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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

2017 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development  
Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:  
Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Arab region  
Rabat, 3-5 May 2017

**Information note****I. BACKGROUND**

The Arab Forum for Sustainable Development is the primary regional mechanism for the follow up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region.<sup>1</sup> This regional Forum is also relevant at the global level; its outcomes give voice to the aspirations of the region at the High-level Forum on Sustainable Development. The report of the Arab Forum sets out key messages emanating from the regional dialogue on the opportunities and challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region.

The importance of the Arab Forum lies in its participatory approach. It comprises high-level representatives of ministries, bodies concerned with planning and following up on the of the 2030 Agenda, Arab parliaments, a wide range of regional and international institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector and centres of expertise, among others.

The 2017 Arab Forum builds on the successes of three previous sessions, held in Amman in 2014 and 2016 and in Manama in 2015. Its role and membership are set out in the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which defines the Forum as an annual meeting bringing together Arab Governments and sustainable development stakeholders to discuss progress, review national and regional experiences, and consider the latest developments and implementation mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda at the national and regional levels.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1 on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” of 25 September 2015.

<sup>2</sup> ESCWA resolutions 327 (XXIX) (Doha, 13-15 December 2016) on the working mechanisms of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development; 314 (XXVIII) (Tunis, 15-18 September 2014) on the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development; and 322 issued at the second meeting of the Executive Committee (Amman, 14-16 December 2015) on supporting member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## II. 2017 ARAB FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE THEME “IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ERADICATING POVERTY AND PROMOTING PROSPERITY IN A CHANGING ARAB REGION”

### A. THEME OF THE 2017 ARAB FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (AFSD)

Within the context of implementing ESCWA resolution 327 (XXIX) on the working mechanisms of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and in line with the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, 10-19 July 2017) on the theme “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world” and the other regional forums organized by the United Nations regional commissions, the theme for the 2017 Arab Forum is **“Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Arab region”**.

Given the importance of the Arab Forum as an expanded regional meeting to discuss sustainable development issues, and in accordance with the recommendations of the 2016 AFSD,<sup>3</sup> ESCWA has adopted a participatory approach to preparing the 2017 Forum session. Several organizations, including the League of Arab States and United Nations bodies working in the region, participated in preparing its background papers and organizing its plenary and special sessions.

### B. OBJECTIVE AND FOCUS OF THE 2017 ARAB FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 2017 Arab Forum will be held during the second year following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many Arab countries have begun developing practical approaches to adapt their national plans and strategies to the 2030 Agenda. Some have established institutional frameworks ensuring coordination and consistency in identifying priorities for the provision of resources and expertise. Egypt and Morocco prepared voluntary national reports in 2016, and Jordan and Qatar will present their reports in 2017.

The Arab Forum is an opportunity for Arab countries and sustainable development stakeholders to exchange experiences, expertise and lessons learned on national and regional accomplishments, and on future work priorities in view of key regional development opportunities and challenges.

### C. PROGRAMME OF THE 2017 ARAB FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The programme of the 2017 Arab Forum on the theme “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Arab region”, held over three days, is divided into three principal topics:

1. Implementation, follow-up and review at the national level.
2. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level: eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity.
3. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: unlocking the potential of means of implementation at the regional level.

The Arab Forum will highlight some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be reviewed in 2017 at the global level,<sup>4</sup> including SDG 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

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<sup>3</sup> E/ESCWA/SDD/2016/WG.1/Report.

<sup>4</sup> SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 shall be reviewed in 2017. SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15 shall be reviewed in 2018. SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16 shall be reviewed in 2019. SDG 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development shall be reviewed every year.

## **Topic 1: Implementation, follow-up and review at the national level**

Topic 1 will include an overview and evaluation of the 2030 Agenda in its second year in the Arab region, focusing on implementation, follow-up and review at the national level and highlighting the extent of Arab countries' response to the 2030 Agenda.

Topic 1 aims to consider the achievements of member States towards implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region by reviewing national experiences and the expertise of certain countries in preparing voluntary national reviews for presentation at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Qatar will present their experiences in preparing voluntary national reviews, and other countries will have the opportunity to present their experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

## **Topic 2: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level: eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity**

Topic 2 tackles poverty eradication in Arab countries in all its forms and dimensions, and highlights key factors exacerbating poverty and inequality. This topic will consider means to expedite development to achieve prosperity for all.

Eradicating poverty has been a major challenge in Arab countries for decades. It is a key basis and goal of the 2030 Agenda, the implementation of which requires an understanding of the interlinkages between the SDGs and of the policy coherence required to maximize synergy and achieve the desired development outcomes.

