

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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UNITED NATIONS

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ESCWA

## TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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FOR DEVELOPMENT**

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# FOREWORD

**Welcome to the Annual Report 2018 on the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and thank you for your interest in the Commission's work and the region it serves.**



*Rola Dashti*  
*Executive Secretary*

In a region that continues to suffer from widespread instability, conflict and uneven growth, ESCWA steadfastly supports global, regional and national efforts towards a more stable and prosperous Arab region. We remain committed more than ever to a brighter future for our region where, as pledged by all Member States through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, no one is left behind.

ESCWA made great strides on the road towards this future in 2018, the first year of its two-year strategic framework, in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In June, our thirtieth ministerial session drew the broadest and highest-level attendance in the recent history of the Commission. Leaders from across the region renewed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and adopted the landmark Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region.

The Commission advocates that the positive effects of technology have the potential to benefit all segments of society. For rural populations, women, girls, youth, migrants, older persons and persons with disabilities, properly harnessed technology can play an important equalizing role, opening new pathways to inclusion, safety, empowerment and access. This is why technology for development was selected as the theme for the ESCWA ministerial session and why ESCWA's dedication to applying technology for development is highlighted in this report.

In a crisis-prone region, mobile technology will play an essential role in early warning and response while geospatial information has already become a critical component of humanitarian interventions. From renewable energy sources to ever more sophisticated data gathering and analysis, from smart government and improved service delivery to deeper, more meaningful forms of political participation, the pace of technological innovation inevitably exceeds the ability of Governments to regulate and tap into it for the greater good of their populations.

Leading by example, ESCWA is adopting a culture of continuous learning, keeping pace with rapid technological developments and incorporating them into its own work. We embrace new technologies and innovation to implement our vision and improve our working methods. Our objective is to provide more relevant services to the Arab region and its peoples, to help them build entrepreneurial and knowledge societies and confidently move forward in their development paths.

As ESCWA is striving to be a modern, flexible and vigorous institution, we are bringing our work closer to the youth of the region and involving young people in internal reforms aimed at keeping ESCWA dynamic, updating its working methods and increasing its effectiveness and efficiency to be fit for purpose. ESCWA has expanded its commitment to help youth to confront concerning issues such as early marriage, fostering labour market skill sets and good jobs for young women and men. To put this principle in practice in-house, Young ESCWA – a network of junior staff members modelled on Young UN – was launched as an incubator for innovative solutions. Initiated to empower and involve junior staff in internal reforms, it is a dedicated group that channels ESCWA's most innovative ideas and applies them in its work.

Hand in hand with supporting its member States in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the three pillars of ESCWA's Strategic Framework for the biennium 2018-2019 reflect the main priorities of its work: sustainable development, social justice and regional integration. The following pages detail the work undertaken by the Commission in these priority areas.

In 2018, many ESCWA member States reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda by delivering their voluntary national reviews during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and senior officials gathered in Beirut in April at the annual Arab Forum on Sustainable Development in demonstration of this same regional dedication.

Financing for development (FfD) came to the fore as the international community rallied behind key initiatives to push resource mobilization forward, recognizing it as an essential means of implementation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. ESCWA held a high-level forum on FfD in Beirut in November, which explored possible untapped resources in the region and beyond, highlighting the need for regional collective action to utilize them.

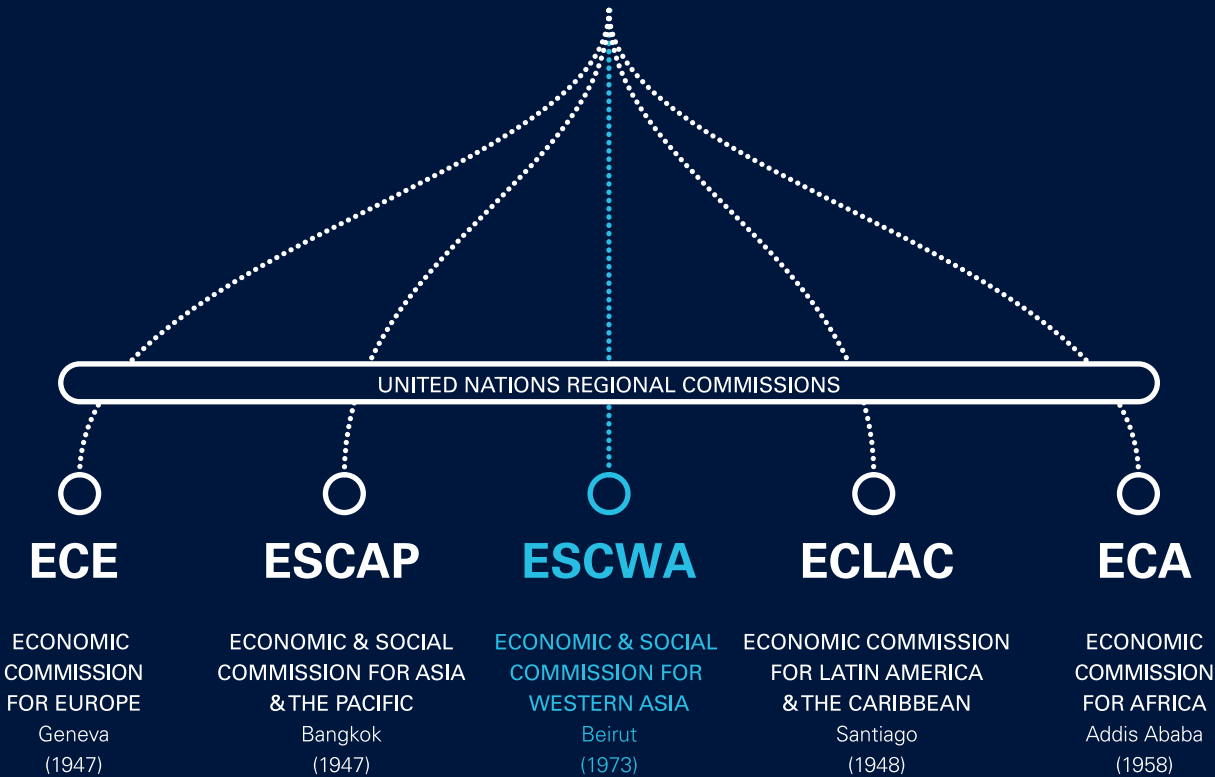
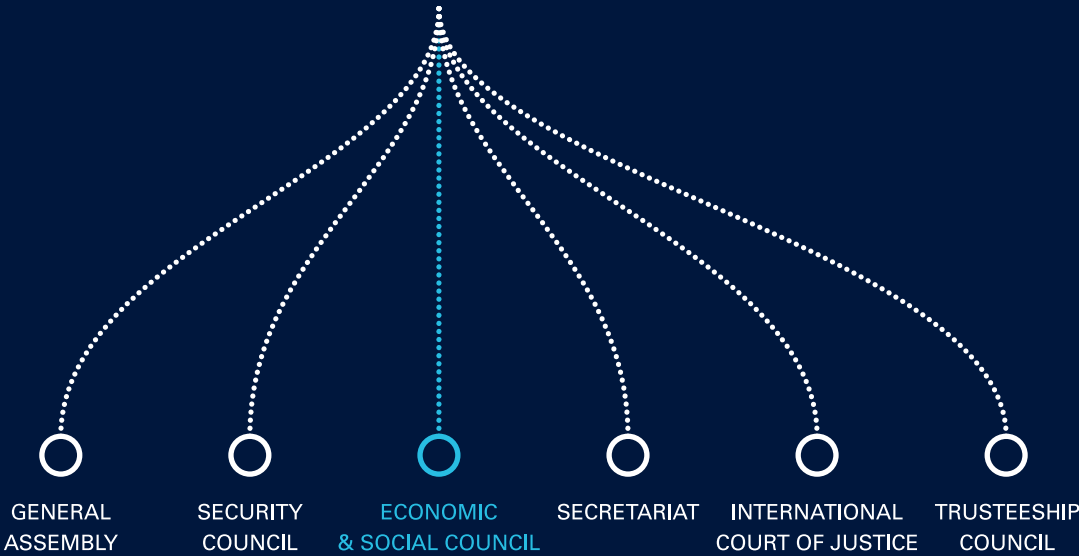
In December, the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) was resoundingly adopted, reflecting the importance of regional dialogue as a stepping stone towards global consensus. The work of ESCWA across the region, from technical advisory services to regional forums for knowledge exchange, was essential in drawing attention to critical migration issues for the region and ensuring that these were properly reflected in the deliberations which shaped the GCM.

ESCWA continues to be a trusted partner to member States in the region, but as an organization, we will not rest on our reputation. ESCWA has taken a hands-on and comprehensive approach to system reform that draws its strength from collaboration with United Nations development entities, the newly transformed United Nations development system, regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. We look forward to continuing this work in 2019 as we fulfill the second half of our Strategic Framework.



Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary

# UNITED NATIONS



# ESCWA IN BRIEF

**The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) promotes inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region. It provides a regional presence for the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 18 member States and serves as a platform for Arab countries on the global stage. While its member States differ in some respects, they share a cultural, historic and linguistic heritage and face common development challenges and opportunities which are most effectively tackled through collective, coordinated and mutually reinforcing action.**

ESCWA is one of five regional commissions across the world; its sister Commissions are located in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Geneva and Santiago. The United Nations regional commissions are unique, neutral intergovernmental platforms for the advancement of regional integration, the development of regional norms and standards, the exchange of experiences and the fostering of cooperation. Regional commissions are recognized for the critical role they play in promoting a holistic approach to development in their regions, and balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their member States. Four outcome documents of key United Nations events and three General Assembly resolutions explicitly call upon the regional commissions to advocate for and contribute to supporting member States in regional development.

ESCWA leverages its convening power to promote dialogue and knowledge-sharing at the national, regional and global levels, to foster interregional cooperation and vibrant South-South partnerships. The implementation of global policy frameworks, chiefly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are among the top priorities for ESCWA in the region.

# VISION

ESCWA – an innovative catalyst for a stable, just and flourishing Arab region.

# MISSION

Committed to the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA's passionate team produces innovative knowledge, fosters regional consensus and delivers transformational policy advice.

Together, we work for a sustainable future for all.



**STABILITY**



**KNOWLEDGE**



**JUSTICE**



**FLOURISHING  
REGION**

# HOW WE WORK

ESCWA links development knowledge to policy through research and analysis. Bringing together policymakers, researchers, experts and relevant stakeholders through its convening power, transforming this knowledge into constructive dialogue and concerted action. ESCWA plays four essential roles:

## PROVIDER OF SUPPORT FOR THE 2030 AGENDA IN THE REGION

A partner to member States in the Arab region in their efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals



### VOICE OF THE REGION

A regional platform for deliberation, coordination, consensus building and advocacy



### THINK TANK OF THE REGION

A source of innovative research, supporting quality data collection and analysis for forward-looking, evidence-based policymaking



### ADVISER TO THE REGION

A provider of capacity-building and technical advisory services, strengthening national efforts to adopt norms and policies

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The Executive Secretary heads the Commission and holds the rank of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**The current Executive Secretary Rola Dashti who took up the post in February 2019 hails from Kuwait; her predecessors originated from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the State of Palestine, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.**



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW: HIGHLIGHTS

## JANUARY

### **16-17, Beirut**

Trade, Transport and Logistics Workshop: Implementing a Single-window System in Iraq

### **29-31, Cairo**

Regional Workshop on the Use of Technology in Population and Housing Censuses in Arab Countries

## MARCH

### **22-23, Tunis**

Disseminating the Culture of Good Governance as a Development Factor and a Conflict Prevention Tool: Expert Group Meeting on the Role of Civil Society

### **27-28, Riyadh**

National Consultation on Costing Violence against Women in Saudi Arabia

## MAY

### **8, Beirut**

Workshop: Revisiting Socioeconomic Policies to Address Poverty in all its Dimensions in Middle-Income Countries

### **9, Tunis**

Expert Group Meeting on Implementing Agenda 2030: Economic Governance and National Development Planning in the Arab Region

## FEBRUARY

### **10-12, Cairo**

Workshop on Sand and Dust Storms in the Arab Region

### **13, Dubai**

Meeting of the Directors of e-Government Programmes in Arab States - World Government Summit - 2018

### **13-14, Cairo**

The Arab Climate Outlook Forum (ArabCOF2)

## APRIL

### **3, Kuwait City**

Tenth Regional Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries

### **15-19, Amman**

UN-wide Capacity-building Workshop on Innovation Policies for SDGs in the Arab Region

### **24-26, Beirut**

Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

## JUNE

### **21-22, Beirut**

Expert Group Meeting on Frontier Technologies and the 2030 Agenda in the Arab Region: Implications on Employment and Youth

### **25-28, Beirut**

Thirtieth Ministerial Session

## JULY

**16-17, Cairo**  
Capacity-building  
Workshop: Migration  
and the SDGs in the Arab  
Region

**25, Beirut**  
Leaving No Women  
Behind: Addressing  
Gender Intersectionality  
in the Arab Region

**26, Beirut**  
Expert Group Meeting on  
Water, Energy and Food  
Security: Challenges and  
Opportunities for the  
Peacebuilding Phase

## SEPTEMBER

**18-19, Beirut**  
Regional Workshop on  
Combating Violence  
against Women in the  
Arab Region

**18-20, Cairo**  
Inter-agency and Expert  
Group Meeting on  
Improving Disability  
Statistics in the  
Sustainable Development  
Goals-Workshop on  
Establishing an Arab  
Disability Indicator  
Framework and  
Improving Data Collection  
on Persons with  
Disabilities

**25-27, Beirut**  
Regional Workshop on  
Open Government in the  
Arab Region

## NOVEMBER

**17, Beirut**  
Third Model ESCWA

**26-28, Beirut**  
Nineteenth Session -  
Committee on Transport  
& Logistics

**27-28, Beirut**  
Regional Workshop on  
Road Safety Management  
in the Arab Countries

**28-29, Beirut**  
Conference on  
Financing Sustainable  
Development: Curbing  
Illicit Financial Flows

**29, Beirut**  
International Day of  
Solidarity with the  
Palestinian People

## OCTOBER

**3, Amman**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Mitigating the  
Ramifications of Conflict  
through Development:  
Operationalizing  
Pathways for Peace in the  
Arab States

**24-25, Beirut**  
Expert Group Meeting on  
Technology as a Renewed  
Hope to Achieving  
Gender Equality in the  
Arab Region: A Fact or an  
Illusion?

