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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Regional Workshop on RCM Applications and Analysis
Beirut, 2-4 July 2012

INFORMATION NOTE

I. BACKGROUND

In response to resolutions adopted by the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC), the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), and the ESCWA 25th Ministerial Session, as well as inter-agency collaborative processes involving the specialized and regional organizations of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, a Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability was launched. The Regional Initiative was formulated based on the outcomes of the Expert Group Meeting Towards Assessing the Vulnerability of Water Resources to Climate Change in the Arab Region (Beirut, October 2009), which was organized by the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) with financial support from other organizations. The Regional Initiative is based on four pillars supported by a series of activities aimed at achieving: (a) a baseline review; (b) impact assessment and vulnerability assessment; (c) awareness raising and information dissemination; and (d) capacity building and institutional strengthening.

The Regional Initiative is implemented through a collaborative partnership involving the LAS, ESCWA, UNEP, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO Cairo Office), United Nations University (UNU-INWEH), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR Regional Office for the Arab States), Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). In addition to the partner agencies, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provide financial support for the initiative.

This workshop is implemented under the SIDA-supported project component of the Regional Initiative. The project is led by ESCWA and implemented in partnership with the LAS, ACSAD, SMHI, WMO and UNISDR. This workshop is the second in a series of project workshops that support the capacity building and institutional strengthening pillar of the Regional Initiative. The first training workshop on Climate Change Prediction/Projection and Extreme Events Indices in the Arab Region was held from 13 to 16 March 2012 in Casablanca and targeted climate experts in Arab meteorological offices.

II. SCOPE

This workshop aims to build the capacity of water ministries to understand and analyze regional climate models (RCM), and particularly RCM applications in the Arab region. The training will introduce global circulation models (GCMs) and RCM downscaling techniques. It will also discuss work undertaken by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on emissions scenarios and the different approaches espoused by the Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES) and the newly endorsed representative concentration pathways (RCP) to produce climate change projections.

The workshop will review the sensitivity analysis undertaken to establish the limiting boundary conditions (LBCs) of the Arab Domain and its submission to the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX) supported by regional climate modelling centers around the world. Methods to reduce uncertainty associated with climate modelling will also be discussed, particularly the development of an ensemble average for the Arab region.

Country representatives will have the opportunity to deliver short presentations (5 minute each) on the climate modeling efforts at the national level. Regional climate modeling applications and case studies will be presented by regional and international climate modelers contributing to the development of the ensemble average for the Arab region, including a presentation on PRECIS by ACSAD.

The workshop will expose the RCM applications, inputs, outputs and types of projections that will be generated under the SIDA-supported project component under the leadership of SMHI. Climate data requirement for running and validating RCMs and analyzing extreme events from the model outputs will also be addressed. A hands-on training exercise will help the workshop participants to access and define the types of tools needed to support RCM applications and analysis of climate change projections in the Arab region.

III. OBJECTIVES

The regional workshop aims to:

- (a) Introduce GCMs and downscaling techniques used apply RCMs in the Arab region.
- (b) Review the findings of the sensitivity analysis undertaken to establish the Arab Domain.
- (c) Examine how to develop an ensemble average to reduce uncertainty when analyzing climate projections.
- (d) Identify water and climate data needs required to support regional climate modelling.
- (e) Expose the climate and water related parameters that are generated from climate modelling applications.
- (f) Exchange national experiences and views about regional climate modelling.
- (g) Provide hands-on training for examining RCMs outputs and application on-line.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop is organized by SMHI and ACSAD with the support of ESCWA and the other partners implementing the SIDA-funded project “Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region” within the context of the Regional Initiative.

V. PARTICIPANTS

Government representatives who are nominated by water ministries are kindly requested to send their letter of nomination and registration form to ESCWA by 10 June 2012 in order to assure arrangements for their sponsorship. Regional Initiative partner organizations are welcome to participate in the workshop at their own cost. ESCWA can assist in making hotel reservations in Beirut at a preferential rate if so requested on the registration form. All participants are requested to submit their registration form to ESCWA by 15 June 2012.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

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For additional information, please visit the meeting website at: <http://www.escwa.un.org/RICCAR>