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Arab Sustainable Development Week Towards an Effective Partnership

Cairo 14-17 May 2017



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League of Arab States
Department of Sustainable Development &
International Cooperation



Arab Sustainable Development Week

Towards an Effective Partnership

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Under the Patronage of

His Excellency, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Abdel-fattah El-Sisi

The Arab Sustainable Development Week (ASDW) highlights the challenges facing Arab citizens from in all Arab countries from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf, and draws the roadmap of partnership and cooperation among different actors (governments, international organizations, NGOs, and private sector) with a view to implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan in this area of the world which faces serious and complicated challenges that threaten both the present and the future.

Mr. Ahmed Abu El-Ghait
Secretary General
the Arab League of States

14 January 2017



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1. Why do we hold the Arab Sustainable Development Week (ASDW)?

Preparation of the “2030 Sustainable Development Plan (SDP)” depended on a basic concept; to engage all Arab countries in the plan preparation provided that countries and stakeholders voluntarily participate in the implementation, determining date, place of the plan within less than fifteen years from now. This duration is supposed to improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable brackets regardless of their gender, race, age, religion or any other factor.

Arab countries are committed to the sustainable development objectives (SDGs), and like other countries, need answers to several questions such as: who are the most marginalized and most vulnerable brackets? How can current strategies and policies adaptable to suit the SDGs so that they can be practically achieved? What is the role of partnerships and how can they be effective? What is the role of science? How can we transfer, adapt, and localize technology? Then, how can we ensure enhancing ambition and determination to guarantee commitment in implementing the plan?

The adverse situations in the Arab region and escalation of economic, social and environmental difficulties that impede focusing on long-term planning for the sake of the urgent daily demands and requirements and slow down the process of attracting investments required for the SD, as well as the rise of various forms of vulnerability, risks, conflicts and instability in the Arab region since the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011 which threatened the life of Arab citizens, all together represented barriers to the Arab countries in achieving SDGs and made their first mission towards achieving the SDGs links to improve peace, security and stability.

As a matter of fact, the challenges facing the achievement of 2030 SDP require continuous analysis and monitoring. The related results should be submitted to decision makers on various regional, national and local levels in the Arab region. Such results need a deep and clear vision for measured realities particularly for challenges transcending barriers of political geography, civilizations and generations. When it comes to sustainable development, the major challenges that should be addressed are as follows¹:

- The growing sense of instability felt by Arab citizens, especially in the vulnerable and marginalized areas, particularly areas witnessing growing conflicts that have markedly affected the lives of 48% of the Arab population. Also, displacement, asylum and migration have become major concerns;
- The extent to which countries are able to recoup current losses and their repercussions on the decline of development levels. This requires exerting efforts and finding non-traditional solutions and measuring how such objectives could be achieved. The Arab region suffers the highest levels of conflicts, violence and vulnerability worldwide. According to World Food Program (WFP), the number of refugees, 7% of the Arab population, receiving food aids jumped from 5 million persons in 2011 to 30 million persons at the time being;
- The sharp fluctuations in the oil market and the global trend towards using renewable energy to meet the requirements of the Paris Climate Convention through drawing up development strategies that lead only to low emissions of greenhouse gases in the long term. Furthermore, the sharp decline in oil prices has recently affected the expected levels of future development. This

¹ Most of the cited percentages are taken from the Arab Report on Sustainable Development, No. 1, 2015 - ESCWA and the United Nations Environment Program.

requires preparing practical plans that take into account the maintenance of the achieved levels of development;

