

Delegation from
Jordan

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ESSEC

Position paper for the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The topics before the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia are: Promoting Sustainable Energy Production for Socio-Economic Development, Countering Socio-Economic Marginalization to Strengthen Post-Arab Spring Democracies, Towards Sustainable Water Management, Development, and Productivity. The Kingdom of Jordan is very proud to serve as Executive Secretary of the current Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and is committed to fostering collaborative approaches to promoting democracy and achieving the ultimate goal of sustainable development.

1. Promoting sustainable energy production for socio-economic development

The Kingdom of Jordan is dedicated to integrating sustainable energy as an integral part of its energy production. We fully support Resolution (A/CONF.199/PC) that settled the rules for an international project on sustainable development. As stated during the 5th session of Commission for Sustainable Development (ENV/DEV/927), the Kingdom of Jordan encourages the cooperation with countries in the region, covers 85% of its energy needs with gas imported from Egypt and calls for a bill aiming to promote investment in renewable energy. The Kingdom of Jordan is strongly committed to accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and in particular to ensuring environmental sustainability as stated in Goal 7. In May 2011, the Kingdom of Jordan completed the “Law on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency”. Although only 1.5 % of Jordan’s total consumption of energy currently originates from renewable energy sources, Jordan is willing to reach the ambitious goal of 10% by 2020. As the Kingdom of Jordan and its neighboring countries experience a high rise in energy consumption linked to the development of the region, the Kingdom of Jordan welcomes the initiatives undertaken by countries such as Morocco or Egypt in terms of wind or hydro-energy, and encourages all Western Asian countries to further reduce their dependence on fossil fuels, to limit pollution and to promote sustainable energy production.

Keeping in mind that the region still has a significant potential to produce green energy, the Kingdom of Jordan believes that beyond the issue of public subsidies on fossil fuels, “the highest barriers to renewable energy production are the lack from a legal framework for the exploitation of energy resources and for energy prices”, as Mr. Alaa Bataynah, Minister of Energy, underlined it at the second session of the Arab Conference for Renewable Energy held in Amman in December 2012. It is an even greater obstacle to development than the public subsidies on fossil fuels, which is the reason why Mr. Salih Rachidat, Secretary of the Commission, called for “an international expertise in renewable energy”.

In the years to come, the Kingdom of Jordan with the help of the European Bank for Construction and Development (EBRD) will be able to implement sustainable energy projects.

The Jordanian delegation urges the ESCWA member states to consider cooperative actions in the field of financing the promotion of renewable energy, in order to increase the impact of the shift towards sustainable energies; long term decisions aiming at increasing the sustainable energies share should prevail over short term decisions based on economic motives.

2. Countering socio-economic marginalization to strengthen post-Arab spring democracies

The Kingdom of Jordan is deeply concerned about the issue of socio-economic marginalization in the aftermath of the Arab Spring since the Kingdom of Jordan has faced several protests related to the harsh economic situation the population was enduring. Among other reforms, we have taken measures to improve the development of poorest Jordanian regions. The Jordanian delegation

believes in the principles stated in the National Agenda which was published in 2006, and is dedicated to promoting political reforms aiming at achieving a democratic society. The Kingdom of Jordan urges ESCWA Member States to follow this path in order to reinforce the stability of the region. The Kingdom of Jordan prides to serve as Executive Secretary of the current Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and will make the most of this role to pursue that goal.

One of the reasons for the uprising of the Arab people was its decreasing purchasing power, partly related to the sharp rise of commodity prices throughout the world. The Kingdom of Jordan urges the ESCWA to deal with this issue of food security. In particular, food management and tax policy should be addressed as regional solutions.

The region is facing a significant risk of social marginalization: counter revolutionary forces in Jordan as well as in other Arab countries are trying to prevent the Arab Spring from giving birth to democracy and the values associated with this reachable ideal, as Ms Rhima Khalaf, Executive Secretary of the ESCWA mentioned in her 2013/2/5 speech in Rabat. The Kingdom of Jordan is willing to conduct a cooperative program in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, defined by the members of the ESCWA, and aiming at ensuring that the people receive the benefits from the democratic foundations.

3. Towards Sustainable Water Management, Development and Productivity

The Kingdom of Jordan urges Member States to promote water management to fulfill the commitments taken into Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals with the aim to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Water management impacts not only the food-processing industry but the entire economic eco-system. Water scarcity is faced by the vast majority of the ESCWA member states, and Jordan is one of the countries with the least water resources in the region. And yet, the Kingdom of Jordan prides to mention that the Jordanian population reaches one of the highest water access and improved sanitation rates (both over 90% of the population). In order to meet the increasing demand of the growing Jordanian population, the Water for Life strategy, published in 2008, addresses the education of the Jordanian people in order to limit water demand as well as water management issues. The Jordanian delegation requests the member states to take into account the aim of the United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation, since the delegation is convinced that raising awareness on water issues is one of the two ways to improve water management.

The Jordanian delegation supports the project of the Red Sea-Dead Sea canal and has launched the first step of this cooperative project in October 2009 under the name of the Jordan Red Sea Project. The project of the Red Sea-Dead Sea canal represents a unique opportunity to efficiently meet water demand with supply of desalinated water. The Jordanian delegation calls for the ESCWA member states to support this project regional project.

The Kingdom of Jordan urges the member States of the ESCWA committee to create a regulatory agency on the legislation of water resources sharing, particularly on the resources of the Jordan River. The water use and environmental awareness of the Middle Eastern and North African populations is essential to decrease water consumption and consequently improve the water management sustainability in this region. Increasing the service quality as well as water production and storage infrastructure is a regional issue which has to be addressed through the cooperation of ESCWA member states. Finally, the Jordanian delegation is convinced that empowering the research in water management by increasing the financing of that sector will lead to a more efficient and sustainable water management.