

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022
Recovery and resilience
Hybrid, 15-17 March 2022

Information note**I. Background**

The Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD) is the primary regional mechanism for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region.¹ It brings together Arab Governments and sustainable development stakeholders to discuss progress, review national and regional experiences, and consider the latest developments and implementation mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda at the national and regional levels. The AFSD outcome formally delivers the voice of the region to the global High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, (HLPF), held annually in New York. The AFSD report sets out key messages emanating from the regional dialogue on the opportunities and challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda in Arab countries.

AFSD promotes a participatory approach to follow up and review the 2030 Agenda. It brings together high-level representatives of ministries, bodies concerned with planning and following up on the 2030 Agenda, parliamentarians, a wide range of regional and international institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, academic and research centres, audit institutes, and the media, among others.

The Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022 (AFSD-2022) will be chaired by Jordan. It builds on the successes of seven previous forums: one held virtually in 2021, two held in Beirut in 2019 and 2018, one held in Rabat in 2017, two held in Amman in 2016 and 2014, and one held in Manama in 2015.

The organization of AFSD relies on strong a partnership with the League of Arab States, a key partner in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region. In line with the Secretary-General's call for greater coherence and enhanced synergies within the United Nations at the regional level, AFSD is a joint effort of the United Nations development system. Similar to previous AFSD editions, a dedicated AFSD-2022 inter-agency task force has been setup to ensure collaboration and coordination, comprising representatives of United Nations agencies and of the League of Arab States.

¹ ESCWA resolutions [327 \(XXIX\)](#); [314 \(XXVIII\)](#); and [322 \(EC.2\)](#).

II. Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022

A. Theme of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022

As per ESCWA resolution [327 \(XXIX\)](#) on the working mechanisms of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, the AFSD theme is consistent with that of HLPF. The 2022 HLPF will be convened from 5 to 15 July 2022 under the theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. It will review five Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17. AFSD-2022 is organized under the theme "Recovery and resilience" and will review the same SDGs as the 2022 HLPF.

B. Objective and focus of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022

Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, Governments and communities worldwide are still trying to contain the spread of the virus and recover from its impact. As countries chart their road to recovery, the 2021 HLPF and the resulting ministerial declaration² have affirmed a global commitment to the 2030 Agenda as a blueprint for responding to the negative direct and indirect effects of the pandemic, so as to build back better and help prevent future pandemics. Deliberations at the 2021 HLPF³ focused on ways to ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery that would put the world back on track to achieving the SDGs during the Decade of Action and Delivery.⁴

The Secretary-General’s recently issued [Our Common Agenda](#) report calls on the United Nations system to be at the centre of renewed global solidarity and action to deliver global public goods, playing a catalytic and convening role to drive greater innovation, inclusion, collaboration and foresight. In his statement on 10 September 2021, the Secretary-General highlighted a strong focus on young people and future generations, setting out concrete steps for the United Nations to give weight to the interests of those born over the coming century, and to upgrade engagement with young people across all United Nations work, so that today’s young women and men can be designers of their own future.

Last year, [AFSD-2021](#) advocated the 2030 Agenda as a roadmap for the Arab region to recover from the impact of the pandemic and achieve sustainable development. Its deliberations and ensuing key messages highlighted key entry points for an inclusive and green recovery that expedites the achievement of the SDGs, including the need to address inequalities, make structural changes to social protection systems, accelerate digital transformation, adopt integrated planning approaches, align budgets with SDGs, and further support the private sector, young people and women.

Following on from 2021, and as Arab countries continue to develop and enhance their recovery plans, they must focus on the considerations of equity, resilience and sustainability. They need to prioritize recovery actions that prevent new risks, reduce existing risks, and build resilience to future shocks, crises and pandemics.

AFSD-2022 will provide the space for review and appraisal of Arab countries’ SDG status, in particular those under review this year, and will engage stakeholders in a conversation on practical approaches for better recovery and resilience. It is a timely opportunity for Arab countries and sustainable development stakeholders to collectively discuss what efforts are working and could therefore be strengthened, institutionalized and scaled-up, and to learn lessons from unsuccessful measures. It will engage more stakeholders in this regional dialogue, including local actors, and will solicit a commitment to strengthen coordination between the planning

² Resolution [E/HLPF/2021/L.2](#).

³ Economic and Social Council, [Report of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its 2021 session](#), 2021.

⁴ Resolution [A/Res/74/4](#).

and financing tracks. In addition to the SDGs under review, AFSD-2022 will focus on the following key thematic areas proposed to accelerate and enhance the pandemic recovery process and effectively progress towards the SDGs: multi-stakeholder efforts for green recovery, digital transformation for sustainable recovery, health-oriented regional supply chains, social inclusion through recovery, and recovery in Arab least developed countries.