**30 Oct - 1 Nov, Beirut**  
Arab Regional  
Conference on Population  
and Development: Five  
Years after the 2013 Cairo  
Declaration

Launch of Population  
and Development Report  
Issue No. 8: "Prospects  
of Ageing with Dignity in  
the Arab Region"

## DECEMBER

**4, Beirut**  
Expert Group Meeting  
on Women, Peace and  
Security: National  
Women's Machineries,  
Conflict, Occupation and  
Transition in the Arab  
Region

**4, Beirut**  
Arab Regional Dialogue  
and Expert Group  
Meeting on Internet  
Governance and  
Cybersecurity Nexus  
Promoting Trust in  
Cyberspace

**11-13, Beirut**  
Training of Trainers'  
Workshop on Capacity-  
building for Partnership in  
Democratic Governance

**18-19, Beirut**  
Fifth Executive  
Committee

## AUGUST

**14, Beirut**  
Exploring Policy  
Alternatives for Post-  
conflict Reconstruction

**28-29, Beirut**  
Persons with Disabilities  
Living in Institutions in  
Arab Countries

# ESCWA IN NUMBERS

## STAFF



# VISITORS

ESCWA welcomes an average of 1,000 visitors to the United Nations House every month. Policymakers, researchers, civil society advocates, students and other development stakeholders from across the Arab region and around the world converge in Beirut to attend expert group and intergovernmental meetings, as well as special events and high-level forums.



**2018 FIGURES:**

**12,360 VISITORS**



**~1000 VISITORS  
PER MONTH**

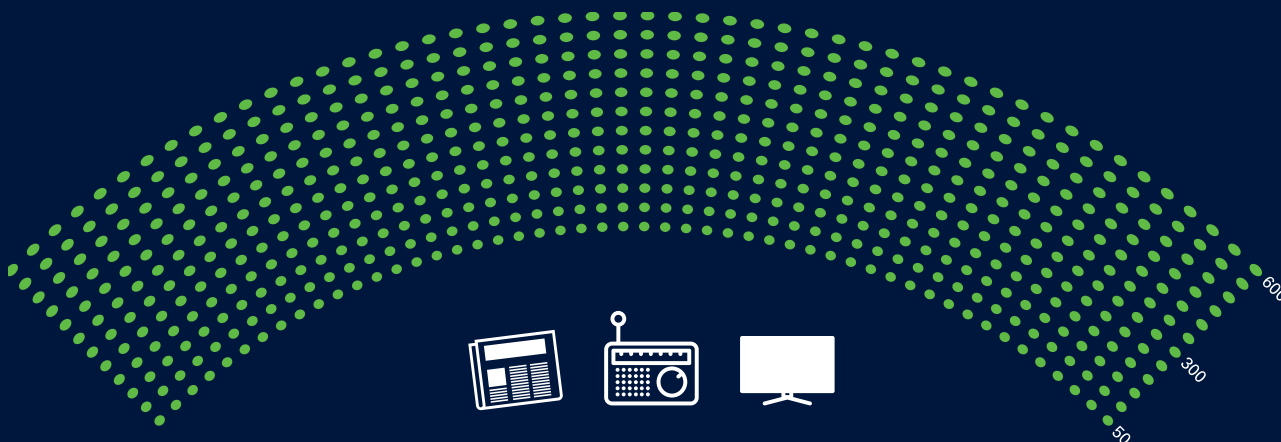


**~ 34 VISITORS  
PER DAY**

# ESCWA IN THE MEDIA

## TRADITIONAL MEDIA

In 2018, ESCWA was mentioned in print publications (newspapers, magazines) on television and on the radio 20 per cent more times than in 2017.



**20% INCREASE IN  
PRINT PUBLICATION  
MENTIONS**

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Applying the principal of effectively harnessing technology in its own outreach and communication efforts, ESCWA's social media scope and influence grew tremendously in 2018. This growth is a direct effect of the Commission's new social media strategy that calls for regularly posting clear, concise and consistent communication in Arabic and English of key messages in one coherent and unified voice. This has expanded the ability of ESCWA to transmit and exchange information directly with the constituents of its member States.

Dec 2017

9.5K FACEBOOK  
FOLLOWERS



Dec 2018

12.4K

**+2.9K (30%) INCREASE**



Dec 2017

3.1K TWITTER  
FOLLOWERS



Dec 2018

6.9K

**+3.8K (123%)  
INCREASE**



0K

2K

4K

6K

8K

10K

12K

14K

# THE THIRTIETH MINISTERIAL SESSION OF ESCWA



ESCWA held its thirtieth session from 25 to 28 June 2018 in Beirut. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was the theme with a focus on the amplifier effect of technology and innovation on sustainable and inclusive development in the Arab region. Discussions concentrated on the role that ESCWA plays in delivering tools and materials to help member States in tackling poverty, boosting their economy and protecting both the environment and public health via technology. Participants discussed mainstreaming technology and innovation into national development planning, the role of technology in addressing the challenges of the Arab region, including the empowerment of women and creation of decent jobs for youth, and the opportunities and challenges related to frontier technologies.



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The session stressed the adoption of the **Arab Strategy for Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation** which emphasizes the importance of embracing technology and innovation in line with regional development needs. Participants also referred to the adoption of the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission, calling for the development of a regional action plan for the achievement of aspects related to science, technology and innovation in the Arab region.

Participants also called on ESCWA to carry on supporting member States by developing regional strategies that stimulate technology transfer, promote assistive technology and increase the accessibility of technological tools and networks among stakeholders, especially vulnerable groups, altogether in line with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For more information, see

<https://www.unescwa.org/events/ministerial-session-30th>



# I. ADVANCING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA IN THE REGION



ESCWA has made major strides in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs across the Arab region, which include but are not limited to the following: aligning the structure of the Commission with the transformative features of the 2030 Agenda; readjusting or updating results-based budgeting and management, including performance indicators; and developing SDG-specific strategies, plans or work programmes.

In December 2015, ESCWA presented a comprehensive strategy to its member States on how it will support them. The strategy was further complemented by the Doha Declaration on Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Arab States, which set a regional road map for implementing the SDGs; it also requested ESCWA to play a more active role in building the capacities of member States in integrating development planning to implement the 2030 Agenda.

Since then, ESCWA has produced **more than 350 knowledge products**, including policy tools, guidelines, methodologies and training modules, impacting policymaking in the Arab region and beyond. Our primary clients for these products are policymakers. Civil society and the private sector are being increasingly engaged as partners in the development process. ESCWA mobilizes these actors through its convening power.

## **KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

### **Monitoring and supporting progress on the SDGs**

ESCWA has launched a data portal of 100 million data points on social, economic and environmental data in English and Arabic, which was the basis for a regional SDG monitoring portal to be launched in 2019.

### **Agenda 2030 macroeconomic model for sustainable fiscal policies**

In promoting an integrated approach to 2030 Agenda implementation, ESCWA has developed a macroeconomic SDG model that simulates the impact of policy choices on each of the 17 SDGs. It has also developed a social expenditure monitoring tool that feeds into the model and helps optimize social allocations. ESCWA continues to refine this model and will apply it in pilot countries as a policy tool for sustainable SDG financing.

ESCWA has also developed the Arab Trade Integration Monitoring and Evaluation Platform (ATIMEP), designed to monitor and assess Arab regional and global integration performance and market access to promote economic growth, as a necessary condition for job creation and poverty reduction.

### **Combating multidimensional poverty**

In supporting member States to address poverty, ESCWA has contributed to the formulation of a regional multidimensional poverty reduction framework that would be adopted by Arab leaders at the 2019 Summit of the League of Arab States (LAS). ESCWA is currently updating its Arab Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to be used by member States in measuring and combating poverty (SDG 1).

### **Leaving no one behind**

In promoting the “leaving no one behind” principle, ESCWA is focusing on equity and inclusiveness, particularly on persons with disabilities. In 2018, ESCWA updated its Arab region overview and quantitative study on disability and made available the first regional data set that complies with the statistical standards and approach of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. ESCWA also developed the first regional handbook of its kind on statistics on persons with disabilities.

## Climate change policies and hydrological climate modelling

ESCWA established the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies and is supporting climate actions in such areas as training climate negotiators and developing climate modelling tools that help assess climate change in the region, the latest of which provides hydrological projections on water and climate intersections covering basins that extend beyond Arab States.

## Prevention of conflict relapse

ESCWA has developed an institutional gaps assessment for Arab countries in conflict or post-conflict settings. The tool assists countries in strengthening the public sector's capacity to support recovery, improve development outcomes and prevent conflict relapse. The gaps assessment has been deployed in Yemen and Iraq.

## Technology and innovation

To strengthen digital transformation in the region, ESCWA has established and led the Arab Internet Governance Forum (AIGF), setting regional norms and guidelines on Internet management in the region. It is working with Governments and other stakeholders, including from the private sector, academia and civil society to influence policies that leverage and harness technology and innovation for job creation and sustainable development in the region, including through promoting enablers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in urban and rural settings.

ESCWA also promotes the use of technology in national statistics systems, including the use of geospatial technology in conducting censuses.

## SDG 1 End poverty

While poverty in the world has been reduced dramatically, it has been increasing in the Arab region. Nearly 40% of the Arab region's population is living on less than \$2.75 a day.

Based on these efforts, ESCWA formulated its Strategic Framework to shape its programme of work. For the biennium 2018-2019, it is structured along three main priorities: sustainable development, social justice and regional integration. Each subsequent section details the work undertaken by ESCWA to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in these three regional priority areas.

# A. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ESCWA's work in this priority area focuses on integrated management of natural resources, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

© ESCWA photo by Souad El Ouafi



# 1. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Throughout 2018, ESCWA continued to promote regional and subregional cooperation around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the fields of **energy, water resources, food security and the environment**, specifically climate change mitigation. ESCWA promotes multisectoral policy dialogue on sustainable development based on an enhanced science-policy interface, ensuring coherence across sectors, fostering institution-building, providing policy recommendations and championing green technology. ESCWA has developed climate change adaptation and mitigation mechanisms and regularly conducts impact and vulnerability assessments. It examines associated socioeconomic and environmental issues to inform policymaking and support member States in negotiations.

## ENERGY

In March 2018, ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS) convened the **Arab Preparatory Meeting on Energy-related Issues** in Beirut. The meeting paved the way for the 2018 Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (AFSD, Beirut, April 2018) and served to harmonize the regional outlook on energy. Participants agreed on the following key priorities: transitioning towards sustainable energy systems, improving resource management and reducing the overwhelming reliance on fossil fuels.

ESCWA published a study on assessing the potential of renewable energy manufacturing in the region in cooperation with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). It identified gaps and barriers in the sector and provided policy recommendations to promote this type of manufacturing.

Working with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), LAS and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, ESCWA also convened the first coordination meeting of the **Regional Initiative for Promoting Small-scale Renewable Energy Applications in Rural Areas of the Arab Region** in Beirut, on 25-26 September 2018. The initiative aims to improve livelihoods, social inclusion and gender equality in Arab rural communities by promoting investment in small-scale renewable energy technologies for productive activities. The initiative initially focuses on Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, with a view to expand and share experiences across the region.

### SDG7 Energy

The Arab region is the only world region where energy intensity has been increasing, with a significant gap in energy efficiency regulation and actual progress achieved.

# FOOD SECURITY

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Measuring food security is a complex yet essential task to help communities in the Arab region become more resilient to climate change, control natural resource depletion, shift towards terrestrial ecosystem conservation and adopt more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

ESCWA set forth the development of a framework to monitor food security in the Arab region, taking into consideration regional specificities and looking into the four dimensions of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization and stability. Additionally, ESCWA and regional partners are working on the establishment of a mechanism for regional coordination on water and agriculture issues to enable the Arab region to maximize the use of its water and agricultural resources and help bridge the food gap of the region. ESCWA and regional partners have also developed an outcome document containing key messages and recommendations in support to the implementation of the three major environment-related SDGs on the agenda of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development for 2018, namely SDGs 11, 12 and 15.

## **SDG 2** **End hunger and** **achieve food security**

More than 40 million people in the Arab region – or 1 person in 10 – suffer from hunger and malnutrition and increasing climate shocks are putting the food security of the region in peril.

## **COUNTRY FACTSHEETS ON** **FOOD SECURITY IN THE ARAB** **REGION**

These factsheets provide an overview on food security in the 22 Arab countries. They cover indicators and key findings related to the four dimensions of food security: access, availability, utilization and stability.



## 2. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

In 2018, ESCWA developed a comprehensive framework for understanding water security in the Arab region which takes regional systemic constraints into account. It recognizes the centrality of water to the three pillars of sustainable development and stresses the importance of a rights-based approach that empowers the most vulnerable to ensure that no one is left behind.

In line with its advocacy support to member States in voicing their concerns in global forums, ESCWA organized a regional preparatory meeting to consolidate regional views on water-related issues and priorities. This resulted in an outcome document highlighting key messages which were conveyed to the AFSD (Beirut, April 2018), the Arab Ministerial Water Council (Kuwait, May 2018) and ultimately the HLPF (New York, July 2018).

Working with LAS, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the State Meteorological Agency of Spain (AEMET), ESCWA organized a **regional workshop on dust storms and sandstorms** (Cairo, February 2018). Participants from meteorological services across the region enhanced their operational and research capacities on the analysis, prediction and projection of sand and dust storms, including ground and satellite observations, storm modelling and prediction and dust classification. They discussed the multidimensional impacts of dust and sandstorms and opportunities to further regional cooperation in this area.

