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

Arab Preparatory Meeting on Energy-related Issues for the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and the High Level Political Forum.  
Beirut, Lebanon, 27-28 March 2018

### INFORMATION NOTE

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) in collaboration with the League of Arab States (LAS) are convening an Arab Preparatory meeting to discuss major issues related to energy and progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) on “Affordable and Clean Energy” and its interlinkage with other development issues within the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. The outcome of the meeting will provide an input into the 2018 Arab Sustainable Development Forum (AFSD) and the 2018 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) where this year SDG 7 is one of the thematic focus of the HLPF. The Arab Preparatory meeting will be held on 27-28 March 2018, in Beirut, Lebanon.

#### 1. Background

The 2030 Agenda sets out a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and defines 169 associated targets to be achieved by 2030 through an integrated and comprehensive manner. SDG7 is a first-ever universal goal on energy, with five targets on access, efficiency, renewables and means of implementation, including technology cooperation, capacity building, scaled-up financing and multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve sustainable development.

The UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)<sup>1</sup> on Sustainable Development is the central platform within the UN system for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Member States regularly undertake in-depth reviews, including through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), to assess progress at the country level towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to the SDG6, 11,12,15 and 17, SDG7 will be reviewed in depth for the first time at the 2018 HLPF to be convened in New York during the period from 10 to 19 July 2018 under the theme “**Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies**”.

The UN Regional Commissions are mandated by GA Resolution 70/1, “**Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**” to support Member States in regional follow-up and review and to organize annually a regional forum to track progress toward sustainable development. In 2018, eight Arab countries will submit VNRs to the HLPF: Bahrain, Egypt, KSA, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, and UAE.

In this context, the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD) is set as a regional forum for follow-up and review (FUR) and as an annual multi-stakeholder event to review experiences and discuss

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(1) <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

modalities of implementation and FUR at national and regional levels<sup>2</sup>. The 2018 session of the AFSD will be organized from 24 to 26 April 2018 in Beirut. Its outcomes will feed into the 2018 HLPF session.

To facilitate stocktaking of progress at national and Arab regional level towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and to provide inputs for the 2018 AFSD, ESCWA in collaboration with the League of Arab States' Secretariat, is organizing the Preparatory Meeting on the Regional Energy Issues and Priorities as input to the 2018 AFSD and the 2018 HLPF.

## 2. *Scope*

The Arab region is still at the very beginning of its transformation toward a more sustainable way of using its natural resources, while protecting itself from its very own immediate and long-term vulnerabilities: declining mineral resources, water scarcity, and the threat of the negative implications of climate change on precious land and maritime resources and on food security. Without rapid progress in the area of secure, affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), it will be impossible to deliver on other SDGs by 2030.

Energy is the source of and a solution to many global problems, and it is the golden thread that connects all the SDGs – from its close link to the security of water and food supplies, to other key development goals, such as universalizing access to modern health services and education, poverty eradication, gender equality, empowerment of youth and women, technology and innovation and critical achievement of the Paris Agreement. The nexus among energy and other key development challenges suggests that numerous opportunities can arise from wider cross-sector perspectives and more holistic decision-making.

The Arab Preparatory Meeting will focus on tracking progress of the Arab countries on up-scaling access to modern energy through electrification and access to modern clean cooking fuels and technologies (CFTs); doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and substantially increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. The meeting will be an opportunity to discuss the gaps between policies in place today and the targets set for a sustainable energy future, identify key challenges and priorities to scale up ambitions and brainstorm on the policy options to lead to the transformation of the energy system, taking into consideration the Arab regional specificity and country national context.

During the Meeting, ESCWA will launch the “Arab Region Progress in Sustainable Energy: Global Tracking Framework Regional Report” which reviews the progress made by the Arab region in recent years and decades in the area of sustainable energy management and its interlinkage with other development issues.

## 3. *Objectives and Themes*

The objective of this Arab Preparatory Meeting is to inform intergovernmental discussions on energy-related issues and priorities and SDG7 follow-up and review. It aims at bringing together key stakeholders from Arab regional and national Governments institutions, UN system, regional and international organizations, the Private sector, Financial institutions and Civil society. It intends to assess the progress made by the Arab region in the area of sustainable energy management and to engage in a dialogue that emphasize the integrated and cross-cutting nature of sustainable energy and its multiple roles in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The meeting also intends to provide recommendations for policymakers to develop and implement policies for achieving sustainable development.

Participants at the Meeting will review the primary indicators, highlight the major trends towards the achievement of the SDG7 targets and means of implementation, including finance, technology and innovation and will explore how sustainable energy can help address a much broader spectrum of SDGs in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Member States participating at the Meeting will have the opportunity to present the progress made at the country level towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDG7 in particular, lessons learned and policy recommendations to advance interlinkages between energy and other SDGs. The meeting will result in a

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(2) GA Resolution 70/299 on FUR at the global level

report that includes a set of key messages, conclusions and recommendations. The report will be submitted to the 2018 AFSD and the 2018 HLPF.

#### 4. *Focus Areas*

The Arab Preparatory Meeting will focus on the following topics:

- a- Explore the progress of the Arab countries' sustainable energy efforts in line with Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development in terms of Energy Access, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
- b- Discuss the nexus between energy and other areas such as water, food, climate, economic growth, and how to link crosscutting concerns to policy design
- c- Assess the gaps between policies in place today and the targets set for a sustainable energy future
- d- Debate on how to stimulate and mobilize national financial resources and attract international financing and access to technology
- e- Identify key priorities for policy makers to increase alignment of national plans with the 2030 Agenda.

#### 5. *Participants*

Participants will include, Government officials, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations and other multi-stakeholders from Academia, Scientific Research Institutions, NGOs, Financial Institutions and the Private Sector working on Sustainable Energy at the technical, practical and policy making levels.

#### 6. *Date and venue*

The Arab Preparatory Meeting will be held at UN-premises in Beirut, Lebanon, from 27 to 28 March 2018. Registration will commence at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, 27 March 2018.

#### 7. *Language of the session*

The meeting materials will be presented in Arabic and English languages with simultaneous translation.

#### 8. *Logistical information*

Each participant shall undertake the following preparation related to her/his participation: securing hotel reservation, visa, and any other requirements for travelling to Beirut.

Additional logistical information about how to obtain entry visa to Lebanon, as well as any special arrangements made for hotel reservations, or other additional information will be provided to participants in due course.

#### 9. *Correspondence*

All session-related correspondence should be sent to the following ESCWA officials:

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