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**23-24
September 2026
Cairo, Egypt**

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE, WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY



Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals
**Women, Peace and Security and Climate Change in the Arab Region:
Operationalizing Policy Coherence for the Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus**

23 - 24 September 2026

Steigenberger Hotel El Tahrir, Cairo, Egypt

Concept Note

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding, is convening a Regional Workshop for the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals on Women, Peace and Security and Climate Change in the Arab Region. The meeting will be held in Cairo, Egypt, 23 – 24 September 2026.

1. Background

The Arab region faces deep-rooted and longstanding gender inequalities, shaped by structural, legal, social and economic factors that long predate recent crises. Over the past years, two additional and increasingly intertwined challenges have further compounded these pre-existing inequalities and hindered the region's efforts to achieve its sustainable development targets and goals: accelerating climate change and protracted conflict.

While not the root causes of gender inequality, climate change and conflict act as powerful threat multipliers, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and creating new barriers to women's rights, agency and participation¹. The region is among the world's most water-scarce, and rising temperatures, extreme weather events and desertification are deepening existing social, political and economic vulnerabilities². Women are particularly exposed to specific climate hazards — droughts that deplete water sources and destroy harvests, floods that damage homes and displace families, heatwaves that intensify outdoor labour burdens, and sand and dust storms that devastate agricultural land and livestock — each compounding pre-existing gender inequalities in distinct ways. Women in the Arab region experience climate change in uniquely gendered ways, owing to deeply entrenched gender inequalities compounded by limited access to resources, chronic conflict and mass displacement. Yet women's political participation and representation in the region remains among the lowest globally, constraining the adoption of gender responsive climate policies and limiting women's ability to

¹ UNDP (forthcoming), Guidance Note on Operationalizing the Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus.

² UN Women (2026), Gender, Climate, Peace and Security in the Arab States: In Brief.



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contribute to the discussions on responses that affect them most³. In fragile states, climate change intensifies traditional conflict drivers, resource competition, displacement and economic stress, while armed conflict contributes to environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources, locking communities in a cycle of compounding insecurity⁴.

Women and girls bear a disproportionate share of these burdens. Discriminatory laws on land and inheritance, limited access to credit and technology, and exclusion from decision-making restrict women's ability to adapt and recover⁵. According to a new report by UN Women, women produce between 60 and 80 per cent of food in the Arab region yet own less than 5 per cent of land with increasing unpaid care responsibilities during crises⁶. These livelihood impacts differ between rural and agrarian settings, where women farmers depend heavily on land and natural resources, and urban and peri-urban informal settlements, where women face loss of informal livelihoods and shrinking access to basic services. Closing these gaps requires targeted financing mechanisms, including micro-finance, mobile banking and digital asset tools, designed to reach women across both contexts. Enhancing women's adaptive capacity requires concrete interventions: income diversification programmes that reduce dependence on climate-vulnerable livelihoods; access to micro-credit for reconstruction of homes, land and livestock after climate shocks; and expanded social protection coverage, particularly access to affordable healthcare in areas where costs spike sharply following natural disasters and during conflict. When climate shocks and conflict strike, women's burdens intensify and their exposure to gender-based violence, early marriage and exploitation increases⁷. The Arab region hosts approximately 28 million refugees and internally displaced persons⁸, and displaced women face compounded risks of poverty, violence and livelihood loss, with limited mobility and fewer economic options heightening their vulnerability⁹. In humanitarian settings, women's access to assistance is frequently constrained by protection risks and mobility restrictions, underlining the need for gender-responsive humanitarian action. When climate shocks and conflict strike repeatedly, the cumulative toll on women's resilience deepens with each successive crisis, making long-term recovery increasingly difficult without sustained support.

Yet, evidence from the Arab region demonstrates that women possess contextually specific knowledge and play critical roles in managing natural resources, mediating disputes and sustaining community

³ ESCWA (2023), Mainstreaming Gender in Climate Action in the Arab Region.

⁴ UNDP (forthcoming), Guidance Note on Operationalizing the Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus.

⁵ ESCWA (2016), Conflict, Climate Change and Their Mutually Reinforcing Impact on Gender Imbalances in the Arab Region.

⁶ UN Women (2026), Gender, Climate, Peace and Security in the Arab States: In Brief.

⁷ UN Women (2026), Gender, Climate, Peace and Security in the Arab States: In Brief.

⁸ UNHCR, Middle East and North Africa Regional Overview, mid-2025.

URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/where-we-work/regions/middle-east-and-north-africa>

⁹ UN Women (2026), Gender, Climate, Peace and Security in the Arab States: In Brief.

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resilience. Yet their contributions remain largely unrecognised in formal policy and institutional responses¹⁰.