- The rapid pace of natural hazards increase the negative effects and pressures on human life economically, socially and environmentally as well as on natural resources:
 - Water scarcity in the Arab region is the most important challenge before Arab countries to establish security and stability, particularly with the decline of quality and quantity of water and the increasing need for different uses of water.
 - Many Arab countries depend on rivers and underground reservoirs that are shared with other neighboring countries; which poses risks under scarcity of water.
 - The rise of intensity, frequency and continuous durations of drought affecting large areas of the Arab region which is considered globally as the region with the most volatile climate and highest water evaporation rates.
 - Many Arab countries face the threat of inability to achieve food security, especially the least developed countries and regions with relatively high poverty rates, or countries where the agricultural sector has a high share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
 - Decline of agricultural output in light of the high level of uncertainty in agricultural production due to fluctuations in the global food market when some countries import 100% of their food needs. Densely populated Arab countries depend on high rates of grain imports, especially wheat which is an important strategic crop by 56.2%; which is higher than global average. There was a sub-regional rise in this trend, at a time when levels of land degradation are increasing and water usage efficiency levels in the Arab region are seriously declining.
 - While the level of malnutrition in the Arab region is improving, there have been significant differences when comparing sub-regions: the Levant showed unfavorable trends, the Arab Maghreb region witnessed a decline in malnutrition level, while the Gulf Council Countries (GCC) clearly showed a positive trend, in view of the fact that the area of agricultural land in the Arab region, only 4.1%, is significantly below the world average.
 - The agricultural land areas decreased by 64.5 million hectares after the separation of South Sudan. The average annual value of food production per capita in the Arab region (\$ 191.4) was much lower than the global average (\$ 311). The region showed a moderate positive trend with an agricultural production increase of 21%. However, there are still clear differences. Both the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Levant show moderate positive trends. The Arab Maghreb shows a positive trend of more than 43%, while the GCC show a decline of 18.5%.
 - The Arab region showed an improvement related to the decline in the value of food imports as a percentage of commodity exports estimated at 42.2% for the Arab region, 65.9% for the LDCs, 51% for the Levant and 43% for the GCC. However, the decline was small in the Arab Maghreb estimated at about 15.5%.
- The increase of the population growth by more than 2.2% that led to demand increase on natural resources as well as demographic changes represented in changing of population quantitative characteristics such as population density, distribution, growth, size and structure in addition to population qualitative characteristics such as development, education, nutrition and wealth.
- Urban growth and emergence of unsustainable consumption patterns. Today, 56% of the population lives in cities. This figure will reach 70% by the middle of the century, although there

are indicators for the average decline of population growth rate in the Arab region during the period from 2010 to 2015 at an average of 19.2% compared to the duration of 1990-1995. However, the total number of population is steadily increasing in many Arab countries.

- The Arab region has not achieved the Millennium Development Goals of reducing the population poverty rate for those with income below \$1.25. Although the rate in the Arab region (7.4%) is better than the global average, which is a challenge in achieving the first goal related to eradication of poverty, the regional trend in general is unfavorable. Thus, the Arab regional trend of this indicator shows an insignificant change at the regional and sub-regional levels.
- The Arab region did not meet the Millennium Development Goals of reducing the proportion of underweight children who are under the age of 5 years. Although the ratio in the region (12.7%) is better than the global average, the trend is medium scale in the region as a whole (-1.7%); it is (-27.5%) in the Levant, (-58.7%) in the Arab Maghreb and (-62.1%) in the GCC, while the LDCs do not show any positive trend over time.
- Rural migration to cities is met by a large-scale migration from poor countries to the world's richest regions, which has become a permanent feature of the world economy for decades as a result of major demographic changes in the Arab countries that would reshape economic development for decades.
- There are negative impacts of climate change on a number of social, economic and environmental levels. It also leads to increasing heat waves, droughts, floods which are accompanied by an increase in dust and sand storms, negative impacts on terrestrial and aquatic environments, posing a threat on biodiversity with its economic and social impacts as well as the expected rise in sea level with its effects on coastal areas in the second half of the century.
- The importance of addressing the challenges of climate change and the need to work closely with the international community to benefit from adapting to the requirements of international agreements, promoting regional cooperation in order to adapt to potential risks and taking advantage of opportunities available for climate finance and the transfer of climate-friendly technology.
- It is important to emphasize the reality of the current deterioration of the vegetation cover in the Arab region with its impact on food security. This, in its turn, leads to current and future increase in different losses in the Arab region due to land degradation, reduction in crop production rates and the rise of total losses as a result of the increase of heat waves, droughts and land deterioration. In addition, the decline of quality of water and land with its effects on many important biological and production fields, particularly in the areas irrigated with groundwater, necessitates the redistribution of water uses among key sectors. Thus, water consumption for agricultural purposes is expected to decrease by 20%.
- The current conditions of financial systems are incompatible with the approach to sustainable development and the need for supportive policies to ensure financial sustainability of investment and sustainable economic growth plans and programs. This requires working with international institutions and multilateral funds, along with mobilizing the existing domestic private and public financial resources.
- We would not be exaggerating when we say that the most serious challenges facing the efforts of the Arab countries in their endeavors to achieve the 2030 SDP is their ability to achieve the plan as well as the political and executive will to change the existing patterns of managing development with its different separate elements, which must be aligned with the SDGs.

