

# Under the high patronage of the President of the Lebanese Republic **His Excellency General Joseph Aoun**

**AFSD 2025**  
**Arab Forum** for  
Sustainable Development  
Restoring hope, raising  
ambition

Beirut, 14-16 April 2025



E/ESCWA/CL5.SDGs/2025/RFSD/L.1

## Detailed Agenda

Beirut time (GMT+3)	DAY ONE: MONDAY, 14 APRIL 2025
9–10.30 a.m.	<b>OPENING SESSION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Artistic segment</li> <li>Welcoming remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Rola Dashti</b>, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA</li> <li><b>Amina J. Mohammed</b>, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations (video message)</li> <li><b>Muhammad Ali Tamim</b>, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning of the Republic of Iraq, Chair of AFSD-2025</li> <li><b>Ahmed Aboul Gheit</b>, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States</li> <li><b>General Joseph Aoun</b>, President of the Lebanese Republic, represented by <b>Fadi Makki</b>, Minister of State for Administrative Reform, Lebanon.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;"><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>
10.30–11 a.m.	<b>BREAK</b>
11 a.m.– 12.30 p.m.	<b>HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE</b> <b>Sustainable development and the emerging geopolitics: lost and found opportunities for the Arab region</b> Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Noha El-Mikawy</b>, Professor of Practice in the Public Policy and Administration Department and Dean of the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, American University in Cairo, Egypt</li> </ul> Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Karim Haggag</b>, Professor of Practice, School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, American University in Cairo, Egypt</li> <li><b>Marwa Fatafta</b>, MENA Policy and Advocacy Director, Access Now (virtual)</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hala Bsaisu Lattouf</b>, former Minister of Social Development, Jordan</li> <li>• <b>Mahmoud Mohieldin</b>, United Nations Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</li> <li>• <b>Nizar Yaiche</b>, former Minister of Finance, Tunisia</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	
<b>12.30–1.30 p.m.</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>1.30–3 p.m.</b>	<p><b>MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION – PACT FOR THE FUTURE: GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT</b></p> <p><b>Towards an inclusive, open, sustainable, safe and secure digital future for all</b></p> <p>The United Nations adopted a Global Digital Compact at the Summit of the Future in September 2024. This comprehensive governance framework for digital technology and artificial intelligence strives for an inclusive, open, sustainable, safe and secure digital future for all. This high-level session will discuss the implementation of the Compact and its policy implication towards an efficient digital transition in the Arab region.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lina Oueidat</b>, National ICT, Cybersecurity and AI Advisor, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Lebanon</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kamal Shehadeh</b>, Minister of the Displaced and Minister of State for Technology Affairs and Artificial Intelligence, Lebanon</li> <li>• <b>Amr Aljowaily</b>, Assistant Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs and International Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration, and Egyptian Expatriates Affairs, Egypt</li> <li>• <b>Walaa Turki</b>, Advisor, Ministry for Information and Communication Technologies, Tunisia</li> <li>• <b>Mounir Tabet</b>, Regional Expert, Lebanon</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	<p><b>Special session 1</b></p> <p>Women's roles in recovery and post-conflict reconstruction</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><a href="#">More info</a> <a href="#">Session link</a></p>
<b>3–3.15 p.m.</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	

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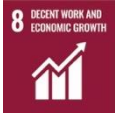
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3.15–5.15 p.m.



## **THEMATIC SESSION – SDG 8 REVIEW**

### **Decent employment in support of economic growth**

Where does the region stand on SDG 8? Which initiatives have succeeded in creating decent work opportunities for all? How can Arab countries accelerate progress to include those who are left behind inside the job market, steering transformative shifts towards innovative, productive and sustainable economies?

