

Report of the Secretary-General “Towards the achievement of sustainable development: implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through sustainable consumption and production, building on Agenda 21”

Draft Outline

I. Introduction

In its resolution 78/151 of 14 December 2023, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, with a particular focus on the state of play with regard to sustainable consumption and production and the application and promotion thereof, taking into account the impacts of, response to and recovery from COVID-19, and to recommend concrete actions to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in this regard.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, the sub-item entitled “Towards the achievement of sustainable development: implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through sustainable consumption and production, building on Agenda 21”.

II. Promoting sustainable consumption patterns for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Agenda 21

A. Follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This section will provide an overview of the status 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, built on Agenda 21, which recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

B. Sustainable Consumption and Production

Taking into account the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, this section will focus on the central role of Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production as a cross-cutting goal supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, recognizing that eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.

It will refer to progress achieved in making fundamental changes in the way societies consume and produce goods and services through the transition to sustainable economic and business models that promote sustainable consumption and production patterns as well as enabling policies, policies, frameworks, partnerships, technological innovation and instruments that improve resource efficiency and the sustainable management of natural resources, including water-use efficiency, reduce waste, promote life-cycle approaches, encourage approaches such as the circular economy, life cycle and other approaches, ass appropriate and taking into account national circumstance and capacities, enable consumers to make sustainable consumption choices, mainstream sustainability practices, encourage sustainable and

environmentally sound bio-based products and increase resilience across all sectors of the economy, which will contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 12. It will also take consider the important role of private sector in prompting and utilizing sustainable practices.

It will also explore sustainable consumption and production approaches, in which products and materials are designed in such a way that they can be reused, remanufactured or recycled and therefore retained in the economy for as long as possible, along with the resources of which they are made, the generation of waste is avoided or minimized, and greenhouse gas emissions are prevented or reduced.

United Nations Development Systems’ support for the implementation of SDG 12.

This sub-section will provide concrete examples of actions and initiatives being taken across the UN system in support of the implementation of the present resolution.

It will also include commitments and initiatives that provide tools for action on sustainable consumption and production, such as the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and its new Global Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Sustainable Patterns.

D. Financing for Development

This section will address the challenges of financing for development as envisaged in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including financing the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

It will also explore policy options that incentivize and attract private sector finance and adjust national public and private financial systems to mobilize resources for sustainable investment at the national and regional levels.

E. Strengthening Science-Policy Interface

This section will assess the current state of scientific knowledge on sustainable development. innovative approaches to sustainability science, digital technologies.

It will refer to initiatives to harness science, technology and innovation, including new and emerging technologies, including through scaling up the use of open science, affordable and open-source technology, research and development to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals including SDG 12.

It will also explore initiatives from the international community to support developing countries in strengthening their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

In the Arab region, economies have traditionally relied on unsustainable resource consumption, leading to an alarming acceleration in both the Material Footprint and the Domestic Material Consumption per capita. These trends underscore resource-intensive lifestyles, exacerbate environmental degradation, and strain already limited resources and fragile ecosystems. Moreover,

approximately 90–95% of all municipal solid waste in the Arab region is disposed of in landfills, with waste generation on the rise, reaching up to 2.7 kg per person per day in some areas. This highlights the urgent necessity to transition from extractive to regenerative, resilient economies and practices throughout the region. In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift. Arab States demonstrated their commitment to transitioning towards resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable economies through their national strategies and action plans that are aligned with SDG 12. To assess the status and prospects of circular economy adoption in the Arab region, ESCWA conducted a comprehensive mapping exercise of policies, initiatives, and projects related to circular economy concepts, processes, and solutions. The findings revealed that Arab states and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations, are actively engaged in promoting resource and material circularity in various capacities. Additionally, ESCWA has developed an evidence-based policy brief¹ to accelerate the transition to a circular economy in the Arab Region, fostering cooperation and raising awareness on the topic.

ESCWA is also preparing guidelines for mainstreaming the transition to a circular economy in the Arab region. These guidelines will serve as a tool for national policymakers to initiate or scale up circularity initiatives. They outline goals, prioritize sectors and actions, and facilitate the necessary changes to realize the anticipated transition.