This was immediately followed by a **meeting of the Arab Climate Outlook Forum** (ArabCOF), which addressed institutional, financial and technical aspects of the climate outlook and made decisions and recommendations to be submitted to the Permanent Committee for Meteorology of LAS. A dedicated ArabCOF website and regional knowledge hub that promotes wide access to the findings of the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) and related data sets was established. It is meant to facilitate cooperation and dialogue on issues related to climate change and water resources in the Arab region.

Based on demand from ministries of agriculture, water and environment, ESCWA held regional and national capacity-building workshops, drawing upon new regional knowledge to support member States in their climate change impact assessments. The **tenth Regional Training Workshop on Capacity Development for Climate Change Negotiations for the Arab Countries** was held in Kuwait City from 3 to 5 April 2018. The main objectives of this workshop included the implementation of the Paris Agreement provisions in the Arab region, the impact of climate change on agriculture and the development of skills of Arab officials in climate change negotiations on new emerging issues.

© Shutterstock by Songsak P



Building on the scientific knowledge base aggregated under RICCAR, ESCWA hosted a regional meeting to engage Arab States on climate change issues, to prepare young officials for global climate negotiations, and to support Arab States in accessing climate funds (Cairo, November 2018). This meeting immediately preceded the twenty-fourth Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, COP 24, Katowice, Poland, December 2018). ESCWA briefed on the status of negotiations, presented possible scenarios, facilitated discussions on desired outcome, difficulties, redlines and linkages in order to strengthen the preparations of member State delegates.

The Government of Iraq highlighted ESCWA's support on climate change as a key factor in obtaining a \$10 million project from the Adaptation Fund in 2018. The Sudan also recognized ESCWA's critical role in helping it obtain readiness programme funding from the Green Climate Fund.

### **SDG 13 Combat climate change**

Temperatures in the Arab region are increasing and are expected to continue to increase through the end of the century and maybe beyond. Although the Arab region contributes only about 5% of total global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, it is one of the regions most affected by climate change.

## **WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT 2018: SMART CHOICES TO PRESERVE OUR LAND**

The theme of the 2018 World Day to Combat Desertification (on 17 June) was "Land has true value. Invest in it". ESCWA carried out an awareness-raising campaign on loss of land and the importance of revitalizing livelihoods through wise consumption and production choices. In a region particularly affected by rapid depletion and degradation of its scarce resources, adopting responsible consumption patterns is much needed. Through smart consumption, smart shopping and smart decisions, it is possible to help improve land resources both through increased efficiency – more persons fed per unit of land – and through low and easily degradable waste generation.

## ARAB CENTRE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES

At the thirtieth ESCWA ministerial session, member States welcomed the establishment of the **Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies (ACCCP)**, which will focus on five pillars of work: delivering technical assistance and advisory services; building capacity through institutional strengthening and policymaking; strengthening regional platforms for exchange, coordination and consensus building; promoting integrated responses to and management of climate-related challenges; and providing access to regional knowledge products, data and information.

The Centre is the first of its kind in the region. It builds on and expands the work achieved under RICCAR by providing multisectoral technical assistance and advisory services; building regional consensus; promoting comprehensive responses to climate-related challenges affecting water, energy and food security; and providing access to knowledge

products and to regional data and information through the Regional Knowledge Hub. Partners include: LAS, the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations University – Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region (ACCWaM) initiative, the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4AL) initiative, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Swedish International Development Cooperation (Sida) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (GIZ-BMI).



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# B. SOCIAL JUSTICE

The work of ESCWA in the field of social justice is focused on achieving equitable, inclusive and participatory social development in line with the 2030 Agenda. The three main areas of activity are inclusion and participation, population and human development, and conflict and occupation.



# 1. INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

## POVERTY

Poverty undermines the Arab region's chances to achieve development, stability and peace. Over the past two decades, economic growth failed to bring about the expected reduction in poverty and unemployment, underemployment and youth unemployment, especially among young women and youth with disabilities, and inequality remained stagnant or increased. Poverty reduction challenges at the national level include gaps in governance, understanding poverty (manifestations and causes) and in designing policies and programmes. Furthermore, across the region, public budgets remain under pressure. In certain cases, poorly designed fiscal policies have fueled social tension, which in turn increased demand for more spending to ease high unemployment, poverty and inequality.

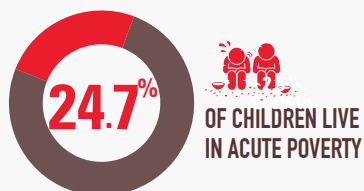
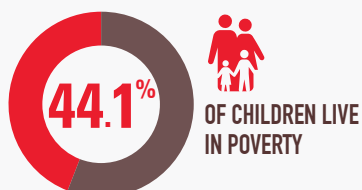
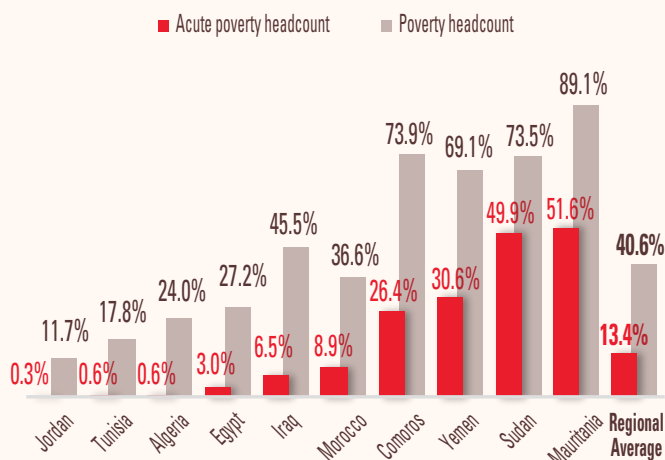
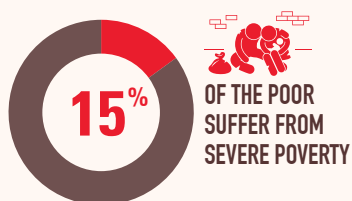
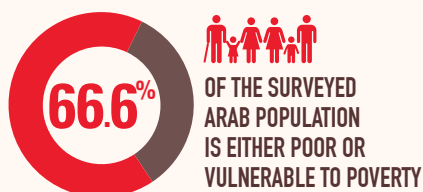
Against this backdrop, and in aid of the realization of SDGs 1, 2, 5, 8 and 10, ESCWA supports member States by informing and promoting global and regional poverty eradication frameworks. This involves refining the recent and innovative Arab multidimensional poverty measurement methodology with LAS and studying the evolution of multidimensional poverty over time.

ESCWA is developing tools to incorporate multidimensional poverty targets in national plans and budgets, in addition to technical cooperation and direct training to member States and the LAS secretariat. Over the five past years ESCWA and its partners have trained over 200 government officials on the use of **multidimensional poverty analysis** and policy tools.

### SDG 8 Employment and decent work for all

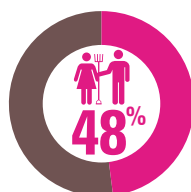
In 10 Arab countries, joblessness among youth is at 30%, more than twice the world average. In some countries, young women's unemployment rate exceeds 60%.

# ARAB MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY



**NUTRITION AND HOUSING CONDITIONS** ARE THE HIGHEST CONTRIBUTORS TO CHILDHOOD POVERTY

## SPATIAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES



### POVERTY AND ACUTE POVERTY ARE HIGHER IN THE FOLLOWING HOUSEHOLDS:

- ▶ RURAL
- ▶ LARGE SIZED HOUSEHOLDS
- ▶ NON-EDUCATED HEAD
- ▶ BOTTOM WEALTH QUINTILES

### INEQUALITY IN CHILD POVERTY IS VERY HIGH ACROSS:

- ▶ AREAS
- ▶ EDUCATION
- ▶ WEALTH STATUS



## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Social inclusion entails enabling people to realize their economic, social, cultural, civic and political rights, encouraging them to participate in the society and shape the decisions that affect their lives, and ensuring that they can achieve their full potential.

ESCWA's research and analysis points to a lack of empowerment and participation among young people, women, residents of rural areas and persons with disabilities. The Commission strives to ensure that their voices and stories are heard when informing Governments on inclusion and participation.

Persons with disabilities have lower rates of literacy, education and economic activity. Girls and women with disabilities in rural areas are acutely disadvantaged. With the support of ESCWA, Governments in the region are making progress in implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

In 2018, ESCWA published several major studies and reports on persons with disabilities and international migration. These were complemented by the provision of capacity-building tools on equality, social justice and governance and enhanced by dialogue on social policies for social inclusion, population welfare and the impact of conflict-related issues on social equity.



## International Day of Persons with Disabilities

This work is likely to have an impact in the region. Arab Governments are showing increasing commitment to leaving no one behind: social insurance and health care are being expanded and consolidated, while universal subsidies are gradually being substituted with targeted social assistance. ESCWA closely monitors these and other reforms undertaken by member States and is drafting the first regional report analysing recent and ongoing social protection reforms, as well as their wider policy implications and political economy aspects of the choices and trade-offs inherent in the reform process. The report will promote a system's perspective on social protection that enables Governments to better integrate the different parts of social insurance, assistance and health care, and deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind in their social protection systems.

ESCWA continues to support the Inter-sessional Group of Experts on Disability (IGED) which it established in 2017. Nearly every member State in the region is an active participant in this Group, exchanging knowledge on intra- and interregional cooperation. In May 2018, policymakers convened in Saudi Arabia to review progress on shifting from the “medical model” which focused on



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the physical aspects of disability to the “social model” of disability assessment, which considers the societal aspects and uses a rights-based approach and a classification tool from the World Health Organization. ESCWA also partners with the International Labour Organization in a joint regional project on inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

In August, ESCWA organized an expert group meeting in Beirut focusing on institutionalization of persons with disabilities and its root causes, approaches and alternatives. The meeting identified challenges, opportunities and assistance needed to better support persons with disabilities to live independently, in line with the CRPD.

In September 2018, ESCWA held the first joint meeting between statisticians and policymakers from Arab countries to discuss approaches to refining the collection of data on persons with disabilities and to develop a framework of disability indicators for the Arab region. Participants reviewed global best practices and methodologies in data collection and explored the use of additional data sources to supplement survey and census data collected by national statistical offices. Through the IGED Iraq became aware of Jordan's successful review of its disability law, and subsequently requested support in carrying out their own review, which ESCWA facilitated.



## 2. POPULATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The Arab region is characterized by a large population of children and a youth bulge due to reduced infant mortality and high fertility rates in many countries. These demographic trends lead to a significant expansion in the region's population size, intense and increased human mobility and rapid urbanization. At the same time, a historic and significant ageing transition is underway, in which the number and proportion of older persons in society is steadily rising across the region. Given the relatively weak, non-inclusive social protection and long-term care systems which leave many older persons, especially older women, highly vulnerable to poverty, sickness and isolation, this development has important social and economic ramifications.

### SDG 16 Peaceful and inclusive societies and access to justice

Of the 68.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world in 2017, 29 million – or more than 40% - were in Arab countries.

## MIGRATION

Widespread migration also continues to shape the region's population dynamics. It is home to an estimated 38 million migrants; worldwide, approximately 29 million migrants originate from the Arab region, with nearly half of these migrating within the region.

The complexity of political, socioeconomic and environmental factors driving the patterns of migration, make it a priority area for national action and regional cooperation. The **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration** (GCM), adopted in Marrakech, Morocco, on 10 December 2018, represents an unprecedented milestone in global cooperation towards a common framework for migration. A non-binding agreement, the GCM seeks to improve the governance of migration and to address the challenges and opportunities associated with it, including its contribution to sustainable development.

ESCWA engaged Arab countries in regional consultations leading up to the adoption of the GCM. As co-chairs of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, comprising 18 United Nations agencies and LAS, ESCWA together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and LAS organized a capacity-building workshop on migration and

sustainable development on 16 and 17 July 2018 in Cairo. Policymakers from 13 Arab countries, alongside experts and representatives of United Nations agencies, met to strengthen national capacities to achieve the SDGs, notably target 10.7 on facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration. The main goal of the Working Group is to promote joint research and interventions on international migration in the region.

During the Marrakech Conference, ESCWA participated in the plenary debate and co-organized a side event to present regional perspectives on the GCM with its sister regional commissions. The side event increased member States' awareness of the Compact's regional mechanisms for implementation, follow-up and review, which would ensure harmonized cooperation to achieve the GCM objectives. ESCWA delivered a statement which presented regional priorities and challenges while highlighting migration's potential to contribute to development.

ESCWA is now helping its member States mobilize the necessary resources, expertise and partnerships to implement the GCM.

## WOMEN AND YOUTH

Throughout 2018, Arab States demonstrated their growing commitment to gender-sensitive legal reform, especially with the **aim of combating violence against women**, a topic on which ESCWA has taken a leading role in providing policy advice. In February 2018, Morocco became the sixth Arab State to enact a stand-alone law on violence against women. The following month, the State of Palestine passed a law repealing a so-called "marry your rapist" provision whereby alleged rapists could escape prosecution by marrying their victims.

Persistent conflict in the Arab region has resulted in an increase in **child marriage**, despite momentum to formally criminalize the practice. In conflict contexts, child marriage is a negative coping mechanism for many displaced



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### ARAB REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: FIVE YEARS AFTER THE 2013 CAIRO DECLARATION (BEIRUT, 30 OCTOBER – 1 NOVEMBER)

ESCWA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and LAS co-led the five-year review of the 2013 Cairo Declaration on Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World. The Conference reviewed progress since 2013, focusing on linkages between the Cairo Declaration and the 2030 Agenda and means of moving forward. Close to 200 participants, including senior government officials, parliamentarians, civil society representatives and academics, adopted a set of key messages that were submitted to the Commission on Population and Development.





