



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

REPORT

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON GREEN VALUE CHAINS FOR IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS IN THE ARAB REGION BEIRUT, 20-21 JUNE 2013

Summary

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Green Value Chains for Improving Livelihoods in the Arab Region was held in Beirut, Lebanon on 20-21 June 2013. It brought together experts from national public, private and civil society institutions and from regional and international institutions. The experts were from the economic, social and environment fields, working on such issues as agriculture, industry, water and energy. The meeting offered a platform to review and discuss policies and initiatives for developing and/or strengthening green agricultural value chains in the Arab region by identifying key challenges and opportunities and examining and proposing ways to improve their efficiency and effectiveness in terms of higher productivity, improved use of resources, improved product quality and safety, and reduced waste.

Various presentations were made and group discussions held at the end of which a set of general and specific recommendations relating to the development of agricultural value chains in the Arab region were proposed for implementation. Among the recommendations made were the need to promote agriculture and food security through the development of agricultural value chains at the national and regional levels; put in place appropriate conditions for the development of a more supportive environment; and allot appropriate means to support agricultural value chains with a special focus on small-scale farmers. In addition, the EGM identified a number of priority crops for the region, namely cereals, olive oil, cotton and sugar beets, which have the potential to enhance either food security or improve livelihoods in rural areas. Other recommendations concerned the need to promote value chain development in the region through the provision of appropriate financial support; developing market infrastructure; supporting cooperatives; and improving productivity and efficiency. The need for greater regional cooperation, collaboration and coordination among stakeholders and institutions was also underscored.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-4	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	5-7	3
II. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSIONS	8-47	5
A. Opening session.....	8-12	5
B. Session 1: promoting green agricultural value chains for food security in the Arab region	13-21	6
C. Session 2: agricultural value chains: overview, challenges and case-studies	22-26	7
D. Session 3: Framework for a regional initiative on agricultural value chains and breakout group discussions	27-31	8
E. Session 4: presentations of breakout group discussions and closing remarks	32-47	9
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	48-53	10
A. Venue and date	48	10
B. Agenda.....	49	10
C. Participants	50	11
D. Evaluation.....	51-52	11
E. Documents and presentations	53	11
<i>Annex.</i> List of participants.....		12

Introduction

1. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organised an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) entitled “Green Agricultural Value Chains for Improving Livelihood in the Arab Region” on 20-21 June 2013 in Beirut, in collaboration with The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ/BMZ) and in partnership with the Arab Network for the Protection of Nature (APN) / Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS).
2. The aim of the EGM was to assess the major constraints facing agricultural value chains in the region through an assessment of their structure, conduct and performance, with a view to proposing ways to enhance how these value chains work, enhance their resource–use efficiency and reduce the waste generated, while also improving food availability, food quality and livelihoods.
3. The value chain methodological framework allows a better understanding of how inputs are brought together to produce agricultural commodities, whether fresh or processed, and to assess the flow of goods and revenues. Value chains contribute to alleviating poverty, as they link smallholders to markets and allow the tracing and linking of geographically dispersed activities, characterization of roles and relationships in the chain of activities, and assessment of various economic, social, technological, environmental and institutional issues. Green agricultural value chains imply that good agricultural practices are being used as part of a strategic and transparent integration of material, information and capital flows in order to achieve specific economic, social and environmental objectives.
4. It is expected that the outcome of the EGM will feed into a project proposal to promote the development of agricultural value chains for the benefit of various stakeholders in member countries. The project will be submitted to potential donors for funding and will be implemented in collaboration with various partners at the national, regional and international levels.

I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The meeting consisted of five sessions: an opening session, substantive sessions on (a) promoting green agricultural value chains for food security in the Arab region; (b) agricultural value chains: overview, challenges and case-studies; and (c) framework for a regional initiative on agricultural value chains, and a final session dedicated to group discussions and the closing of the meeting.
6. The EGM reviewed and discussed policies and initiatives for developing and strengthening agricultural value chains in the Arab region with a view to identifying key challenges and opportunities and determining ways to improve efficiency in terms of higher productivity, improved resource use, improved quality and safety, and reduced waste.
7. Group discussions during the final session led to a set of general and specific recommendations related to the proposed framework for agricultural value chain development. The following recommendations were made:
 - (a) Promote agricultural development and food security through enhanced agricultural value chains at the national and regional levels;
 - (b) Put in place appropriate conditions for the development of a more supportive environment that, among other roles, provides adequate assistance to low income farmers, reduces bureaucratic red-tape and removes all monopolistic behaviours, notably for cereal milling, which relies heavily on imported cereals;
 - (c) Allot appropriate means to support small-scale farmers, including providing them with, or helping them to access, adequate financing and other means of production;

(d) Improve commodity storage in order to reduce waste, enhance marketing and retail standards and improve other value chain intermediate activities;

