FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Thirty-fifth Session

Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman, 2-4 March 2020

Information Note

A. Conference arrangements

1. The 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC-35) will be held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman, from 2 to 4 March 2020. The inaugural ceremony will take place in the Plenary Hall at 09.00 hours on Monday, 2 March 2020.

2. The normal working hours of the conference will be from 09.00 to 12.00 hours and from 14.00 to 17.00 hours, unless otherwise decided by the conference.

3. An “Order of the Day” will be issued daily by the Conference Secretary, giving detailed information of the Regional Conference business, timetable of meetings, items to be discussed and other general information.

4. Copy of the Provisional Annotated Agenda (NERC/20/1) is being circulated to delegates with the invitation letter and this document as well as the Provisional Timetable (NERC/20/INF/2) and Provisional List of Documents (NERC/20/INF/3) will also be available on the NERC website at http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/nerc35/documents/en/.

5. The Secretary of the Regional Conference is Mr Serge Nakouzi, Deputy Regional Representative (DRR), FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE). He will be assisted by a number of FAO staff, whose names and functions will be included in a list to be issued on the first day of the conference.

B. Working languages

6. The working languages of the Regional Conference are Arabic, English and French. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided and the conference documents will also be issued in these three languages.
C. Documentation

7. The Regional Conference webpage is available at:

8. Working documents will be made available to all participating governments and organizations before the Regional Conference commences, at the following address:
http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/nerc35/documents/en/. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring their own copies of documentation to the meeting and to refrain from requesting additional copies. Documents drafted during the Regional Conference will be available at the documents distribution desk. All documentation will be published on the NERC webpage at the above-mentioned link.

D. Draft recommendations and amendments

9. Delegates who wish to submit draft recommendations, or other documents requiring decision by the Regional Conference, are requested to provide an electronic version of their text in English to the Regional Conference Secretary at FAO-RNE-NERC@fao.org. Delegates wishing to circulate other written materials related to the Agenda of the Regional Conference are requested to deliver 15 copies in Arabic, 15 copies in English, 15 copies in French to the Secretariat for distribution.

E. Advance communication of speeches and statements

10. Delegations are encouraged to limit their written statements to a maximum of 800 words. In order to ensure accuracy in interpretation, delegates are kindly requested to submit digital copies of their statements in Arabic, English or French, to the Secretariat of the Regional Conference at FAO-RNE-NERC@fao.org by Thursday, 20 February 2020.

11. FAO will post these statements on the Regional Conference webpage at:

F. Correspondence

12. All correspondence concerning the Regional Conference should be addressed to:

Mr Serge Nakouzi  
Conference Secretary, 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East  
FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa  
P. O Box 2223, Cairo, Egypt  
Tel: +202 33316000  
Fax: +202 37495981, or 33373419  
E-mail: FAO-RNE-NERC@fao.org

and copied to:

The Conference Affairs Officer in Oman, Ms Nora OurabahHaddad  
Telephone: (+968) 24955405  
Fax: (+968) 24601642  
E-mail: FAO-Oman@fao.org; nora.ourabahhaddad@fao.org
During the Regional Conference, the contact details of the Conference Secretariat are:

Title: RNE-DRR
E-mail: RNE-DRR@fao.org; RNE-ADG@fao.org; FAO-RNE-NERC@fao.org
Tel.: +20233316000

G. Webcasting

13. All plenary sessions will be webcasted live and/or uploaded to the Regional Conference website at: http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/nerc35/documents/en/.

H. Press liaison and information

14. For the duration of the conference, the FAO Information Officer, assisted by a team from the conference, will ensure contacts with the press and be responsible for matters concerning information to the public.

15. Foreign journalists must be accredited by the relevant Omani authorities prior to arrival in the Sultanate of Oman.

I. Conference venue

16. The main Regional Conference venue is the Plenary Hall in the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat:

Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre
Al Irfan, Airport Heights
PO Box 1659
Al Athaiba P.C. 130
Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2423 3800
E-mail: sales@oceccom
Website: www.omanconvention.com

J. WIFI

17. WiFi access will be available throughout the Regional Conference sessions.

K. Formalities for entry into the Sultanate of Oman

18. Information about visa requirements to enter Oman can be found at: https://www.rop.gov.om/english/countrylist1.html

19. All UN Laissez-Passer (UNLP) holders, regardless of citizenship, do not require a visa to enter Oman. The UNLP must be valid for at least six months from the date of arrival in Muscat.

