



Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region

High Level Conference on Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation in the Arab Region Beirut, 26-28 September 2017

Information Note

I. BACKGROUND

The Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) is the outcome of the first Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change (2007), which recognized the potential impacts that climate change may have on development in the Arab region. The Declaration called for a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable developing countries, including Arab States, as well as the need to identify priorities and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation programs at the national and regional levels.

A series of successive resolutions followed. This included the resolution adopted by the 25th Ministerial Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) calling for the preparation of an assessment of socio-economic vulnerability caused by climate change impacts on water resources (Sana'a, May 2008), as well as the approval by the Arab Summit for Economic and Social Development of a project to examine climate change impact on water resources in the Arab region (Kuwait, 2009).

This led to the launching of RICCAR in 2009 and its endorsement by the Arab Ministerial Water Council as a regional initiative contributing to the implementation of the Arab Strategy for Water Security in the Arab Region to Meet the Challenges and Future Needs for Sustainable Development 2010-2030.

RICCAR strategically bridges the science-policy interface by building regional capacity and conducting climate change assessments that inform regional priority setting, policy formulation, positioning and decision-making through a highly consultative and cooperative process.

RICCAR is implemented through a collaborative partnership involving 11 partner organizations, namely the League of Arab States, ESCWA, the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Cairo Office, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). In addition to the resources provided by the partner agencies, funding is provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which financially support RICCAR through the Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region (ACCWaM) project.





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RICCAR is structured around four pillars of work consisting of: (a) a baseline review and set-up of a regional knowledge hub; (b) an integrated assessment consisting of impact assessment and vulnerability assessment components; (c) awareness raising and information dissemination; and (d) capacity building and institutional strengthening. ESCWA served as coordinator of the regional initiative, and provides regular reporting to the Arab Ministerial Water Council and Arab Permanent Committee on Meteorology on RICCAR-related activities.

Numerous other regional and international organizations and experts have been engaged in RICCAR activities through its expert group meetings, training workshops and peer review processes, or by serving as members of the Vulnerability Assessment Working Group, Regional Knowledge Hub Working Group or task forces. Consultation has also been pursued with regional climate research institutes that have demonstrated interest in conducting regional climate modeling work on the Arab (MENA) Domain, which was vetted and adopted as a domain of the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX) of the World Climate Research Programme.

The GIZ-led ACCWaM project was launched in 2011 and is implemented in partnership with the League of Arab States, ACSAD, ESCWA and regional counterparts. ACCWaM has supported the vulnerability assessment and regional knowledge hub components of RICCAR, and has completed a several innovative pilot projects and training activities aimed at advancing climate change adaptation in Arab States. As the regional project is expected to end in December 2017, this conference will also serve as the closing meeting of the ACCWaM project.

II. OBJECTIVE

The High Level Conference on Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation in the Arab Region will launch the *Arab Climate Change Assessment Report* and an associated series of publications that aim to foster dialogue about the impacts of climate change on the Arab region and its freshwater resources, and what these impacts mean for climate change vulnerability in key socio-economic sectors. The meeting will also seek to bridge the climate change and disaster risk reduction communities by presenting the findings of RICCAR supported work on disaster loss databases and the establishment of an Arab Climate Outlook Forum (ArabCOF). This will be complemented by the launching of training manuals and discussion of innovative pilot projects and identified best practices aimed at advancing climate change adaptation in Arab States.

III. HIGHLIGHTS

The High Level Conference will launch and showcase for discussion and high level dialogue, the:

- ***Arab Climate Change Assessment Report*** – that presents regional climate modeling and hydrological modeling projections for the Arab Region through the year 2100, based on climate scenarios adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its Fifth Assessment Report (2013). The report also examines the impact of climate change on shared water resources, as well as the vulnerability of water, agriculture, ecosystems, human settlements and people to climate change in the Arab region. Case studies findings examining flood frequency, droughts, crop productivity and human health are summarized in the report, as well as research on climate and water data in the region.
- ***RICCAR Publication Series*** – technical reports elaborating the case studies summarized in the main assessment report, as well as technical notes detailing the methodology applied during the



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regional climate modeling, regional hydrological modeling and vulnerability assessment phases of the integrated assessment will be presented.

- ***Report for Disaster Loss Data and linkages to Climate Change Impacts for the Arab Region*** – which provides nationally accounted disaster loss data and information on disaster loss and disaster risk reduction in a climate change context.
- ***Establishment of an Arab Climate Outlook Forum (ArabCOF)*** – which will strengthen exchange and consensus building on seasonal forecasts and climate predications among Arab States through a network of Arab Meteorological Services. Analysis generated through the ArabCOF would be accessible through a ***Regional Knowledge Hub*** that will ensure accessibility to all the knowledge products being generated through the regional initiative.