(e) Prioritize crops to be promoted based on their importance to achieve food security and improve farmer livelihoods. To this end, the following products are seen as having great potential and thus need to be promoted: cereals, olives and olive oil, cotton and sugar beets;

(f) Improve yields, identify suitable seeds, enhance farming practices including irrigation, planting, fertilization and insect, disease and pest controls, and develop supporting marketing system;

(g) Support the various processes of agricultural value chains including production, processing, storing, handling, transporting and marketing with a special emphasis on priority crops such as cereals, olive oil, cotton and sugar beets. There will also be a need to improve the value-added of internationally traded commodities, such as olives and cotton, in order to avoid re-importing related processed products at exorbitant prices;

(h) Promote the production of seeds locally by supporting or establishing appropriate research centres. To this end, there is a need to establish a committee of research institutions (including the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) and national institutions), academics and field experts in order to develop a practical plan to implement the above;

(i) Promote the establishment of agricultural cooperatives to support small-scale farmers; Provide support for farmer education and capacity-building and develop appropriate extension services; Promote the development of organic products, including cotton;

(j) Develop appropriate agricultural manufacturing and/or processing networks especially for those crops in which countries of the region already have a comparative advantage;

(k) Strengthen regional cooperation and coordination between concerned public and private institutions, alongside the harmonization of agricultural rules and regulations;

(l) Promote regional cooperation and coordination between civil society organizations operating in the agricultural sector (including industrial and commercial groups, NGOs and other stakeholders);

(m) Identify all organizations working on agricultural development, food security and food sovereignty issues with an emphasis on agricultural value chains, while also enhancing coordination and cooperation among them;

(n) Develop a comprehensive database of stakeholders, which could lead to a re-evaluation of the organizations working in this field. This could be accomplished through a cooperative agreement between ESCWA, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), ANFS and others;

(o) Study and address the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for the agricultural sector in the region in order to promote more equitable rural development and the improvement of livelihoods;

(p) Prioritize programmes and sub-programmes in light of the results of the ESCWA-GIZ report on Green Value Chains for Improving Livelihoods in the Arab Region. In doing so, ESCWA would coordinate, guide and supervise the work of civil society, whose role would be to prepare a roadmap and a programme for the priority sectors identified;

(q) Develop the legal, institutional and technical framework throughout the value chain with a view to guaranteeing transparency and efficiency.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

A. OPENING SESSION

8. The opening session was chaired and moderated by Ms. Roula Majdalani, Director, Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD) at ESCWA. It comprised statements from representatives of the three organising partners, namely APN/ANFS, GIZ and ESCWA.

9. In her statement, Ms. Razan Zuayter, President of the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN), stressed the need for a true partnership with the Arab civil society. She briefed the audience on APN work in the area of food security over the last 10 years, which focused on food sovereignty. She underscored that APN advocates the development of alternative production, distribution and consumption methods based on the rights of small food producers and the right of the people to sovereignty over their natural resources. She went on to note that the Green Value Chain (GVC) idea is based on changing relations between producers and final consumers, while taking into consideration the intermediate levels of the chain. She noted that this could support and protect small farmers, enabling them to have better access to production resources, applying new agricultural laws and strengthening the role of the State.

10. Mr. Berthold Hansmann, Technical Advisor, GIZ, noted that there are two relevant joint ESCWA-GIZ events that had already taken place, namely a workshop on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) in September 2011 and a side event during the Rio+20 Conference in Brazil in June 2012. The VSS meeting gave a mandate to the two institutions to pursue follow-up activities to promote sustainable agricultural development and trade through the use of appropriate standards. The second event promoted the need to support food security and food safety with a view to improving livelihoods in rural areas. He then noted that the current event was a continuation of the previous two events, which sought an appropriate mandate for developing additional activities, including a pilot project.

11. Finally, Dr. Nadim Khouri, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCWA, welcomed participants and applauded the fruitful collaboration between ESCWA, GIZ and APN in organizing this meeting. He noted that greening value chains will result in better use of natural resources, as it will lead to improved productivity and increased income for smallholders and women. He listed some of the major challenges facing the Arab region, including its status as the largest cereal importer in the world; increasing unemployment, especially among the youth and women; and decreasing agricultural productivity. He also noted that food security is at the heart of sustainable development activities in the region. Finally, he provided a short overview of the Dubai Declaration, noting that it provides an opportunity to translate Rio+20 outcomes into workable activities at the regional level.