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and refugee families due to fears surrounding the vulnerability of young females and the need for a dowry from a girl's family. In the short term, girls' health and safety is compromised, as is their access to education. In the long term, health, education and employment prospects are weakened and the risk of domestic violence and child abuse rises, furthering cycles of poverty and insecurity. To better understand these long-term impacts on girls, their families, communities and States, ESCWA played a role in shaping the Regional Accountability Framework on Child Marriage to address the phenomenon holistically. The Commission is also developing a costing model on child marriage, to help States develop concrete interventions.

Violence against women has a significant and long-term economic impact on individual women, their families, the community and the State. Estimating the cost of violence against women is a long-term, multi-year process that allows States to assess the full impact of violence against women on the economy at the individual, family, community and State levels. To encourage better response from States, ESCWA has been closely involved with the Governments of Iraq, Lebanon, the State of Palestine and Saudi Arabia to cost violence against women, in particular marital violence, due to its high prevalence in the Arab region.

## **SDG 10** **Reduce inequality**

Income inequality has increased since 2000 in many Arab countries and some of the highest levels of inequality globally are in Arab countries.

## SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH STRATEGY

The United Nations Strategy on Youth, known as Youth 2030, was developed under the leadership of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in coordination with the Co-Chairs of the headquarters-based Inter-agency Network on Youth Development and received inputs from 27 United Nations entities (including ESCWA) and youth organizations and networks. The Secretary-General endorsed the strategy on 22 June 2018, setting as its main objective to ensure youth participation in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The strategy also aims to provide avenues for youth participation in the work of the United Nations.

The strategy defines the following five priority focus areas:

- Participation
- Health and education
- Economic empowerment
- Human rights
- Peace and resilience building

While ESCWA's work on youth is relevant to the implementation of all areas, ESCWA has identified three priorities take the lead:

### **ENGAGEMENT, PARTICIPATION AND ADVOCACY**

ESCWA will continue to promote and build upon its earlier work to foster youth participation and encourage meaningful engagement, including youth/State dialogue and partnerships.

### **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DECENT WORK**

A top priority for policymakers and youth themselves, ESCWA will continue to address youth unemployment through a multifaceted approach, including exploring prospects for job creation and identifying successful paths to school-to-work transitions.

### **PEACE AND RESILIENCE BUILDING**

ESCWA places emphasis on the positive role of youth in the peace and security agenda, delineating the urgent need to first and foremost protect their lives, safety and security, while promoting sustainable channels of youth participation to unlock agency of young men and young women to act as champions of peace and valued partners in achieving sustainable development.

Efforts were underway in 2018 to estimate the cost of marital violence in Palestine under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Government of Saudi Arabia, with support from ESCWA, is also estimating the cost of marital violence through two tracks: seeking to understand the economic costs of violence at the family level through a national survey and estimating the cost of services for victims of violence. The Government of Lebanon has also shown a keen interest in estimating the cost of marital violence. ESCWA has fostered an extensive multisectoral interview process with key stakeholders providing services to survivors and key research institutions, in order to better understand the quality and availability of



## CHILD MARRIAGE REMAINS A WIDELY IGNORED FORM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS



MORE THAN **20%** OF GIRLS WERE **MARRIED**  
BEFORE THE AGE OF **18** IN 6 ARAB COUNTRIES

administrative and statistical data. ESCWA will continue to support Lebanon through facilitating national consultations, developing an operation model on costing violence, and seeking financial resources to carry out further research. Lebanon is also currently developing its national strategy on violence against women in collaboration with ESCWA and UNFPA. The Government of Iraq is estimating the cost of marital violence in a process closely mirroring Lebanon's approach.

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE UN-SWAP

**ESCWA's active commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women is reflected by its remarkable performance in the UN System-wide Action Plan (SWAP).**

Upon the completion of the five-year reporting cycle on the UN-SWAP, ESCWA was recognized by UN Women, the custodian entity monitoring its implementation, as the best performer in the United Nations system.

Since its early commitment to the implementation of the UN-SWAP in 2011, the organization realized the most significant progress compared to all other United Nations entities. It excelled in areas that are the least advanced elsewhere in the system, including staff capacity assessment and enhancement for gender equality, financial resources tracking enabled by the development of a gender marker and its inclusion in the existing systems.

In addition, as one of the measures to implement the UN-SWAP, ESCWA revived its Gender Focal Point Network in 2015. The network is comprised of mid-level managers from all seven divisions and programme support functions and its members are responsible for supporting their colleagues in mainstreaming a gender perspective into their activities. Gender focal points are the first entry point for every staff member to seek advice on gender analysis in relation to their specific areas of work.

### **ESCWA Gender Marker**

The Gender Marker is a benchmarking tool that assesses the contribution of ESCWA's activities and financial resources to gender equality and women's empowerment on a four-point scale. A standard tool introduced through the UN-SWAP, the marker has played a critical role in rethinking the difference that ESCWA activities can make to promote a more just and inclusive society.

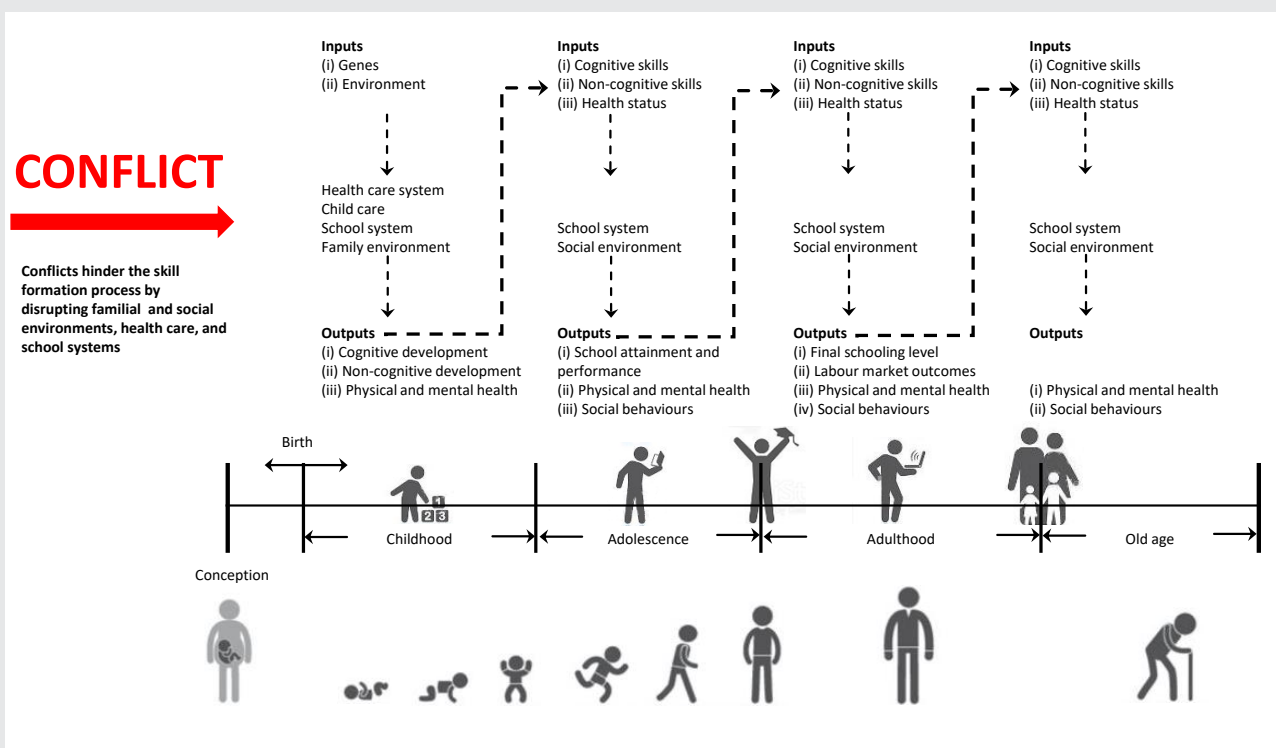
In 2018, ESCWA implemented 142 outputs of the two-year Programme of Work. The organization spent 49 per cent of its resources on products and services that contribute to reducing gender inequalities in the region.

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# 3. CONFLICT AND OCCUPATION

Conflict and occupation are among the most significant challenges to development facing ESCWA member States. In the Arab region, widespread conflict is the predominant challenge to development. These crises, compounded by the effects of climate change, have led to the highest regional displacement rates in the world. Nearly 30 million displaced people and 50 million people requiring humanitarian assistance originate from the Arab region.



ESCWA works to generate new knowledge on conflict and human development in support of United Nations humanitarian operations, such as household survey microdata to monitor SDG attainment. It is developing an **Arab regional risk assessment framework** to provide member States and the United Nations system with regular analysis of the interacting pressure points in the Arab region.

ESCWA has produced a study on the “Impact of Conflict on Human Development from Childhood to Adulthood: Evidence for the Arab Region.” It highlights obstacles to future human development and serves as a guide to agencies, donors and national entities tasked with reconstruction and

peacebuilding to better target policies and interventions. As a result, a series of partnerships with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Danish Refugee Council have been developed.

By concentrating on the effects of conflict on critical periods of life, the study provides evidence of the effects of conflict exposure in infancy, early childhood, childhood and the transition into adulthood. Since the foundations of later-life success are for the most part built in the early years, children exposed to conflict will likely carry the effects of conflict throughout their lives. Food insecurity, deterioration of family resources and reduction of family investments in children will have devastating long-term consequences on children in conflict-ridden countries across the region. In the absence of critical interventions designed to enhance opportunities of children affected by conflict, inequalities will be reinforced. For the Arab region, framing the complex situations of conflict around the 2030 Agenda represents an opportunity to carry out interventions to promote human development.

## CONFLICT RECOVERY

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Throughout 2018 ESCWA also conducted an institutional gaps analysis for Arab countries facing crises, to facilitate structural transformation towards recovery and improved development outcomes. The project develops public sector capacity to support **recovery**, improve development outcomes and prevent conflict relapse. The programme entailed a series of tailor-made national capacity-building modules for Yemeni and Iraqi officials, based on an institutional diagnostic toolkit that identifies critical gaps in institutional effectiveness. National interlocutors received training and then completed a self-assessment. At the request of the Yemeni counterparts, the gaps assessment focused on institutional budgeting, strategic planning and coordination - capacities that were identified as critical and common to all ministries.

Eventually ESCWA will increase the scope of deployment of the gap assessment methodology to Libya and the Sudan. Meanwhile, the Commission continues to provide technical support to national dialogue processes, through projects including the Libya Socioeconomic Dialogue Project in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and monitors governance and institutional development across the region.



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Abdulmouty



Furthermore in 2018, ESCWA issued its third “Arab Governance Report on institutional development in post-conflict settings”. The report adopts a consensus-based process for reforming governance structures and introduces post-conflict best practice in line with global and regional experiences. It also suggests strategies and policies tailored to the unique circumstances of Libya and Yemen.

Developed by ESCWA, the National Agenda for the Future of Syria (NAFS) Programme continues to formulate a forward-looking vision on workable scenarios and viable solutions for the Syrian Arab Republic post conflict. Accordingly, the Commission published two new studies in 2018. The study “Constitutional Options for Syria” encourages an inclusive process of national consensus while drafting a new constitution. It addresses new issues of the ongoing conflict, including the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons, citizenship and personal identity issues, decommissioning of militias and their reintegration into the Syrian military or Syrian society, resolving property disputes triggered by the conflict, transnational justice and national reconciliation measures and foundations for future elections in the Syrian Arab Republic. The study “Laying the Foundations for the Future Elections in Syria”, written in partnership with the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), highlights the prospects for a successful electoral process reflected in Security Council resolution 2254 and recommends full participation of all Syrians living home or abroad. It also underscores the relevance of Syrian citizenship and calls for the eradication of any discrimination based on race, colour, gender, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, wealth, birth or any other type.

Lastly, in an effort to increase youth awareness on the impact of conflict on development and encourage a shift in thinking between generations, ESCWA hosted the third Model ESCWA Conference for students from the American University of Beirut and Saint Joseph University.



# STATE OF PALESTINE

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The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory presents unique challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda. In the occupied Palestinian territory, advancement towards the SDGs is severely constrained by the inability of Palestinian institutions to provide adequate and quality services to the population, mainly due to the occupation. Palestinians continue to suffer from discriminatory Israeli policies clearly embodied in the application of two different legal systems on the sole basis of nationality or origin, discriminatory planning and zoning policies, as well as mobility restrictions applicable only to Palestinians. The blockade on Gaza, excessive use of force, settlement expansion, and land confiscations further exacerbate the situation.

