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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report

Eleventh session of the Committee on Water resources Amman, 26-27 March 2015

Summary

The eleventh session of the Committee on Water Resources of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was held in Amman, on 26 and 27 March 2015.

The session agenda included priority issues such as climate change and its impacts on water resources in the Arab region; progress achieved in 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); building the capacities of member States in climate change negotiations and preparations for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; progress achieved in implementing the Regional Initiative for Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region (MDG+ Initiative); regional cooperation for shared water resources management; the post-2015 development agenda from the perspective of the Arab region; the water-energy-food nexus in the Arab region; implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its tenth session; implementation of water resources-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work; and the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of water resources.

The present report contains a brief review of discussions on each agenda item and the recommendations made thereon.

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Introduction

1. The eleventh session of the Committee on Water Resources was held on 26 to 27 March 2015, pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 205 (XVIII) of 25 May 1995, concerning the establishment of a committee on water resources in ESCWA, which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1995/26 of 24 July 1995; and pursuant also to the recommendations issued by the Committee on Water Resources at its tenth session (Beirut, 20-21 March 2013) and adopted at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session (15-18 September 2014).

I. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AT ITS TENTH SESSION

2. At the conclusion of its tenth session, the Committee on Water Resources issued the following set of recommendations to member States and the ESCWA secretariat.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS TO MEMBER STATES

3. The Committee made the following recommendations to member States:

(a) Continue to support 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 use its results to prepare studies on the impact of climate change on water resources and the vulnerability of social and economic sectors in the Arab region; exchange data on water resources with the secretariat for use in developing regional climate and hydrological models; participate effectively in analysing model results and developing predictions on that basis; and appoint focal points that ESCWA can contact if countries have not yet provided the names of candidates tasked with following up on RICCAR activities;

(b) Encourage national scientific researchers specialized in the impact of climate change on water resources to benefit from RICCAR outcomes when preparing scientific studies that undergo international peer reviews so that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change can rely on them as references reflecting the situation in the Arab region when preparing its periodic reports;

(c) Continue to support the Regional Initiative for Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region (MDG+ Initiative) and expeditiously provide the secretariat with national data to complete the first MDG+ Initiative annual report and begin the second report;

(d) Follow up on the latest developments of the current negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, especially regarding the sustainable development goals and targets related to the water sector, and follow up on the discussions on proposed indicators for these goals and targets to ensure consistency;

(e) Benefit from the experiences of the MDG+ Initiative and national mechanisms established to assist in developing indicators and a methodology for the sustainable development goals related to water and sanitation at the regional level to ensure consistency between them, on the one hand, and with the post-2015 development agenda, on the other;

(f) Include water-energy-food nexus issues in national development strategies and provide the secretariat, when possible, with information on pilot national projects that can be benefited from at the regional level; and appoint national focal points to participate in activities of the project on building the capacities of ESCWA member States regarding the water-energy-food nexus to achieve sustainable development;

(g) Submit reports to the secretariat on progress made in implementing recommendations issued to member States before the twelfth session of the Committee to ensure the effectiveness of its work;

(h) Ensure coordination between representatives of each member State in ESCWA subcommittees and between regional stakeholders on the implementation of decisions of the Arab Ministerial Water Council.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARIAT

4. The Committee made the following recommendations to the secretariat:

(a) Continue to offer technical support and capacity-building services to those involved in the management of shared surface and ground water resources, including familiarizing them with related international conventions and their implications for the region;

(b) Continue to implement RICCAR activities, especially those related to analysing regional climate and hydrological models, and provide stakeholders with the RICCAR results to support informed and effective national and regional policy formulation and decision-making;

(c) Link RICCAR results to activities for enhancing the capacities of Arab negotiators on issues discussed during climate change negotiations, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, in preparation for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and follow up on the outcomes of the Conference;

(d) Continue to implement the MDG+ Initiative; consult, coordinate and collaborate with partners; complete the first and second MDG+ annual reports; implement Arab Ministerial Water Council decisions; and update member State data;

(e) Benefit from the experiences of the MDG+ Initiative and related national mechanisms in preparing a methodology for developing indicators and measurement tools for the sustainable development goals on water and sanitation at the regional level to ensure consistency between them, on the one hand, and with the post-2015 development agenda, on the other;