12. These opening remarks were followed by a presentation by Ms. Reem Nejdawi, Chief, Productivity Sectors Section (PSS), SDPD, ESCWA, who briefed the audience on the work of ESCWA and SDPD, with a particular emphasis on activities related to the green economy, the Rio+20 outcomes, and their implementation in the Arab region. In particular, she emphasized the Rio+20 outcome document, “The Future We Want,” and its follow-up. Among the achievements she listed was the preparation of the post-Rio+20 agenda, for which a Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) was organized in May 2013, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. She noted that at the end of the RIM the “Dubai Document” was adopted, which provides a joint position statement and a set of recommendations for advancing sustainable development and Rio+20 outcomes.

B. SESSION 1: PROMOTING GREEN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS FOR FOOD SECURITY
IN THE ARAB REGION

13. During the session, three presentations were made and two discussants provided their points of view prior to plenary discussions. The session was moderated by Ms. Roula Majdalani, Director, SDPD, ESCWA.

14. Mr. Abdul Karim Sadik, Economic Advisor, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, made a presentation on “Enhancing Food Security in the Arab Region”, during which he noted that food security is a political, social and environmental issue. He also reviewed a number of challenges to food security in the region, including reliance on large quantities of imports and a continuously increasing population. He noted that water resources are being used unsustainably, even though the region is one of the most water-poor areas of the world. Among the options he listed to enhance food security in the region were improving agricultural productivity and irrigation capacities; improving water irrigation productivity through the use of high value crops; enhancing regional cooperation and adopting policies that support environmentally-friendly agricultural trade between Arab countries; re-using low-grade water to protect the environment; supporting related research and development; and providing investments for enhanced food production and other activities in the value chain.

15. Mr. Martin Keulertz, PhD Researcher at King’s College, London, delivered a presentation entitled “Arab Vulnerability in Global Food Supply Chains”. The presentation highlighted that the global agricultural commodity trade is dominated by a few big companies and that Arab countries have to deal with these big chains to meet their imports. He also noted that several firms from Asian countries are starting to compete with these global chains. He emphasized the fact that countries of the region are faced with significant challenges, such as the need to increase natural resources scarcity and the difficult geopolitical situation, which increases the vulnerability of the food supply chain. Finally, he noted that there is a need to develop a strategic Arab food supply system in order to make the region less dependent on global markets to meet its food needs.

16. Mr. Taha Ouarda, Researcher at MASDAR Institute, Abu Dhabi, UAE, provided a presentation entitled “Water-Energy-Food-Land Nexus Approach for Creating Opportunities to Improve the Agriculture Value Chains.” He provided a global overview of the issues facing the region, which include, among others, a high population growth rate and a growing scarcity of natural resources, notably land and water. He then proceeded to highlight the interdependencies existing between water, energy, land and food. He noted that the above nexus elements have an impact on agricultural value chains, be it as related to food and agricultural production (land, water), processing (water, energy), handling and storage (energy, water, land), marketing and retailing (water, energy) and others. He then identified several steps to promote the nexus approach, including the long-term investigation of resource availability and balance, modelling spatial distribution and temporal dynamics and assessing the impact of the climate, among others.

17. In the discussions that followed, participants underscored the need to address the disconnect between academics and research on the one hand, and on the other, lived experiences at the level of communities, where alarm is growing over the deterioration of the food supply and livelihoods. This calls for an improvement in the relationship between the media and civil society so that they may better inform all stakeholders. It was also noted that food security is a political issue which has worsened the levels of poverty in the region, especially since the 2009 food crisis. There is a need to look more carefully into the issue of food sovereignty as, in the case of supply shocks, countries may place restrictions on the sale of their produce, notably wheat. It was noted that water, energy and land are interconnected to each other and to food. Issues such as storage, handling, climate change impact and regional cooperation and collaboration must also be taken into account.

18. Two discussants provided additional insights based on their experiences. Ms. Mariam Al Jaajaa, Policy Officer, APN, underscored the fact that a large part of the Arab population lives in rural areas; that agricultural imports in the Arab region have tripled while agricultural exports have not; that the global

liberalization of food markets does not improve food security; that agricultural value chains tend to emphasize increasing productivity rather than the fair distribution of food; and that there is a need to think at the regional level, rather than exclusively at the global level.

19. Ms. Aziza Darghouth, Strategic Planning Expert, National Observatory of Participatory Citizenship, Tunisia, pointed out that the sectoral problems related to sustainable development and food security means that issues should be assessed from the farmers' point of view, as they often face difficulties in having their voices heard.

20. In the ensuing discussions, participants emphasized the need to differentiate between food security and food self-sufficiency. The need to achieve food security was underscored, which implies taking into account the constraints of natural resources. It was also said that no institutions were currently able to supervise agricultural value chain development at the regional or national levels, although AOAD is trying to find a regional solution.

21. The presenters closed the session with a few final points. Mr. Sadik highlighted the fact that value chains begin with farmers, who should be provided with efficient production methods including quality irrigation. Mr. Keulertz stressed the importance of strong civil society involvement and the need for further research, alongside the advice of various experts. Finally, Mr. Ouarda underscored the need to achieve food security, as opposed to self-sufficiency, and the need for greater intra-regional cooperation.

