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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Twelfth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change
Negotiations for the Arab Countries
Beirut, 7- 8 April 2019

INFORMATION NOTE

I. BACKGROUND

The Arab region is facing major challenges that are hindering its ability to achieve sustainable socio-economic development. Climate change and climate variability are among these challenges that are imposing additional stresses on the region. In the past years, it has been evident that the region is subject to extreme climate events such as droughts, floods, sand and dust storms and intense heat waves and Arab countries were facing difficulties in adapting to these impacts.

Arab governments have been actively engaged in international negotiations pursued under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and have participated in the preparatory processes and negotiation sessions convened by the Conference of the Parties (COP). They were also actively engaged in negotiations leading to the Paris Agreement, which was adopted at COP-21 in Paris in 2015. This Agreement represents a turning point in climate negotiations as it establishes a common framework that commits all countries, including developing countries for the first time, to commit their best efforts to reaching the long-term temperature goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C. The provisions of the Agreement include requirements on developed and developing countries to submit successive Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to report on their actions toward implementation of the agreement.

COP-24 was convened in Katowice, Poland from 2-14 December 2018 and resulted in governments adopting a robust set of guidelines for implementing the landmark Paris Agreement. The agreed 'Katowice Climate Package' is designed to operationalize the climate change regime contained in the Paris Agreement, including guidelines that will operationalize the transparency framework. It also sets out how countries will report on their NDCs and their domestic climate actions. Information on mitigation and adaptation measures will be incorporated as well as details on financial support for climate action in developing countries. The package also includes guidelines that relate to the process of establishing new targets for climate finance from the year 2025 onwards to follow-on from the current target of mobilizing USD 100 billion per year from 2020 to support developing countries. The package also addresses ways to conduct the Global Stocktake that will review the effectiveness of climate action in 2023 and guidelines on assessing progress on the development and transfer of technology.

The Fiji-led Talanoa Dialogue, adopted alongside the Paris Agreement, concluded at COP-24, with discussion of the Global Warming of 1.5C Report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018. Countries were encouraged to factor the outcomes of the dialogue in efforts to increase their ambition and to update their NDCs in 2020. COP-24 also demonstrated that there is clear recognition of the IPCC's role in providing scientific input to inform countries in strengthening their response to climate change challenges. A high-level stock-taking of actions taken before 2020 is planned in 2019 to give countries the opportunity to assess their current level of ambition.

The year 2019, is additionally a strategic year for addressing climate change challenges in the global and regional arena as SDG13 on climate action is one of the SDGs targeted for examination at the High Level Political Forum and the Climate Summit in September. It will also be signaled as a topic for focused discussion at the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development and preparatory meetings earlier in the year.

Upon the request of the League of Arab States (LAS), ESCWA has provided technical support to Arab negotiators on climate change since October 2013. ESCWA jointly organized with the LAS the first four regional workshops. UN Environment (UNE) has joined as a partner since the fifth workshops and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Cairo Office joined the partnership starting with the seventh workshops. Several Arab States have also hosted these workshops, as can be seen in the list of workshops below that built the capacity of Arab negotiators:

- The first workshop (Amman, 22-24 October 2013) addressed climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and strengthened the capacity of Arab representatives for negotiations;
- The second workshop (Amman, 26-28 May 2014) improved skills for negotiating new international agreements based on ESCWA's "Guide on climate change negotiations for representatives and negotiators from Arab countries";
- The third workshop (Kuwait, 11-13 November 2014) prepared Arab officials for the global negotiations that took place at COP-20 in Lima, Peru;
- The fourth workshop (Doha, 19-21 May 2015) assisted Arab officials with preparatory negotiations led to COP-21, including the issues and ambitions proposed for negotiation;
- The fifth workshop (Cairo, 17-19 November 2015) fostered mutual understanding for a unified Arab position, taking into consideration the challenges and limits of such common positions, in preparation for COP-21 in Paris;
- The sixth workshop (Cairo, 3-6 April 2016) discussed the legal aspects of the Paris Agreement and its implications, access to finance through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and technology assistance available through the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN);
- The seventh workshop (Rabat, 25-27 September 2016) prepared Arab States for COP-22, discussed the legal effect of different provisions of the Paris Agreement, including its entry into force, as well as means of implementation, including access to finance through the GCF and its accredited agencies;
- The eighth workshop (Beirut, 10-13 April 2017) discussed the outcomes of COP-22, the means of implementation outlined in the Paris Agreement, the transparency framework and the global stocktake of the Paris Agreement, and the engagement of Arab States with the GCF;
- The ninth workshop (Cairo, 9-12 October 2017) discussed the means of implementation of the Paris Agreement with a focus on finance and technology, the implications on emissions of the expected withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, and associated legal and financial challenges; and
- The tenth workshop (Kuwait, 3-5 April 2018) addressed the latest developments in the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue and issues related to agriculture as a new item under the SBSTA and SBI, the implications on trade, response measures, in addition to mapping trade-related response measures in NDCs, including measures related to the energy sector, green industrial policies, green government procurement, financial and direct trade measures, and international cooperation.
- The eleventh workshop (Cairo, 13-15 November 2018) discussed the latest negotiation issues related to the Paris Agreement Work Program (PAWP) on adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, carbon markets, trade, etc. and the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue (Talanoa Dialogue) outcomes in preparation for COP-24 and discussion of a Paris Agreement "rulebook".

In preparation for the Bonn Meeting in June 2019 and COP-29 that will take place in Santiago, 2-13 December 2019, the “Twelfth Regional Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries” will be held during 7-8 April in Beirut and organized by LAS, ESCWA, UN Environment and UNESCO/Cairo Office.

II. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this workshop is to discuss the following subjects in order to reach clear recommendations for building a common Arab position:

- Latest outcomes and issues for negotiation related to the Katowice Climate Package on adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, carbon markets, trade, etc. and the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue addressed at COP 24;
- Adaptation as an element of the NDCs and defining an adaptation global goal and implementation of Article 4.7;
- The proposed transparency mechanism and balancing transparency of action and support;
- Guidelines for integrating response measures and co-benefits actions in compliance and transparency mechanisms;
- The finance component of the PAWP package (Articles 9.5 and 9.7);
- Response measures and the operationalization of related policy measures to respond to expected impacts;
- Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on market and non-market approaches and possible outcome and tradeoffs;
- Technology framework implementation and opportunities for support;
- NDCs features, information and accounting; and
- Regional positions and priorities for action.

IV. PARTICIPANTS

Participants shall be senior negotiators from Arab States with hands-on experience serving on national negotiation teams. Arab Governments are invited to nominate and include junior negotiators in their delegations to the workshop who are qualified to become members of future national negotiation teams.

V. LANGUAGE

Language of the workshop will be Arabic and English, which will be used interchangeably. No simultaneous translation will be provided.

VI. VENUE AND DATE

The workshop will be convened at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Verdun, Beirut, Lebanon from 7 to 8 April 2019.

VII. CONTACTS

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