- Such alignment must be integrated, interdependent and indivisible, and must have same characteristics to improve its credibility and increase its resources in the field of sustainable development as a means of changing the patterns of life in the Arab communities.
- The partnership between all development actors should be the key to achieving such partnership. Thus, addressing the challenges provides a path to reducing poverty and achieving shared prosperity if favorable national and international policies are developed. Governments with young populations can maximize demographic benefits through investment in health and education with the aim of best utilizing the skills of their youth and creating future job opportunities for them. Countries with older segments of the population should also consolidate their economic gains by enhancing productivity and supporting social safety nets and other care systems in order to protect the elderly.
- On the global level, the liberalization of cross-border trade and investment flows as well as movement of individuals can facilitate assistance in managing demographic imbalances.

Based on the above-mentioned information, the Arab Sustainable Development Week (ASDW) becomes very important as a part of the Arab League's efforts to propagate the concept of sustainable development and its goals and the 2030 agenda in the Arab region as an initiative launched by the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation of the Arab League. The ASDW represents the largest and most important event for addressing and finding means of comprehensively support sustainable development objectives in the Arab region.

The ASDW also serves as a platform for dialogue to deepen the common visions of Arab countries and partners on concepts, procedures and plans related to achieving the sustainable development goals and objectives in the Arab region. It also supports building up a specific Arab vision for both the Arab League and partners in handling this issue.

This is an important step towards raising public awareness of Arab citizens of the sustainable development importance; which gives the Arab region the lead in addressing 2030 agenda objectives in particular and sustainable development topics in general, and gives great impetus to the real implementation of development projects in the Arab region.

2. What are the objectives of the ASDW?

With the sponsorship of His Excellency the president of the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE), Abdel Fatah Al Sisi; the General Secretariat of the Arab League in collaboration with the Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation, the World Bank, the UNDP (Chairman of the UN Development Group) held the first Arab Sustainable Development Week (ASDW) in Cairo during the period from the 14th to the 17th of May 2017 under the slogan of: “**Towards an Effective Partnership**”.

The main goal of the ASDW is to “enhance the plans of achieving the SDGs in the Arab region” through the concerted efforts of Arab countries in order to achieve the 2030 agenda objectives as well as provide a framework to establish a high-level regional dialogue to discuss and review means of implementing these plans in the Arab region along with creating a supportive international and regional climate.

This goal will also be achieved through establishing partnerships with as many international, regional and Arab organizations and finance institutions as possible. This will enable the Arab countries to address

challenges and seizing opportunities to achieve the key goals upon which the future of the Arab communities depends in addition to creating a comprehensive Arab framework for research in sustainable development issues in the Arab region along with attracting the largest number of Arab and foreign participants from all walks of life to activate the principle of partnership for development.

The topics discussed during the ASDW included key development concepts representing the foundation for development action in the Arab region. They also included the work concepts and methodologies for alignment and interconnection in sustainable development; quality of life and living standard; enhancing peace, security and justice; economic growth, production and consumption; climate risks; and water and food security.

Participants

The participants are mainly the representatives of Arab governments, especially decision makers who meet to talk with representatives of international, regional and Arab organizations, civil society, private sector, women, youth, media, universities and research centers.

Outcomes of the ASDW include:

- Preparing an Arab vision that represents a foundation for the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation and a basis for coordination with general secretariats and related different ministerial councils. Another outcome of the ASDW is making recommendations and issuing a communiqué that are considered the roadmap for sustainable development. Also, an MOU was also signed with the World Bank.
- The common vision represents the basis for launching a number of Arab development projects that are applicable in cooperation with partner Arab, regional and international organizations particularly UN partners in addition to the private sector and the civil society.
- All outcomes of the ASDW were submitted to the “Arab Committee for Monitoring the Implementation of 2030 SDP in the Arab Region” that held its meeting after the end of the ASDW final session.

3. The ASDW Program and Topics:

The ASDW included a high-level plenary session on work concepts and methods as well as interconnection between the SDGs in addition to 10 main sessions reviewing the above-mentioned topics along with a number of side events organized in collaboration with the specialized UN agencies, the WB, civil society organizations, private sector and other SD partners.

Also, the WB held a forum on the sidelines of the ASDW to discuss “Water Vulnerability”. The Arab Health Council of Ministers held a high-level forum to discuss topics related to health and sustainable development. Furthermore, a meeting on management of drought risks in Somalia and the Horn of Africa was held. Due to the importance of establishing a facility for financing sustainable development and giving a distinguished role to the Arab Consultative Group for Science and Technology, a number of special meetings were organized to discuss such important issues.