C. SESSION 2: AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS: OVERVIEW, CHALLENGES AND CASE-STUDIES

22. The session was moderated by Ms. Razan Zuayter, President, APN. It comprised a presentation and comments by two panel discussants, followed by a plenary discussion.

23. Mr. Fidèle Byiringiro, Economic Affairs Officer, SDPD, ESCWA presented the background document for the meeting, entitled "Green Agricultural Value Chains for Improved Livelihood in the ESCWA Region." He noted that the study was produced jointly by ESCWA and GIZ with contributions from two consultants, who contributed case studies on resource use efficiency and value chain analyses in Lebanon and Tunisia. He then proceeded with the presentation of the report, noting that it provides a review of agriculture trade in the region and focuses on the potential for increasing intra-regional trade. He also provided an overview of agricultural value chains noting that they allow the examination of economic, social, technological, environmental and institutional issues in the production and consumption of agricultural produce. He went on to highlight the importance of developing green agricultural value chains as a means of addressing the socio-economic and environmental challenges facing the region. He also provided an overview of the seven implementation tasks proposed for the development of efficient agricultural value chains, before moving on to the recommendations, which included the need to set appropriate priorities, enhance trade policies, strengthen markets and institutions, improve agricultural productivity and competitiveness, improve access to markets, simplify and rationalize regulations, improve infrastructure, and introduce and enforce appropriate standards for quality and safety.

24. Two discussants provided their views on the report. Dr. Rami Zreik, Professor, American University of Beirut (AUB), noted that the food security problem does not exist on the global level even though half of all food is wasted. In the Arab region, the problem arises because the land cannot feed the current population. He also noted that the distribution of land resources and production is unfair. He acknowledged that trade is unavoidable but that it should not be capitalistic. He recognized that green value chains is an approach for analysis with the objective of achieving sustainability. However, he stressed the need to better understand internal corruption and its influence on value chains performance and noted that there is a need to humanize agriculture before making it green.

25. Mr. Hasan Machlab, Country Manager for Lebanon, ICARDA, emphasized the importance of ICARDA's work to decrease poverty in desert areas through research and working in the field with farmers.

He explained that they are developing ways to harvest plant varieties that require less irrigation. He also highlighted the importance of transmitting advanced techniques to farmers so they could improve their production, thereby allowing them to avoid the over-exploitation of their productive resources. He noted that productivities need to be improved in order to enter markets; that farmer associations need to be developed or strengthened to give them a greater voice; and that there is a need to better assess if green value chains could improve the situation of women in the region.

26. The ensuing discussion covered a number of topics, including the need to identify the impacts of green value chains on small farmers, who should be supported in conforming to and orienting themselves towards green value chains. It was noted that ministries of agriculture have the least funding and thus cannot implement the full agricultural development agenda, including the development of properly functioning agricultural value chains. Moreover, rural areas and farmers are somehow marginalized, a situation which must change. There is also a need to emphasize the importance of cooperatives and to encourage their establishment, as well as quality certificates and quality control through standards. Finally, a unified system should be adopted at the regional level to ensure food safety, quality control and proper packaging and labelling.

D. SESSION 3: FRAMEWORK FOR A REGIONAL INITIATIVE ON AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS AND BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

27. The session was chaired by Mr. Mehdi Jaffaar, Vice President, Environment Society of Oman, and featured a presentation and comments by one discussant before breaking out into group discussions.

28. Ms. Reem Nejdawi, Chief, Productive Sectors Section, ESCWA, presented a framework for a regional initiative on agricultural value chains that is being developed by ESCWA and GIZ. The initiative is entitled: “Enhancing sustainable production and consumption in the agricultural sector in the Arab region” and aims to contribute to sustainable development and enhancing food security in the Arab region. Its main activities include an in-depth assessment of agricultural value chains; the formulation of a framework for promoting best practices and supporting the establishment of an Arab GAP; the implementation of activities to promote competitiveness; and supporting regional and national efforts while ensuring better and sustained harmonization of rules and procedures.

29. Mr. Berthold Hansmann noted that the focus should be on efficiency and how to bring the activities down to the field level in order to improve production systems at farm level. He also noted that there is a need to design more environmentally friendly and more efficient systems through capacity-building and other activities. He also indicated the need to promote intraregional trade instead of focusing exclusively on trade with European countries. He underlined the work that was done by GIZ in Africa to develop farmer business schools and wondered whether that experience could be replicated in the Arab region.

30. In the discussions which followed, it was understood that there is currently a shift from MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) to SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and that agriculture, fisheries and natural resources management are being included in the discussions at the global level. Several other points were made, including the possibility of linking the initiative to the Sustainable Consumption and Production programme proposed by LAS while also stressing on the importance of the civil society in the design and implementation of the initiative.