(f) Continue implementing water-energy-food nexus activities in the Arab region, in coordination with the League of Arab States secretariat, ministerial councils and other relevant bodies, especially in the light of new projects and developments in the field; these projects include building the capacities of ESCWA member States regarding the water-energy-food nexus to achieve sustainable development and enhancing water and food security in the Arab region through capacity-building, training and preparing analytical studies;

(g) Continue to follow up on the implementation of recommendations issued at the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources and activities under the ESCWA programme of work in the field of water resources between the tenth and eleventh sessions of the Committee; maintain the overall orientation with regard to water issues; and implement activities proposed under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017, focusing on the need to meet the development needs of member States and ensuring consistency with the outcomes of international and regional conferences on water;

(h) Continue to participate effectively in regional and international forums and benefit from those forums to highlight the region's water priorities and to support the regional agenda on water resources; and continue to support the implementation of activities and programmes of the Technical Scientific Advisory Committee of the Arab Ministerial Water Council and other related ministerial councils, in line with available resources, especially regarding implementing the Council's recommendations and decisions related to ESCWA and climate change, the management of shared surface and ground water resources, water security and the water-energy-food nexus;

(i) Submit an annual report to member States on progress in implementing activities of the ESCWA Water Resources Section and quarterly summaries of key activities;

(j) Support coordination between the ESCWA Committee on Energy and the Committee on Water Resources, strengthen coordination between ESCWA subsidiary bodies and the Committee on Water Resources and facilitate the participation of the Committee Chair or Vice-Chair in meetings of other water bodies;

(k) Allocate extrabudgetary resources to implement additional activities on water resources.

II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

A. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS ON WATER RESOURCES IN THE ARAB REGION (Agenda item 4)

5. Under this item, the Committee reviewed document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/3 on the progress achieved in implementing RICCAR. Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane, Chief of the ESCWA Water Resources Section, made a presentation on the objectives of RICCAR and the mandate given by the United Nations and the League of Arab States to ESCWA to coordinate the assessment of climate change in the Arab region and use the results to support further work. She explained the four RICCAR pillars and activities implemented in the light of the integrated assessment methodology, including preparing regional climate modelling projections. She said that 13 projections had been completed for the Arab region, nine of which were generated by the CORDEX website. She also reviewed the three hydrological models prepared by the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) for the Arab region; the preliminary results of the modelling process; maps on change in runoff and evapotranspiration; and extreme weather events. In the future, climate and hydrological models would focus on studying shared basins and shared rivers in the Arab region.

6. Regarding vulnerability, she gave an overview of the working group on vulnerability that, through discussions and dialogue, had developed a methodology and indicators to assess vulnerability (50 indicators chosen from 200 on sensitivity and adaptive capacity), and established two working groups to review those indicators and support the application of the vulnerability methodology. A draft training manual on the methodology had been prepared and tested at a training workshop held in Beirut, from 11 to 13 May 2014. Members of the two task forces, the Committee on Water Resources and the Working Group on Vulnerability Assessment (WG-VA) and workshop participants are expected to complete a questionnaire to identify and prioritize the most efficient vulnerability-evaluation indicators.

7. Concerning knowledge management, she presented the administrative structure of the regional knowledge hub, whose establishment had been approved by the Technical Scientific Advisory Committee and the Arab Ministerial Water Council at its sixth session, held in May 2014. She addressed progress in establishing the Arab Climate Outlook Forum (Arab COF) under measures taken to build the institutional capacities of meteorological services in the Arab region.

8. She said it was vital to appoint focal points in member States to assist in completing the implementation of integrated assessment methodology by providing verified data from Governments and exchanging information to facilitate the establishment of the regional knowledge hub and the Arab COF, noting that only 10 RICCAR focal points had been appointed from 10 Arab countries; the remaining countries still need to appoint their respective focal points.

9. The Committee took note of progress in implementing RICCAR. Representatives then discussed technical issues related to climate modelling, appointing focal points and providing data. They proposed the development of a mechanism to inform officials and decision-makers of conclusions and recommendations related to RICCAR in a succinct and simplified manner. Some representatives asked about ways that member States could benefit from established models by using their own data.

10. Representatives agreed that national focal points play an important role and should be regularly presented with all available information, stressing the need to communicate directly with the highest specialized authorities and to send them an official letter requesting that they provide information to focal points, so as to enable working groups to gather data and send them to the Committee within the set deadline.

