**Regional consultation on draft guidelines on the effective implementation   
of the right to participate in public affairs**

[**United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**](https://www.google.ch/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjw0uSMovXWAhWCURoKHURxDyAQFggmMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unescwa.org%2F&usg=AOvVaw3Qc6g6S10NrCEKefxIaAPh) **(ESCWA)**

**Beirut, Lebanon**

**21 - 22 December 2017**

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

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| **Thursday, 21 December 2017** |

**Morning Session: 8am -11 am**

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| **8.00am-8.30am** | **Welcome, introduction and opening remarks.**  Opening remarks by Mr. **Abdel Salam Sidahmed**, Regional Representative, Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).  Opening remarks by Mr **Hernan Vales**, Human Rights Officer, Rule of Law and Democracy Section, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) |
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| **8.30am-9.30am** | **Session 1: The right to participate in public affairs: Scope, content, and related guidance at the international, regional and national levels.**  Moderator: Mr Hernan Vales  **Introductory remarks by Mr Fateh Azzam,** currentlyconsultant for numerous human rights and development institutions and inter-governmental organizations, former Director of Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship, and former OHCHR Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa.  *Discussion* |
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| **Coffee break 9.30am-9.45am** | |
| **9.45am-11.00am** | **Session 2: Ensuring an enabling environment for the effective exercise of the right to participate in public affairs: pre-requisites**  Moderator: Mr Fateh Azzam  **This session will discuss the normative and institutional frameworks which enable the enjoyment of the right to participate in public affairs. It will also focus on the inter-linkages between the right to participate and other human rights, the implementation of which constitutes a pre-requisite for the full enjoyment of the right to participate, in particular, the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association**.  **Introductory remarks by Ms Dima Jweihan** (**Jordan**), Executive Director of the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office of the International Center for Not for-Profit Law (ICNL) in Amman, Jordan.  *Discussion* |
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| **Lunch break 11.00am-12.30pm** | |

**Afternoon session: 12.30pm – 3.30pm**

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| **12.30pm- 2.00pm** | **Session 3: Enjoyment of the equal right to participate in public affairs by all: overcoming challenges, creating opportunities and sharing good practices.**    Moderator: Mr Fateh Azzam  **This session will focus on challenges, and ways to overcome them, as well as sharing good national practices, with regard to enhancing the right to participate of various marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, minorities, and young people. All discussions will include challenges from a gender perspective.**   * **Enhancing women’s participation in public affairs: the practice of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**   **Introductory remarks by Ms Naéla Gabr** (Egypt), Member of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**.**   * **Enhancing women’s participation in public affairs : perspectives from civil society organizations**   **Introductory remarks by Ms Wajeeha S. Al-Baharna** (Bahrain), Vice-President of the Bahrain Women’s Association.  *Discussion* |
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| **Coffee break 2.00pm-2.15pm** | |
| **2.15pm**  **3.30pm** | **Session 3 (*continued*): Enjoyment of the equal right to participate in public affairs by all: overcoming challenges, creating opportunities and sharing good practices.**  Moderator: Mr Hernán Vales (OHCHR)     * **Participation of young people**   **Introductory remarks by Mr Adel Sabaneh** (Palestine),Operations Manager at Sharek Youth Forum.   * **Participation of minorities**   **Introductory remarks by Mr Zuhair Lazgeen** (Iraq), Yezidi peace activist and “Ambassadors of citizenship” for the initiative *Kulluna Muwatinun* (“We are all citizens”). *Discussion* |
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| **Closing** | |

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| **Friday, 22 December 2017** |

**Morning Session: 8am – 11am**

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| **8.00am-9.30am** | **Session 4: Various forms and levels of participation, including emerging new forms.**  Moderator: Mr Hernán Vales (OHCHR)   * **Participation in electoral assistance and elections**   **Introductory remarks by Ms Zeina El-Helou** (Lebanon), Secretary General, Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE).   * **Good national and regional practices in relation to ensuring accountability and transparency of public decision making processes and institutions**   **Introductory remarks by Mr. Khaled Emam** (Egypt), Programs Director, Arab Program for Human Rights Activists (APHRA).  *Discussion* |
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| **Coffee break 9.30am – 9.45am** | |
| **9.45am-11.00am** | **Session 4: Various forms and levels of participation, including emerging new forms (*continued)***  Moderator: Mr Fateh Azzam   * **Enhancing the role of civil society in the formulation, monitoring and implementation of policies and legislation in the context of post-conflict and peace-building efforts.**   **Introductory remarks** **by Ms. Haya Atassi Onugoren** (Syria), co-founder of the Syrian Youth Assembly (SYA).  *Discussion* |
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| **Lunch break 11.00am-12.30pm** | |

**Afternoon session: 12.30pm-3.30pm**

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| **12.30pm-1.30pm** | **Session 4: Various forms and levels of participation, including emerging new forms (*continued)***  Moderator: Mr Hernán Vales (OHCHR)   * **Technology and social media: opportunities and challenges to strengthen equal and meaningful participation**   **Introductory remarks by** **Mr Tarik Nesh-Nash** (Morocco), CEO & co-founder GovRight.    *Discussion* |
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| **1.30pm-2.30pm** | **Session 5: The right to participate at the regional and international level, including within international organizations.**  Moderator: **Mr Fateh Azzam**  **Introductory remarks by Ms Amal Basha** (Yemen), Chairwoman of Sisters Arab Forum for Human Rights (SAF).  *Discussion* |
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| **Coffee break 2.30pm-2.45pm** | |
| **2.45pm-3.30pm** | **Closing session**  ***Recap of discussions, final discussion and participants’ recommendations on Content of guidelines.*** |
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