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ازدهار البلدان كرامة الإنسان



## Consultative Conference and Expert Meetings on the Arab Digital Agenda and the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum

Hybrid in Dubai, UAE, 25-27 October 2022

### Comprising:

- 1- The Fifth Meeting of the Joint Technical Committee and Core Research and Technical Cooperation Mechanism on producing, developing and implementing the Arab Information and Communication Technology Strategy (The Arab Digital Agenda)
- 2- The Consultative Conference on the Arab Digital Agenda and the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum
- 3- A Special Session with the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology in New York
- 4- The First Preparatory Meeting of the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum 2023, comprising the Fourth Arab High-level Forum on the World Summit on the Information Society and 2030 Agenda (Arab WSIS), and the Seventh Conference of the Arab Internet Governance Forum (Arab-IGF 7)

### Information Note



## 1- Background

In 2019, the Arab Telecom and Information Technology Council of Ministers (ATICM) mandated the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to **producing, developing and implementing the Arab Information and Communication Technology Strategy (The Arab Digital Agenda)**. As part of this project, ESCWA's Executive Secretariat and LAS General Secretariat have organized a number of events in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, whereby representatives of Arab countries, Arab and international organizations and experts contributed to developing and enhancing successive versions of this strategic document.

Within this framework, and in accordance with the recommendations made at the 50<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Bureau of the Arab Telecom and Information Technology Council of Ministers, held on July 19, 2022, ESCWA is working to polish and improve the Arab Digital Agenda's content.

Towards this end, ESCWA and LAS, in partnership with the Telecom and Digital Government Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates (TDRA), the Arab Federation for Digital Economy (AFDE) / Council of Arab Economic Unity, and Mohamed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG), and in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology in New York, the International Telecommunication Union-Arab Region Office (ITU-ARO) in Cairo, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Cairo Office, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in New York, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva, The World Health Organization – Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO/EMRO), the Arab Information and Communication Technologies Organization (AICTO), the Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO), the National Telecom Regulatory Authority of Egypt (NTRA), and the Arab Academy on Science, Technology and Transport (AASTT), are leading the preparations of a series of digital development and cooperation related events under the **"Consultative Conference and Expert Meetings on the Arab Digital Agenda and the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum"**, that will take place at MBRSG headquarters in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 25 to 27 October 2022.

## 2- Objectives

Through its various tracks, the "Consultative Conference and Expert Meetings on the Arab Digital Agenda and the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum" seeks to pursue the collective work for finalizing the prefinal draft of the Arab Digital Agenda, by soliciting input from a larger group of experts and multi-stakeholders on the second version of the ADA prefinal draft, so that the members of the ADA Joint Technical Committee work towards finishing up and fine tuning its components and content, during the 5<sup>th</sup> JTC/CRTCM meeting planned as part of the composite event.

Furthermore, given the role of the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum (DCDF) in providing a platform for periodic dialogue on issues tackled by the Arab digital agenda, part of the consultations are intended to discuss the DCDF linkages to global tracks (WSIS, IGF, Global Digital Compact and The Summit of the Future 2024). Such consultations play a key role in the preparations for the second session of DCDF planned to take place in the second half of 2023, whereby the DCDF will provide a platform for multi-stakeholders to discuss issues of priority to the Arab region in the area of digital cooperation and development.

As a result, this series of meetings marks the conclusion of the consultations before the Arab Digital Agenda is finalized and put forth for the Arab Telecom and Information Technology Council of Ministers' (ATICM) approval at its 26<sup>th</sup> regular session towards the end of December 2022. The Arab Digital Agenda will then be launched for implementation during the first quarter of 2023.

### 3- Segments and tracks

The series of events and tracks under the Consultative Conference and Expert Meetings are designed as follows:

1. **Day One (Tuesday 25 October 2022)** - features two morning closed sessions and two afternoon open sessions:

The morning first and second closed sessions are dedicated to members of the Joint Technical Committee and the Core Research and Technical Cooperation Mechanism of the joint ESCWA-LAS project to producing, developing and implementing the Arab Information and Communication Technology Strategy (The Arab Digital Agenda);

The afternoon third and fourth- open sessions are open to all participants. They revolve around two Arab digital agenda related tracks; namely, the National Digital Development Reviews and the Arab Digital Development Report, which have been both used to set the Arab digital agenda goals for the coming years, and will also be used for monitoring its implementation and progress in the region. The sessions will present:

- Highlights from the National Digital Development Report of the host country, prepared by TDRA of the United Arab Emirates in collaboration with ESCWA;
- Highlights from the NDDRs of selected countries participating in this process;
- An overview of the Arab Digital Development Report.

2. **Day Two (Wednesday, October 26, 2022)** – consists of an expanded multi-stakeholder consultative conference on the Arab digital agenda and interlinkages with global tracks. It gathers Arab government representatives and regional and international organizations active in the field of ICT for development, in addition to invitees from the business sector, multinational companies, funding agencies, academic institutions, youth and other groups. It includes two parts:

**The first part** seeks to collect multi-stakeholders' views on the Arab digital agenda and its implementation and collaborative framework.