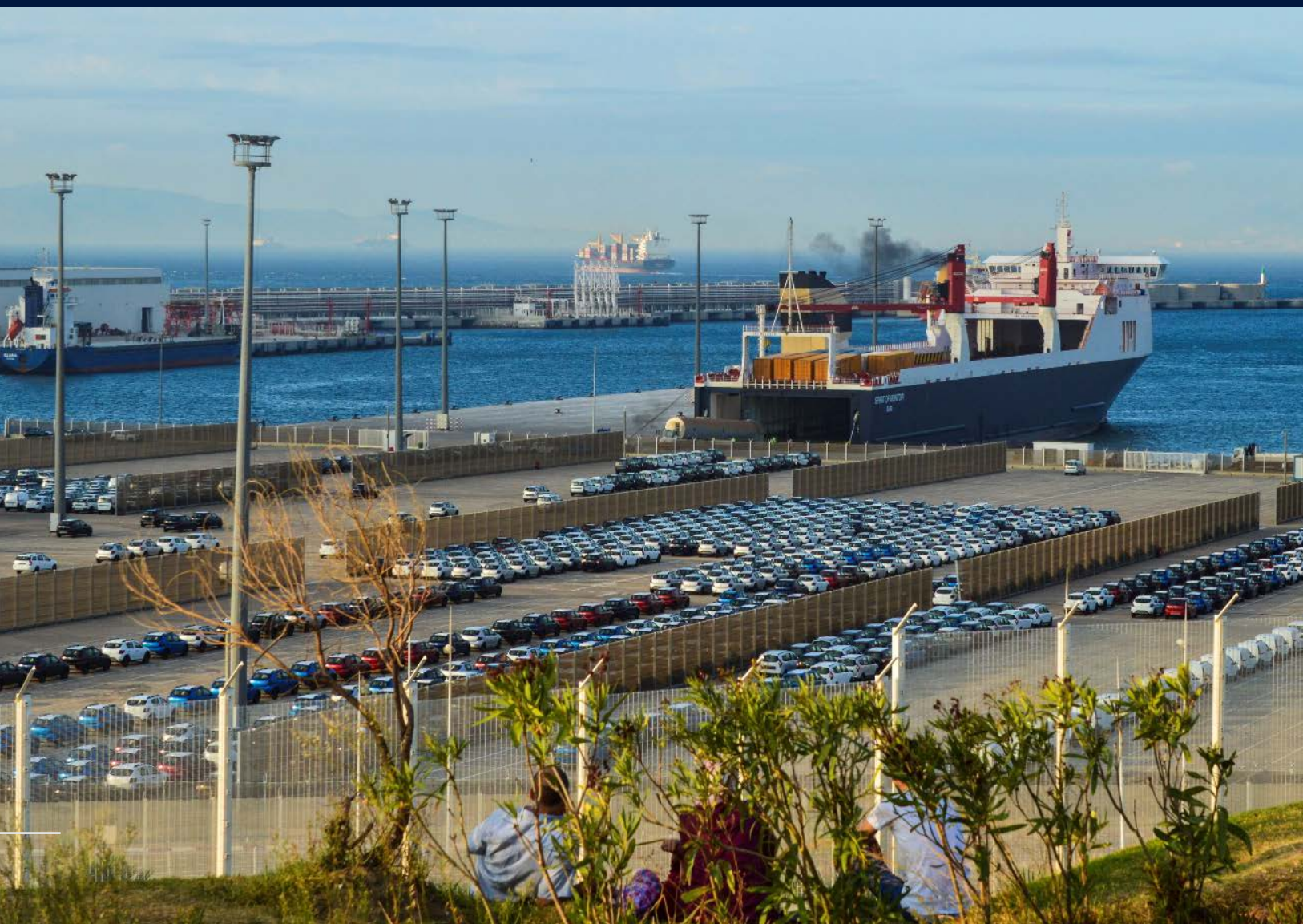
Responding to this, ESCWA continues to monitor and report the costs and impacts of occupation, and prepares the Secretary-General's annual note on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.



# C. REGIONAL INTEGRATION

**Central to the mandate of ESCWA is the development and promotion of regional integration: promoting ever-closer economic and social ties between member States and their peoples. Despite geographic proximity and a shared cultural heritage, trade and economic ties between countries in the Arab region are comparatively lower than in other regions. The benefits of greater integration are of key importance to advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.**

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ESCWA strives to promote **coherence** in development policy and planning, as well as to strengthen institutions, in order to achieve greater regional integration. In 2018, it developed a common Arab regional job competencies framework for senior public servants working on the 2030 Agenda and in public policy. Beginning with nine countries, this programme contributes to institutional development and focuses on enhancing the skill set of civil servants in key ministries with responsibility for delivering on the SDGs. Workshops and sustained engagement with a standing group of experts resulted in a road map for 2022 that will be presented in Cairo in 2019. A training module on job competencies will also be developed.

While most countries in the region have mechanisms in place for national planning, including dedicated ministries of planning, many face constraints including lack of resources and structural rigidity. ESCWA supports its member States with a regionally tailored, integrated, strategic and coordinated approach to development planning. This approach is grounded in sound economic governance (namely, legislative and regulatory reform) and contributes to placing Governments on a more inclusive development trajectory in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda.

In May 2018, ESCWA held an expert group meeting in Tunis on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda focused on **economic governance and national development planning in the Arab region**. The meeting recognized that sustainable economic growth, employment creation, financial stability and sound public finances in the region currently rank behind the resolution of conflict in terms of political priority. Participants sought to shift this perspective and explore the creation of conducive conditions for effective national development planning, stressing that positive socioeconomic developments and sound economic governance are crucial for the prevention and resolution of political conflict.

The promotion of **regional cohesion** is an equally important aspect of ESCWA's work in this area. The Commission is keen to thus promote both **entrepreneurship** and **competition**.

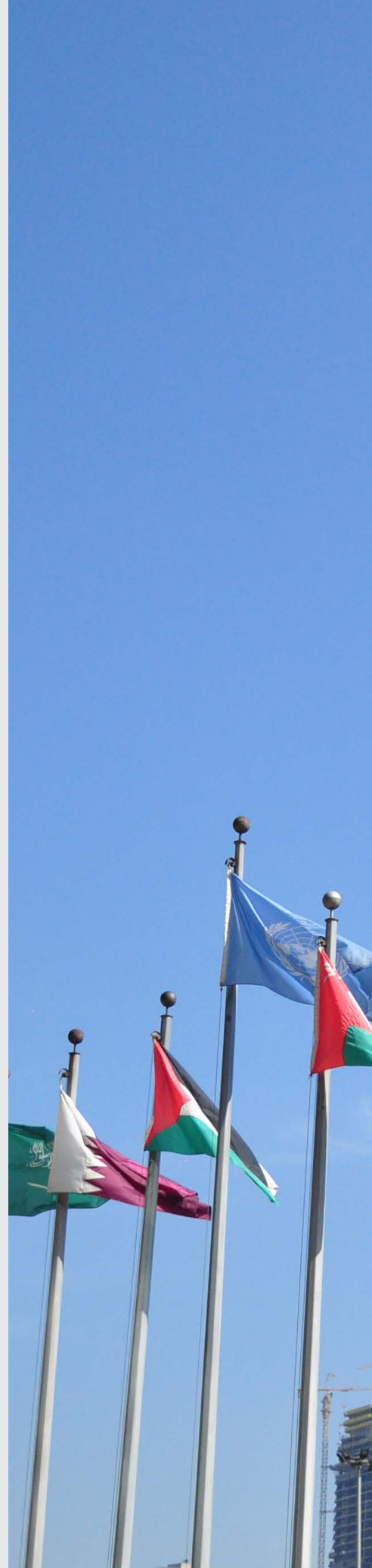
Arab countries could make important advancements in their entrepreneurial environments, particularly by easing access to finance and legal barriers to opening a business. Accordingly, ESCWA has published a paper entitled "Economic Governance for Entrepreneurs in the Arab Region: Prioritizing Policy Challenges" which identifies priority challenges to facilitate entrepreneurship in the region. The paper stresses three chief policy challenges for economic governance reform: competition policy, access to finance and entrepreneurial education. ESCWA is recommending improvement of economic governance in these three policy areas in order to promote entrepreneurship in the Arab region, including the promotion of competition, increase access to finance and foster entrepreneurial education and skills matching.



Competition policy and regulation are additional essential components of economic systems at the national, regional and global levels. ESCWA focuses on competition policy as one crucial legislative framework to enable market access for entrepreneurs driving innovation as well as for consumer protection (such as fair quality and price). ESCWA provides tailored advisory services on economic governance and national development planning, especially competition policy in support of economic diversification, on integrated development planning as well as on legislative and regulatory reform to support achievement of the SDGs.

ESCWA provides a forum for regional, subregional and national level knowledge exchange, dialogue and cooperation on economic governance and national development planning by bringing together stakeholders and by raising the position of ESCWA member States in international forums.

The 2018 AFSD has achieved considerable work with regards to regional integration. The measures and recommendations taken were presented at the 2018 HLPF on Sustainable Development. The forum focused on voluntary national reviews that share experiences and lessons learned on countries' action plans related to integration policies, measurement systems and means of implementation, all in line with the 2030 Agenda.





# II. STRENGTHENING THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA



# A. SPOTLIGHT: TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Technology for development, given its capacity to open new pathways to inclusion, safety, empowerment and access in a crisis-prone region, was selected as the theme for the thirtieth ESCWA ministerial session. Clearly a topic of importance and interest, it drew the broadest and most senior level attendance in the recent history of the Commission. Leaders from across the region renewed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and adopted the landmark Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region.

As mentioned in the foreword of this report, from renewable energy sources to ever more sophisticated data gathering and analysis, from smart government and improved service delivery to deeper, more meaningful forms of political participation, technological innovation can deliver much needed positive outcomes to populations, and to marginalized populations in particular.

In 2018, ESCWA enriched and harmonized the response of its member States to global and regional technology and innovation trends through an innovative process that links the “Eleven Action Lines” of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) with the SDGs, in the framework of its programme on the Information Society and Digital Economy Hub for the Arab Region (ISDEHAR).

## **SDG 9** **Build resilient** **infrastructure and** **foster innovation**

Innovation is weak in the Arab region: expenditure in scientific research ranged from just 0.2 to 0.4% of the national GDP in Arab countries.

Regional stakeholders endorsed this effort in a March 2018 consultative meeting. Their commitment to harness technology for development was reaffirmed in the June 2018 ministerial session and its outcome document, the Beirut Consensus on Technology for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region. In September 2018, ESCWA engaged with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to incorporate the United Nations E-Government Survey into its work. In order to assess Arab countries' situations in terms of digital development, it devised a toolkit which it shared with national focal points in November 2018. This work will yield national digital development reports, which will feed into an Arab regional digital development report, to be issued for the first time in 2019.

In October 2018 in Amman, the **ESCWA Technology Centre (ETC) held its sixth Technical Committee meeting** to refine its programmatic priorities in line with the outcomes of the ministerial session and the Beirut Consensus as well as the region's evolving technological priorities. Participants included experts in emerging technologies from across the region, representing academia and research institutions, industry, the public sector, the United Nations and other international organizations.

In December 2018, ESCWA hosted a regional dialogue and experts meeting on Internet Governance and on **Cybersecurity: Promoting Trust in Cyberspace**, organized in partnership with LAS in preparation for the **Fifth Arab Internet Governance Forum (AIGF)**. Nearly 50 participants from 14 Arab countries developed recommendations on Internet trust, safety and security issues in line with the ESCWA-LAS Second Roadmap for Internet Governance.

Further to work by ESCWA on national technology transfer, Egypt adopted a new law on incentives for science, technology and innovation. In Morocco, a new five-year scientific research plan was adopted based on a road map developed with ESCWA, while work began on a national "smart cities" strategy. The strategy was also supported by ESCWA, with a focus on infrastructure, accessibility, citizen empowerment, data openness and availability, innovation, entrepreneurship, services and applications, governance and institutions and measurement mechanisms.

Also in 2018, ESCWA provided support to the Government of Mauritania in the formulation of its national digital transformation strategy, including through a field mission at the request of the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

In the Sudan, ESCWA provided support to the National Agency for the Employment of Graduates on technology incubators, shared best practices and recommended a model ahead of the launch of Al-Moqren incubator in 2019.

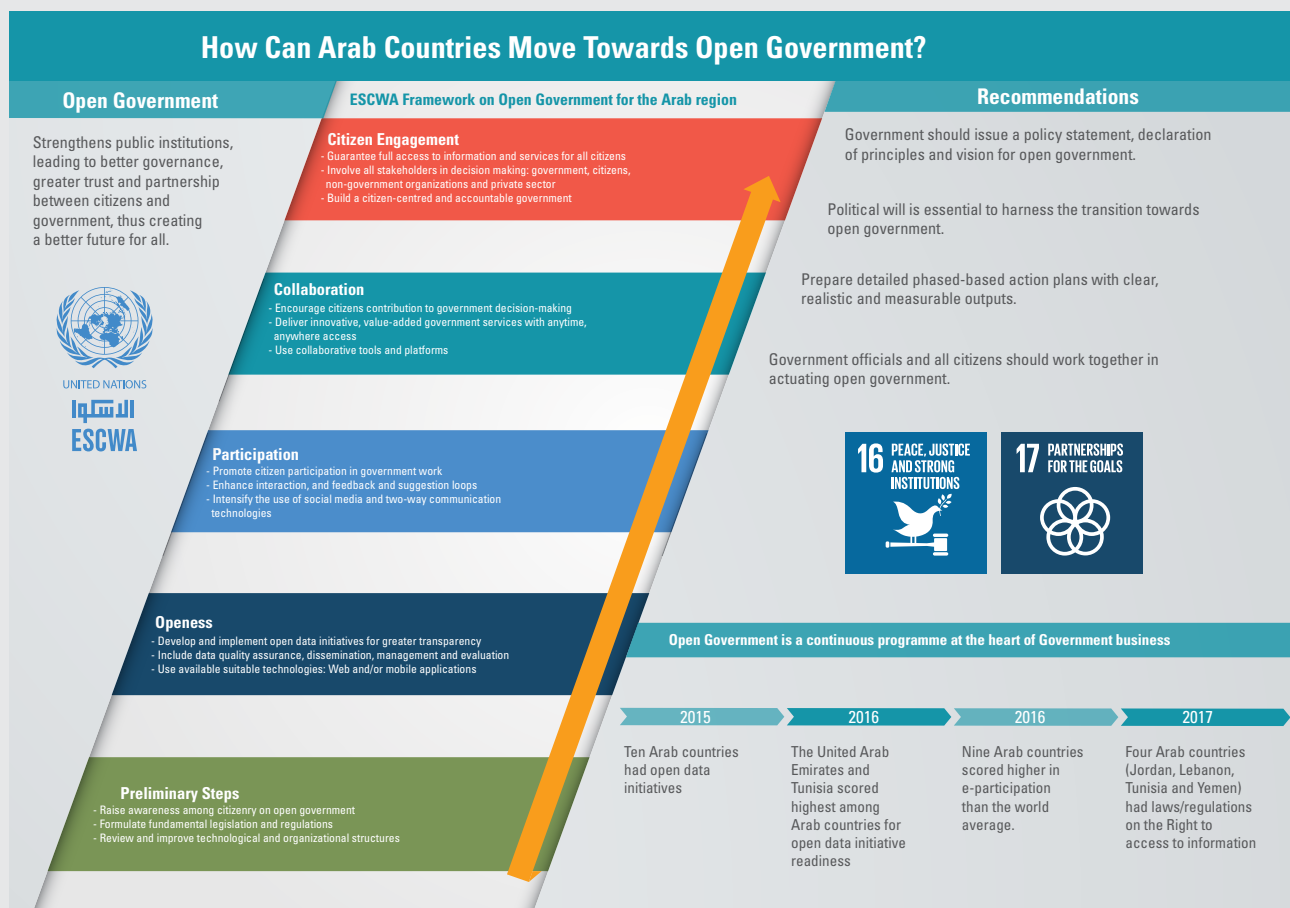
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## OPEN GOVERNMENT

ESCWA held a regional workshop on open government in September 2018. Government officials from across the region received training on fostering open government based on a framework developed by ESCWA. On 2 October 2018, the Palestinian Government established a special committee for open data including several ministries and the private sector. Jordan and the Sudan also requested national workshops on open government.

