



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

Expert Consultation on SDG6 Indicators  
Beirut, 21 December 2016

### **INFORMATION NOTE**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

The United Nations Statistical Commission established the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to prepare a global indicator framework for monitoring progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated targets. The resulting framework includes over 230 indicators, with at least one indicator identified to measure progress related to each target. A High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG) has also been set up to support global efforts on statistical monitoring and reporting to this end.

The indicators put forth at the global level do not cover the full scope of issues included in the SDG6 targets, which collectively aim to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. For example, the affordability of water supply is addressed in the SDG6.1 target, but is not covered by a global indicator. Water recycling and the safe reuse of wastewater are addressed in the SDG6.3 target, and as means of implementation under SDG6.a, but are not covered by a global indicator. Moreover, the SDG 6.4 target to substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity is not covered by any proposed metric.

These gaps in the indicator monitoring framework are relevant to Arab States and other water-scarce countries, as the indicator framework under SDG6 does not sufficiently cover issues of principle concern to water scarce regions. This includes the socio-economic dimension of ensuring water and sanitation for all by considering the equitable access and affordability of drinking water. It also discounts knowledge and experience gained in sustainable water resources management in water scarce regions by omitting monitoring and reporting on progress related to water recycling and the safe reuse of treated wastewater, which are both important for protecting renewable and non-renewable groundwater resources, increasing access to water resources for agricultural production and reducing risks to the environment.

The work on the indicators has been formally underway since 2015. The members of the IAEG-SDGs are now submitting a revised list of proposed indicators to the United Nations Statistical Commission for its consideration at its 48<sup>th</sup> session in March 2016. IAEG-SDGs members are also reviewing other proposed additional indicators to present to the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Statistical Commission for its consideration in March 2018. IAEG-SDGs will review the results of consultations, and the IAEG-SDGs may give preference to those proposals with an established methodology and with data available when vetting proposals that equally address the same issue. An open consultation on the proposed possible additional indicators will subsequently be launched, similar to the consultation that was recently concluded on indicator refinements.

Regional experience on collecting country-level data on water-related indicators can inform the work of the members of the IAEG-SDGs from Arab States as well as others from water-scarce countries. Of particular note is the MDG+ Initiative, which was launched by the Arab Ministerial Water Council in 2010 to establish a regional mechanism for monitoring and reporting on access to water supply and sanitation services in the Arab Region. The initiative provides reliable information on access to water supply, sanitation and wastewater services in Arab States based on a set of regional indicators, a common methodology and data collected and vetted by National Monitoring Teams comprised of ministries responsible for water, water and sanitation utilities and national statistical offices. It is suggested that this inter-sectoral approach can help inform the development of the global indicator monitoring framework as well as Arab preparations for monitoring and reporting on the water-related SDGs.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING**

The purpose of the expert consultation is to discuss and consider additional water-related indicators and the components of potential indicator methodologies that can better reflect the targets mandated in SDG6.

The objective of the meeting is then to formulate a set of recommendations on how Arab States should support global and regional monitoring and reporting on the water-related targets and indicators. The deliberations will be informed by regional and national experience related to monitoring and reporting water-related indicators in the Arab region.

By doing so, this consultation would follow up on the recommendations adopted by the representatives of statistical offices, water-related ministries, water and wastewater utilities and regulators from Arab States at the MDG+ Initiative: High Level Meeting on the Water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Amman from 1 to 2 November 2016.

## **III. PARTICIPANTS**

This meeting will bring together expert representatives from the statistics offices in Arab States that serve on the IAEG-SDG and HLG, namely from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Palestine and Tunisia. High level water experts from the countries that serve on these working groups will also be invited to participate.

## **IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING**

The discussion meeting is organized by ESCWA within the framework of the MDG+ Initiative that is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The ESCWA Statistics Division and the ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division are cooperating on the preparation of the meeting. The Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), which has partnered with ESCWA to implement the MDG+ Initiative, will also contribute to the discussions.

The meeting will be held at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon on Wednesday, 21 December 2016. Participants are kindly requested to arrive at 8:30 am to secure their identification cards in order to access the building. English will be the primary working language of the meeting.

## **V. LOGISTICAL INFORMATION**

A block of rooms has been reserved for participants at the Markazia Suites hotel in Downtown Beirut at a preferential room rate of \$110/night for a single room, inclusive of breakfast, internet access and all taxes. The hotel is located walking distance to ESCWA (5 minutes) and is conveniently located next to the Beirut Souks (7-10 minute walk) and Hamra (7-10 minutes by taxi) where one can find retail outlets, restaurants and coffee shops. Kindly indicate on the registration form if you would like ESCWA to reserve a room for you at this hotel.

Participants are kindly request to return their completed registration form to ESCWA no later than 12 December 2016 to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for their travel. Sponsorship cannot be assured for registration forms received beyond that date. Participants are responsible for securing their own visa for travel to Lebanon.

## VI. DOCUMENTATION

The meeting will be informed by the following documents:

- Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, available in English at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-2-IAEG-SDGs-E.pdf>
- MDG+ Initiative 2015 Report, available in Arabic at: <http://www.acwua.org/mdg-initiative>
- MDG+ Initiative Training Manual on the Water Supply and Sanitation Indicators, available in Arabic at: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/water-supply-and-sanitation-indicators-training-manual-mdg-initiative>
- International Recommendations for Water Statistics (2012), available at: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/irws/irwswebversion\\_ara.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/irws/irwswebversion_ara.pdf) (Arabic) <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/irws/irwswebversion.pdf> (English)
- ESCWA Water Development Report 5: Issues in Sustainable Water Resources Management and Water Services (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/4), available in Arabic and English at: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/escwa-water-development-report-5-issues-sustainable-water-resources-management-and>
- Background paper on “Drawing on the MDG+ Initiative for Informing the Water-related SDGs in the Arab Region”, available at: [https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/events/files/working\\_paper\\_on\\_mdg\\_for\\_informing\\_water-related\\_sdgs-31march16.pdf](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/events/files/working_paper_on_mdg_for_informing_water-related_sdgs-31march16.pdf)

## VII. CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence and inquiries concerning the expert group meeting should be addressed to:

Ms. Wafa AboulHosn  
Chief  
Economic Statistics Section  
Statistics Division  
ESCWA  
Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: +961 1 978 353  
Email: [abouhosn@un.org](mailto:abouhosn@un.org)

Mr. Adnan Kaddoura  
Administrative Assistant  
Water Resources Section  
Sustainable Development Policies Division  
ESCWA  
Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: +961 1 978 504  
Mobile: +961 70 732 116  
Fax: +961 1 981 510 / 511 / 512  
Email: [kaddouraa@un.org](mailto:kaddouraa@un.org)

Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane  
Chief  
Water Resources Section  
Sustainable Development Policies Section  
ESCWA  
Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: +961 1 978 518  
Email: [chouchanicherfane@un.org](mailto:chouchanicherfane@un.org)