Moderator:

- **Hanan Nazier**, Professor of Economics, Cairo University, Egypt

Panelists and discussants:

- **Khaled Mahmoud Al-Bakkar**, Minister of Labour, Jordan (virtual)
- **Fayçal Bentaleb**, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Algeria (virtual)
- **Enas Dahadha Attari**, Minister of Labor, State of Palestine (virtual)
- **Najwa bint Abdulrahman Al-Thani**, Undersecretary, Ministry of Labour, Qatar
- **Ibrahim Saif**, Economist, former Minister, Jordan
- **Maha Al-Rawi**, Director General, Department of Human Development, Ministry of Planning, Iraq
- **Najat Simou**, Member of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, Chairwoman of the Commission for Employment Affairs and Professional Relations, Morocco (virtual)
- **Hind Benammar**, Executive Secretary, Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC), Jordan
- **Najoua Zhar**, Economist and Sustainable Development Expert, Union of Arab Chambers, Lebanon
- **Ali Abdullah Al Ibrahim**, Deputy Director, Regional Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Network, Qatar

[Watch the session](#)

3.15–4.45  
p.m.

### **Special session 2**

Behavioural  
science as a  
pathway to  
development  
impact in the  
Arab countries

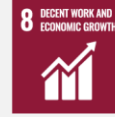
[More info](#)  
[Session link](#)

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5.15–5.30 p.m.	<b>BREAK</b>
5.30–6.30 p.m.	<b>Ceremony:</b> <b>ESCWA Digital Arabic Content Award for Sustainable Development 2024-2025</b>  <a href="#">Watch the session</a>

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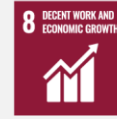
Beirut time (GMT+3)	DAY TWO: TUESDAY, 15 APRIL 2025	
9–10.30 a.m.	<p><b>ARAB SDG BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE</b>  <b>Advancing financial inclusion in the Arab region</b>  Access to and use of financial services can foster entrepreneurship, empower vulnerable populations, and alleviate poverty and inequality. Yet, 197 million people in the Arab region remain financially excluded. This roundtable – the second in the Arab SDG Business Roundtable series – will explore policies and innovative solutions to enhance financial inclusion for underserved groups, particularly women, persons with disabilities, and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Discussions will focus on financial literacy, the potential of fintech and the role of the private sector in achieving this goal.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mohammad Ibrahim Fheili</b>, Executive in Residence, Suliman S. Olayan School of Business, American University of Beirut, Lebanon</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nasser Al Kahtani</b>, Executive Director, Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND)</li> <li>• <b>Sherif Lokman</b>, Sub Governor, Financial Inclusion Sector, Central Bank of Egypt</li> <li>• <b>Maher Mahrouq</b>, Director General, Association of Banks in Jordan</li> <li>• <b>Fatma Triki</b>, Director of Research and Development, Enda Inter-Arabe, Tunisia</li> <li>• <b>Heba Hagrass</b>, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities</li> <li>• <b>Arafo Hassan Barbad</b>, General Secretary, Network of Ambitious Djiboutian Entrepreneurs (REDA)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Special session 3</b>  <b>– A youth led special session</b>  Children’s voices, sustainable futures:  protecting child rights in times of conflict</p> <p><a href="#">More info</a>  <a href="#">Session link</a></p>