These intersecting crises directly undermine progress on several Sustainable Development Goals. The depletion of water resources and deteriorating water quality driven by climate stress and conflict threaten SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), with women and girls disproportionately bearing the burden of water collection in affected communities. Disrupted energy infrastructure and constrained access to clean, affordable energy in conflict-affected settings impede SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), further limiting women's economic opportunities and safety. The destruction of livelihoods, infrastructure and supply chains caused by protracted conflict and climate shocks erodes the foundations of inclusive industrialization and innovation central to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), deepening structural inequalities in already fragile economies. Displacement, the collapse of essential services and the proliferation of informal settlements undermine SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), exposing displaced women and girls to heightened risks of violence and exclusion. At the same time, the breakdown of governance, institutional capacity and the rule of law in conflict-affected states directly obstructs SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), weakening the accountability mechanisms and inclusive decision-making processes that are essential to gender-responsive and climate-resilient policy.

Despite these interconnected realities, most Arab States continue to develop Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans (WPS NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies in isolation, under separate mandates with limited coordination. In the Arab States, only five current WPS NAPs, those of Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates, reference climate change, and only Jordan's and Sudan's address climate-related insecurities in their outcomes¹¹. Across the region, only seven countries make substantive reference to gender in their NDCs¹². This disconnect reflects not only structural governance gaps but also limited institutional capacity and technical expertise within national women's machineries and line ministries to engage meaningfully with climate and conflict policy processes. Building and sustaining this capacity is essential, particularly in contexts where iterative climate shocks and recurring conflict continuously erode institutional gains and community resilience. A practical avenue for achieving this coherence is to move beyond parallel strategy documents and towards shared, cross-cutting projects that are simultaneously listed and funded across WPS NAPs, NDCs and DRR strategies — translating policy alignment into concrete, co-owned interventions on the ground.

¹⁰ UNDP (forthcoming), Guidance Note on Operationalizing the Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus.

¹¹ UN Women (2026), Gender, Climate, Peace and Security in the Arab States: In Brief.

¹² [Advancing gender equality in NDCs: progress and higher ambitions | Data Futures Exchange](#)

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This disconnect is the central challenge the meeting addresses. To support governments and institutions in closing it, ESCWA, UNDP, UN Women and UfM, developed a number of knowledge products that address gaps and enhance synergies among the various national stakeholders. Such knowledge products capitalise on two recent developments. In November 2025, UfM launched the [UfM Network on Climate, Women, Peace and Security \(WPS\)](#) in Amman, Jordan, which builds on regional commitments, including the 5th UfM Ministerial Declaration (2022) and subsequent high-level dialogues, to move from fragmented initiatives towards a coordinated and action-oriented regional platform. The first output of the Network will be a new publication from the **MedWe Policy Study**¹³ (a joint UfM–IEMed initiative), which compiles and structures methodological inputs on the Climate–WPS nexus, to be presented in Cairo.”

Most recently, UNDP developed the draft Guidance Note on Operationalizing the Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus, following wide consultations in the region including with the UfM Network on Climate and WPS. The Guidance Note provides a practical framework for enhancing policy coherence across the WPS Agenda, Climate policies, DRR strategies, built around four interconnected pathways: governance and coordination; institutional and technical capacity; data, knowledge and evidence; and aligned financing. It also guides women-led organisations and civil society on engaging in policy advocacy at global, regional and national levels.

This meeting convenes the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals to strengthen the capacity of National Women's Machineries to understand and address the intersections between gender inequality, climate change, and conflict, and to translate this understanding into practical policy action, drawing on normative frameworks, collective knowledge products, and UNDP's upcoming Guidance Note. The event will further train participants on its tools and pathways, facilitate the exchange of national experiences, and foster a shared commitment to operationalizing the triple nexus through existing and forthcoming policy cycles.

2. Objectives

The meeting has the following objectives:

- To present the latest regional evidence on the gendered impacts of climate change and conflict.
- To strengthen the capacity of national women's machineries and other national stakeholders, including representatives from ministries of environment and civil society representatives, to engage meaningfully with climate governance processes, NDC revision cycles and DRR planning, and to advance gender-responsive policy coherence at national level.

¹³ *MedWE Policy Study 3 (MedWE3) on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Climate nexus, led by IEMed in coordination with the UfM Climate–WPS framework, is conceived as a preparatory analytical contribution to the UfM Regional Policy Report (2026). Its main objective is to outline the current state of play in terms of knowledge, data, and policy related to the climate–WPS nexus, while identifying key gaps, showcasing good practices, and providing actionable recommendations.*



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3. Partners

The meeting is convened by **ESCWA in partnership with the UN Women, UfM, UNDP and CCCPA.**

4. Participants

Approximately, 40 participants are representatives of National Women Machineries in the Arab region, ministries of environment and CSOs. Regional and international partners, including UN Women, UNDP, UfM, the Arab Water Council, civil society organisations and women-led organisations up to 60, will contribute as resource persons and facilitators.

5. Language

The meeting will be conducted in Arabic and English, with simultaneous interpretation into both languages.



