



Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



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**Statement of  
The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

**Delivered by  
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Esteemed Delegates, Colleagues,

Good Afternoon.

Thank you for giving the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) the opportunity to address the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the CFS. I would like to present some key messages from UN-ESCWA's work on the State of Food Security in the Arab region, an issue that is critical for the region not to be left behind.

Of the many challenges affecting Food security in the region, I would like to highlight four:

- Protracted conflicts and wars increase the prevalence of undernourishment, wasting and stunting among children. Yemen alone counts close to 20 million affected citizens.
- The triple burden of malnutrition is plaguing the Arab region, while there are 115 million obese persons (28% of Arab Population in 2016), 50 million people are undernourished (12% of Arab Population in 2016) and one third of Arab Women are anemic.
- Frequent and intense drought and warmer temperatures add stress to existing water scarcity and low soil productivity.
- Exponential growth of food import bill, with cereals import dependency ratio reaching over 80% increase the vulnerability of the region to food prices volatility

To make a difference we need to:

- Build resilience to climate change through informed policies and practices, and technology transfer and adoption
- Support peace building and conflict prevention efforts as sine qua non, a driver and accelerator for achieving the SDGs
- Expand intraregional cooperation and trade
- Promote traditional and healthy diets

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To make a difference ESCWA established the Arab Center for Climate Change Policies in 2018 by a mandate of its Member States, to strengthen their capacities to better understand and address the implications of climate change on agriculture and rural communities.

The center provides open access to the regional knowledge hub which includes a wealth of data, information and tools to inform policy and support the generation of new research and analysis.

With its partners ESCWA has also launched the Arab regional food security monitoring framework, a tool that allows identifying gaps and hotspot areas to inform decision making.

In closing, let me assure you that ESCWA and its member states are already committed to enhancing food security. But the region still needs more support, technically, financially and technologically and we need it at scale.

Thank you.