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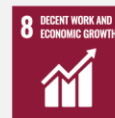
	<p>Discussant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Dani Ibrahim</b>, Founder and General Manager, EA Advisory LLC, United Arab Emirates</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	
<b>10.30–11 a.m.</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
11 a.m.– 12.30 p.m.	<p><b>MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION – ON THE ROAD TO THE SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (WSSD2)</b></p> <p><b>Upholding inclusive social development in the face of new inequalities, conflict and shrinking fiscal space</b></p> <p>Thirty years after the first World Summit for Social Development, the aspirations embodied in the Copenhagen Declaration to eradicate poverty, achieve full productive employment and decent work, and promote social integration seem out of reach for the Arab region. This session aims at preparing and positioning the region in the context of the forthcoming Second World Summit for Social Development, due to take place in Doha, Qatar, in November 2025. It will discuss the zero draft outcome document of the Summit with a view to assess its suitability to the regional context and identify additional elements that the Arab countries could push for in the political negotiation process.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Hania Sholkamy</b>, Associate Professor, Social Research Center, American University in Cairo, Egypt</li> </ul> <p>Video message:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Omar Hilale</b>, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, and co-facilitator of the intergovernmental preparatory process for the Second World Summit for Social Development</li> </ul> <p>Ministers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Wafaa Bani Mustafa</b>, Minister of Social Development, Jordan</li> <li><b>Hind Kabawat</b>, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Syrian Arab Republic</li> </ul>	<p><b>Special session 4</b></p> <p>Promoting a human-centred approach to artificial intelligence and digitalization in the Arab region</p> <p><a href="#">More info</a> <a href="#">Session link</a></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Buthaina bint Ali Al Jabr Al Nuaimi</b>, Minister of Social Development and Family, Qatar</li> <li>• <b>Haneen Sayed</b>, Minister of Social Affairs, Lebanon</li> <li>• <b>Naima Ben Yahia</b>, Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family, Morocco (virtual)</li> <li>• <b>Ahmed Kouchouk</b>, Minister of Finance, Egypt (virtual)</li> </ul> <p>Panelists and discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maher Johan</b>, Undersecretary, Ministry of Planning, Iraq (virtual)</li> <li>• <b>Heba Hagrass</b>, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities</li> <li>• <b>Jassim Al-Hamrani</b>, Director of Strategic Planning and Communication, Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States</li> <li>• <b>Hanouf Abdulrahman N. J. Al-Thani</b>, Director of the International Organizations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar</li> <li>• <b>Tarek El Nabulsi</b>, Director of Development and Social Policies Department, Social Affairs Sector, League of Arab States</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	
<b>12.30–1.30 p.m.</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
1.30–3 p.m.	<p><b>MINISTERIAL DISCUSSION – ON THE ROAD TO THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT (FfD4)</b></p> <p><b>Advancing a renewed global FfD framework and reforming the international financial architecture</b></p> <p>The Arab region faces major financing challenges that contribute to an SDG financing gap exceeding \$660 billion annually. The upcoming Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) presents a pivotal opportunity to advance Arab positions on reforming the global financial architecture.</p>	<p><b>Special session 5</b></p> <p>Re-imagining the future of women in food systems: harnessing science, technology and partnership to advance the SDGs</p>

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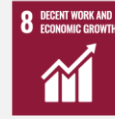
	<p>This ministerial discussion aims to strengthen the Arab region's position ahead of FfD4, which will take place in Seville, Spain, from 30 June to 3 July 2025. The session will assess the conference's draft outcome document, review initial negotiations, and discuss the region's key priorities to help shape the global financing agenda.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ibrahim Ahmed Elbadawi</b>, Founder and Managing Director, Economic Policy and Research Center</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yassine Jaber</b>, Minister of Finance, Lebanon</li> <li>• <b>Abbas Kadhom Obaid</b>, Chair of the Group of 77 and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations</li> <li>• <b>Jesús Ignacio Santos Aguado</b>, Ambassador of Spain to Lebanon</li> <li>• <b>Mahmoud Mohieldin</b>, United Nations Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</li> </ul> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Navid Hanif</b>, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (virtual)</li> <li>• <b>Dima Al-Khatib</b>, Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (virtual)</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	<p><a href="#">More info</a> <a href="#">Session link</a></p>
<b>3–3.15 p.m.</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	

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3.15–5.15 p.m.



## **THEMATIC SESSION – SDG 5 REVIEW**

### **Five years to 2030: Is the region on track to achieve gender equality?**

This session will take stock of progress on SDG 5 in the Arab region, including in the amendment of legislation to support gender equality and the empowerment of women. It will discuss the lessons learnt in policymaking for gender equality, and developments in data availability to inform policies and track progress.