20. Visa requirements to enter Oman include a passport valid for at least six months from the date of arrival in the country. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) of the Sultanate of
Oman will arrange for entry visas. To this end, the attached visa form should be completed and submitted before 20 February 2020. Participants should ensure that they submit a copy of their passport and a passport-size photo with the completed form to Manal.fahmy@fao.org. Participants should carry a printout copy of the visa and present it upon arrival to the airport authorities at Muscat International Airport.

21. The same passport that was submitted for obtaining the visa must be presented upon arrival.

I. Registration form and travel

22. The Regional Conference Secretariat has sent the registration form to all participants by email together with the invitation letter. A copy of the registration form is attached hereto.

23. The Omani authorities will provide participants with pick-up to and from the airport. Participants are requested to send their flight details to Manal.fahmy@fao.org as soon as possible prior to arrival, to ensure that they are properly met on arrival at Muscat International Airport. Participants are advised to mark their luggage clearly to facilitate identification.

24. Muscat International Airport is 12 km west of Muscat.

M. Foreign exchange and banking

25. Oman’s local currency is Omani Riyals (OMR). United States Dollars (USD), Euros (EUR) or other currencies can be exchanged at banks, hotels and foreign exchange services located in the airport, hotel and city. The current exchange rate is approximately USD 1 to OMR 0.384. Visa and MasterCard credit cards are usually accepted in hotels, airport and shopping malls.

26. Amounts of more than OMR 6,000, or the equivalent in foreign currency, must be declared to the Customs Officer.

N. Medical services and first aid

27. Medical and first aid services will be available at the conference premises. Each traveller should carry international travel insurance to cover any medical emergency. For medical emergencies please press the emergency button on the nearest phone and for all other medical services call the reception (0).

28. It is the responsibility of each participant to ensure that they have medical clearance and to carry sufficient prescribed medication. Vaccination cards indicating the necessary vaccines (especially for those arriving from areas where yellow fever is endemic) should be carried.

29. Due to the evolving situation of 2019-nCoV in the world, participants planning to come from or transiting through the People’s Republic of China are kindly requested to use alternative means of participation, namely video-conference tele-participation. FAO will make available the necessary means to facilitate such participation.

30. The risk of malaria is sporadic in Dakhliyah, North Batinah, and North and South Sharqiyyah. Precautions such as the use of mosquito repellent are advised.

31. The following numbers may be useful in case of emergency: 9999.
The nearby hospitals are:

Name: Muscat Private Hospital  
Address: Al Khuwair  
Tel: +968 24 583600

Name: Aster Al Raffah Hospital,  
Address: Ghubra  
Tel: +968 24 618900

Name: Starcare Hospital  
Address: Boshar  
Tel: +968 22 507777

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**O. Hotel accommodation**

32. Requests for hotel accommodation for participants should be made at the earliest possible date. Participants should use the online registration form available at each of the hotels listed below.

33. There are many high quality hotels in the immediate vicinity of the Regional Conference venue which can provide delegates with an ample choice of hotel accommodation. However, **it is strongly recommended to complete the online registration form at the earliest convenience**. A number of recommended hotels are available as choices to delegates during online registration, and a list is also included below:

- **J.W. Marriott**
  
  Al Jamah Al Akbar Street, Madinat Al Irfan  
  Contact person: John Simson, Assistant Director of Sales and Marketing  
  Tel./Mobile: +968 24920021; +968 71996104  
  E-mail: John.simson@marriott.com  

  Rate per room per night:

  Standard room: 85 OMR plus taxes, inclusive of breakfast  
  Executive room: 115 OMR plus taxes, inclusive of breakfast  
  Junior suite: 140 OMR plus taxes, inclusive of breakfast

  For reservation please use this link to book directly with the hotel:  
  [https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1580108345811&key=GRP&app=resvlink](https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1580108345811&key=GRP&app=resvlink)

- **Hormuz Grand Muscat, A Radisson Collection Hotel**
  
  OM, 111 Al Matar St. Muscat 128  
  Tel: +968 24350500 | D: +968 24350548 | M: +968 99697743  
  Contact person: Mr Alaa Chaar  
  Mobile: +96891389152  
  E-mail: alaa.elchaar@radissonhotels.com  

  Rate per room per night:

  Collection room: OMR 50.00 plus taxes inclusive of breakfast and transportation to OCEC  
  Collection executive room – lounge access: OMR 65.00 plus taxes inclusive of breakfast  
  Junior suite – lounge access: OMR 90.00 plus taxes inclusive of breakfast

