

## Localizing SDGs in the Arab Region: Challenges and Prospects for Action

**Wednesday 25 April 2018 | 16:00-17:30 | Committee Room 1 | UN House, Beirut**

### Background:

Around 65% of the SDGs necessitates the engagement of local actors, to be fully achieved. In the Arab region, 58% of the population live in cities. Centrally-managed policies have contributed to increasing regional and urban disparities in Arab states by concentrating industrial activities and employment opportunities in capital and coastal cities, while interior secondary cities are falling behind. Breaking down silos and bringing all levels of government together is essential in the pursuit of sustainability. Horizontal and vertical coordination between national and local governments will guarantee a balanced and accelerated implementation of SDGs in the Arab region.

### Session Objective:

- Underline the importance of the role of cities and local governments, not just as mere executors of the SDGs but also significant policy-makers who can steer change and build a sense of ownership of the 2030 Agenda among their societies;
- Identify gaps and reflect on systemic challenges of localizing SDGs in the Arab region; and
- Provide an overview of international agencies efforts in supporting member States to embed SDGs across their policies, at the local level and monitor their progress in delivering SDGs targets.

### Themes of Discussion:

- Localization of SDGs is a requirement in an increasingly urbanized Arab world. Initial efforts and practices will be presented to build sustainable, inclusive and resilient cities through policy coherence, local data monitoring and resilience building;
- Assessment of the existing environment, governance mechanisms, available resources and level of responsibilities, as well as capacities of local governments in the Arab region. Further to this, identification of entry points for local governments and necessary reforms to influence SDGs delivery in the long-term; and
- Role of intermediate cities, as critical spaces to promote the development of more balanced and sustainable human settlements and the importance of their integration in national and regional development planning to accelerate the pace of SDGs attainment.

### Facilitator:

- [Mr. Frederico Neto](#), Director, Social Development Division, UN-ESCWA

### Panelists:

- [Ms. Soha Farouk](#), Programme Officer, UNHabitat-ROAS.
- [Ms. Mona Harb](#), Professor of Urban Studies and Politics, the American University of Beirut.
- [Mr. Mohamed Saadieh](#), President of union of Dannieh municipalities and co-president of UCLG-MEWA.
- [Ms. Firdaous Oussidhom](#), Coordinator of the Global Forum of Intermediate Cities, UCLG.