Addressing food loss and waste presents another critical challenge to achieving sustainable consumption and production goals in the Arab region. This issue leads to economic losses and wastes resources such as land, water, energy, and inputs. Particularly in a region facing severe water scarcity exacerbated by climate change, food security is significantly impacted. To address this challenge, ESCWA is developing one regional and two national guidelines for Algeria and Iraq, to promote the use of online platforms for marketing and commercializing agricultural products. By leveraging online platforms to connect producers with consumers more efficiently, regional food loss can be minimized, food security can be enhanced, and economic opportunities for local communities are strengthened.

F. Partnerships for Sustainable Development

This section will examine the role of multi-stakeholder and cross-disciplinary partnerships as means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It will refer to partnerships at all levels, including with the United Nations system and international financial system, to advance innovative pathways to achieving sustainable consumption and production.

¹ ESCWA 2023. Accelerating circularity in the Arab region E/ESCWA/CL1.CCS/2023/Policy Brief.2. Accessible form: <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/accelerating-circularity-arab-region>

This section also will refer to partnerships that contribute to resource efficiency, sustainable management of natural resources, reduce waste, and increase resilience across all sectors of the economy, which will contribute to SDG 12 and 2030

It will also address the imperative of leaving no one behind by supporting countries to implement sustainability practices through joint delivery.

ESCWA recognizes the need for regional cooperation to promote sustainable consumption and production and accelerate the transition to a circular economy in the Arab region. To this end:

- ESCWA has integrated discussions on circular economy within the sustainable consumption and production framework during the 24th session of the Technical Committee of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment in October 2023, by sharing its initiatives and plans on the topic. Subsequently, during its 34th session, the Council adopted resolution 651/34, 2023, urging ESCWA to undertake a comprehensive study on circular economy practices specific to the Arab region.
- Through strategic partnerships with regional entities engaged in circular economy applications, ESCWA organized regional multi-stakeholder consultative meetings and dialogues. These events cover technical know-how, governance structures and policy frameworks, and opportunities for investment, essential for accelerating the transition to a circular economy.
 - o In March 2023, ESCWA collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to host a regional consultation on circular economy transition in the Arab region: Opportunities and Challenges². The event aimed at assessing the potential and current status of circular economy in the region.
 - o In November 2023, ESCWA in collaboration with the Regional Program Energy Security and Climate Change of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS-REMENA), and the Ministry of Environment in Jordan, and with the support of the Government of Sweden organized the Regional Dialogue on Accelerating the Transition to Circular Economy for Climate Resilience in the Arab Region³.
- In collaboration with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, ESCWA is currently developing national guidelines and policy briefs in Algeria and Iraq. These resources focus on reducing food loss and waste through a Food-Water-Energy approach to sustainable resource management.

III. Conclusions

This section will refer to policy implications necessary to achieve implementation of sustainable consumption and production as a cross-cutting goal to achievement 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

² Regional Consultation on Circular Economy Transition in The Arab Region: Opportunities and Challenges. Accessible from: <https://www.unescwa.org/events/circular-economy-transition-opportunities-and-challenges>

³ Regional Dialogue on Accelerating the Transition to Circular Economy for Climate Resilience in the Arab Region. Accessible from: <https://www.unescwa.org/events/accelerating-transition-circular-economy-climate-resilience>

- Several challenges hinder progress toward the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region. Embracing trends toward transitioning to a circular economy offers solutions by accelerating progress across SDGs, particularly SDG 12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production. This shift directly impacts SDG 2 (Hunger), SDG 6 (Water), SDG 7 (Energy), SDG 9 (Industries), SDG 11 (cities), and SDG 13 (Climate), while also promoting positive outcomes for SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 15 (Life on land) through sustainable resource use and waste reduction.
- Arab states face additional difficulties due to conflicts and occupation, resulting in significant waste generation, particularly from construction demolition during raids and attacks. In post-conflict scenarios, adopting a circular approach offers the opportunity to repurpose this waste material for reconstruction efforts. This approach not only utilizes existing materials but also minimizes the environmental impact of rebuilding processes, aligning with the concept of "building back better".
- The digitization of agricultural commodities speeds up the shift towards sustainable consumption and production by cutting down on food loss and waste while enhancing overall efficiency.