C. Programme of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022

Over three days, AFSD-2022 will feature a variety of plenaries, thematic discussions and special sessions. Background notes on the SDGs under review and the Annual SDG Review 2022⁵ will provide the main analytical input. The following are the key components of AFSD-2022.

Component 1: Accelerating action on the SDGs under review in the context of the COVID-19 recovery

AFSD-2022 will take stock of regional progress towards specific SDGs, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Plenary sessions will review SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 14 on life below water, and SDG 15 on life on land. These plenary sessions will build on the findings of background notes on the SDGs under review this year, while considering the integrated and interlinked nature of the SDGs.

Component 2: Thematic, specialized and priority areas for recovery and resilience

AFSD-2022 will explore solutions to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic, build resilience to future crises, and accelerate efforts to put the Arab region back on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Plenary sessions, thematic discussions and special sessions will focus on selected priority issues and sectors, highlighting new directions and multi-stakeholder efforts to drive the needed transformations.

Component 3: National and local follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda

An interactive roundtable will highlight national and local follow-up and review processes. Participants will discuss the inclusion of subnational inputs into voluntary national reviews (VNRs), and the preparation of voluntary local reviews, with due consideration to regional trends, lessons learned, and the way forward. In 2021, Egypt, Iraq, Qatar and Tunisia submitted their VNRs. The VNRs of Djibouti, Jordan, Somalia, the Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates are confirmed for 2022.⁶

D. Outcomes of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022

Similar to previous editions of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, the outcomes of AFSD-2022 will highlight key messages for participating member States and other stakeholders. The Forum will also take stock of relevant preparatory meetings.

The final report of AFSD-2022 will be presented by the Chair of AFSD-2022 as the Arab region's main input to the 2022 HLPF.

⁵ The Annual SDG Review will be issued by ESCWA for the first time in 2022. Issued yearly ahead of AFSD, it aims to provide a statistical check-in on where the Arab region stands in terms of realizing the 17 SDGs; and offers a reading of the AFSD theme in relation to the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

⁶ As reported online at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates> as at 13 January 2022.

III. Organizational and logistical details

A. Date and modality of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2022

AFSD-2022 will be held as a hybrid event in Beirut and online, from 15 to 17 March 2022. A link to attend AFSD-2022 will be emailed to all registered participants to join virtually. Additional details will be made available on the AFSD-2022 web page: <https://afsd-2022.unescwa.org/>.

B. Organization of work

ESCWA is leading the preparation of the AFSD-2022 programme of work through consultations with member States, United Nations agencies, the League of Arab States, and various resource persons and experts. The draft programme will be available on the [AFSD-2022 web page](#), and updated regularly.

C. Participants and registration

Participants comprise high-level representatives of Arab Governments, including ministers and senior officials responsible for planning, implementing and reporting on the 2030 Agenda. In line with the theme of AFSD-2022 and the 2022 HLPF, member States' delegations may also include representatives of government institutions involved in COVID-19 response and recovery plans, social protection, economic development, employment, environment and natural resources, data and statistics, financing and technology. Regional intergovernmental organizations, civil society networks and organizations, parliamentarians, academic institutions, private sector representatives and United Nations agencies working in the Arab region will also take part in this annual multi-stakeholder event. AFSD-2022 will allow for wider participation through online conferencing platforms.

All participants are requested to register no later than **Tuesday, 1 March 2022** by [clicking here](#).

D. Documentation

In addition to AFSD-2022 background notes and the Annual SDG Review 2022, which will be made available prior to the Arab Forum, proceedings will be informed by the following documents:

- [General Assembly resolution 70/1](#) – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- [General Assembly resolution 74/4](#) – Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly.
- [Global indicator framework](#) adopted by the General Assembly ([A/RES/71/313](#)), and annual refinements contained.
- [Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators](#) to the fifty-first session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
- [A/70/684](#) – Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level.
- [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Available in English from.
- [Paris Agreement](#).
- [Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab States](#) (in Arabic only).
- [Voluntary National Reviews Handbook](#), 2022.

- [UNRISD, Policy Innovations for Transformative Change, 2016.](#)
- [Arab Forum for Sustainable Development-2016.](#)
- [Arab Forum for Sustainable Development-2017.](#)
- [Arab Forum for Sustainable Development-2018.](#)
- [Arab Forum for Sustainable Development-2019.](#)
- [Arab Forum for Sustainable Development-2021.](#)
- [Global Sustainable Development Report 2019.](#)
- [Sustainable Development Dialogues](#) in the Arab Region – an ASDR 2020 series.
- [Arab Sustainable Development Report 2020.](#)

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