

## **Status and Needs of Water Statistics in the ESCWA region**

**Wafa Aboul Hosn,  
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA),  
Beirut,  
Lebanon,  
[aboulhosn@un.org](mailto:aboulhosn@un.org)**

**ABSTRACT:** The ESCWA region (13 countries of West Asia and Egypt) is characterized largely by arid land, and water scarcity where freshwater renewable resources represent only 0.4 percent of the global renewable water resources. Groundwater dependency for the ESCWA region exceeded 50 percent in 2000 except for Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon and Syria. Eight ESCWA member countries have per capita renewable water resources of under 500 cubic meters per year which indicates absolute water scarcity. Non-conventional water resources are mainly derived from seawater desalination in the Gulf countries and agricultural drainage re-use in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt.

The weakness in providing reliable, timely, detailed and comparable official statistics on water quantity and quality is a source of major concern in the region given the increasing constraints on water resources. ESCWA is undertaking major efforts at the policy level in the region for a sustainable and integrated management of water resources. At the statistics level UNSD, ESCWA UNEP/ROWA, are collaborating to build capacity in the ESCWA region in environment statistics in general and water statistics in particular. Efforts need to be sustained and coordinated further with other UN and regional agencies concerned with water statistics to strengthen capacity of member countries in assessment of water resources, comparable sectoral consumption, addition of new areas of interest to the region such as water markets and water accounts.