The ASDW included six key pillars. Each point addresses the sustainable development concept with a view to achieving objectives, taking into consideration the concepts of interconnection between objectives and goals during implementing the plan. The points also address how far the Arab strategies and existing action plans need alignment with the SDGs and shedding light on challenges, opportunities and indicators giving a room for expressing opinions by various partner stakeholders including decision makers, private sector, financial institutions, civil society, media, researchers, academicians and the parliament Members (PMs).

First Pillar: Simplification of work concepts and methodologies as well as interconnection between SDGs

The term of “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” has become one of the contemporary terms and is now used on the international arena. It is very important to fully understand sustainable development and its terminology in order to master powerful rhetoric to influence the entire world. We should realize the meaning of this term with no ambiguity or confusion. In addition, this term should not be explained or interpreted in different ways as per each country’s culture or personal views which might create ambiguity and confusion in its meaning not only among the public but also among professionals.

Therefore, it is important to understand the SDGs upon which the lives of many people depend. We should also unify visions and concepts to understand the nature of problems so that they could be easy and clear to reach regionally agreed-upon solutions. In addition, specifying objectives and goals in a measurable way will require achieving a real progress and using a comprehensive approach using integrated policies covering the economic, social and environmental aspects as well as overlapping areas.

If the objective of poverty elimination requires provision of food, water and energy, it also requires access to well-paid job opportunities. Thus, providing energy to everyone requires working on developing renewable energy and sustainable agriculture opportunities. When we talk about achieving food security we will find out that it is impossible to achieve in view of the prevailing way of thinking focusing on the concept of self-sufficiency or the decline or lack of agricultural systems and practices that do not support the development in farmers’ communities, and aim at producing sufficient food that only caters for the people’s requirements. Food security should also focus on maintaining natural resource in view of the growing demand on water for other uses through prevention of through desertification, land degradation and fertility restoration. Here comes the importance of the sustainable agriculture concept that regulates and links production and consumption to food security.

Second Pillar: Human Dignity, Quality of Life and Living Standard

Poverty elimination was the key challenge before the UN in 2017. Through this topic, shocks, pressures to which Arab citizens are exposed are addressed with a particular focus on the poorest and most fragile communities; LDCs suffering from conflicts, displacement and social vulnerability.

This point also addressed topics such as eliminating poverty; sustaining a decent life; enhancing gender equality; empowerment of and giving women proper roles to achieve each and every SDG; protecting families and children; and the growth of the communities through effective institutions on all levels where development rates declined.

Third Pillar: Climate Risk Management

Climate change multiplies the challenges facing development in the Arab region, and increases risks of various socio-economic and environmental issues. It has become increasingly clear to us that development attempts that do not take into account the risk concept is in fact unsustainable. Therefore, national development policies must be reviewed and harmonized. Thus, many investments may be at risk; marine and terrestrial ecosystems face significant pressures due to misuse, as well as degradation of biodiversity and shrinkage of vegetation. The sharp rise in annual rates of fishing in Arab countries over the past two decades has put pressure on fish resources. This point also addresses climate risks and urgent actions required to combat climate change and its related effects; and to protect, restore and promote the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems such as forest management and combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation and the loss of biodiversity.

Fourth Pillar: Promoting Peace, Security and Justice

This point addresses issues related to the search for the best ways through which the development situation gets rid of the bottleneck in many Arab countries as a result of the events taking place in the region, which led to the rapid pace of political instability and insecurity, and to the increased doubts of the Arab peoples in relation to the effectiveness of the development pattern that prevailed for a long time. This point has a special importance in order to answer the question of how to improve the development performance in Arab countries at the time of conflicts and deterioration of the humanitarian situation that led to high rates of loss of lives, destruction of infrastructure, and collapse of the economies of entire countries along with increased unemployment rates. In addition, there are huge political implications, especially in view of the emergence of violent extremist groups that presented themselves as an alternative to states; the geopolitical developments such as the refugee problem in the Middle East and the migrants seeking asylum in other countries to escape conflicts and violence; which formed a new regional and international political reality.

It is important to consider how to take advantage of the international momentum aiming to achieve sustainable development as a key to addressing challenges and turning them into new opportunities for security, stability, justice; reducing conflicts, violence and displacement in favor of real and sustainable development for the Arab region citizens.

