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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Seminar on: “Monitoring the Implementation of Energy Related SDG Indicators in the Arab Region”
UN-House, Beirut, Lebanon 17-18 April 2019

Information Note

1. *Background*

Global processes

The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, along with the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015, with the aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all with specific targets to be achieved by 2030. However, the primary current concern relates to the implementation programs that countries can develop to achieve those SDGs, including the ones in relation to developing more sustainable energy systems, as indicated by SDG7 aiming at “ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”.

Achieving the SDGs and enhancing the quality of life is largely dependent on the successful uptake of globally-coordinated measures to improve the energy system, especially with energy being at the heart of the 2030 development agenda and the climate change challenge. However, to address the gap between current actions taken by governments and the commitments they have made, it is necessary to understand the gaps in their various dimensions.

In this context, “The Global Tracking Framework (GTF)” is considered as the global platform that tracks progress in sustainable energy through the collection and analysis of quantifiable, internationally comparable energy-related indicators to provide the international community with a more detailed insight report into progress on the three pillars of sustainable energy: energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy. The new branding of the GTF - “SDG7 Tracking: Energy progress Report” – follows the same data indicators with some adjustments to improve the tracking of SDG7 indicators.

Regional processes

The GTF 2017 involved the United Nations regional commissions to develop regional profiles on tracking the energy progress in terms of energy access, doubling the share of renewable energy and increasing the role of energy efficiency. Drawing on data from the GTF, the first edition of the GTF Arab Regional report provided an overview of the progress made by the Arab region from 1990 - 2014 on areas of sustainable energy management and universal energy access with a focus on the 2030 Agenda. The regional report provided a country by country breakdown which is highly important in bringing the process and the findings of the GTF closer to national level energy policy makers and statisticians.

The progress in sustainable energy can no longer be seen as separate from other socioeconomic development goals in the Arab region. And as such, the second edition of the Arab regional report “Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2019 – Arab Region” will continue to track the progress achieved by the Arab countries towards the SDG7 indicators with additional focus on climate actions and the interlinkages between SDG7 and SDG13 as well other relevant SDGs under review at the 2019 High-Level Political Forum (SDG1, 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15). The report will also provide policymakers with significant analysis of the status, progress and challenges to better assess and enhance their countries’ ability to push for sustainable energy actions.

In collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Seminar on “Monitoring the Implementation of Energy related SDG Indicators in the Arab Region” will be held in Beirut from 17-18 April 2019 to strengthen the capacity of the governments of the Member Countries (MCs) on mainstreaming the energy-related SDGs and the Paris Agreement into their national development plans.

2. Objectives

The objective of the Seminar on: “Monitoring the Implementation of Energy Related SDG Indicators” in the Arab Region is to consult on the progress achieved by ESCWA’s member countries on the implementation of the SDG7 goals (ensuring access to modern energy, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix and double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency). The seminar will also provide an opportunity to fill the data gaps present in the Arab region and enhance the analysis of the tracking report.

The Seminar will focus on defining the major challenges that face the Arab countries’ sustainable energy future and opportunities to accelerate progress on energy related sustainable development goals, at the Arab regional level and the country level. The collected inputs at the seminar will be integrated into the Arab regional report “Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2019 – Arab Region” and will serve to:

- Highlight differences among countries and regions in terms of progress towards SDG7.
- Provide the opportunity to interpret the drivers behind specific country performances.
- Emphasize the data availability, reliability and fill the data gaps.
- Discuss country needs in terms of data collection processes and indicators used.
- Share and explore key elements of realizing the objectives of SDG7 at country level, the main challenges and opportunities for each of the Arab countries and the potential action forward towards a sustainable energy future.

The seminar will support the Arab region’s SDG7 Tracking Report which will use the dataset from SDG7 Custodian agencies and complement missing data by other reliable sources to fill the gaps where needed and will also provide additional insights and policy recommendations as priority actions for policy makers and key stakeholders to advance in sustainable energy systems.

3. Agenda

The agenda will foster a regional dialogue which will focus on the progress related to the implementation of the SDG7 at national and Arab regional levels with the following key aspects:

- Access to Energy: Analysis of the progress of the SDG7 indicators in terms of access to

electricity and CFTs)

- Energy Efficiency: Analysis of the progress of the SDG7 indicators in terms of energy efficiency in key economic sectors: building, industry and transportation sectors)
- Renewable Energy: Analysis of the progress of the SDG7 indicators in terms of renewable energy)
- Sustainable Energy and Climate actions
- Challenges facing the Arab countries in achieving their SDGs (from technology, finance and expertise perspectives)
- Data availability and gaps

Breaks for coffee and lunch will be arranged during the two-day meeting. The draft agenda will be circulated to registered participants.

4. Participants

Representatives of the Arab member States Committee of Energy (CoE), the Statistics National Directorate, the international and regional energy and statistics agencies, as well as energy experts and senior representatives from academia and civil society are invited to participate in the meeting.

5. Date and Venue

The Seminar on: Monitoring the Implementation of Energy Related SDG Indicators in the Arab Region will be held from 17-18 April 2019 at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon. Registration will commence at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 17 April 2019. The meeting will conclude by 4 pm on Thursday, 18 April 2019.

Participants are kindly asked to bring photographic identification on the first day of the meeting and to allow sufficient time to pass through security to collect their identification badge. Access to the United Nations House is provided through the Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden pedestrian entrance.

6. Language of the session

The meeting will be conducted in the Arabic and English languages. Simultaneous interpretation from and into the Arabic and English languages will be provided.

7. Registration

Designated officials, interested participants and regional partners are kindly invited to submit their completed registration form to the ESCWA secretariat. A colour, scanned passport-like photograph should be submitted with the registration form to allow for issuance of an identification badge to access the United Nations House.

8. Entry visas

Participants are required to secure their own visas for travel to Lebanon, as may be necessary. A personalized letter of invitation can be provided by ESCWA for nominated participants to facilitate the visa request process. Lebanese visa and entry requirements are available at the following site: <http://www.general-security.gov.lb/en/posts/65>.

➤ CORRESPONDENCES

All correspondences related to the Seminar are to be sent to either of the below addresses:

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