



## TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN ARAB COUNTRIES

### FIRST MEETING OF UNDP-SIDA UNDP TRADE AND SDGs WORKING GROUP

(Cairo, Egypt, May 9 - 10 2017)

#### Provisional Annotated Agenda

##### Purposes:

Strong regional trade policies have the capacity to underpin the implementation of the economic, social and environmental Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As such, effective trade and trade-related policies can assist in the establishment of a competitive and efficient Pan-Arabic market. To this end, a cooperation between the United Nation Development Project (UNDP) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) establishes the UNDP-Sida Trade and SDG in Arab countries Working Group, hereinafter Working Group. It aims to establish an evidence-based dialogue for standardized, sustainable and inclusive policy proposals, tailored to the Arab region. It also targets at enhancing the capacity of analysis of impacts and linkages between trade and SDGs as well as the comprehensive understanding. The Working Group's responsibilities and work scope are defined in the adopted Terms of Reference (ToR).

The targeted Working Group output is two-fold, a technical analysis and formulation of specified recommendations for development of feasible policy proposals. The Working Group, firstly, serves to enhance the analytical understanding of the contribution of trade and trade-related activities. For the analysis, experts will assist with establishment of relevant indicators to benchmark impacts of the trade for Arab economic integration within the framework of SDGs. At the same time, they will also help to design benchmarking indicators to record effectiveness of support by programmes of technical assistance of the Sweden Government to Arab countries. This would be carried out to benchmark efficiency of support activities on the basis of the strategies of regional cooperation of 2016-2020 by Sida.

The Working Group is, secondly, expected to assist Arab policy and decision makers with policy proposals aimed at improvement of Arab connectivity for subsequent steps, while taking account

of interests of Arab countries. In doing so, outputs of the Working Group may support implementation of socio-economic programmes towards closer economic integration. Especially trade may serve as a tool for sustainable development.

#### Objectives:

This first meeting of the Working Group is held to enable members to consider and adopt a structured work program. Members will also discuss background papers which are prepared as the basis for further deliberations and exchange of views. The focus could be on enhancement of understanding of how trade could affect transformational impacts to achievement of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, and 17. As trade is a major engine for inclusive and sustainable growth, it is essential to incorporate into key policies and measures relevant features of contribution of trade to the implementation of SDGs in the Arab context.

#### Target Outputs:

1. Adopted the action plan of the Working Group in line with the project document.
2. Consolidated understanding of challenges of modernization and reform of trade and trade-related policies.
3. Identification of key trends of Arab economic integration within challenging multilateral trade and investment.
4. Identification of areas and substance of key interest to Arab countries.

#### Preparatory works:

1. Identified experts prepare the background papers on the relationship between trade in agro-products and Arab economic integration and on the contribution of value chain in strengthening trade and economic integration.
2. Interventions by members of the Working Group in terms of providing technical inputs to the background papers (being circulated three weeks prior to the effective date of the meeting) will be made on voluntary basis.
3. UNDP will be the technical secretariat for the Working Group.

#### Contact points:

Mr. Quang Anh Le, Chief Technical Advisor ([quang.le@undp.org](mailto:quang.le@undp.org))

Ms. Melanie Theisinger, Junior researcher ([melanie.theisinger@undp.org](mailto:melanie.theisinger@undp.org))

Ms. Anne-Marie Rihane, Junior researcher ([anne.marie.rihane@undp.org](mailto:anne.marie.rihane@undp.org)).

## **DAY ONE**

### **Agenda item 1. Introduction and selection of the Chair**

9:00 to 9:25

**1.1** Opening remarks by H.E. Kamal Hassan Ali, Assistant Secretary-General, Head of the Economic Sector, Leagues of Arab States

**1.2** Introduction by Mr. Yakup Beris, Coordinator of Regional Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States;

**1.3** Introduction remarks by Ms. Margareta Davidson-Abdelli, Economic Counsellor, Sweden Embassy in Cairo;

**1.4** Introduction of Mr. Quang Anh Le, Chief Technical Advisor, and members of the WG.

**1.5** Selection of the Chairperson

### **Agenda item 2. Targets of works of the Working Group**

9:25 to 10:00

**2.1** Presentation of the draft action plan of the Working Group by Mr. Quang Anh Le, Chief Technical Advisor.

**2.2** Discussion and adoption of the action plan.

### **Agenda item 3. Overall briefing of Arab economic integration – Achievements and Challenges**

10:00 to 11:15

**3.1** Observations from a practitioner;

**3.2** Presentation by Dr. Salah Ismail, Director, Arab Maritime Academy;

**3.3** Open discussion.

*Coffee break*

11:15 to 11:25

### **Agenda item 4. Trade as an Engine in achieving SDGs in Arab countries**

11:25 to 12:45

**4.1** Trade contribution to SDGs in specific areas:

4.1.1 Income generation and business opportunities;

4.1.2 Jobs and employment;

4.1.3 Governance;

4.1.4 Institutions.

**4.2** Presentation of indicators, used to map the linkages of Trade and SDGs by the UNDP team in charge of Arab Development Portal.

**4.3** Open discussion.

*Lunch*

**Agenda item 5. Specific entries in mainstreaming trade for development in Arab countries**

13:45 to 14:45

**5.1** Presentation of the background paper on Trade in agricultural products for Arab economic integration and SDGs achievement.

5.1.1 Thematic presentation by the expert.

5.1.2 Group discussions.

5.1.3 Conclusions.

14:45 to 16:15

**5.2** Presentation of the background paper on Value Chains for Arab economic integration and SDGs achievement.

5.2.1 Thematic presentation by the expert.

5.2.2 Group discussions.

5.2.3 Conclusions.

**5.3** Open discussion.

**Wrap-ups of Day One**

**DAY TWO**

**Agenda item 6.** Interventions and presentations by members of the Working Group towards a regional strategy of mainstreaming trade for reform and modernization

9:00 to 11:15

**6.1** Presentation of strategic points resulting from consultations of Day One.

**6.2** Presentation of perspectives of mainstreaming trade for reform and modernization in the region.

**6.3** Open discussion.

*Coffee break*

11:15 to 11:25

**Agenda item 7.** Role of the private sector to Arab economic integration.

11:25 to 12:45

**7.1** Small and Medium Enterprises and Arab economic integration by the Director of Economic Sector of LAS.

**7.2** Presentation by Dr. Eng. Rana R. Farag, CEO.

**7.3** Open discussion.

*Lunch*

**Agenda item 8.** Exchange of view on the content and agenda of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group as well as preparation for the 1<sup>st</sup> high level consultation.

13:45 to 15:45

**8.1** Key topics and subjects of discussion in making Arab economic integration an instrument of inclusive and sustainable growth.

**8.2** Draft conclusions of discussion of the first meeting of the Working Group.

**8.3** Future plans and new directions.