Throughout 2018, ESCWA reviewed and enriched Jordan's Digital Transformation strategy, which involved over 40 stakeholder consultations and will result in the launch of a new strategy in 2019.

Leveraging technology and innovation for sustainable and inclusive development in the Arab region will continue to be a high priority for ESCWA and its member States. In 2019, ESCWA will continue to focus on delivering tools and materials to help member States tackle poverty and create decent jobs, boost their economies and protect both the environment and public health with technology.



# B. FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Resource mobilization and the identification of innovative sources of financing for development (FfD) are critical enablers of the 2030 Agenda, particularly in attracting domestic, intraregional and international investment.

In this regard, ESCWA is examining the challenges of **fiscal-monetary coordination** in the region. The macroeconomic models currently developed by ESCWA help better identify the effects of insufficient coordination between fiscal and monetary authorities, yielding policy recommendations for Governments. They also help design policies that boost growth and social development beyond simple fiscal consolidation. In 2018, ESCWA received technical assistance requests from Jordan, Tunisia and Kuwait to develop social expenditure and macrofiscal monitoring tools, while Iraq requested support on fiscal policy reform toward economic diversification and employment generation.

The central message of ESCWA's innovative report "Rethinking Fiscal Policy for the Arab Region" was that fiscal policy is crucial to economic reform and social investment on the path to more inclusive and sustainable development. This must be accompanied by governance reforms and political stability. The report made the following recommendations:

- Design fiscal policies to promote economic transformation and decent work;
- Make budget choices to reduce poverty and inequality, and close health, housing and education deficits;
- Expand and sustain fiscal space by raising revenues;
- Harness public expenditure management for inclusive and sustainable development through better quality governance;
- Orient fiscal policy towards peace and development in post-conflict countries.

In 2018, Jordan and Tunisia benefitted from pilot capacity development programmes delivered by ESCWA on macrofiscal policies and social expenditure monitoring. These programmes boost policymakers' access to evidence-based tools for better analysis and implementation of reform.

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# FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION



## ARAB FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT SCORECARD

Substantial resources are flowing out of, rather than into, the region constituting an opportunity lost to finance Arab sustainable development.

FOR EVERY **1\$ GAINED** THE ARAB REGION **LOST**



## INTERNATIONAL TRADE AS AN ENGINE FOR FINANCING DEVELOPMENT



since 2015  
**EXPORTS < IMPORTS**

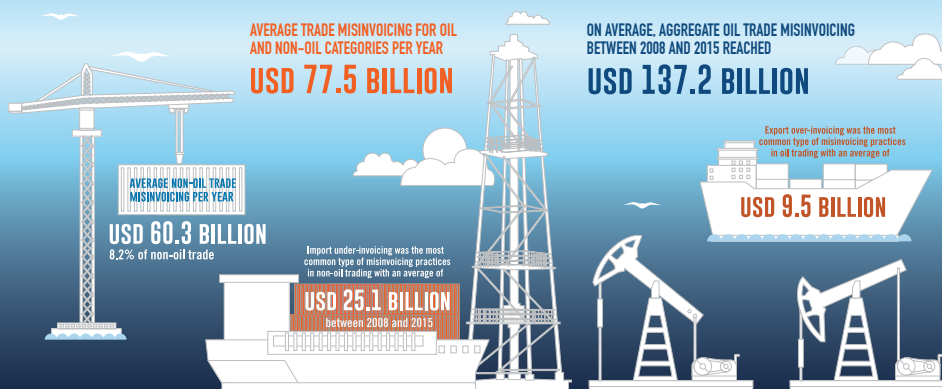
- Trade restrictions imposed on Arab exports are 1.7 times higher than trade liberalization measures.
- Arab countries lost around half a trillion dollars in trade-based illicit financial flows between 2008 and 2015.

## ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS IN THE ARAB REGION

Trade misinvoicing is a predominant form and channel of illicit financial flows used to move money undetected across borders. It poses severe structural, socioeconomic and governance challenges for the Arab economies.

### Top misinvoiced categories in the Arab region between 2008 and 2015 (million USD)

Mineral Fuels	Machinery	Electrical Machinery	Vehicles	Plastics	Precious Stones & Metals	Organic Chemicals	Iron & Steel Articles	Pharmaceuticals	Non-Knitted Apparel	Iron & Steel
137,197	58,086	52,803	48,440	34,149	22,802	21,389	17,525	12,785	12,402	11,391



Sources: "The State of Financing Development in the Arab Region" and "Illicit Financial Flows in the Arab Region" reports. For further details refer to: [www.unescwa.org/ffd](http://www.unescwa.org/ffd)

Throughout the year, ESCWA also provided support to member States for the enhancement of their budgets and fiscal policy through evidence-based policy assessments and design of appropriate financing policy. This aimed to mobilize much needed domestic and international resources. Through analytical studies, expert group meetings, training workshops and seminars, ESCWA helped member States implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. To that end, ESCWA provides technical assistance, with a focus on investment agreements, tax efficiency, workers' remittances, financial inclusion and debt management.

Harnessing vast flows of remittances is an area of great promise for ESCWA member States in financing their development efforts. Recent estimates indicate that the region receives nearly \$50 billion in remittances annually, almost double the amount it receives in official development assistance and official aid, and nearly 20 per cent more than what it receives in foreign direct investment. To understand the impact of remittances, in 2018 ESCWA updated the Arab FfD Scorecard to render the opportunity lost from having high cost transfer corridors and is currently undertaking a study highlighting the value proposition from employing financial technology solutions (such as e-wallets, apps, etc.) on mobilizing remittances for development.

The challenges facing the Arab region are no longer confined to the traditional factors influencing economic frailty. Today they involve a broader stream of factors, including foreign direct investment reflux (in which outflows outpace inflows); private capital constraints and reversals; debt distress; subdued trade growth and increased exposures to illicit finance. National, regional and global reform and policy coordination are thus urgently needed and ESCWA is at the forefront of these efforts in the Arab region, providing analysis and recommendations, and serving as a platform for consensus-building and information exchange.

The Commission has been mindful in concretizing above proposals and initiatives for financing through organizing events, seminars and conferences in order to engage stakeholders across the Arab region together.

The ongoing work of ESCWA on FfD reached a new peak in November 2018 with the International Conference on Financing Sustainable Development: Curbing Illicit Financial Flows, held at the UN House in Beirut ahead of the **2019 High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development**. The conference helped advocate for the transition **from funding individual projects to financing transformative change**. The conference also promoted measures to combat illicit financial flows, which continue to evolve both in scale and sophistication, undermining national efforts to finance sustainable development.



CONFERENCE ON  
**FINANCING  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**  
CURBING ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS

Participants adopted the Beirut Consensus on Financing for Development, which was instigated by the mounting challenges facing developing and least developed countries in mobilizing the trillions needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Discussions on the measures needed to combat illicit financial flows were based on the findings of the ESCWA report on “Illicit Financial Flows in the Arab Region”. According to the report, average financial outflows associated with illicit financial flows in the form of trade mis-invoicing are estimated at around \$42.8 billion each year. ESCWA also published a new report on “The State of Financing Development in the Arab Region” which affirmed that for every \$1 gained from remittances, \$2.8 are transferred out of the Arab region, and for every \$1 gained annually from external debt, it loses \$1.5 on debt repayments. Also, if the current trends of net cross-border flows are maintained, the region would require \$2.3 trillion in development finance to achieve the SDGs by 2030, in addition to the estimated \$3.6 trillion cost of the SDGs themselves.

Islamic finance is another area that ESCWA has been exploring in innovative sources of funding. Islamic finance is a large and underutilized resource to fund the 2030 Agenda: it is estimated that its total exceeds \$2.3 trillion and is growing at a rapid double-digit rate.

ESCWA co-organized a workshop on Islamic Finance in National Accounts with the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The workshop examined the sectorization of Islamic financial corporations, the classification of Islamic financial instruments and corresponding property income, the calculation of output and value added of Islamic financial services, and the coordination between regional and international organizations in the collection of statistics on Islamic finance.

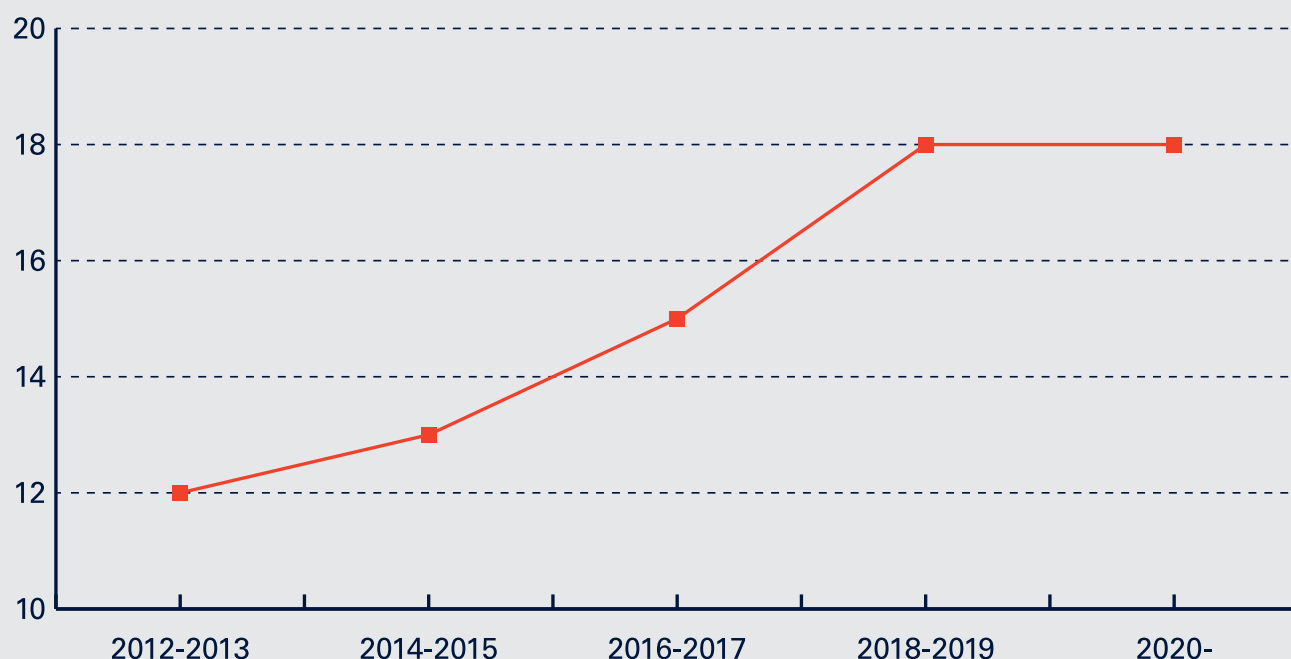
# C. STATISTICS

Quality data and statistics are a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2018, ESCWA supported Arab Governments in producing relevant, reliable and timely data and statistics for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Progress was made in aligning national statistical practices with international statistical standards, methods and concepts. This resulted in the production of new, previously unavailable data and improved quality of existing statistical data from member States, and improved suitability for policymaking at the national and subnational levels. This increasing rate of implementation of the latest revision of the System of National Accounts is a testament of this trend.

ESCWA and its partners assisted countries in formulating tailored national strategies for development of statistics (NSDS) in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Sixteen countries implemented the basic requirements of ESCWA's regional guidelines on production of statistics on persons with disabilities. International experts on disability statistics commended ESCWA for these guidelines, which are the first of their kind. The Integrated Toolkit on Gender Statistics was rolled out in 2018 and an estimated total of 1,500 trainees will be equipped to use this programme.

Egypt, Jordan, the State of Palestine and the United Arab Emirates completed their 2020 round of population and housing censuses using new technologies in data collection, including portable electronic devices, automated detection of geospatial coordinates and use of administrative sources of data. Moreover, experts from Egypt, Jordan and the State of Palestine provided technical assistance and fed their experience to other countries preparing censuses and/or comprehensive household and population surveys.



■ Number of countries adopting the System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) as a framework to integrate all economic statistics

The latest System of National Accounts (SNA) was established as an overarching framework for all economic statistics, with a compilation of supply and use tables in all 18 member States. ESCWA initiated and leads a global initiative that resulted in guidelines for reflecting Islamic finance in the SNA. Six pilot countries implemented harmonized consumer price indices in 2018, while 13 countries produce their national and subnational purchasing power parities annually. ESCWA has benefitted from significant financial support from and partnership with the World Bank for that programme.

The electronic publication of “**External Trade in ESCWA member States – Country Profiles**” was a new approach to publishing data in a user-friendly electronic form. This publication of full-fledged country profiles uses tools of business intelligence, while providing a valuable substantive content and descriptive analysis of data. During the first six month of its publishing, the page was accessed by some 2,000 users. ESCWA also launched its flagship bilingual data portal in 2018, making national statistics available online with customizable visualizations and regular updates when new data is available from national statistical offices at <https://data.unescwa.org>.