Under the broad theme of “**eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing Arab region**”, the 2017 Arab Forum will discuss development challenges in the Arab region, such as revitalizing inclusive and sustainable economic growth to reduce poverty, creating an enabling environment to promote productive sectors, providing decent work opportunities, promoting entrepreneurship, advancing technology and innovation, and taking into account the most vulnerable groups including women, young people, the elderly, refugees, migrants and persons with disabilities in development efforts, so as to build prosperous societies based on equality and human rights. This topic also covers peace and stability and their role in limiting risks and building prosperous societies ensuring dignified lives for all.

## **Topic 3: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: unlocking the potential of means of implementation at the regional level**

This topic builds on the Arab region's ability to mobilize financial and non-financial resources for achieving sustainable development in all its economic, social and environmental dimensions. The plenary meeting on this topic will focus on the region's ability to provide resources following a drop in official development assistance, foreign direct investment and oil prices, and an increase in risks and instability factors. The meeting will focus on general issues related to consistency between policies and institutions, capacity-building, and operationalizing partnerships and science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. It will also consider adapting means of implementation including trade, knowledge and data to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a regional context.

### **D. OUTCOMES OF THE 2017 ARAB FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Similarly to previous sessions of the Arab Forum, the outcomes of the 2017 AFSD will constitute the main contribution of the Arab region to the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which Morocco, as host country and chair, will present. The report of the Arab Forum will also be submitted at the next Executive Committee meeting and ESCWA session.

The final report of the Arab Forum will set out the topics discussed to highlight main messages of to participating member States and other stakeholders.

### III. ORGANIZATIONAL AND LOGISTICAL DETAILS

#### A. DATE AND VENUE OF THE ARAB FORUM

The 2017 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development will be held in Rabat, Morocco, from 3 to 5 May 2017. Logistical details will be made available on the following website, which will be regularly updated: [www.unescwa.org/arab-forum-sustainable-development-2017](http://www.unescwa.org/arab-forum-sustainable-development-2017).

#### B. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

ESCWA is leading the organization of the 2017 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development in cooperation with the government of the Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry Delegate to the Head of Government in Charge of General Affairs and Governance, and in partnership with the League of Arab States and United Nations organizations working in the Arab region.

#### C. PARTICIPANTS AND REGISTRATION

Participants include high-level representatives of Arab governments, including Ministers and senior officials responsible for Planning and for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Regional intergovernmental organisations, civil society networks and organisations, parliamentarians, and United Nations agencies working in the Arab region will also take part in this annual multi-stakeholder event. The Forum is expected to attract around 150 participants.

**To confirm attendance**, please complete the attached registration form **by 10 April 2017** so that ESCWA could finalize the list of participants. Please also provide us a clear colour copy of your passport or identity card and a passport picture (jpeg) to the email address in the correspondence section of this document.

#### D. TRAVEL AND ENTRY VISAS

Participants are requested to directly apply for entry visas at the Moroccan Embassy in their countries. Kindly provide a copy of the invitation letter for ease of reference.

#### E. ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT

Please note that ESCWA has identified a number of hotels in Rabat. The exact venue of the meeting and further details on accommodation and transport will be provided in due course.

Participants are therefore requested to visit the Forum website to access logistical information and make personal transport and accommodation arrangements in Rabat for the duration of the Forum.

#### F. DOCUMENTATION

In addition to background papers on the Forum's theme, forum proceedings will be informed by information and data from the following documents:

- General Assembly resolution 70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available in English and Arabic from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

- Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to the 47th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. Available in Arabic from <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-2-IAEG-SDGs-A.pdf>; and in English from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-2-IAEG-SDGs-E.pdf>.
- A/70/684 – Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level. Available in Arabic from [www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/L.60&Lang=A](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/L.60&Lang=A); and in English from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/follow-up>.
- Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Available in English from [www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA\\_Outcome.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf).
- Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab States. Available in Arabic only from [www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/ministerial\\_sessions/docs/e\\_escwa\\_29\\_11\\_a\\_0.pdf](http://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/ministerial_sessions/docs/e_escwa_29_11_a_0.pdf).
- Report of the 2016 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development. Available in Arabic from [www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/events/files/arab-forum-sustainable-development-2016-final-report-ar\\_1.pdf](http://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/events/files/arab-forum-sustainable-development-2016-final-report-ar_1.pdf).
- Report of the twenty-ninth ESCWA session. Available in English from [www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/ministerial\\_sessions/reports/e\\_escwa\\_29\\_12\\_report\\_e.pdf](http://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/ministerial_sessions/reports/e_escwa_29_12_report_e.pdf).
- Forum documents will be available on the following ESCWA website, which will be regularly updated: <https://www.unescwa.org/arab-forum-sustainable-development-2017>.

#### G. CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence regarding the 2017 Arab Forum for Sustainable Development should be sent to the following address:

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