11. In response to comments, Ms. Chouchani Cherfane clarified that ESCWA submits periodic progress reports, twice a year, to the League of Arab States which, as a key partner in this Initiative, manages official communications with Arab States. ESCWA sends invitations to relevant ministers through embassies, in accordance with the practices of each member State, to invite them to appoint representatives to participate in the expert group meetings, taking into account that States may appoint different experts for different meetings. She said that it was necessary to develop several climate change scenarios so as to allow the study of the various effects of mitigation measures that might be taken by countries, adding that result summaries were normally prepared in simplified forms.

12. Regarding climate change, Mr. Tarek Sadek, First Economic Affairs Officer at the ESCWA Water Resources Section, made a presentation on capacity-building activities implemented in preparation for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC/COP-21), with reference to document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/3(Part II). He tackled the issues covered at three workshops held prior to UNFCCC negotiation sessions and the results of previous conferences of the parties and preparatory meetings. He stressed the need to develop a united Arab negotiating position on a new climate change convention to be discussed at the UNFCCC/COP-21 which will be held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015.

13. He clarified that the guide and training material prepared by ESCWA on climate change negotiations for Arab negotiators set out key scientific information on climate change and its implications for the Arab region; UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the conferences of the parties; and guidelines on negotiating methods, forming negotiating teams and building alliances. Three workshops to build the capacities of Arab States on climate change negotiations had been held, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, in preparation for the nineteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Warsaw from 11 to 22 November 2013; the fortieth session of the subsidiary bodies of the Framework Convention, held in Bonn, Germany, from 4 to 15 June 2014; the Climate Summit, held in New York on 23 September 2014; and the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Lima from 1 to 12 December 2014.

14. He said that experts and representatives of official bodies, including ministries of foreign affairs, the environment, oil, electricity, water, agriculture and energy and experts from regional and international organizations, had participated in the training workshops and in the meetings of the Arab negotiating group, held after each training workshop and aimed at preparing a summary paper on the united Arab position on climate change to be presented to Arab negotiators at the UNFCCC conferences of the parties and during preparatory activities for the subsidiary bodies of the Framework Convention. He presented the main recommendations issued at the workshops and future activities in that field which included the request to organize two additional workshops, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, to be held in 2015 before the forty-second session of the subsidiary bodies of the Framework Convention and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties. He stressed the importance of benefiting from RICCAR outputs when linking scientific results of climate change to the negotiation process on key issues, including adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and financing.

15. In the ensuing discussion, some representatives questioned the importance of taking into account State priorities, common interests, a united Arab vision and concerns related to climate change negotiations when negotiating as one Arab bloc in view of the existence of national priorities that reflect the specificities of each country in this area. Several representatives requested that members of the Committee participate in workshops on climate change negotiations to increase effectiveness at all levels. Mr. Sadek clarified that the role of ESCWA was limited to providing technical support to countries by preparing studies and building the capacities of negotiators appointed by member States.

B. INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE ARAB REGION
(Agenda item 5)

16. Under this item, the Committee reviewed document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/4(Part I) on progress achieved in implementing the MDG+ Initiative. Mr. Sadek gave a presentation in which he mentioned the mandate given to ESCWA by the Arab Ministerial Water Council at its third session, held on 15 June 2011, to implement the Initiative, in partnership with the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association and in collaboration with the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe, the Arab Water Council, the Arab Network for Environment and Development and the World Health Organization, under the auspices of the Arab Ministerial Water Council. He reviewed developments in preparing the first report of the Initiative, implementing field surveys on drinking water and sanitation indicators, conducting pilot surveys and organizing national workshops. He stressed the important role of focal points in the Initiative, especially regarding the provision of requested data, and urged countries that had not appointed focal points to coordinate with ESCWA to do so and provide ESCWA with their names. He also reviewed the programme for the next stage and preparations for the second regional MDG+ Initiative report and a workshop to discuss the results of that report, to be held in 2015. He concluded by saying that it was possible to benefit from the database on drinking water and sanitation developed under the Initiative in the preparation of the post-2015 sustainable development goals.

