

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)**

Twenty-ninth session
Doha, 13-15 December 2016

Information for participants

2016

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I. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The twenty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will be held in Doha, Qatar from 13 to 15 December 2016. The venue of the session is the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel.

Representatives of ESCWA member States will participate in the session. The session will also be attended by representatives invited as observers from Member States of the United Nations, relevant United Nations organs and specialized agencies, interested regional and intergovernmental organizations, organizations and entities in permanent observer status with the General Assembly, and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Participants shall bear the cost of their travel and accommodation throughout the duration of the session.

The ESCWA secretariat hopes that member States will be represented at the ministerial level. The main theme of the session is “Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab States”.

Credentials

In accordance with the rules of procedures of the Commission, **official credentials duly signed** by the appropriate authorities in member States, agencies or organizations **should be submitted** to Mr. Karim Khalil, Secretary of ESCWA (khalil31@un.org; fax +961-1-981510/1), **one week before the opening of the session**, if possible, or to the ESCWA registration desk at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel, at the time of registration.

Arrival in and departure from Qatar

The composition of delegations and expected dates and times of arrival should be communicated to the Secretary of ESCWA at khalil31@un.org. All participants will have the right of entry into and exit from Qatar, and no impediment will be imposed on their transit to and from the session areas. Their speedy travel will be facilitated. Participants in the session should apply for a visa at the Embassy of Qatar in their respective countries.

II. CONFERENCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel will provide, for as long as is required, including during the preparatory meetings and the period following session meetings, the needed premises, including the conference room, meeting rooms, delegates' and interpreters' lounges, suitable office space with communication facilities, storage areas and related amenities.

The conference room will have facilities for sound recording and will be equipped for simultaneous interpretation between the Arabic and English languages.

Staff members of the ESCWA Conference Services Section will be responsible for registering delegates and preparing a provisional list of participants. They will also provide information on, and support with regard to, meeting services, including documents distribution, agenda and interpretation.

Registration and identification

Participants shall register online through the following link: <https://participant.escwa.org.lb/MeetingsReg.aspx? M=WQH3417U2FE=& N=N& O=N>.

The Government of Qatar will be responsible for issuing the necessary ground passes/identity badges for all participants and delegates, who will be requested to wear those badges at all times. To that end, delegates are kindly requested to **provide a passport type photo, which they can post while registering online no later than two weeks prior to the opening of the session.**

Session documentation

During the session, documents will be available in limited quantities at the documents distribution desk in the conference area. Participants are thus requested to bring with them the complete set of the session documents, which can be downloaded from the relevant page on the ESCWA website, available from <http://www.escwa.un.org/ms29>.

Delegates wishing to submit documents for circulation should present them to Mr. Karim Khalil, Secretary of ESCWA (khali31@un.org; fax +961-1-981510/1) for clearance prior to distribution by ESCWA meeting assistants. It should be noted that a minimum of 100 copies is required to ensure distribution to all delegations. In accordance with the United Nations rules and regulations for the control and limitation of documentation, the ESCWA secretariat cannot undertake to translate or reproduce documents or statements submitted by individual delegations unless they are approved by the Commission.

Only United Nations documents or documents cleared by the Secretary of ESCWA may be distributed during the session. Session documents will be distributed in the conference room by ESCWA staff. Other ESCWA publications will be available outside the conference room.

III. FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Session venue

The meetings of the twenty-ninth session will be held in the Salwa conference room at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel which is situated on Cornich Avenue by the West Bay in Doha. Computers, printers and copy machines will be provided.

Travel services

Participants are requested to communicate the expected date and time of their arrival in Qatar and their flight numbers to ESCWA through Ms. Shadia Abdallah (abdallah6@un.org). It is advisable to confirm return travel arrangements well in advance.

Food

The Government of Qatar will offer lunch for all participants throughout the duration of the session in the main dining room at the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel.

Information services and media coverage

The public meetings of the session will be open to representatives of the press and of other information media invited by the United Nations. Such representatives will be provided with the required passes and needed facilities. The ESCWA Communication and Information Unit (ECIU) provides the media, government officials, non-governmental organizations and other entities with information on the United Nations activities, documents, press releases and other information materials. ECIU also produces press releases, collaborates with local radio and television broadcasters and organizations, and participates in arranging media events to promote the activities of ESCWA and other United Nations entities.

The ESCWA website <http://www.escwa.un.org> provides up-to-date information on the structure and activities of the ESCWA secretariat.

