

**Draft Information Note**

## **Water Scarcity: A Challenge to Sustainable Development in the Arab Region**

### **High-Level Meeting within the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Arab Ministerial Water Council**

**Venue:** League of the Arab States (LAS)

**Date:** Wednesday, 17 November 2021

**Time:** 9:00 – 18:00

**Participants (by Invitation):** High-level Government Officials - Members of the Technical Advisory Scientific Committee of the Arab Ministerial Water Council - Development Partners - Donors - Civil Society -Private sector - Academia, ...

**Modality:** Physical (in-person), however, if required the meeting can be modified to be a Hybrid or Online meeting.

**Language:** Arabic and English, with simultaneous translation

### **Background**

The water scarcity challenge in the Arab Region is more pressing now than ever before. Declining water quality and quantity, decreasing groundwater levels, increasing population and urbanization, and climate change pose serious threats for countries in the region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and uphold the basic human rights of access to water and sanitation.

As water scarcity is a multi-dimensional challenge, it is necessary to respond to the threats with a coordinated and multi-sectoral response. Actions are required at all levels of society and governance, from the community level through the national level policy, and fiscal environment to the transboundary and regional level of coordination and cooperation.

As part of the regional Water Scarcity Initiative and aligned with the 2019 Cairo declaration from the First Joint Meeting of Arab Ministers of Agriculture and Water, this meeting is planned to present current challenges and opportunities in addressing water scarcity in the region.

The meeting aims to provide an inclusive forum and dialogue environment for decision makers, development partners, donors, civil society and scientists to discuss and debate advances and innovations

in the field. The meeting will provide inclusive, multi-sectoral output messages that will feed into the intergovernmental high-level processes on Water Scarcity and Sustainable Development.

## Objectives

- Increase visibility of the water scarcity crisis for the region's governments, civil society and development partners.
- Promote more integrated and harmonized policies that connect Water Resources management, Drinking water and sanitation, Agriculture, and other sectors.
- Serve as an inclusive platform for providing coordinated input into the intergovernmental processes on water scarcity.

## Format

The one-day meeting will be organized within the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Arab Ministerial Water Council, scheduled for 14-18 November 2021. Participation in the meeting is only by invitation from the League of Arab states and/or the partner agencies leading the technical sessions.

The meeting will be opened by the Chair of the Council session, followed by a keynote presentation and 4 technical panel sessions. Each technical session will be convened by a lead agency who will develop a brief 5-10 page background paper on the theme of the session. The lead agency will give a short introductory presentation to be followed by a moderated panel discussion (Panel composition could include high-level officials, experts, donors, development partners, civil society, academia,...).

Key messages from the four sessions will be consolidated and presented to the ministerial session, by the Technical Secretariat of the Ministerial Council, as an outcome of the meeting. Moreover, the background papers and the key messages/recommendations that stem from the technical sessions will be consolidated into a meeting report to be jointly published following the meeting. These will also be used to inform the Arab Regional Preparations for the 2023 Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Water Action Decade (WAD) and will be presented at the regional high level WAD meeting during the first half of 2022.

## Draft Programme

Wednesday, 17 November 2021	
Opening Session 09:00 – 09:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chair of the current session of the Arab Ministerial Water Council (5 min.)</li> <li>- FAO Regional Representative (5 min.)</li> <li>- UNICEF Regional Director (5 min.)</li> <li>- Keynote Presentation on water scarcity and sustainable development (30 min.)</li> <li>TBD</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical Session 1: Economic impacts of water scarcity</li> <li>- Lead Convener: UNESCWA, in collaboration with (TBD)</li> <li>- Session Chair: TBD by the lead convener</li> <li>- Moderator: TBD by the lead convener</li> </ul>
09:45 – 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introductory presentation – ESCWA (10 min.)</li> <li>- Panel discussion (30 min.)</li> <li>- Questions from the audience (20 min.)</li> <li>- Key messages from the session (15 min.)</li> </ul>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee Break
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical Session 2: Challenges and opportunities for the use of non-conventional water resources</li> <li>- Lead Convener: FAO in collaboration with IWMI</li> <li>- Session Chair: TBD by the lead convener</li> <li>- Panel Moderator: TBD by the lead convener</li> </ul>
11:30 – 12:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introductory presentation – FAO (10 min.)</li> <li>- Panel discussion (30 min.)</li> <li>- Questions from the audience (20 min.)</li> <li>- Key messages from the session (15 min.)</li> </ul>
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch Break
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical Session 3: Management of Scarce Water Resources during Protracted Armed Conflict</li> <li>- Lead Convener: ICRC in collaboration with (TBD)</li> <li>- Session Chair: TBD</li> <li>- Moderator: TBD</li> </ul>
13:45 – 15:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introductory presentation - TBD (10 min.)</li> <li>- Panel discussion (30 min.)</li> <li>- Questions from the audience (20 min.)</li> <li>- Key messages from the session (15 min.)</li> </ul>
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical Session 4: Water Scarcity and WASH services at community level</li> <li>- Lead Convener: UNICEF in collaboration with Oxfam</li> <li>- Session Chair: TBD</li> <li>- Moderator: TBD</li> </ul>
15:30 – 16:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introductory presentation (10 min.)</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Panel discussion (30 min.)</li> <li>- Questions from the audience (20 min.)</li> <li>- Key messages from the session (15 min.)</li> </ul>
<b>Closing</b> 16:45 – 17:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key messages of all technical sessions (10 min.)</li> <li>- Closing remarks, Chair of the current ministerial session/League of Arab States (5 min.)</li> </ul>
<b>Cocktail Reception</b> 17:00 – 18:00	Invitation by FAO and UNICEF

For more information about the meeting, please contact the representatives of FAO and UNICEF as listed below:

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