17. In the ensuing discussion, representatives focused on issues related to the first regional report on the MDG+ Initiative and on the determination of a base year to reflect the situation on the ground. The representative of the United Arab Emirates said that it was necessary to be accurate when using official data to calculate indicators, to include those data in official reports and to review them with national focal points. The representative of Qatar proposed sending official reports to States for review before submitting them to the Arab Ministerial Water Council. Representatives recommended updating data, linking MDG+ Initiative objectives to the sustainable development goals, implementing other similar initiatives that focused on the water-food-energy nexus and setting short-term goals. Representatives said that communication between the ESCWA secretariat and the Gulf Cooperation Council should be strengthened to exchange available data. Mr. Sadek stressed the importance of national statistical offices and preparing annual national reports to be posted on the websites of national statistical offices. He said that the ESCWA Statistics Division and appointed Government officials communicated regularly, adding that the Statistical Committee was tasked with following up on the collection of related national data from member States. He noted the special nature of the MDG+ Initiative data, which requires relevant national bodies to send the requested data to the secretariat. Representatives said it was important to benefit from the successful experiences of countries in this area.

18. Under this item, the Committee gave a presentation on regional cooperation for shared water resources management in the Arab region, with reference to document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/4(Part II). Ms. Cherfane reviewed the latest developments related to legal frameworks, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, the draft articles on the law of transboundary aquifers, the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary and International Lakes of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the draft framework convention on shared water resources in the Arab region.

19. She also reviewed regional initiatives on shared water resources management in the Arab region undertaken by the secretariat. She said that those initiatives included publishing the *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia* at the regional and international levels, in collaboration with the German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR); conducting a dialogue on the Jordan River Basin, following a request from the Palestinian Water Authority, to discuss key issues related to the shared river basin on the basis of the chapter on the Jordan River Basin in the *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia*; and organizing the High-level Workshop on Trilateral Cooperation to Improve the Management of the Euphrates River and Related Challenges, in collaboration with the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the International Sustainability Unit of the Prince of Wales' Charitable Foundation. She indicated the strong cooperation with the League of Arab States and the Arab Ministerial Water Council in matters related to shared

water resources, especially support for the preparation of the draft framework convention on shared water resources. She highlighted the results of the fourth consultative meeting on the draft convention and on the need for the Arab Ministerial Water Council to review it and comment on its provisions.

20. Representatives noted the efforts of the secretariat aimed at incorporating shared water resources management within sustainable development and water-energy-food nexus policies, assessing the impact of climate change in the Arab region under RICCAR, and implementing other activities related to sustainable development.

21. In the ensuing discussion, representatives lauded the secretariat's efforts on shared water resources management aimed at preparing the draft framework convention on shared water resources in the Arab region, and stressed the importance of ground water management. They said that international laws could not be imposed in the same manner as national laws, unless States had adopted them. As a result, it was suggested that the draft convention could remain an unbinding, but valuable legal instrument that could be built upon.

C. NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (Agenda item 6)

22. Under this item, Ms. Roula Majdalani, Director of the ESCWA Sustainable Development Policies Division, gave a presentation on the post-2015 development agenda from the perspective of the Arab region, with reference to document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/5(Part I). She indicated progress in activities on the post-2015 development agenda, especially global and regional consultations to be held in 2015 on determining the development path until 2030. She mentioned the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals that would replace the Millennium Development Goals. She stressed the key role of ESCWA, in collaboration with its regional partners and member States, in developing a clear Arab perspective on international development priorities.

23. Representatives discussed the definitions of sustainable development, its goals, targets and indicators and the shortfalls of the Millennium Development Goals and ways of tackling them through the sustainable development goals, especially in terms of the development and measurement of indicators and publishing reports on national data. They noted the participation of Arab countries in current negotiations at the regional and international levels. Ms. Majdalani said that the role of the United Nations in that field entailed capacity-building, issuing studies, raising awareness in member States, offering technical guidance and training cadres. ESCWA was preparing for the Regional High-level Forum on Sustainable Development, attended by experts from different sectors, including the environment, social affairs, agriculture and industry, and civil society representatives, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the League of Arab States and the Office of the Prime Minister of Bahrain. The Forum would be held in response to related resolutions of the Economic and Social Council.

24. Mr. Ziad Khayat, First Economic Affairs Officer in the Water Resources Section, reviewed the water-energy-food nexus in the Arab region, with reference to document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/5(Part II). He summarized the analytical frameworks of the nexus, related regional priorities and ESCWA activities, including projects funded by the United Nations Development Account and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). He presented the objectives of the ESCWA project funded by the Development Account on Developing the Capacities of ESCWA Member Countries to Address the Water and Energy Nexus for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals, its schedule, activities, outcomes and expected results.