31. The moderator of the session invited all participants to join the group discussions so that their views could be reflected in the recommendations. The participants were then split into three groups with the first group discussing the issue of identifying priority crops and the other two groups discussing the major actions for implementation and contribution from stakeholders and regional institutions.

E. SESSION 4: PRESENTATIONS OF BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS

32. The session was co-chaired by Ms. Reem Nejdawi and Mr. Fidele Byiringio, and opened with reporting from the various discussion groups, followed by plenary discussions and concluding remarks by ESCWA, GIZ and APN.

GROUP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY CROPS

33. The first group's focus was on identifying priority crops for the region. While taking into consideration the differences in priorities for Arab countries, it also recognized their many commonalities, including the low incomes of farmers, bureaucracy, corruption and monopolistic behaviours. Taking this into consideration, the group identified the four priority crops as:

34. *Cereals*: Production yields in the region are much lower than global yields, and there is a need to identify suitable cereal crops for major areas while also rationalizing farming practices in terms of irrigation, seeds, fertilization and the control of diseases and insects. There is a need for the provision of financing, particularly for small-scale farmers in countries where this is not already being done. There is also a need to improve storage methods in order to reduce waste in addition to supporting marketing and other activities such as milling. It was stressed that Governments should be encouraged to support research so as to increase and improve production and to this end it was suggested to look into how to establish a committee comprising ICARDA, ICBA, academics and field experts in order to develop a practical plan to implement the proposal.

35. *Olive oil*: Olive oil should be promoted, noting in particular that there is a need to develop an appropriate marketing mechanism in relevant countries.

36. *Cotton*: Cotton should also be a priority commodity as it has a high added-value potential that has yet to be exploited, as some countries in the region sell raw cotton, only to buy it back as manufactured goods at exorbitant prices.

37. *Sugar beets*: The last proposed priority crop could be sugar beets, due to its potential to substantially improve the livelihoods of farmers.

GROUP 2: MAJOR ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTRIBUTION FROM STAKEHOLDERS AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS: VALUE CHAIN AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

38. The second group identified a few major actions that should be taken by stakeholders and regional institutions in relation to value chain and agricultural development. Actions were proposed for specific priority crops. For cereals, Governments should play a major role in promoting the development of the various processes including the establishment of agricultural cooperatives to support small-scale farmers. Emphasis would be placed on developing and adopting appropriate varieties of cereals by supporting scientific research, educating small-scale farmers and prioritising cereals over other crops. The issues of storage and marketing, both intra- and extra-regional, need to be addressed as well. Moreover, in order to determine how to achieve food self-sufficiency, specific strategic plans would have to be developed for each country alongside a more general regional plan.

39. Regarding olive oil and cotton, Governments should facilitate marketing for the international market with a special emphasis on value-added goods, as opposed to raw materials only. In addition, Governments should look into how to support the production of organic cotton and processing cotton internally.

40. The group identified several other actions that could be implemented in other sectors as well. These include, for example, the need to link production to demand; encouraging cooperative, rather than individual, production; assisting small-scale farmers to access appropriate funding; avoiding the development of

monopoly firms; finding alternatives to importing seeds with an emphasis on producing them internally; and the establishment of research centres to support agricultural development.

41. Finally, the group underscored the need to develop manufacturing and other agricultural industries, especially for sectors or crops in which regional production levels are high, while avoiding the development of monopolistic firms—especially when most of the needed input is imported (for example, cereals).

GROUP 3: MAJOR ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND CONTRIBUTION FROM STAKEHOLDERS AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

42. The focus for the third group was on how to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination among the various stakeholders in the public and private sectors and civil society (industrial and commercial groups, NGOs and the public). The group identified four potential areas to be developed:

43. The first would be to determine the scope of the mandate of the various organizations working on agriculture, food security, and food sovereignty issues in the region. To this end, it was recommended to seek ways to enhance coordination between ESCWA, AOAD and ANFS so that, for example, a database of stakeholders working on these issues could be established.

44. A second area would be the further study of the regional agriculture SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), which could result in a re-evaluation of organizations and stakeholders working in this field. This activity could also be accomplished through a cooperative agreement between ESCWA, AOAD and ANFS.

45. The third area would be the development of a programme for priority areas in light of the results of the study on green agricultural value chains. To this end, ESCWA could provide assistance to civil society, whose role would be to prepare a roadmap and a coherent programme for the priority areas identified.

46. Finally, there would be a need to develop an appropriate legal, institutional and technical framework that could support the implementation of the tasks that were identified. This could guarantee transparency and efficiency in addition to encouraging the participation of the private sector.