Moderator:

- **Salma Nims**, Founder and Chief Consulting Officer of Inclusive Scopes Advisors, Jordan

Panelists:

- **Wafaa Bani Mustafa**, Minister of Social Development, Jordan
- **Naima Ben Yahia**, Minister of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family, Morocco (virtual)
- **Inaya Ezzeddine**, Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Women and Children Committee and the SDG 2030 Agenda Parliamentary Committee, Lebanese Parliament, Lebanon
- **Intisar Abdullah Al Wahaibi**, Director General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Statistical Centre (GCC-STAT) (virtual)
- **Marwa Sharafeldin**, Senior Technical Advisor and Expert on the Middle East and North Africa Region in the Global Musawah Movement for Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family, Egypt (virtual)

Discussant:

- **Manar Zeaiter**, Lawyer and consultant on gender justice, Lebanon

[Watch the session](#)

3.15–4.45 p.m.

### **Special session 6**

Supporting young people's learning, skilling and transition to decent work in the Arab countries

[More info](#)  
[Session link](#)

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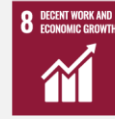
Beirut time (GMT+3)	DAY THREE: WEDNESDAY, 16 APRIL 2025	
9–11 a.m.	<p><b>THEMATIC SESSION – SDG 3 REVIEW</b></p> <p><b>Delivering healthcare in emergencies</b></p> <p>The Arab region is achieving good progress towards SDG 3 on good health and well-being. Healthcare systems, however, are impacted by emergencies such as conflicts, natural disasters and pandemics. This session will assess progress towards SDG 3 in the Arab region, focusing on the drivers of progress and the causes of regression. The session's theme is health systems under emergencies, with a focus on several aspects such as universal health coverage, integrated primary healthcare, digital technologies, and regional solidarity.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sawsan Abdulrahim</b>, Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, Chair, IDRC Chair in Forced Displacement, American University of Beirut, Lebanon</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arash Rashidian</b>, Director, Science, Information and Dissemination, World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean</li> </ul>	<p><b>THEMATIC SESSION – SDG 14 REVIEW</b></p> <p><b>Integrated management of marine ecosystems in the Arab region</b></p> <p>The Arab region is surrounded by unique marine environments that provide income for millions of people. While good progress has been achieved in designating marine protected areas, biodiversity protection has not been enough to halt marine ecosystems' degradation. Building on an assessment of SDG 14 in the region, this session will discuss national measures and regional cooperation towards integrated marine ecosystems management and coastal conservation.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Manal Nader</b>, Director, Institute of the Environment, Balamand University, Lebanon</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mohamed Alrezaiqi</b>, Head of Coastal Zones Management Section, Environment Authority, Oman</li> <li>• <b>Lara Samaha</b>, Head of Ecosystems Department, Ministry of Environment, Lebanon</li> </ul>

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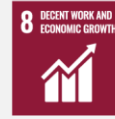
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Khuloud Al Mufarji</b>, Director of Planning, Ministry of Health, Oman</li> <li>• <b>Jilali Charrouk</b>, Head of Health and Nutrition Department, Planning Directorate, High Commission for Planning, Morocco (virtual)</li> <li>• <b>Mohannad Al Nsour</b>, Executive Director, Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET), Jordan</li> <li>• <b>Shereen Hussein</b>, Professor of Health and Social Care Policy, Department of Health Services Research and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom (virtual)</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ali El Kekli</b>, Environmental Expert, Ministry of Environment, Libya (virtual)</li> <li>• <b>Mohamed Said Abdelwarith Attea</b>, Environmental Researcher, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), Egypt (virtual)</li> <li>• <b>Mohammad Dawood Al-Ahmad</b>, Executive Secretary, Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), Kuwait</li> <li>• <b>Mehdi Aissi</b>, Marine Programme Manager, WWF North Africa, Tunisia</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>
<b>11.00–11.15 a.m.</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
11.15 a.m.– 12.45 p.m.	<p><b>ROUNDTABLE ON VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS</b></p> <p><b>Voluntary national reviews of countries in conflict</b></p> <p>Countries in conflict face a complex set of challenges that hamper their ability to undertake adequate follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, including a meaningful Voluntary National Review (VNR). This roundtable will focus on inspiring approaches and practical solutions through which countries in conflict can produce VNRs that help advance the SDGs and contribute to building and consolidating peace.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ola Sidani</b>, Economic Expert, Lead on Lebanon's 2030 Agenda, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Lebanon</li> </ul>	<p><b>Special session 7</b></p> <p>Migration, employment and the future of work: changing dynamics in the Arab region</p> <p><a href="#">More info</a> <a href="#">Session link</a></p>