All enquiries related to media coverage and public information should be directed to ECIU by e-mail at any of the following addresses: dargham@un.org; and abi-zaki@un.org.

Medical services

The Government of Qatar will provide medical services as needed. For serious emergencies, it will ensure immediate transportation by ambulance and admission to a hospital with first class facilities at the patient's expenses.

Internet access

Wireless Internet is available in all areas of the Sheraton Grand Doha Resort and Convention Hotel.

ESCWA officials participating in the session

Office of the Executive Secretary

Name	Position
Ms. Rima Khalaf	Executive Secretary
Mr. Abdallah Al-Dardari	Deputy Executive Secretary for Programmes
Ms. Khawla Matar	Deputy Executive Secretary for Programme Support
Mr. Karim Khalil	Secretary of ESCWA

Administrative Services Division (ASD)

Name	Position
Mr. Pontus Molin	Director, Administrative Services Division
Ms. Ahed Sboul	Chief, Conference Services Section

Chiefs of substantive divisions

Name	Position
Ms. Rola Majdalani	Director, Sustainable Development Policies Division (SDPD)
Mr. Haidar Fraihat	Director, Technology for Development Division (TDD)
Mr. Mohamed El-Hacene	Director, Economic Development and Integration Division (EDID)
Mr. Frederico Neto	Director, Social Development Division (SDD)
Mr. Juraj Riecan	Director, Statistics Division (SD)
Mr. Tarik Alami	Director, Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues Division (ECRI)
Ms. Mehrinaz El-Awadi	Acting Director, ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW)

ESCWA Communication and Information Unit (ECIU)

Name	Position
Mr. Nabil Abu Dargham	Communication and Information Officer

IV. FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN QATAR

Accommodation

The following table contains information on hotels in Qatar which offer reduced rates to participants in the session.

Hotel (bed & breakfast)	Single room/ per night/ per person	Double room/ per night	Contact details	Website
Sheraton Grand Doha Hotel West Bay	QAR 675.00	QAR 750.00	dennielyn.viesca@sherton.com	http://www.sheratondoha.com/
Movenpick Hotel West Bay Doha	QAR 500.00	QAR 600.00	nermine.kharma@moevenpick.com	www.moevenpick-hotels.com
Retaj Al Rayyan Hotel, West Bay	QAR 400.00	QAR 475.00	m_alshahed@retaj.com	www.retajalrayyan.com

Weather

During the session, the expected temperature range in Doha is 26°C to 39°C.

Banking, currency and exchange rates

The unit of currency is the Qatari dinar. The exchange rate is 3.64 Qatari riyal for one United States dollar.

Money or traveler checks can be exchanged at banks, private money exchange shops and major hotels. Banks and exchange shops offer better exchange rates. Major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club etc.) are accepted at most stores, restaurants and hotels throughout the country. Automatic teller machines (ATMs) are also widely available in main cities throughout the country.

Transportation

Many transportation agencies in Qatar provide modern buses. In addition, there are numerous car rental and taxi offices.

Restaurants

A wide variety of restaurants in Doha offer Arab meals (Egyptian, Moroccan and Yemeni), European, Mediterranean and Asian meals (Indian, Pakistani and Thai) and seafood. Several fast food restaurants can also be found. More information can be obtained from any hotel in Doha.

Sightseeing
Main cities and tourist attractions

The major cities in Qatar are Rayan which is known for horse racing; Wakra which is known as the city of fishing and pearl fishery and hosts a museum of marine life and natural history tools; and Msayeid which hosts oil factories, plants and ports, contains salt lands and is known for being a birds refuge.

Tourist attractions in Doha include the Museum of Islamic Art, the Waqef market, the National Museum of Qatar, and several towers such as Peperzan Towers which were used for surveillance and lunar calendar. Attractions also include fortresses and citadels, which were used to protect national treasures.

More information on those sites and cities can be obtained from <http://www.onlineqatar.com>.

Government office hours

Working hours in government offices are from 7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m., except weekends, which fall on Friday and Saturday, and official holidays. No official holidays coincide with the session.

Internet

High-speed Internet is available in many hotels for free or for a small fee.

Language

While Arabic is Qatar's official language, English is widely spoken. Many establishments provide signs, menus and information in English and Arabic.

Time

Qatari time is three hours ahead of G.M.T.

Electrical current

The electrical current is 220 AC country-wide.