



**DRAFT Final Document of the 14th General
Cooperation Meeting between
the League of Arab States and the United Nations Systems**

Geneva, 17 -19 July 2018

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/11 of 5 December 2016, and the 146th Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States resolution 8078 of 8 September 2016, the 14th General Cooperation Meeting between the Secretariats of the United Nations (UN) and the League of Arab States (LAS) and their specialized organizations took place at the United Nations Office in Geneva 17-19 July 2018. The Agenda, Programme of Work, and the List of Participants are attached as Annexes I, II, and III.

Participation in the meeting

2. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Khaled Al Habbas, Assistant Secretary General for International Political Affairs of the League of Arab States, and Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations.

United Nations

3. Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Department of Public Information (DPI), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

League of Arab States

4. General Secretariat of the LAS (International Political Affairs Sector, Arab National Security Sector, Economic and Social Sectors, and the Cabinet of the Secretary-General), the LAS Permanent Mission to Geneva, Arab Labor Organization (ALO), Arab Atomic Energy Agency (AAEA), The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ALECSO), Council of Arab Ministers of Interior (AMIC), Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AODA), ~~Arab Organization for Tourism (AOT)~~

Opening Session

5. Dr. Khaled Al Habbas, Assistant Secretary General for International Political Affairs of the League of Arab States, and Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations, made statements on behalf of their organisations (attached as Annex IV and V). Mr. Rashid Khalikov, OCHA Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Partnerships with the Middle East and Central Asia also addressed the opening session. Statements were also made by representatives of the following organizations: AMIC, ESCWA, IOM, ITU, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNODC, UNROD, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WIPO, OHCHR, UNODC, WFP, ODA, UNRWA, UNDP, FAO, ACSAD, AAEA.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

6. The participants reaffirmed the importance of strengthening cooperation and coordination between the UN and LAS. They reiterated their commitment to deepening UN-LAS partnership on issues of peace and security, disarmament, conflict prevention and management, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, peace-making, combating terrorism and radicalisation, human rights, electoral assistance, social, economic, cultural and issues. They believed that UN-LAS cooperation, including exchange of views could be increased on the Middle East Peace Process, and on the situations in Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, with a view to strengthening conflict prevention. The participants further recommended enhancing partnership between the UN secretariat and the LAS general secretariat on peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and mediation.

7. It was the first General Cooperation Meeting held since the signing of the protocol of amendment, which included new areas of future cooperation between the two organizations. The LAS, stressing that the challenges and threats in the region have become increasingly intense, saw great value in strengthening cooperation and coordination to keep abreast of current and future developments. The LAS affirmed that the Palestinian issue remained at the heart of the concern of the Arab world. The LAS indicated its concern about the grave situation of the Palestinian people and the need to find a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

8. The meeting reviewed the implementation of the Matrix adopted by the 13th general cooperation meeting held in Geneva in May 2016. The participants welcomed the progress made, discussed the obstacles towards effective implementation of the joint activities, and exchanged

views on the way forward. While many of the activities were undertaken effectively, some obstacles included clarity on the role of the lead agency, and a need to show how the activities linked to the SDGs.

9. Both organizations look forward to having their sectoral meeting in 2019 whose venue, date and theme will be determined through usual contacts, and the next biennial meeting in 2020, at the UN Office in Vienna.

High Level Working Group

10. In line with the GA resolution 71/11, the inaugural High-Level Working Group between the two Secretariats was held in the margins of the meeting. The HLWG noted the excellent cooperation efforts between the two organisations at the working level. Both Secretariats are keen to establish a UN liaison office at LAS Headquarters in Cairo, and it was agreed that discussions would continue in New York and Cairo on the details and logistical arrangements for such an office.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

28. The participants agreed on the need for UN organizations and Arab specialized organizations to continue to coordinate their efforts regarding ongoing and new projects in the Arab region, and to work together to prepare a project profile for the programmes and projects activities proposed and to mobilize resources from donors for the effective implementation of projects identified in the matrix. The participating UN agencies would study those proposals and consult with the agencies who were not present at the meeting.

29. The participants discussed success stories from the previous UN-LAS collaboration, as well as to identified challenges and lessons learned that could be taken into account going forward. Two were highlighted, by the representatives of ACSAD (the Regional initiative for the assessment of climate change impact, the first phase of which was done in collaboration with FAO), and AIDMO (activity on food safety, done in collaboration with UNIDO and ESCWA).

30. LAS representatives shared a needs assessment in the area of economic and environmental issues. In terms of needs, the following areas were identified: the need for training capacities; the need for capacity building; the need for funding.

31. The representative of the Arab Atomic Energy Agency underscored the importance of the Arab Strategy for Nuclear Safety, Security and Nuclear Power. The strategy, developed with the International Atomic Energy Agency, contains 12 projects, and a number of cross-cutting themes with UN agencies such as the FAO, UNIDO, ESCWA, UN Environment. He underscored the importance of the nexus between energy, water, and food security for peace, and of the strategic collaboration between LAS and the UN in these fields. In relation to the Food-Energy-Water security nexus, he recognized the work towards Arab trade capabilities in Food Safety Systems, the Arab Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural Development (2005-2025), and the Emergency Programme for Arab Food Security and Sudan Agricultural Investment Initiative aimed at helping bridge the food gap and ensuring Arab food security.

32. The WIPO representative identified three UN-LAS activities planned for the next two years, and proposed to include them in the final Matrix, namely: a regional Arab meeting on intellectual property and think tanks in the Arab region; a regional Arab meeting on global innovation index; and a regional Arab meeting on Intellectual Property (IP) policies for universities.

Implementation of SDGs

33. Participants from the UN underscored the need for an integrated focus on the SDG framework, so that integrated aspects of development can be better captured. The current sectoral approach in LAS results in some activities that are currently being implemented not being reflected in the Matrix. A SDG-based approach would allow for a more coherent, overarching approach.

Water-Food-Energy Security Nexus

34. Climate change, water scarcity, energy provision and food security are all critical issues in the region, and emphasis was placed on the importance of the Energy-Water-Food nexus within the Arab region, calling for the ongoing cooperation amongst agencies in coordinating activities in this regard. LAS and UN organizations are already actively engaged in a number of projects and programmes on climate change adaptation and mitigation and related water resource

management and energy efficiency programmes under the framework of the nexus and this focus will continue, with a recommendation to develop a related action plan.

35. The meeting acknowledged the importance of the implementation of the Arab Water Security Strategy for Sustainable Development 2010-2030 and its Action Plan, as well as the Regional Water Scarcity Initiative endorsed by the Arab Water Ministerial Council in May 2015. ICT. The ITU representative noted that, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda, "the spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide, and to develop knowledge societies". ICTs have enormous potential to fast-forward progress on all the SDGs and improve people's lives in fundamental ways.