# D. LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ESCWA continues to provide the Arab region with a dedicated regional platform for knowledge sharing and policy coordination. It also serves as a medium through which local and national needs are conveyed to the international community and international development agreements are in turn distilled into development action at the local and national levels. To achieve this, ESCWA capitalizes on deep and wide partnerships, built over many years, with other regional organizations such as LAS, and other United Nations entities, including its four sister regional commissions. ESCWA has also built partnerships with different local and regional constituencies central to advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, **including parliamentarians, civil society organizations and the private sector.**

ESCWA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) prepared for the January 2019 Arab Region Parliamentary Forum on the 2030 Agenda. The Forum built on ongoing efforts to enhance the awareness of parliamentarians on their role in the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Deliberations linked parliamentary functions to the principles of sustainable development and their implications for policymaking.

With respect to partnerships with the **private sector**, ESCWA took the initiative to redefine its engagement with the Lebanon Chapter of the Global Compact Network and invited the Global Compact small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to lead the outcomes on domestic private finance and financial inclusion at the first International Conference on Financing Sustainable Development held in Beirut on 28 and 29 November 2018. The outcome document adopted by the Conference paved for concrete



© iStock photo by Who\_I\_am

action to be taken, beyond the confines of the United Nations business cooperation framework, to advance the principles of the Global Compact, providing regional pathways to mobilize the private sector to advance the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. ESCWA also capitalizes on its convening power to build on existing private sector networks to engage in policy discussions both at the expert group meetings and intergovernmental bodies it hosts.

In leveraging the partnership with the **civil society organizations** (CSOs), ESCWA held a series of “CSO dialogues”, focused on selected areas of SDGs implementation such as SDGs 10 and 16. In April 2018, ESCWA organized the Regional Meeting of Civil Society on Sustainable Development in the Arab Region, which reviewed the efforts of civil society organizations to engage in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region and its follow up and review. It also facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experiences among organizations as well as launching a platform for dialogue on sustainable development.

ESCWA has leveraged the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) to achieve greater coherence and synergy in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with United Nations system organizations. The 2030 Agenda was a main theme of the RCM annual meetings in 2015, 2016 and 2017. In 2017 and 2018, the RCM was organized back-to-back with the meeting of the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group (R-UNSDG) with joint sessions on the 2030 Agenda. The RCM and R-UNSDG also set up a Joint RCM R-UNSDG Working Group on the 2030 Agenda, composed of all United Nations organizations working in the region and LAS. DESA took part in the 2018 joint RCM R-UNSDG meeting, where it was agreed that it would be invited to attend all future RCM R-UNSDG meetings. This Joint Working Group oversees the work of four distinct task forces on: the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, the Arab Sustainable Development Report, SDG Data and country Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS).

In January 2019, the RCM and R-UNSDG further operationalized their commitments to pursue greater coordination by agreeing on a joint operational framework for collaboration, which seeks to:

1. Enhance regional coordination through the closer alignment and integration of the RCM and R-UNSDG meetings and secretariats;
2. Ensure more effective analysis and action on regional and transboundary issues;
3. Improve the capacity of the regional United Nations Development System to deliver integrated policy advice in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to member States and United Nations Country Teams;
4. Enhance leadership and coordination in the area of data;
5. Reduce duplication and enhance cooperation in the production of regional knowledge products.

Under the leadership of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and in partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa, ESCWA co-organized and participated in the Interregional Youth Policy Forum in Bangkok from 21 to 23 November 2017. The event provided a platform for international exchange of experiences and substantive knowledge on youth policies, as well as for

© ESCWA photo by Amr Mohammad Shawky



exploring the implementation of ICT in engaging diverse stakeholders to enhance the role of youth in achieving the SDGs. The forum, which was attended by policymakers and youth leaders from the three target member States, Jordan, Kuwait and Tunisia, also built the capacity of participants to implement and sustain effective youth policies.

ESCWA frames its interventions within wider regional efforts to drive development and maximize impact. It has established strategic partnerships with Arab organizations, regional United Nations entities and country teams, and a number of key donors and civil society organizations and networks.

Most notably, the strategic partnership of ESCWA with LAS is dynamic and wide-ranging. ESCWA provides substantive support to LAS's intergovernmental bodies, such as the Arab Ministerial Water Council and its Technical, Scientific and Advisory Committee; the Arab Ministerial Council for Meteorology and Climate; the Arab Permanent Committee for Meteorology; the Arab Climate Change Negotiations Group; the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment; and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Electricity. The Secretary-General of LAS has attended some RCM meetings convened by ESCWA.

ESCWA invests in and leverages partnerships for an array of positive outcomes, including to:

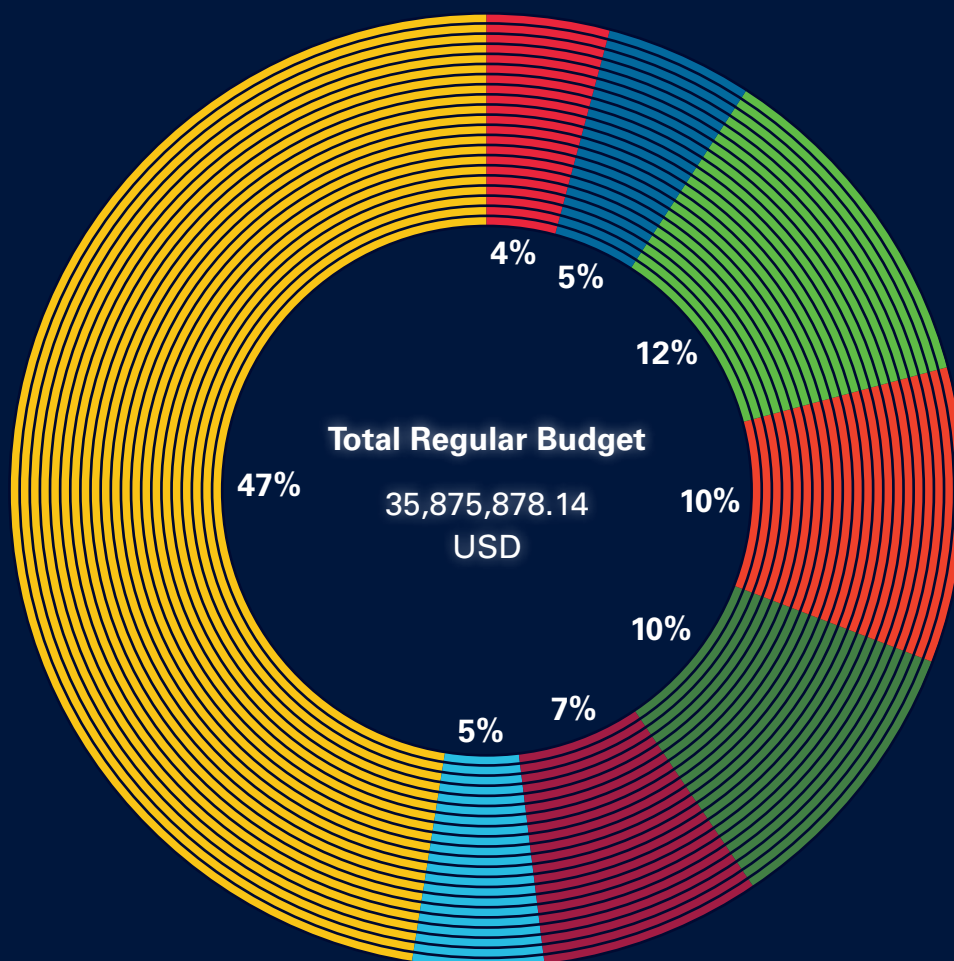
- **Influence development policy:** Translating evidence-based recommendations into policies and programmes requires shaping agendas, including through pressure groups, the moral force of dignitaries and institutions, and traditional and social media.
- **Facilitate dialogue among stakeholders:** Emerging and new development actors can help ensure a bottom-up representation of various social groups, networks, knowledge producers, and other actors with immense potential to shape and promote the development agenda. ESCWA provides a dialogue platform for all stakeholders, including policymakers and beneficiaries of development programmes.
- **Broaden the scope of development interventions:** Partnerships improve results as they allow for coordinating actions, and pooling resources and information. They allow ESCWA to expand the scope of its interventions, scale up initiatives, deepen analysis, access more or better data and reach more stakeholders.
- **Help bridge gaps between knowledge and implementation:** ESCWA works for the translation of knowledge and recommendations into action on the ground. In order to achieve that goal, it selects partners that have proven records of implementation, enjoy high credibility and adhere rigorously to universal norms and values.
- **Tap into innovation:** Partnership with private sector actors and specialized entities provide access to new concepts, approaches and resources that assist ESCWA in delivering its mandate, enable it to test out new horizons and push the limits of existing knowledge.
- **Promote United Nations norms and values:** As the United Nations' arm in the region, ESCWA promotes the organization's values and norms in all areas of intervention, including through collaboration with its diverse development partners.
- **Jointly mobilize funding:** Partnerships can provide a more comprehensive package of what is achievable and enable partners to access additional financing, build on complementary activities and tackle emerging issues.

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Most regional commissions have taken significant steps to optimize the allocation of their assets to provide regional administrative services, realize significant cost savings and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda more efficiently. To that end, ESCWA has expanded the provision of administrative services to other entities at the regional level in various areas such as conference services, translation and printing, banking, medical services, travel and human resources.

# EXPENDITURES

## REGULAR BUDGET



Advancement of Women  
1,531,523.78



Conflict Mitigation and Development  
1,789,167.59



Economic Development and Integration  
4,202,036.84



Integrated Management of Natural Resources for Sustainable Development  
3,574,026.35



Social Development  
3,517,537.07



Statistics for Evidence-based Policymaking  
2,675,277.28

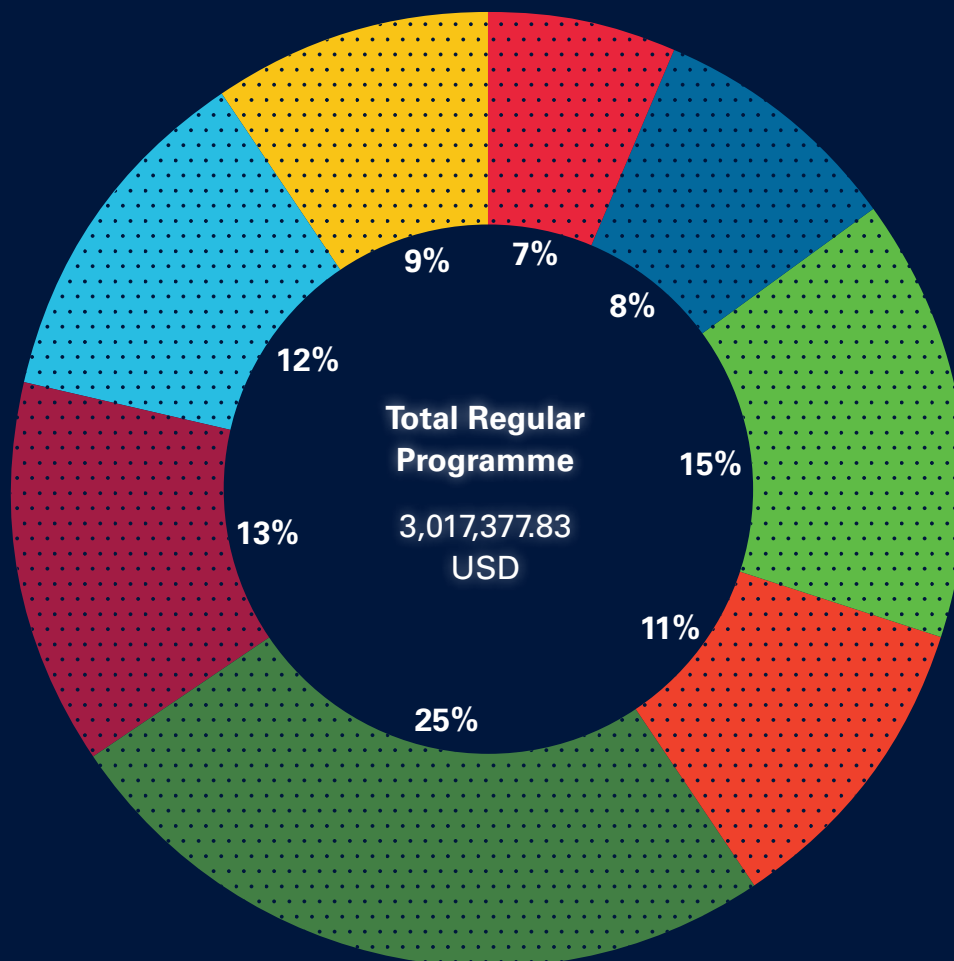


Technology for Development and Regional Integration  
1,643,898.13



Executive Direction and Management - Policy Making Organs - Programme Support  
16,942,411.10

# REGULAR PROGRAMME OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION



Advancement of Women  
200,716.58



Conflict Mitigation and Development  
253,417.70



Economic Development and Integration  
452,234.62



Integrated Management of Natural Resources  
for Sustainable Development  
320,410.61