25. Representatives agreed that it was important to assess activities and projects aimed at building capacities for the water-energy-food nexus to determine future steps, including pilot projects, case studies and the proposed structure of regional policy tools. Representatives enquired as to how they could communicate with ESCWA regarding case studies. The representative of Iraq suggested the implementation of a pilot project in Iraq. The representative of Palestine said that a workshop on water desalination would be held in Gaza on 15 April 2015, organized by the Palestinian Environmental Authority, in parallel with the World Water Forum, which was held in South Korea from 12 to 17 April 2015.

D. ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE FIELD OF WATER RESOURCES SINCE THE TENTH SESSION
OF THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES
(Agenda item 7)

26. Under this item, the Committee reviewed document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/6 and two reports. The first report (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/6(Part I)) was on the activities implemented in the field of water resources pursuant to the recommendations made by the Committee at its tenth session, and the second (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/6(Part II)) on progress achieved in implementing water resources-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work since the tenth session of the Committee. Ms. Cherfane presented both reports in two consecutive presentations.

27. The first presentation covered progress achieved in implementing water resources-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2013-2014 since the tenth session of the Committee. She said that those activities were focused in the areas of shared water resources, climate change, capacity-building for climate change negotiations, the Millennium Development Goals, the integrated management of shared water resources, the framework convention on shared water resources in the Arab region, the water-energy-food nexus, regional workshops and related expert group meetings.

28. The second presentation set out the activities implemented in the field of water resources pursuant to the recommendations made by the Committee at its tenth session, including holding regional consultations and meetings, implementing regional projects, preparing studies, providing technical material and publications, and organizing workshops and expert group meetings. ESCWA had offered various consultative services in the area of water and environmental resources to member States in 2013 and 2014, pursuant to recommendations aimed at strengthening policies and programmes on improving the integrated and sustainable management of shared water resources and propagating sustainable development concepts in national development plans.

29. In the ensuing discussion, representatives stressed the need to regularly inform the Committee of progress in implementing planned activities in member States, ensure coordination to enhance its role at the national level and provide the lists of members of the other committees, focal points and working groups to the Committee.

E. PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2016-2017
IN THE FIELD OF WATER RESOURCES
(Agenda item 8)

30. The Committee on Water Resources considered the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of water resources on the basis of document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/7. The programme of work constitutes the general framework for developing and implementing the strategies, policies and programmes of ESCWA in the field of sustainable development and productivity. Ms. Majdalani outlined the steps taken by ESCWA in adopting its programme of work, including deliberations with ESCWA focal points in member States and the ESCWA Advisory Committee. She invited the Committee members to put forward suggestions on the activities to be undertaken. The proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of water resources was approved as set out in the above document.

F. DATE AND VENUE OF THE TWELFTH SESSION
OF THE COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES
(Agenda item 9)

31. The Committee will hold its twelfth session in Beirut in March 2017, provided that no other member State offers to host it. The date of the session will be determined following consultations between ESCWA and the Committee members.

G. OTHER MATTERS
(Agenda item 10)

32. Given that no other matters were put forward under this item, Mr. Karim Khalil, Secretary of the Commission, outlined the ESCWA ministerial sessions and its subsidiary bodies to familiarize new Committee members with their tasks, terms of reference and the periodicity of their sessions.

**III. ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE
ON WATER RESOURCES**
(Agenda item 11)

33. At its closing session, held on 27 March 2015, the Committee adopted the recommendations issued at its eleventh session.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. DATE AND VENUE

34. The eleventh session of the Committee on Water Resources was held at the Kempinski Hotel in Amman, from 26 to 27 March 2015. A total of six meetings were held.

B. OPENING OF THE SESSION

35. Mr. Ali Al-Subah, Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning at the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation and Chair of the tenth session of the Committee, gave an opening speech in which he welcomed the participants and thanked ESCWA for its efforts to hold the current session in Jordan. He said that the majority of recommendations issued at the tenth session had been implemented and that ESCWA was striving to implement the remainder, including preparing a biannual report and informing the Committee of the results of its participation in regional and international meetings. He thanked donors for supporting the work of ESCWA, especially the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit-GIZ), and wished the Chair of the eleventh session and participants every success.