These RICCAR related outputs are then complemented by technical materials and training manuals focused on climate change adaptation, which is largely understood to be a water challenge in the water-scarce Arab Region. In this respect, the meeting will present the:

- ***Training Manual on Climate Change Adaptation by Applying Integrated Water Resources Management Tools in the Arab Region*** – which draws upon the RICCAR outputs for informing climate change adaptation through modules focused on five key sectors: agriculture, environment, health, human settlements and economic development. The manual was jointly developed by ESCWA, ACSAD, GIZ, UN Environment, the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) within the framework of a United Nations Development Account capacity building project targeting Arab States.
- ***Training of Trainers Manual on Climate Mainstreaming*** – which advances efforts to incorporate climate change considerations in development planning and sector strategies in Arab States through tested tools, including climate proofing. This manual was developed within the framework of the ACCWaM project.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The High Level Conference on Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation in the Arab Region will be held in Beirut Lebanon from 26 to 28 September 2017. The meeting will open at 10:00 on 26 September 2017 and close at 18:00 on 28 September 2017. The meeting will be conducted in the Arabic and English languages. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

The conference is hosted by the 11 partner organizations implementing the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) and is organized by ESCWA. The conference is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)-led project on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region (ACCWaM), which is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The conference will be followed by two closed meetings to be held at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon on 29 September 2017. These are the First Meeting of the Technical and Scientific Committee of the Arab Climate Outlook Forum (ArabCOF) and the First Meeting of the Arab Ministerial Water Council Review Committee.



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V. AGENDA

The high level conference will be organized over three days and feature the following:

- Day 1: Impact Assessment
- Day 2: Vulnerability Assessment
- Day 3: Adaptation

A detailed agenda will be circulated to registered participants prior to the meeting, and will also be made available on the meeting website.

VI. PARTICIPANTS

The conference welcomes Ministers in Arab States to share their views on climate change priorities facing the Arab Region. The meeting is intended for high level officials and climate change advisors serving in ministries responsible for water, agriculture, environment, health, meteorology and foreign affairs in Arab States. Senior representatives from regional and international expert organizations engaged in advancing work on climate change and water in the Arab Region are also invited to participate. Participation in the meeting is on an invitation basis.

VII. REGISTRATION

Invited participants and those who are nominated by their ministries to attend this high level conference are kindly requested to complete and return their registration form to ESCWA by 10 September 2017.

Participants requesting financial support to participate in the conference must return their completed registration form with a copy of their passport identification page to ESCWA no later than 20 August 2017 to be eligible for financial coverage. Nominated representatives should also attach a copy of their letter of nomination.

Financial support covers the cost of roundtrip travel to Beirut, a daily subsistence allowance for each night of participation in the conference, and a terminal allowance to cover airport transfers, as appropriate. Roundtrip airfare would be arranged by ESCWA in economy-class on the most direct, least cost itinerary, noting special arrangements can be requested for those participating at the ministerial level. A daily substance allowance is provided to cover hotel room, meals and incidental expenses and is approximately US\$ 240/night in Beirut, plus a fixed US\$152 for roundtrip airport transfers. Financial support is provided in accordance with United Nations Financial Rules and Regulations.

Registered participants are also welcomed to attend the meeting at their own cost. There is no registration fee to attend the conference. Completed registration forms should be submitted to Mr. El Hadi Radwan (radwan@un.org), with a copy to Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane (chouchanicherfane@un.org) and Mr. Ziad Khayat (khayat@un.org).

VIII. ACCOMMODATIONS AND AIRPORT TRANSFERS

In order to facilitate your accommodation arrangements in Beirut, ESCWA has prepared a list of hotels at which preferential room rates were negotiated. The list of hotels with information on room rates, airport transfers and reservation contacts is provided or available upon request by contacting Mr. El Hadi Radwan (radwan@un.org). Participants are kindly requested to make their own hotel reservation and airport



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transfer arrangements directly with the hotel with a copy of their communication to Mr. Radwan for proper follow-up.

Participants are encouraged to request airport transfer services from/to the Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport directly through their hotel. A one-way taxi secured from the airport to Beirut costs approximately LBP 30,000-45,000 (US\$ 20-30). Kindly note that United States Dollars and Lebanese Pounds are used interchangeably throughout Lebanon, generally at a fixed rate of US\$ 1 to LBP 1500.

IX. VISA

Participants are responsible for securing their own visa to Lebanon. ESCWA can provide nominated participants with a personalized letter of invitation to facilitate the visa request process. Reimbursement of the visa cost can be provided upon submission of the original payment receipt to ESCWA in Beirut.

ESCWA can also assist registered participants who do not have Lebanese consular services available in their home country, and those who are facing special circumstances, with requesting visas through the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beirut. This may include nationals from the Comoros, Djibouti, Palestine and Yemen. Kindly note that request for visa assistance must be received at least one month prior to the date of travel to Lebanon to allow time for processing.

X. DOCUMENTATION

Additional information on the high level conference is available in English and Arabic at:

<https://www.unescwa.org/events/riccar-climate-change-assessment-adaptation-arab-region>

Additional information on RICCAR and ACCWaM is available at:

<https://www.unescwa.org/climate-change-water-resources-arab-region-riccar>

<http://www.accwam.org>

XI. CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions, kindly contact

for substantive issues:

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