**The second part** focuses on the Arab digital agenda linkages to the global tracks (the Global Internet Governance Forum, the World Summit on the Information Society and digital cooperation processes). It features:

A Special Session with the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology in New York to get updates from the UNHQ on the Global Digital Compact and the Summit of the Future in 2024, as well as on the World Summit on the Information Society (2025 and beyond), and the Global Internet Governance Forum.

Arab Community Consultations and public comments on ADA linkages to the global IGF, WSIS, Global Digital compact and Digital Cooperation Processes tracks and corresponding Arab tracks as well as on the Digital Cooperation and Development Forum for 2023 (DCDF 2023).

3. **Day Three (Thursday, October 27, 2022)** - features both morning and afternoon closed sessions dedicated respectively to the *Fifth Meeting of the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) and Core Research and Technical Cooperation Mechanism (CRTCM) on producing, developing and implementing the Arab Information and Communication Technology Strategy (The Arab Digital Agenda)*, and the first

*preparatory meeting of the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum for 2023 (DCDF2023).*

***The Fifth Meeting of the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) and Core Research and Technical Cooperation Mechanism (CRTCM) on producing, developing and implementing the Arab Information and Communication Technology Strategy (The Arab Digital Agenda)*** seeks to review the main messages emanating from the day before multi-stakeholder consultative conference and to update the Arab digital agenda in light of inputs received to crystallize the third version of its prefinal draft, which will be presented respectively to the Arab working group on the ICT Arab Strategy, LAS Standing Committee on ICT, and then to the Executive Office of the Arab Telecom and Information Technology Council of Minister (ATICM) for adoption by the Council of Ministers by the end of 2022.

**The first preparatory meeting of the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum for 2023.** includes two closed sessions targeting the following:

- Preparations for the Fourth Arab High-level Forum on the World Summit on the Information Society and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Arab WSIS) (*dedicated to ESCWA/LAS Arab WSIS track partners*).
- Preparations for the Seventh Conference of the Arab Internet Governance Forum (Arab-IGF 7). (*dedicated to ESCWA/LAS Arab IGF track partners; NTRA of Egypt, and members of the Arab Multistakeholder Program Advisory Committee (AMPAC)*).
- Noting that, starting 2024, the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum (DCDF), will provide a platform for periodic review and policy dialogue on issues included in the Arab digital agenda and progress made in achieving its goals, as well as in keeping pace with the preparations for the United Nations Secretary-General led Summit of the Future in 2024.

#### **4. Organizational and logistical details**

##### **i. Organization of work and partners**

ESCWA and LAS, in partnership with the Telecom and Digital Government Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates (TDRA), the Arab Federation for Digital Economy (AFDE) / Council of Arab Economic Unity, and Mohamed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG), and in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology in New York, the International Telecommunication Union-Arab Region Office (ITU-ARO) in Cairo, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Cairo Office, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in New York, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva, The World Health Organization – Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO/EMRO), the Arab Information and Communication Technologies Organization (AICTO), the Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO), the National Telecom Regulatory Authority of Egypt (NTRA), and the Arab Academy on Science, Technology and Transport (AASTT), are leading the preparations of a series of digital development and cooperation related events under the "**Consultative Conference and Expert Meetings on the Arab Digital Agenda and the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum**", which will take place in a hybrid mode at the headquarters of MBRSG in Dubai, United Arab Emirates and

online, from 25 to 27 October 2022. The event will include a large multi-stakeholders consultative conference on digital development and cooperation issues, and a number of related meetings with all those concerned.

The draft programme will be available on a dedicated web page on the ESCWA official website (<https://www.unescwa.org/>).

## ii. Participation

Participants in the consultative conference and experts meetings comprise the national focal points of the National Digital Development Reviews (NDDRs)'s contributing countries, the Core Research and Technical Cooperation Mechanism (CRTCM), and the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) experts who contribute to producing, developing and implementing the Arab Information and Communication Technology Strategy (The Arab Digital Agenda), representatives of Arab countries, regional and international organizations, and multi-stakeholders including the business sector, multinational companies, the technical community, civil society organizations and networks, funding agencies, academic institutions, youth and other groups. In addition to ESCWA and LAS core team overseeing the development of the Arab Digital Agenda/Arab Strategy for Information.

The links to join virtually the conference and meetings (on the Zoom platform) will be emailed to registered participants

## iii. Logistics

**Date and venue:** The “Consultative Conference and Expert Meetings on the Arab Digital Agenda and the Arab International Digital Cooperation and Development Forum” will be held over three days, from Tuesday, October 25, to Thursday, October 27, 2022, at Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Participation will also be possible online..

**Registration:** The registration process for both in-person and online participation will be announced in due course.

**Entry visa to the United Arab Emirates:** Participants are kindly requested to get in touch with the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in their country in order to secure an entry visa before the meeting date. For assistance, if need be, please get in touch with one of the contacts listed below.

**Language:** English and Arabic are the official languages of the meeting. Simultaneous interpretation between English and Arabic will be available..

## iv. Additional information and correspondence

A dedicated webpage will be made available on the ESCWA official website (<https://www.unescwa.org/>), providing updated information on the event. Further inquiries should be communicated to the persons listed below.

For inquiries on the **substantive arrangements**, please contact:

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