Fifth Pillar: Infrastructure, Economic Growth, Production and Consumption

This point addresses issues related to the relationship and importance of infrastructure to levels of economic growth; encouraging companies to adopt sustainable practices; highlighting the need to meet human requirements through sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources which contributes significantly to eradication of hunger; achieving food security; improving nutrition, enhancing sustainable agriculture; confirming the availability of sustainable management of water and sewage for all; ensuring affordable, reliable and sustainable access to energy for everyone; promoting sustainable economic growth, providing full and productive employment and decent work opportunities for all; building a flexible infrastructure; promoting comprehensive and sustainable manufacturing; encouraging innovation; making cities and human settlements safer, more resilient and more sustainable while ensuring sustainable production and consumption patterns.

This point also addresses how to develop the roles of Arab and foreign investments and the banking sector, insurance companies and stock exchanges in the field of sustainable development. Moreover, it also deals with the challenges facing investments and development in view of the existing risks and the need to build green economies and modify patterns of sustainable production and consumption.

Sixth Pillar: Water and Food Security - Opportunities and Initiatives

There is no place in the world where the relationship between water, food and energy can be more clearly defined than the Arab region. Water scarcity is a major feature there. The share of renewable water resources per capita in the Arab region is less than 1% of the world average. Food production depends on several factors including water scarcity, limited arable lands, land degradation, dry climate and decay of genetic origins. The agricultural sector is also the largest water consumer in the region, particularly in arid regions, while water productivity rates and irrigation efficiency are lower than the global average.

The consumption of water and energy resources in the region is growing at an unsustainable rate, highlighting the urgent need to adopt new approaches based on the interconnection between water, energy and food as well as creating a state of coherence among policies, initiatives and projects at the national and regional levels, taking into account the differences in the available natural resources' levels in the region countries. During the past decades, the region has witnessed an increase in heat waves, drought cycles, storms and floods. The region is becoming increasingly vulnerable due to rise of temperatures compared to other regions. Conflicts have also been found to be exacerbated by climate change due to their effects on environmental migration and shared water resources.

The ASDW covered several cross-cutting topics, including:

- The role of the private sector in achieving sustainable development
- Financial institutions and stock exchanges - Opportunities for investment and success
- Towards building a national non-governmental forums for sustainable development - Arab Network for Environment & Development (RAED).
- Betting on youth - National Youth Conference - Egyptian experience
- The media is the mirror of reality and it raises awareness to achieve sustainable development
- Science and policy-making: Towards a new dialogue - the experience of the Royal Jordanian Scientific Society
- Research and development of vaccines and medicines for the treatment of infectious and non-communicable diseases in developing countries.
- Supporting the development of local technology, research and innovation in developing countries.
- Enhancing scientific knowledge, developing research capabilities, and transferring marine technology.
- Enhancing scientific research and improving technological capabilities in the industrial sectors.
- The Arab Parliament is the conscience of the legislation.
- Arab Youth Parliament.

Meeting rooms were allocated for side sessions held by Arab, regional and international organizations in order to have wider participation and provide opportunities, successes and initiatives, which also contributed to expanding the participation in the process of preparing recommendations.

The recommendations of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development 2017, which was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) in Rabat during the period 3-5 May, were presented in the proceedings of the last day of the ASDW.

4. 1. Details of plenary sessions, events and recommendations

The events of the first day of the ASDW dated 14/5/2017 and the last day of the ASDW dated 17/5/2017 were held at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Arab League. The events of the second day dated 15/5/2017 and the third day dated 16/5/2017 were held at the Ritz-Carlton Nile Hotel.

Representatives from Arab countries, a number of diplomatic missions accredited at the Arab League, Arab organizations, UN specialized agencies, the WB, regional and international organizations, representatives of civil society, the private sector, academia, journalists and PMs attended the events of the ASDW; which also witnessed distinguished presence of youth, women and persons with disabilities.

Day 1: 14 May 2017 - General Secretariat of the Arab League

Opening Session of the ASDW: (Grand Hall 10:00 - 11:00)

Moderated by Senior Advisor/ Nada Al-Ajizi - Director of the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, the Arab League.

Opening Speeches:

- HE Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit - Secretary General of the Arab League.
- HE Mrs. Ghada Wali - Minister of Social Solidarity, Arab Republic of Egypt.
- - Dr. Murad Wahba, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States, United Nations Development Program, and Chairman of United Nations Development Group for Arab States
- Mr. Gwang Chichen - Senior Director, World Water Practices, the WB.
- Dr. Khawla Matar, Acting Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).



