



Final Regional Meeting of the Project "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Labour Market in the Arab Countries"

Online, 16 November 2023 (11:00am-2:00 pm Beirut time)

Concept note and proposed organization of work

1- Background

Arab countries have exerted substantial efforts to develop policies that promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor market, harmonizing their legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). These efforts included amending laws on persons with disabilities, formulating strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor market, and requiring employers in the public and private sectors to allocate a minimum number of jobs for persons with disabilities. However, these efforts have not achieved the desired results as quickly as required because of the incoherence between legislation and sectoral policies, which sometimes hinders the inclusion process.

2- Final Regional Meeting of the Project "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Labour Market in the Arab Countries"

This meeting is the culmination of a series of activities undertaken within the project on "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Labor Market in the Arab Countries", which has been implemented since 2021 by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), with the aim of analyzing the reality of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market in the Arab region. The project addressed three key aspects: designing public policies that promote the vocational integration of persons with disabilities, enhancing an effective role for employers in the public and private sectors in creating an enabling environment for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace, and improving statistics on the participation of persons with disabilities in the labor market in the Arab region.

The final regional meeting of this project aims to present the experiences of countries and discuss the lessons learned and successful steps adopted by Arab countries to reduce legislative gaps and operational challenges that hinder the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor market. In this context, the inclusive employment policy in the Arab region in line with the Article 27 of the CRPD will be presented and discussed during the meeting. In addition, a presentation will discuss the results of the analysis of add-on modules to measure barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from entering the labor market, which were included in the labor force survey in selected Arab countries.

The last session of the meeting will be dedicated to launching a network of national experts from relevant ministries and government institutions in the Arab region, as well as from organizations of persons with disabilities who participated in the project's activities, in addition to experts on disability and employment issues from both ESCWA and the ILO. The aim of this network is to continue the exchange of knowledge and experiences on inclusive employment of persons with disabilities.

3- Venue, time and language of the meeting

The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom platform on Thursday 16 November 2023 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm (Beirut time). The meeting will be held in Arabic, with the availability of simultaneous interpretation to and from English.

4- Participants

The meeting targets project focal points and experts in disability issues from the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs and other relevant government institutions such as agencies and councils of persons with disabilities in the Arab region. The meeting will also include stakeholders representing organizations of persons with disabilities and experts from ESCWA and the ILO.

5- Proposed organization of work (Beirut time)

10:45- 11:00	Registration (access to Zoom platform)
11:00-11:15	Opening remarks and presentation of the agenda
11:15-12:00	Session I: the project on "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Labour Market in Arab Countries"
11:15-11:30	- Presentation on the project "Inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market", progress in the implementation of its activities and achievements <i>Presented by: ESCWA</i>
11:30-11:45	- Presentation on results, lessons learned and proposed solutions <i>Presented by: ESCWA</i>
11:45-12:00	Discussion
12:00-12:45	Session II: ILO Interventions
12:00-12:15	- Why an inclusive employment policy matters – and how to foster it?
12:15-12:30	- Results of the analysis of ILO models on barriers and attitudes – an example from a selected Arab country
12:30-12:45	Discussion

<p>12:45-13:15</p> <p>12:45-13:00</p> <p>13:00-13:15</p>	<p>Session III: Appropriate Policy Framework for Employment in the Arab Countries</p> <p>- Presentation on the Inclusive Employment Policy in the Arab region in line with the Article 27 of CRPD <i>Presented by: ESCWA consultant.</i></p> <p>Discussion</p>
<p>13:15-13:45</p>	<p>Launch of a network of national experts including ESCWA and ILO on inclusive employment – ESCWA and ILO.</p>
<p>13:45-14:00</p>	<p>Closure of the meeting</p>