  The following link can be used to book directly with the hotel: [http://bit.ly/2TUqd6N](http://bit.ly/2TUqd6N)
An e-mail can also be sent to Ms. Melody Obias for reservations:
reservations.muscat@radissoncollection.com

Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC
Al Jamah Al Akbar Street (adjacent to OCEC)
Tel: +968 24 252000
Contact person: Mr Mohammed Alamri
Mobile: +968 92225101
E-mail: mohd.alamri@ihg.com

Rate per room per night:

Superior room: 45 OMR inclusive of breakfast and taxes
Wadi view room: 60 OMR inclusive of breakfast and taxes
Junior suite: 85 OMR inclusive of breakfast and taxes

For reservations please use this link:

• Novotel Muscat Airport
Al Maardih street, Airport Heights, Seeb, P.O. Box 2688, PC 111, Muscat
Tel: +968 24 511 800
Contact person: Gordana Pesic, Director of Sales; Mobile: +968 71555185
E-mail: HB7A7-MK@accor.com

For reservations please send an e-mail to: HB7A7-MK@accor.com
Rate per night: 39 OMR inclusive of taxes and breakfast and transportation to OCEC

34. At check-in, hotels may require guests to present a credit card and/or make an advance cash payment. It should be noted that participants are required to settle their hotel bills on departure, including meals, bar, tips, telephone, laundry, etc.

P. Registration upon arrival at the venue

35. All delegates and observers are requested to register, upon arrival, at the Regional Conference plenary room to receive their identification tags and the meeting package. The registration desk will be open on Sunday, 1 March 2020 from 14.00 to 18.00 hours and daily from 08.00 hours onwards. The Regional Conference Secretariat will provide a Provisional List of Participants on the first day of the conference. The Secretariat should be notified of any corrections or additions to this list. Only registered participants will be issued with special badges, permitting them to enter the Regional Conference meeting venues.

Q. Weather and time

36. In March the average temperature in Muscat is expected to be 26 degrees Celsius, reaching highs of 30 degrees Celsius during the day and lows of 21 degrees Celsius at night.

37. Oman Standard Time is four hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+4).
R. Electricity

38. The voltage in the Sultanate of Oman is 240 V and the frequency is 50 Hz. Plugs and sockets used are type G.

S. Shopping

39. Shops are typically open from 09:00 hours to 23.00 hours.

Nearby shopping centres:
Oman Avenues Mall, Sultan Qaboos Street
Muscat Grand Mall, Dohat Al Adab street
City Center, Al-Seeb street

A useful tool to find the top restaurants, nightlife, shopping and businesses in Oman is http://www.tripadvisor.com/

T. Prayer room

40. A prayer room is available for use by Conference participants in the OCEC.

U. Security

41. Strict security measures are observed at the OCEC. Metal detectors are in operation at all the entrances of the Centre's buildings. Participants are requested to wear their FAO badges at all times and advised not to leave briefcases or any valuable items unattended in conference rooms.

42. Participants are advised to carry their valuables in a safe place. Once participants have checked into their hotels, it is advisable to leave important documents such as passports in the hotel safe and to carry a photocopy.

V. Car rental

43. Participants requiring cars can make their own arrangements with local car hire firms at the airport. The following are recommended car rental companies, also available at Muscat International Airport:

   Europcar Oman: Sunday to Thursday (08:00 - 17:00 hrs) Tel: +968 24 121165
   Dollar Rent a Car: Tel: +968 24 356278; Mobile: +968 99276300

Car rental can also be arranged at the hotel concierge desk.

W. Taxis

44. Taxis are the most reliable form of public transportation in the Sultanate of Oman. This service can be provided by the concierge team (ground floor, lobby area) at the hotel. The following transportation company can also be contacted:

   Oman Taxi: Tel: +968 92723854 (Whatsapp)
APPENDIX A

I. REGISTRATION FORM

This form should be submitted no later than 1 March 2020, together with a recent passport size photo.

PERSONAL DATA

Name of organization: ____________________________
Family name: __________________________________
First name: ____________________________________

☐ Ms ☐ Mr

Official title: __________________________________
Official address: ________________________________

Nationality

Arrival date: ________________________________
Departure date: ________________________________

Telephone: ________________________________
Fax: ________________________________
E-mail: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________

PHOTO must be attached
## PASSPORT DETAILS

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<td>Duration of stay in the Sultanate of Oman:</td>
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<td>The last entry date to the Sultanate of Oman:</td>
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