47. The working groups' presentations were followed by a plenary discussion in which a number of points were raised. These included the need to redevelop traditional techniques like water storage; redesign the policies not adapted to the priorities of local communities; and re-focus national priorities towards farming. It was further highlighted that many agricultural studies already exist, although they are buried in archives due to a lack of follow-up and continuity of action. It was also noted that there is a need to develop an Arab regional action plan to tackle the various issues highlighted at the regional level. Finally, it was noted that farmers should be at the center of agricultural policies. As such, there is a need to resist the urge to focus solely on the provision of humanitarian aid, and instead build their capacity and provide them with appropriate assistance to improve their productivity and efficiency.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. VENUE AND DATE

48. The meeting was held at the United Nations House in Beirut, Lebanon on 20-21 June 2013. The meeting was followed by a half-day meeting of the “Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS)” on 21 June 2013.

B. AGENDA

49. The agenda of the expert group meeting comprised the following sessions:

- (a) **Opening session:** Welcome and opening statements;
- (b) **Session 1:** Promoting Green Agricultural Value Chains for Food Security in the Arab Region;
- (c) **Session 2:** Agricultural Value Chains: Overview, Challenges and Case-Studies;
- (d) **Session 3:** Framework for a Regional Initiative on Agricultural Value Chains and Breakout Group Discussions;
- (e) **Session 4:** Reporting on Breakout Group Discussions and Closing.

C. PARTICIPANTS

50. The meeting was attended by a total of 54 participants, including representatives of the organizing partner institutions. Experts from 13 different Arab countries (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, the Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen) attended the meeting. The participants included academics and practitioners from different sectors including the agricultural, social and environmental fields with specific expertise in industry, water, energy, economy, and women's rights. The full list of participants is attached as an annex to this report

D. EVALUATION

51. Participants were requested to fill out an evaluation questionnaire assessing the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the meeting for future improvement. A total of 26 participants filled out the questionnaire, of which 77 per cent indicated that the EGM had achieved its goals. About 85 per cent of respondents indicated that the EGM was up to their expectations, while about 89 per cent noted that the EGM had introduced new ideas. Also, about 96 per cent said that they had benefited from the EGM while about 93 per cent rated the quality of presentations as good or excellent.

52. There was an unanimous (100 per cent) response in favour of follow-up activities, with numerous suggestions from participants that primarily focused on enhancing communication, networking, and conducting studies and researches. Key proposals included:

(a) To create a committee for the main identified crops (cereals, mainly wheat; cotton; olive oil; and sugar beets) which would include academics, researchers and field experts to follow up on the recommendations of the meeting, including assessing the development of related value chains;

(b) To request that ESCWA promote joint Arab cooperation on the issue, and raise the awareness of decision-makers to include this topic in their countries' strategies;

(c) To develop educational materials for incorporation in higher education curricula;

(d) To organize jointly with FAO, AOAD, and funding organizations a follow-up meeting for governmental and Arab civil society representatives, in order to draw and execute an action plan;

(e) To organize sub-regional meetings in selected countries, such as Egypt, Jordan and Iraq which target farmers and decision-makers;

(f) To organize a meeting with ESCWA, GIZ, AOAD and civil society organizations to outline a future vision to execute the initiative proposed by ESCWA.

E. DOCUMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

53. The documentation and presentations from the EGM are available online at: <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3181E>.

Annex*

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. EXPERTS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

Mr. Jassim Mohamed Hasan Ali Alhamrani
Investment Accountant
Bahrain Youth Democratic Society (BDYS)
Bahrain
Tel.: 97336404420
E-mail: Jassim.alhomrani@gmail.com

Ms. Hala Nayel Barakat
Researcher, Right to Food Unit
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
Egypt
Tel.: 20227960197/27960158
Mobile: 201227799563
Fax: 20227960197/27960158
E-mail: hala.barakat@gmail.com,
hala.barakat@eipr.org

Ms. Elsayeda Ibrahim Mohamed Moustafa
Professor of Economics
Vice-Dean - Faculty of Commerce
University of Alexandria
Egypt
Tel.: 002035439556
Mobile: 00201000066346
Fax: 002034865655
E-mail: elsamoustafa@yahoo.com

Mr. Qasim Abdulameer Jaber Al-Mudhafar
Chairman
Iraqi Bee Keepers Association
Iraq
Tel.: 96415425965
Mobile: 9647901103835
E-mail: qmudhaffer@yahoo.com

Mr. Adnan El-khaddam
President
Farmers Union
Jordan
Tel.: 962795865378
E-mail: a.alkhaddam@yahoo.com

Ms. Amneh Hamoud Saleem Alsihat
President
Jordanian Women Union Karak – branch
Jordan
Tel.: 962799032248
Mobile: 962799032252
Fax: 9625687061
E-mail: amneh.suhaimat@hotmail.com