Speech of Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit - Secretary-General of the Arab League

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

HE Dr. Ghada Wali, Minister of Social Solidarity,
Arab Republic of Egypt;

Dr. Murad Wahba, Assistant Secretary-General of the
United Nations, Director of the Regional Bureau for
Arab States of the United Nations Development
Program and Chairman of the United Nations
Development Group for Arab States;

Mr. Gwang Chichen, Senior Director, World Water
Practices, World Bank;

Dr. Khawla Matar Acting Executive Secretary of the
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for
Western Asia (ESCWA);



Ladies and gentlemen

At the beginning, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you in the Arab League on the occasion of launching the Arab week on sustainable development. I wish all success for this week and that it would result in recommendations and initiatives that would enhance the implementation of 2030 agenda for sustainable development in the Arab region.

We inaugurate this ASDW with the attendance of a number of their excellences Arab Ministers who spared no effort to travel in order to honor us with their presence today confirming that the Arab League is the proper platform for looking for solutions to different issues and challenges faced by the region. On this occasion, I extend my thanks to HE Dr. Sahar Nasr, the Egyptian Minister of Investment and International Cooperation, for her support during the preparation for this important event. I would also like to extend my thanks to the WB group, and UNDP, for their effective contribution in making this week successful and putting it in a proper shape.

Ladies and gentlemen

This ASDW sheds light on the challenges that concern Arab citizens from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arab Gulf. Moreover, it draws a roadmap for partnership and cooperation among various actors including governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and private sector for the implementation of 2030 SD agenda in the Arab region that faces serious and complicated challenges threatening its present and future. Such challenges herald a lost decade of Arab development which entails terrible humanitarian cost and horrendous impacts on Arab communities for which I unfortunately fear our sons, though committed no crime, will pay its costly bill.

There are three civil wars around the Arab world that causing the humanitarian development and economic growth efforts gone in vain. We should remember that those efforts basically faced obstacles and fluctuations in a time where states were stable. So, how then will such efforts be when the structures of such countries have been disrupted where conflicts and disputes spread in an unprecedented way in the modern Arab history? Half of the Syrian people are internally or externally displaced. Libya, whose people used to enjoy a high living standard, has only got 4 out of 98 hospitals operating with only 75% of their capacities that have been recently surveyed by the UN. Yemen currently suffers the potential outbreak of Cholera as 19 million Yemenis live without safe drinking water or sewerage systems. The list is long and distressing; which indicates more dangerous situations.

The health and educational systems, considered the pillars of human development, face destruction and degradation in the conflict countries. As the youth represent 60% of the population in those countries, such conditions would unfortunately lead to the spread of conflicts among the community components on ethnic and sectarian grounds. The spread of religious and political extremism, spread of isolation ideology from the community particularly among youth; which undermines civil peace and makes societies enter a vicious circle of violence and hostilities.

As a matter of fact, there is no way out of this vicious circle except through hope and taking courageous and positive steps to confront the current situation regardless of the required efforts, sacrifices and sufferings. Embarking on the reconstruction is the only option available for the countries facing hardships and crises. There are several countries that faced devastation and destruction but to be reconstructed by its sons. It is wrong to believe that our Arab countries suffer from weak will and lack of determination to face challenges and get out of the vicious circle of despair. The will of survival as well as seeking to reconstruct the land is deeply rooted in the Arab human conscience. The only thing that we lack in is an action plan, a comprehensive program as well as continuous and strenuous effort on the long term. Getting out of the current dilemma shall not be over in a year or two, it is a long way that should be characterized by patience, joint action, love of sacrificing for homelands.

The events and developments that took place over the past years represent a unique opportunity for self-assessment and preparing an accurate analysis regarding the best way out of this grinding crisis and developmental setback. We can only regain balance and consolidation of our communities through cooperation and coordination among Arab countries. Disasters will not be confined to states in crisis. The Arab world can, with its potentials and capabilities, play a pivotal role to address such setback and reduce its impact on communities suffering grinding humanitarian crises as well as create favorable conditions for advancement and reconstruction so as to retrace gradually its economic growth path.

Such situations highlighted the Arab world' need to concerted efforts of Arab action organizations along with the provision of required effective elements in the fields of their specializations and assisting such organizations to move from the phase of inter-coordination of efforts to the phase of taking joint action to implement vital projects in the Arab region which is considered one of the pillars upon which the secretariat establish the foundations of its plan to support and implement the 2030 SD agenda in the Arab region in collaboration and partnership with Arab organizations specialized in various political, economic and social fields. However, Arab citizens with neither experience nor be notified by such efforts and achievements unless such efforts are based on an integrated media strategy; which requires the support and development of the media side of the joint Arab action system.