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Agenda

Wednesday 23 September 2026

09:00 – 09:30	Opening Session - Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) – Nada Darwazeh, Chief, Women's Centre - UN Women – Janneke Van Der Graaff-Kukler, Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for Arab States - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – Chitose Noguchi, Resident Representative, UNDP Egypt Country Office - Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) – Petra Kežman, Deputy Secretary General - Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) – Ambassador Seif Kandeel, Director General
09:30 – 09:45	Preliminary Session: Presentation of Objectives, Agenda and Expected Outputs Overview of the two-day programme and how it is structured, <i>Nada Darwazeh, ESCWA</i>
09:45 – 11:00	Session I: The Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus in the Arab Region <i>Moderated by: Nada Darwazeh, ESCWA</i> - Climate trends in the Arab region, <i>Marlene Ann Thomaschewski, ESCWA</i> - Gendered impacts of climate change and conflict in the Arab States: livelihoods, displacement, resource access and women's agency, <i>Heba Zayyan, Regional Advisor on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, UN Women</i> <i>Moderated questions</i>
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:30	Session II: Introducing the UNDP Guidance Note on Operationalizing the Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus <i>Moderated and facilitated by: Rania Tarazi, Head of the Gender Task Force, Regional Office & Salma Nims, Independent Expert, UNDP</i> - Presentation on the conceptual framework of the Guidance Note - Guided group discussion on the conceptual framework - Overview of the Guidance Note: purpose and background

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12:30 – 14:00	Session III: Normative Frameworks and the State of Implementation in the Arab Region <i>Moderated by: Heba Zayyan, Regional Advisor on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, UN Women</i> ▪ The WPS Agenda and climate change: UNSCR 1325, National Action Plans and the Arab region's record, <i>Ms. Manar Zaiter, Independent Expert on Human Rights, Gender Equality and Justice</i> ▪ CEDAW General Recommendations Addendum to no. GR 30, 37 and 40, <i>Ms. Manar Zaiter, Independent Expert on Human Rights, Gender Equality and Justice</i> ▪ NDCs and national adaptation plans as entry points: how the 2025 NDC revision cycle creates opportunity, <i>Benjamin Basmaci, Regional Climate Specialist, UNDP</i>
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch Break
15:00 – 17:00	Session IV: Experiences from the Region: Women, Peace and Security: Emerging initiatives for a comprehensive, sustainable and effective regional response to current challenges <i>Moderated by: Nour El Kouny, Climate, Peace and Development Program Lead, CCCPA</i> ▪ The UfM Network on Climate, Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and IEMED MedWe Policy Study, <i>Anna Dorangricchia, Programme Manager Gender equality Union for the Mediterranean & Alexia Faus Onbargi, Programme Manager, Department of Sustainable Development and Regional Integration</i> ▪ Country experience: how Lebanon's NDC support programme built a gender-responsive, conflict-sensitive technical architecture, <i>Ms. Ramza Jaber, Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Lebanon</i> ▪ Jordan: Addressing climate change in national action plans, <i>Ms. Samar Al-Husseini, Director of the Institutional Performance Development Unit, Ministry of Environment, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</i> ▪ Iraq: Addressing climate change in NAPs, <i>Ms. Yusra Kareem Mohsen, Director General, National Directorate for Women, Republic of Iraq</i>



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Thursday 24 September 2026	
09:00 – 10:30	Session V: Governance, Coordination and financing for advancing the Gender-Climate-Conflict Nexus in policy making <i>Moderated and facilitated by: Salma Nims, Independent Expert & Barbora Sakho, Gender Specialist, UNDP</i> - Brief presentation on pathway one: governance, coordination and financing - Group work using the Guidance Note checklists (governance and financing in the national context) - Open discussion on governance, coordination and financing
10:30 – 12:00	Session VI: Institutional and Technical Capacity in the UNDP Guidance Note <i>Moderated and facilitated by: Salma Nims, Independent Expert & Barbora Sakho, Gender Specialist, UNDP</i> - Brief presentation on pathway two: institutional capacity - Group work using the Guidance Note checklists
12:00 – 13:30	Session VII: Data, Knowledge and Evidence <i>Moderated by: Nada Darwazeh, ESCWA</i> - Presentation on data and knowledge, Mr. Raidan Alsaqqaf, Deputy Director, Regional Office for Arab States, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – UNDRR - Alternative data-collection tools used by civil society organisations, Hosn El Oujoud B Bey, Researcher, Arab Reform Initiative & International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UfM Network on Climate, Women, Peace and Security (WPS).
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch Break
14:30 – 16:00	Session VIII: Use of data and evidence for analysis, planning, monitoring and reporting <i>Moderated and facilitated by: Rania Tarazi, & Salma Nims, UNDP</i> - Presentation on pathway three: data analysis and indicators on the intersections of climate, women, peace and security - Group work using the Guidance Note checklists
16:00 – 17:00	Session IX: the Way forward – national and regional actions <i>Facilitated by: Anna Dorangricchia, UfM.</i> Group work to collectively agree on: - A way forward that would support regional actions through engagement with the UfM Network on Climate, Women, Peace and Security (WPS). - Applying the Guidance Note; and - Developing National Policy Mapping and Priority Recommendations.
17:00 – 17:15	Closing Session: Wrap-up and Meeting Evaluation ESCWA Summary of conclusions, priority recommendations and meeting evaluation