Ms. Riwa A. Kahale
Arabic Network for Protection of Nature (APN)
Jordan
Mobile: 962777879278
E-mail: riwa@kahale.info

Ms. Nadine Abdelkhalek
Agriculture Engineer
Head Refrigeration Service
Head of Packaging and filing Service
Ministry of Agriculture
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611823900
E-mail: nadabelkhalek@yahoo.com
nkhalek@agriculture.gov.lb

Mr. Ziad M. Shammas
Managing Partner
Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI)
Lebanon
Tel.: 9616952959/ 9616954959
Mobile: 9613228877
Fax: 9616651250
E-mail: ziad.w@chammas.org
ziad.p@chammas.org

Ms. Rana Tabcharani Saliba
Head and Project Manager
Environment and Energy Department
Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI)
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611350280/1/2
Mobile: 9613940383
Fax: 9611351167
E-mail: ali@ali.org.lb
rana_tabcharani@hotmail.com

Mr. Ali Darwish
President
Green Line Lebanon
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611746215
Mobile: 9613372660
Fax: 9611746215
E-mail: alihkd@gmail.com

Ms. Najla Fahed
Treasurer
Green Line Lebanon
Lebanon

Tel.: 9611746215
Mobile: 9613584178
Fax: 9611746215
E-mail: nfahed@gmail.com
nfahed@greenline.org.lb

Mr. Taleb Harake
Union of Fishermen
Lebanon

E-mail: minaaoz@hotmail.com

Ms. Jehane EL-Khoury
CEO of Live World Translation
Assistant to Dr. Patrick Cortbaoui- ESCWA
Consultant

Live World Translation Lebanon
Tel.: 9619921 218
Mobile: 9613951156
E-mail: jehane20@hotmail.com
jehane@liveworldtranslation.com

Ms. Alexandra Tohme
Lebanese Mission to the UN in NY
Lebanon

Tel.: 96270934040/12013944096
E-mail: ajtohme@gmail.com

Mr. George Nasr
Civil Engineer
University Professor
Lebanese University
Lebanon

Mobile: 9613320331
E-mail: george.j.nasr@gmail.com

Ms. Amal Khreis
Free lancer- Sustainable Development
Expert-Food Technology
Lebanon

Tel.: 9611300363
Mobile: 9613861363
Fax: 9611300363
E-mail: amalkrez@hotmail.com

Ms. Alia Sabra
Research Fellow
AUBMC
Lebanon

Tel.: 9611748105
Mobile: 9613702104
E-mail: sabra.alia@gmail.com

Mr. Mohamed Hakech
Engineer Rural Economy
General Secretary of Agriculture
National University of the Agricultural Sector
Morocco

Tel.: 212537700480
Mobile: 212660574467
Fax: 212537708012
E-mail: hakechmo@yahoo.fr

Mr. Ibrahim Deeik
Head of Board
The Palestinian Farmers Union
Palestine

Tel.: 97222971354
Mobile: 972598865333
Fax: 97222971358
E-mail: admin@pafu.ps

Mr. Ahmed J. H. Sourani
Institutional and Agro Development Facilitator
Resource person on agriculture development
Palestine

Tel.: 97082855612
Mobile: 971595858528
Fax: 97082855612
E-mail: haninahmed@hotmail.com
a.sourani@ids.ac.uk

Mr. Mohammed Elbakri
UAWC
General Manager
Union of agricultural work committees
Palestine

Tel.: 97082853086
Mobile: 970599417566
Fax: 97082853075
E-mail: info@uawc.net

Ms. Abla Mahdy Abdelmoniem Ahmed
President
HAWA Organization
Sudan

Tel.: 249912912461/249912912461
Mobile: 2491871052
E-mail: ablamahdi@hotmail.com

Mr. Wael Mualla
Professor, Department of Water Engineering
Faculty of Civil Engineering
Damascus University
Syrian Arab Republic
Tel.: 963113718832
Mobile: 963933224548
Fax: 96315860460
E-mail: wmualla@scs-net.org
wmualla@gmail.com

Mr. Musa Asmar
Engineer Rural Economy
General Secretary of Agriculture
Orient Agricultural Company
Syrian Arab Republic
Tel.: 9631121237000
Mobile: 71161961
Fax: 963112123701
E-mail: rm8084@live.com

Ms. Habiba AlHashmi
Chairperson
Emirates Environmental Group
United Arab Emirates
Tel.: 97143448622
Mobile: 971506448747
Fax: 97143448677
E-mail: eeg@emirates.net.ae

Mr. Gawad Nasser Ali
Engineering
Agriculture Cooperative Union
Yemen
Tel.: 967733218483
E-mail: jawad7273@gmail.com

B. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. Wafaa Amer
Biodiversity Expert
Advisor to the Director General on Biodiversity
and Environmental Affairs
Botany Dept. Faculty of Science and
Manager of Science Heritage Center
Former Director of the Nature Conservation
Sector (NCS, EEAA, Egypt)
AOAD - Biodiversity expert
Cairo University
Tel.: 201001099445
E-mail: wafaa_amer@hotmail.com

Mr. Ahmed Salem Ahmad
Expert at Director General Office
Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
(AOAD)
Sudan
Tel.: 249966211140
Mobile: 249966211140
Fax: 249189471076
E-mail: asahmed1964@yahoo.fr

Mr. Akram Alkhouri
Head of Biodiversity Program Arab Centre for the
Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)
Syrian Arab Republic
Tel.: 963112266250
Mobile: 963933227775 009
Fax: 63112264707
E-mail: akrkha@hotmail.com

Ms. Carole El Hachem
National Project Coordinator
United Nations Industrial Development
Organization (UNIDO/ICU)
Lebanon
Mobile: 9613388398
E-mail: carolehachem@hotmail.com
c.errighi@unido.org

C. RESOURCE PERSONS

Mr. Martin Keulertz
PhD Researcher
King's College London
UK
Tel.: 49 173 27 33 555
E-mail: martin.keulertz@kcl.ac.uk

Mr. Abdul Karim Sadik
Economic Adviser
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development
Kuwait
Tel.: 96522999000
E-mail: asadik@kuwait-fund.org

Mr. Rami Zreik
Professor
Faculty of Agricultural and Food Science
American University of Beirut (AUB)
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611374374 ext: 4571
Mobile: 9613733227
Fax: 9611374374 ext: 4572
E-mail: rzurayk@aub.edu.lb

Mr. Mehdi Jaffaar Matwani
Vice President
Environment Society of Oman
Oman
Tel.: 96824790945
Mobile: 96899433038
Fax: 96824790986
E-mail: mehdi.jaaffar@gmail.com

Ms. Aziza Darghouth
Sociologist, Strategic Planning Expert
National Observatory of participatory citizenship
Tunisia
Tel.: 21671981145
Mobile: 21620226544
E-mail: az.darghouth@gmail.com

D. PARTNERS

Ms. Razan Akram Omar Zuayer
President
Arab Group for Protection of Nature
Arab Network for Food Sovereignty (ANFS)
Jordan
Tel.: 962795552324
E-mail: razan.zuayer@gmail.com

Ms. Mariam Al Jaajaa
Policy Officer
Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)
Jordan
Tel.: 96265673331
Mobile: 962796927711
Fax: 9625677999
E-mail: mariamjaajaa@gmail.com

Mr. Mohammad Qtaishat
Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN)
Jordan
Mobile: 962799265570
E-mail: Info@apnature.org

Mr. Taha Ouarda
Professor, Water and Environment Engineering
MASDAR
United Arab Emirates
Tel.: 97128109107
E-mail: touarda@masdar.ac.ae

Mr. Hasan Machlab
Country Manager- Lebanon
International Centre for Agricultural Research in
Dry Areas (ICARDA)
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611813303/1
Mobile: 9613211553
Fax: 9611804071
E-mail: h.machlab@cgiar.org

Mr. Berthold Hasmann
German Agency for International Cooperation
(GIZ)
Germany
E-mail: berthold.hansmann@giz.de

Ms. Liliane Soueidan
Project Assistant
German Agency for International Cooperation
(GIZ)
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611849644
Mobile: 96113977119
Fax: 9611849644
E-mail: liliane.soueidan@giz.de

E. ESCWA

Mr. Nadim Khouri
Deputy Executive Secretary
ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978805
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: khourin@un.org

Ms. Roula Majdalani
Director
Sustainable Development and Productivity
Division (SDPD)
ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978502
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: majdalani@un.org

Ms. Reem Nejdawi
Chief Productive Sectors Section (PSS)
SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978578
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: nejdawi@un.org

Mr. Fidele Byiringiro
Economic Affairs Officer
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978519
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: byiringiro@un.org

Mr. Riccardo Mesiano
First Economic Affairs Officer
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978568
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: mesiano@un.org

Mr. Cameron Ian Allen
Associate Expert
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978570
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: allen6@un.org

Ms. Rita Wehbe
Research Assistant
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978513
Mobile: 96171199533
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: wehbe@un.org

Ms. Mirna Choueiri
Research Assistant
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978586
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: choueirim@un.org

Mr. Alexander Haddad
Research Assistant
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978585
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: haddada@un.org

Mr. Moneem Murrah
Administrative Assistant
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978525
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: murrahm@un.org

Ms. Rana Mitri
Team Assistant
PSS/SDPD/ESCWA
Lebanon
Tel.: 9611978582
Fax: 9611981510-2
E-mail: mitri@un.org