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	<p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wafaa Al Mahdawi</b>, National Expert for the preparation of the VNR report, Ministry of Planning, Iraq</li> <li>• <b>Khalid Ismail Mohammed</b>, Director of International Finance and Investment, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Sudan</li> <li>• <b>Khaled Abu Khaled</b>, Director General, Registers and Statistical Monitoring Directorate, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, State of Palestine</li> <li>• <b>Mohamed Al-Hawri</b>, Deputy Minister of Economic Studies and Forecasting, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Yemen</li> <li>• <b>Nada El Agizy</b>, Director, Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, League of Arab States</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>		
<b>12.45–2 p.m.</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>		
2–3.30 p.m.	<p><b>ROUNDTABLE – Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2022-2031</b></p> <p>This session will take stock of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2022-2031 to date and way forward in the Arab region.</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ziad Abdel Samad</b>, Executive Director, Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Lebanon</li> </ul> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Omar Ahmed Mohamed Ali</b>, Minister of Trade and Supplies, Sudan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Special session 8</b></p> <p>Delivering quality, driving equity from policy to access: a regional vision for medical products</p> <p><a href="#">More info</a> <a href="#">Session link</a></p>	<p><b>Special session 9</b></p> <p>SDGs: a gender snapshot in the Arab region</p> <p><a href="#">More info</a> <a href="#">Session link</a></p>

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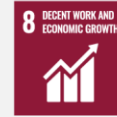
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mohamed Al-Hawri</b>, Deputy Minister of Economic Studies and Forecasting, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Yemen</li> <li>• <b>Abderrahmane Deddi</b>, Assistant Director-General for Strategies and Development Policies, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Mauritania</li> <li>• <b>Hassan Adam Hosow</b>, Chief Economic Advisor to the President and Executive Director of the National Economic Council, Somalia</li> <li>• <b>Hassan Mohamed Ali</b>, Director, Department of Regional and International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Somalia</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>		
<b>3.30–3.45 p.m.</b>	<b>BREAK</b>		
<b>3.45– 5.15 p.m.</b>	<p><b>(cont'd) ROUNDTABLE – Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2022-2031</b></p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Md. Abdul Alim</b>, Head of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) sub-programme, UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) (virtual)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Special session 10</b></p> <p>Localizing the SDGs: accelerating progress and evidence-based action</p> <p><a href="#">More info</a> <a href="#">Session link</a></p>	

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Beirut, 14-16 April 2025



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kinda Mohamadieh</b>, Senior Researcher and Legal Adviser, Third World Network (virtual)</li> <li>• <b>Nader S. Kabbani</b>, Director of Research and Senior Fellow, Middle East Council on Global Affairs</li> <li>• <b>Mustafa Khawaja</b>, Head of the Statistical Policies and Coordination Unit, ESCWA</li> <li>• <b>Hammou Laamrani</b>, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	
5.15–5.30 p.m.	<p><b>CLOSING</b></p> <p><a href="#">Watch the session</a></p>	