Ladies and gentlemen

Although this gloomy picture includes evident challenges that impose additional burdens on governments that look for the stability and prosperity of their communities, this ASDW is held to light a torch on the long road of development that we should follow in spite of all security and military challenges as well as terrorist and armed violence threats facing the Arab region. The greatest challenge and the biggest concern are related to development in its broadest sense. Thus, fulfilling the promise of developing, modernizing and rehabilitating Arab societies to catch up with the development of the current age shall enable the Arab countries to confront all other long-term challenges.

The Arab League has early realized the significance of the sustainable development plan to mount challenges faced by region. The Arab League expressed over and over again its adherence and commitment to implementing sustainable development in the Arab region under highly sophisticated regional and international conditions that require concerned efforts. The Secretariat went even further and established the Arab Committee for Sustainable Development which is considered the first step in a long and arduous journey aiming to establish joint Arab action in the field of sustainable development and open up to benefit from as well as exchange good experiences and practices through other international and regional experiences. You may agree with me that international partnerships represent a key factor in implementing the 2030 SD Plan. In this regard, I confirm the crucial role played by the international community to provide fresh, additional and sufficient financial resources to help poor countries in implementing their SD plans. Transfer of technology and building up capabilities in developing countries will enable them to adopt a more sustainable development approach. Official development assistance is considered an important source of public funding for the majority of Arab countries especially countries that lack other income sources. Therefore, the developed countries should fulfill their official development assistance commitments as per Addis Ababa Action Plan to assist in enabling those countries by improving their capabilities to use technology in order to face development challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen

There is always a room for hope because potentials of our societies are promising but wasted. It is time to put an end for resources wasted, opportunities lost and potentials untapped. Our Arab nation has a strong will, young generation, and is capable of taking joint action. Holding this ASDW is a witness to the strong will and determination of the Arab world. Thus, the ASDW would have never seen light had it not been for the sincere partnership and cooperation of all partners present in this hall.

Thank you and I wish you all success.

Speech of HE Mrs. Ghada Wali- Egyptian Minister of Social Solidarity, On behalf of the President of the Republic

HE Mr. Ahmad Abul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League

Dr. Murad Wahba, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Chairman of the United Nations Development Group for Arab States;

Mr. Gwang Chichen, Senior Director, World Water Practices at the World Bank;

Dr. Khawla Matar Acting Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA);



Ladies and gentlemen

I am very pleased to be with you in the inauguration of this important conference and I am honored to deliver a speech on behalf of the President of the Republic who was keen on making Egypt the first Arab country to host the Arab Sustainable Development Week (ASDW) under his kind patronage.

In the beginning, allow me to express my gratitude to the Arab League for hosting this importance conference to stress that the comprehensive development issue is one of the priorities of the entire Arab world and to implement a comprehensive vision for creating a more prosperous world.

The President of the Republic confirmed in the UN general assembly meeting held in September 2015 that Egypt is committed to achieve a comprehensive sustainable development to improve the living conditions of Egyptian citizens in all governorates and villages alike without any discrimination based on religion, race or gender.

Egypt effectively participated in all the stages of drafting SDGs, and was one of the first countries to provide a voluntary review of the achievements in the field of development in July 2016 on the sidelines of the high-level political forum held in New York.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Last September, the Egyptian President declared that the Egyptian people always kept in mind the right of development and provision of a decent life when starting to build its future. Therefore, Egypt launched its 2030 SD strategy and announced its comprehensive strategy for achieving sustainable economic, social, and political development and took bold steps to implement this strategy including:

- The Government has set up an ambitious and comprehensive reform program with a clear timetable that will put the citizen on top of its priorities. The President has given directives for implementing a number of major national projects to provide employment opportunities and improve living conditions such as the development of the Suez Canal Economic Zone, Al Galala project, Al Alamin

project, the Golden Triangle project, social housing projects and development of slum areas and informal settlements.