36. Ms. Majdalani gave a speech on behalf of Ms. Rima Khalaf, the ESCWA Executive Secretary, in which she welcomed participants and thanked Committee members who had contributed to achieving many accomplishments in the area of sustainable development by continually supporting the implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme of work in the field of water resources. She outlined the items on the agenda of the eleventh session, indicating key challenges facing the Arab region, including the Millennium Development Goals on drinking water and sanitation the post-2015 development agenda, climate change and the water-energy-food nexus. She said that Arab States must participate in regional and international forums with a united Arab position on the sustainable development goals and the new convention on climate change.

37. She reviewed the key accomplishments achieved by ESCWA, with the assistance and support of its member States, especially concerning the implementation of RICCAR and the MDG+ Initiative, preparations for UNFCCC/COP-21 and the implementation of activities related to the outcomes of the ESCWA *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia* which was prepared in cooperation with BGR, under the regional cooperation framework for shared water resources management and the water-energy-food nexus. She commended the coordination between the Committee on Water Resources and the Committee on Energy reflected in the joint meeting on the water-energy-food nexus, held on 24 and 25 March 2015 prior to the session.

C. PARTICIPANTS

38. Representatives of the following 13 ESCWA member States took part in the session: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, the Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

39. Rule 18 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia provides that member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations.* Accordingly, after Jordan had chaired the tenth session of the Committee, Tunisia assumed the chairmanship of the eleventh session of the Committee on Water Resources, represented by Mr. Mohammed Ayadi, Head of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries, in accordance with the Arabic alphabetical order, given that the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain had excused themselves. The representatives of Jordan and the Sudan assumed the position of Vice-Chairs and the representative of Iraq that of Rapporteur, as it was previously agreed to designate the Chair of the previous and next sessions as Vice-Chairs, and the representative of the country that will chair the Committee after two sessions as Rapporteur.

E. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK

40. At its first meeting, the Committee adopted the agenda of its eleventh as set out in document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/L.1:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Climate change and its impacts on water resources in the Arab region:
 - (a) Progress achieved in 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);
 - (b) Building the capacities of member States in climate change negotiations and preparations for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC/COP-21).
5. Integrated water resources management in the Arab region:
 - (a) Progress achieved in implementing the Regional Initiative for Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region (MDG+ Initiative);
 - (b) Regional cooperation for shared water resources management.
6. Natural resources management for sustainable development:
 - (a) The post-2015 development agenda from the perspective of the Arab region;

* The Arabic alphabetized list of ESCWA member States is as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

(b) The water-energy-food nexus in the Arab region.

7. Actions taken in the field of water resources since the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources:

(a) Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its tenth session;

(b) Implementation of water resources-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work.

8. Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of water resources.

9. Date and venue of the twelfth session of the Committee on Water Resources.

10. Other matters.

11. Adoption of the recommendations of the Committee on Water Resources.

41. At the first meeting, the Committee also adopted the proposed organization of work, contained in document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/L.2.

F. DOCUMENTS

42. The list of documents (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/INF.2) presented to the Committee on Water Resources at its eleventh session is set out in annex II to the present report.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ESCWA MEMBER STATES

Bahrain

Mr. Ebrahim Alaradi
Chief of Maintenance
Water Transmission
Electricity and Water Authority

Egypt

Mr. Mohamed Wahba
Deputy Chairman
Egyptian Shore Protection Authority
Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation

Iraq

Mr. Faisal Amin
Director General
Planning and Follow-up
Ministry of Water Resources

Jordan

Mr. Ali Subah
Assistant Secretary General
for Strategic Planning
Ministry of Water and Irrigation

Kuwait

Ms. Maha Al-Mansour
Manager of Groundwater Projects
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Ministry of Water and Environment

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Item	Symbol
Information note		E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/INF.1
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Organization of work	3	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/L.2
Climate change and its impacts on water resources in the Arab region	4	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/3
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Building the capacities of member States in climate change negotiations and preparations for the 21 st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC/COP-21)	4 (b)	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/3(Part II)
Integrated water resources management in the Arab region	5	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/4
Progress achieved in implementing the Regional Initiative for Establishing a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region (MDG+ Initiative)	5 (a)	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/4(Part I)
Regional cooperation for shared water resources management	5 (b)	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/4(Part II)
Natural resources management for sustainable development	6	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/5
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Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its tenth session	7 (a)	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/6(Part I)
Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme of work	7 (b)	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/6(Part II)
Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of water resources	8	E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/IG.2/7
