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

Consolidation Workshop “Sustainable Energy Access for Rural Areas”, 22 September 2016 in the framework of the Seventh Edition of the International Beirut Energy Forum, 21-23 September 2016 “Le Royal Hotel Dbayeh”, Beirut, Lebanon

### Information Note

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is organizing a consolidation Workshop on “Sustainable Energy Access for Rural Areas”, to be held on 22 September 2016, in Beirut, Lebanon. The Workshop is organized within the framework of the Seventh Beirut Energy Forum (7<sup>th</sup> BEF) and is part of the activities included in a United Nations Development Account (UN DA) capacity-building project, led by ESCWA, aiming at strengthening the capacity of ESCWA member countries to mainstream appropriate green technology initiatives into national development programs and policies, in order to enhance livelihoods of rural communities. ESCWA will benefit from the 7<sup>th</sup> BEF to organize other activities, among them a follow-up meeting of the ESCWA’ Committee on Energy (CoE), a joint session on “Energy Efficiency in the Industrial Sector in the Arab Region” in coordination with UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016, and another joint session on “Super Escos” in coordination with Energy Efficiency in the Construction Sector in the Mediterranean (MEDENEC) planned on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2016.

#### 1. Background

Despite that Arab region is endowed with various natural energy resources, which differ from a sub region to another, yet there are still more than 40 million people, mostly concentrated in Sudan, Yemen and Mauritania, do not have access to energy supply. Lack of access to affordable modern energy services is usually associated with poverty in rural and remote areas, which account for about 43 per cent of the Arab population, and known to endure socioeconomic marginalization brought about by insufficient and unequal national support, growing population, and scarce arable land. In addition, rural areas in the Arab region face shortages in modern energy services, relying instead on unsustainable energy resources such as traditional biomass and low-grade fossil fuels.

Building on the fact that most Arab countries are rich in renewable energy (RE) resources, particularly solar energy, dissemination of appropriate green technologies to rural areas can gradually improve rural livelihood and act as a catalyst for people to acquire new sellable skills and contribute to rural economy. Distribution of appropriate RE technologies, on sustainable basis, can deliver considerable benefits to rural socio-economic development in terms of integration in the rural value-chains in agriculture, small agribusinesses, rural traditional manufacturing, etc. Moreover, from the gender perspective, RE applications can enhance the empowerment of rural women by reducing their time and labor burdens, improving their health, and providing them with entrepreneurship opportunities.

#### 2. Scope

This Workshop falls under the UN Development Account (UNDA) project “Building Capacities in Developing Appropriate Green Technologies for Improving the Livelihood of Rural Communities in the

ESCWA Region” which aims to strengthen the capacity of countries in the Arab region to mainstream appropriate green technology initiatives into national development programs and policies, in order to enhance livelihoods of rural communities. The UNDA project targets to:

- a) Build the capacity of public and private development institutions on assessing the appropriate green technology needs in rural areas and on understanding the mechanisms that support the mainstreaming of appropriate green technology initiatives;
- b) Enhance the knowledge of policymakers and decision makers on policy options and building their capacity for using policy tools to enable an environment conducive for investment in appropriate green technologies in the Arab rural areas.

The UNDA project’s outcome is in line with the framework of the UN Secretary General Initiative “Sustainable Energy for All” and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030, particularly SDG 7 that call for ensuring access to sustainable modern energy for all by 2030.

### **3. Objectives**

In light of the above, ESCWA is organizing this completion Workshop as the final outcome of the project in order to present its accomplishments and the activities performed in collaboration with involved stakeholders from ESCWA member countries, experts, government, financial and research institutions. The objective is to share lessons learned, shedding the light on examples from the participating countries and experts, and initiating the approach for possible options on the way forward. The workshop will also provide a platform to debate and agree on an appropriate course of actions for building on the project accomplishments.

Moreover, ESCWA will take this opportunity at the end of the completion Workshop in order to conduct a close session intended for the members of ESCWA’ Committee on Energy (CoE) to present the follow-up of the recommendation of its 10<sup>th</sup> session.

The Workshop will be convened within the context of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of Beirut Energy Forum (BEF) to be held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016. This 7<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Forum will focus on synergies between science, finance, and sustainability and aims to share insights, challenges, and solutions to the region’s energy sector and the workshop will contribute to the Forum’s debate and deliberation, in addition to the outcomes of the joint session to be organized by ESCWA and UNIDO on the “Energy Efficiency in the Industry Sector in the Arab Region” and the other joint session planned with MEDENEC on “Super Escos”. Other topics to be addressed at the 7<sup>th</sup> BEF and could be viewed on the Event website: [www.beirutenergyforum.com](http://www.beirutenergyforum.com).

### **4. Focus Areas**

The Consolidation Workshop will cover the following themes:

1. Addressing socioeconomic situation in the Arab rural population while outlining regional trends and benchmarking them with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Elaborating the manual developed under the DA project on appropriate green technology need assessment, as well as on policy tools, good practices and business models for enabling an environment conducive to the development and dissemination of appropriate green technologies in ESCWA rural communities.

3. Presenting challenges of rural energy enterprise in developing countries, and the energy service approach with the example of the cooking energy service parameters for the sake of improving the life style of rural women.
4. Addressing drivers that would incentivize the financial sectors to extend their activities to support the sustainable penetration of green energy technologies in the rural productive sectors and contribute to the improvement of rural livelihoods, While the roles of the public and private sectors and the civil society groups are closely examined
5. Concluding proposals for promoting sustainable energy access in rural areas through highlighting the countries' present, planned and future activities in the field of RE.

## **5. Participants**

The participants will include energy experts, green technology specialists, rural development practitioners, energy policy developers, among others. The experts are representatives of the public and private sectors in the region, financial and government institutions, civil society organizations and other UN organizations.

## **6. Organization of the Consolidation Workshop**

The registration for the Workshop will start at 8:30 am and the sessions will begin from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm, at "Le Royal Hotel Beirut- Dbayeh", Beirut- Lebanon. Arabic and English interpretation will be provided.

## **7. Logistical Information**

Each participant shall undertake the following preparation related to her/his participation: Securing hotel reservation in the venue location, visa, and any other requirements for travelling to Lebanon. Participants can obtain their entry visa to Lebanon from the Lebanese embassy in their respective countries, and may obtain additional information by visiting: <http://www.general-security.gov.lb>.

## **8. Correspondences**

Correspondences and inquiries concerning ESCWA related activities should be addressed to:

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