Secretarial Assistance  
752,154.95



Social Development  
393,184.29

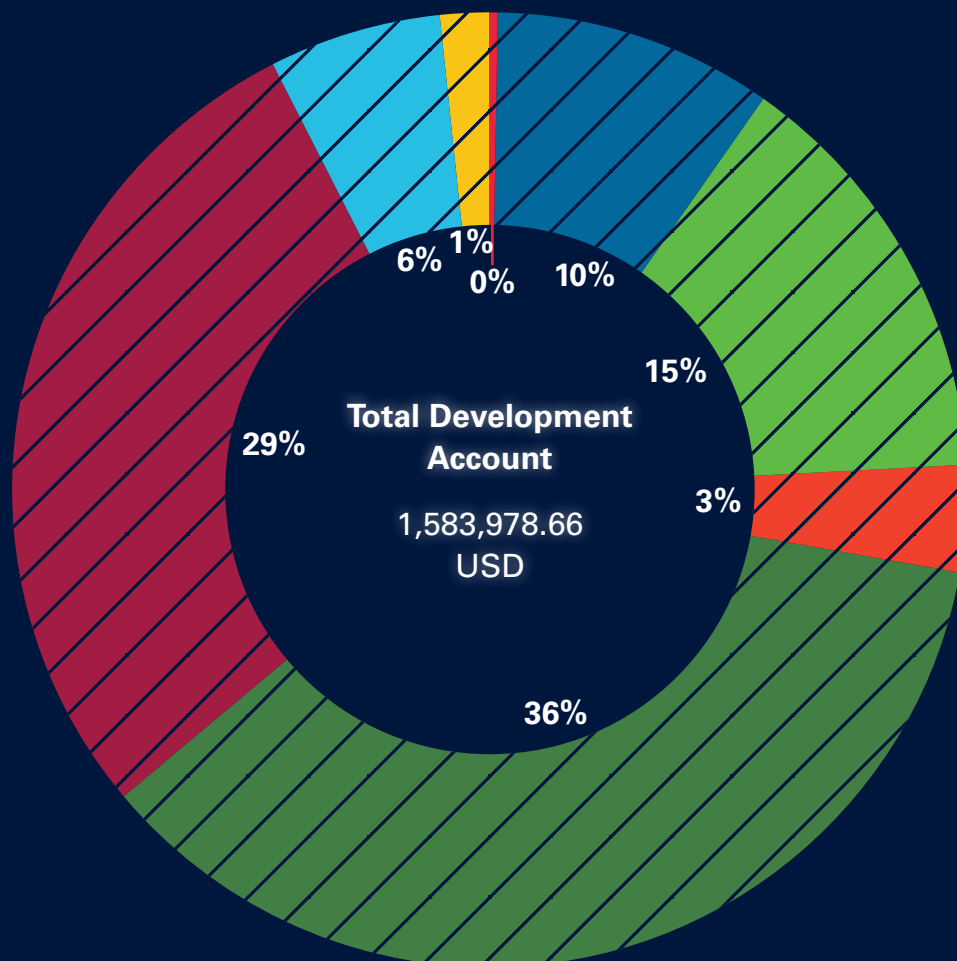


Statistics for Evidence-based Policymaking  
363,684.72



Technology for Development  
and Regional Integration  
281,574.36

# DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT



Advancement of Women  
5,000



Conflict Mitigation and Development  
151,217.66



Economic Development and Integration  
230,722.66



Integrated Management of Natural Resources for Sustainable Development  
55,800.47



Social Development  
569,473.53



Statistics for Evidence-based Policymaking  
456,576.66

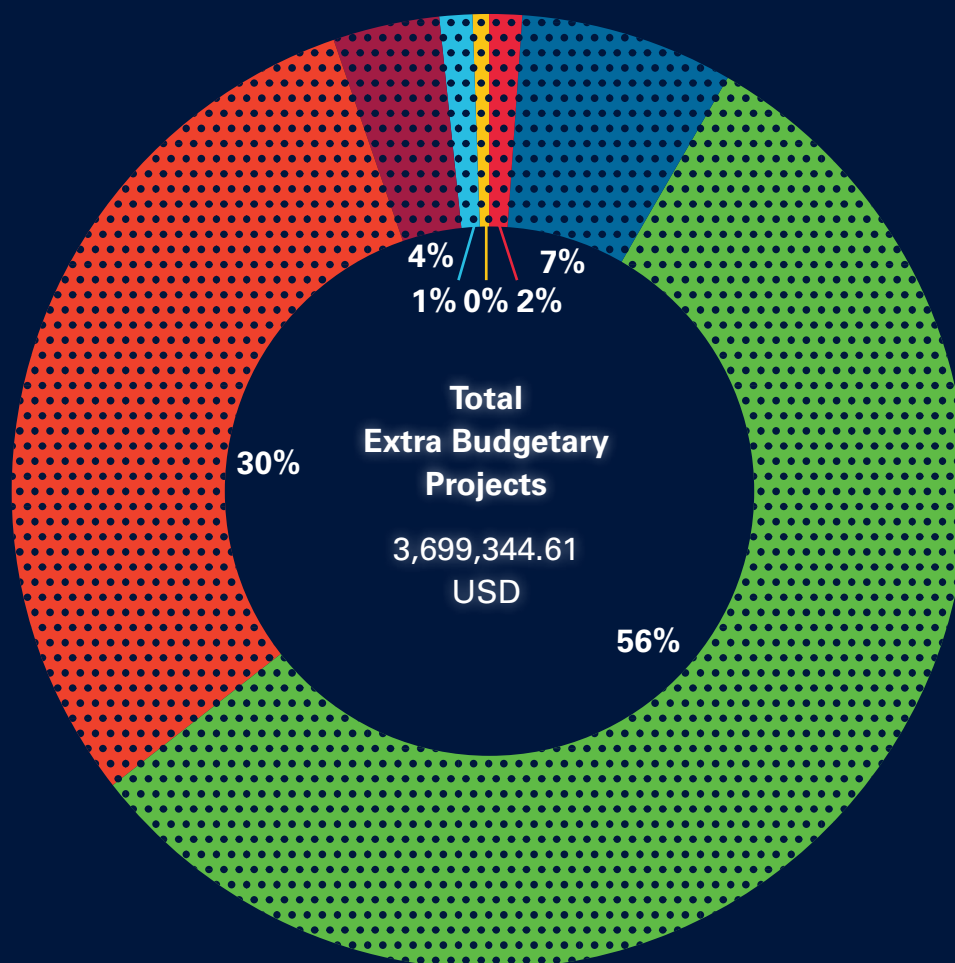


Technology for Development and Regional Integration  
91,204.82



Executive Direction and Management - Programme Support  
23,982.86

# EXTRABUDGETARY PROJECTS



Advancement of Women  
50,065.67



Conflict Mitigation and Development  
261,278.93



Economic Development and Integration  
2,076,696.97



Integrated Management of Natural Resources  
for Sustainable Development  
1,120,673.51



Social Development  
-



Statistics for Evidence-based Policymaking  
133,757.11



Technology for Development  
and Regional Integration  
45,488.09



Executive Direction and Management -  
Programme Support  
11,384.33

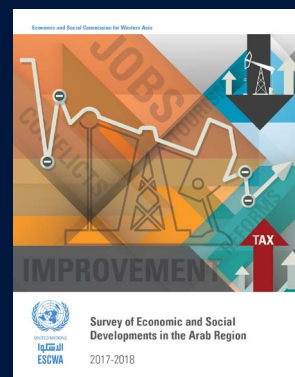
# FEATURED PUBLICATIONS

## Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2017-2018

E/ESCWA/EDID/2018/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/survey-economic-social-development-arab-region-2017-2018>

The Arab region continues to manage uncertainties on its path towards inclusive and sustainable growth: geopolitical tensions persist and global interest rates have soared. Reflecting both upside opportunities and downside risks, the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2017-2018 shows that regional economic growth is estimated to have slowed to 1.5 per cent in 2017 from 2.8 per cent the year before, but is projected to rebound to 3.3 per cent in 2018 and maintain a similar rate of growth in 2019.

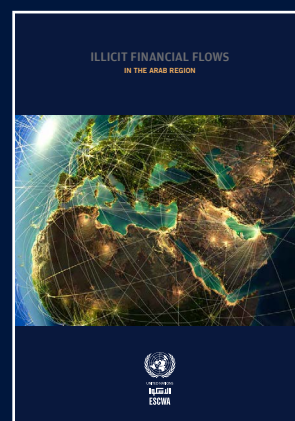


## Illicit Financial Flows in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/EDID/2018/TP.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/illicit-financial-flows-arab-region>

Illicit financial flows (IFFs) are constantly evolving, outpacing detection at every corner. These flows constitute substantial leakages to domestic public revenues that could have otherwise been harnessed to finance national and regional efforts devoted to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



## Fostering Innovation in Small and Medium Enterprises in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/TDD/2018/TP.2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/study-innovation-small-business-arab-region>

This report explores the role of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which form the largest share of group of economic actors in the region, both in terms of employment and of contribution to economic added-value. It focuses on their contribution to achieving the SDGs through innovation, especially in SDGs 8 and 9, based on existing literature and an analysis of selected indicators.



## Fostering Open Government in the Arab region

E/ESCWA/TDD/2018/TP.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/study-fostering-open-government-arab-region>

The study explores the concept of open government, technology and international models for implementation in the context of good governance, and a model ESCWA open government framework, which allows for the incremental implementation of open government initiatives either vertically or horizontally, tailored to the needs of the Arab region.



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## The Due Diligence Standard, Violence against Women and Protection Orders in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/ECW/2018/BRIEF.2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/protection-orders-due-diligence>

As of 2018, six Arab States have implemented stand-alone violence against women laws, and other States have draft legislation underway. As States are exerting considerable efforts to combat violence against women, the increasing presence of such legislation in the region means that protection orders will play a substantial role in Arab States' response to combating violence within the family and supporting survivors.

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## Gender Justice and the Law

<https://www.unescwa.org/events/gender-justice-and-law>

The study, produced by ESCWA in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), provides a baseline assessment of laws and policies affecting the realization of gender equality and the protection of women from violence in the region.



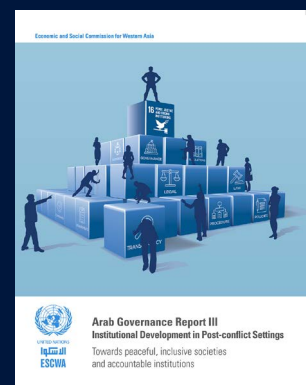
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## Arab Governance Report III: Institutional Development in Post-conflict Settings

E/ESCWA/ECRI/2017/4 (issued in 2018)

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/arab-governance-report-2017>

The third edition of the Arab Governance Report introduces post-war best practices from international and regional experiences. It suggests strategies and policies for Libya and Yemen that focus on the immediate aftermath of combat and a future political settlement.



## Evaluating Renewable Energy Manufacturing Potential in the Arab Region – Jordan, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/TECHNICAL PAPER.6 (issued in 2018)

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/evaluating-renewable-manufacturing-potential-arab-region>

The study on the potential of local manufacturing of renewable energy (RE) equipment in Jordan, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates was conducted by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and ESCWA.

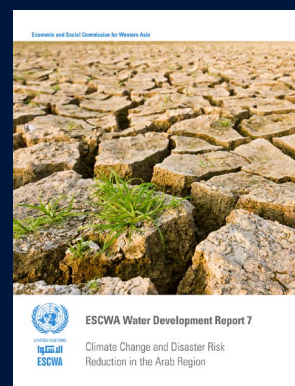


## ESCWA Water Development Report 7: Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDPD/2017/3 (issued in 2018)

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/escwa-water-development-report-7>

The seventh issue of the Water Development Report attempts to link historical disaster loss databases with the projected extreme indices hotspots and vulnerable areas that resulted from the joint United Nations and League of Arab States Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR).

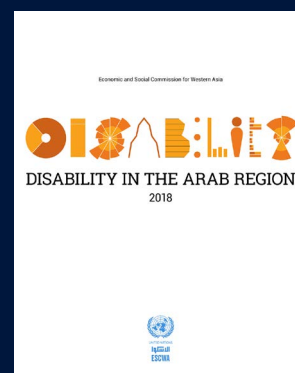


## Disability in the Arab Region 2018

E/ESCWA/SDD/2018/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/disability-arab-region-2018>

The report presents statistics on the demographic characteristics and socioeconomic situation of persons with disabilities in the Arab region. It is based on data from recent national censuses and surveys that have been harmonized and verified by ESCWA in accordance with international standards.



## Population and Development Report Issue No. 8: Prospects of Ageing with Dignity in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDD/2017/3 (issued in 2018)

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/population-development-report-8>

The report provides a demographic overview of Arab countries and describes the process of population ageing in the region. It further analyses the socioeconomic conditions of the current generation of older persons and assesses projected circumstances of future generations, including healthcare and pension coverage. It also highlights the two way intergenerational support between older persons and their families, and warns of the potential impact of changing social dynamics.



## Regional Guidebook to Improve Disability Data Collection and Analysis in the Arab Countries

E/ESCWA/SD/2018/MANUAL.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/regional-guidebook-disability-data-arab-countries>

The guidebook explores the different approaches in design, implementation and analysis of disability data collection in the Arab countries, in view of improving the standardization and implementation of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning and related indicators used to capture data on persons with disabilities.



## External Trade Bulletin of the Arab Region, No. 26

E/ESCWA/SD/2018/1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/external-trade-bulletin-arab-region-issue26>

The External Trade Bulletin of the Arab Region aims to provide complete detailed international merchandise trade data on ESCWA member States for the users of such statistics, including planners and researchers at the national, regional and international levels.



## Disability and SDG 11 in the Arab Region, Social Development Bulletin, Vol. 7 No. 1

E/ESCWA/SDD/2018/TP.2

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/disability-sustainable-development-goal>

SDG 11 aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In order to achieve this in the highly urbanized Arab region, it is critical that cities make public services and infrastructure accessible to vulnerable populations, including women, children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Safe and accessible public transportation and green spaces are key to facilitating an inclusive urban environment in which persons with disabilities can live and work. Although challenges remain, much progress has been made in Arab cities to further the objectives of SDG 11.

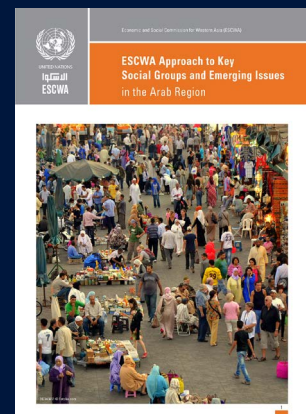


## ESCWA's Approach to Key Social Groups and Emerging Issues in the Arab Region

E/ESCWA/SDD/2018/PAMPHLET.1

<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/approach-key-social-groups-emerging-issues>

ESCWA is an active regional partner in several United Nations initiatives addressing the situation of key social groups – notably youth, older persons and persons with disabilities – as well as emerging development issues, such as social justice, which are critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This pamphlet summarizes ESCWA's recent activities with a focus on why these issues are vital to the development of the Arab region and how ESCWA supports its member States in these areas.





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