- Empowerment of youth who are considered the basis of development, the real wealth of Egypt and the makers of its future. Therefore, the year 2016 was declared “the year for youth”, and the President launched many initiatives that would empower youth on economic, social and political levels. In addition, a National Youth Conference is held monthly to exchange visions with the youth of Egypt, listen to their views and make recommendations binding to all the State agencies.
- The declaration of the year 2017 was declared the “year for women”. Peoples do not rise without empowering women; women represent more than half of the population. The economic, social, cultural and political empowerment of women is one of the pillars of the development strategy. Poverty cannot be eradicated and economic empowerment cannot be achieved without ensuring that women enjoy their full economic rights.
- Enhancing education and health, preparing healthy citizens capable of working and production is the essence of the development strategy in Egypt. Therefore, the Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt stipulates in Article 18 that every citizen has the right to good health and access to health care. The Constitution obliged the State to allocate 3% of the gross national product to the health sector. Thus, Article 19 of the Constitution also stipulates that every citizen has the right to education and the State is obliged to allocate 4% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education.
- The elimination of terrorism in all its forms and types. We cannot achieve development while there is terrorism. Egypt has dedicated all resources required to fight extremist ideologies through achieving real comprehensive development in all fields. We eliminate the roots of evil in all governorates through providing employment opportunities, education, health care, and basic services for all citizens.

Ladies and gentlemen

Regional integration is one of the mechanisms and objectives of sustainable development especially in the Arab world. There are several common challenges facing Arab countries on top of which are economic growth, reducing poverty rates, gender equality and unemployment. We cannot achieve real results without integrated cooperation of governments, private sector and civil society. This cooperation should be based on a common vision expressing the aspiration of the Arab peoples and takes into consideration the economic and social dimensions in Arab countries.

At the end of my speech, my particular tribute goes to the peoples of the Arab world in general, and the Egyptian people in particular, for the role they play in achieving comprehensive and sustainable development which by no means is not of less importance than the role of governments. I thank all attendees for their presence today. In the end, I confirm that Egypt is going forward towards achieving comprehensive and sustainable development based on advancement of human resources, achievement of social justice and creation of a favorable climate for investment.

Speech of Dr. Murad Wahba - Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations; President of the United Nations Development Group for the Middle East, North Africa and the Arab States; and Assistant Director and Director of for the UNDP Arab States Regional Bureau

Ladies and gentlemen;

Distinguished Colleagues;

It gives me great pleasure to be with you today in this inaugural session of the Arab Sustainable Development Week. At the beginning, I would like to extend my thanks to HE President Abdel Fatah Al Sisi, President of the ARE for his generous patronage of this event and for his untiring efforts for supporting sustainable development and leading Egypt's 2030 SD Strategy.



I would also like to express my gratitude for the Arab League for this important initiative and for HE Secretary General of the Arab League Mr. Ahmad Abul Gheit for his continuous efforts and sincere interest in partnership with the UN for pushing forward the implementation of 2030 SDP in the Arab region.

As you know, the year 2015 was crucial for the global development. During this year, the world countries agreed on a number of pioneering and very important agreements that represent a new generation of global development plans including the 2030 SDP, Paris Climate Accord (PCA), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and Addis Ababa Action Plan on Financing Development.

The Arab countries were among the first countries which participated in formulating the vision of 2030 SDP. Also, the Arab League closely participated in this plan through its specialized ministerial councils, especially those concerned with social, economic and environmental affairs.

It is important to draw your attention to the fact that the efforts aiming to achieve the SDGs are exerted now at times harder than the time of accomplishing 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for all countries including the Arab region of which a number of countries suffer repercussions of global challenges such as low economic growth rates, high unemployment rates especially among youth, climate change, and increased conflict rates.

Working hard to achieve the 2030 SDP will enhance the capabilities of Arab countries to face those complicated challenges facing the region; advance the economic and social development; guarantee environmental sustainability and build peaceful and inclusive societies. The current Arab situation clearly embodies what was mentioned at the Forward Part of the 2030 SDP that stated “sustainable development cannot be achieved without establishing peace and security; thus, lack of sustainable development jeopardized peace and security”.

Ladies and gentlemen

With strenuous efforts, several Arab countries have enthusiastically started to accomplish and incorporate the 2030 SDP in their national visions, policies and plans, under a strong national leadership, and through establishing wide-range national alliances, and conscious keenness on the exchange of expertise on the regional level and among the countries of the south that this conference is considered one of its manifestations.

The United Nations development system actively provide support to Arab countries in achieving the 2030 SDP through a comprehensive approach referred to as “MAPS” that includes: **Mainstreaming**; i.e. incorporation of the 2030 SDP in the national plans and budgets, **Acceleration**; i.e. expediting the rate of progress towards achieving the 2030 SDP, and **Policy**; i.e. support policies in an integrated manner by various UN development agencies.

We also provide support to countries in monitoring progress towards achieving the 2030 SDGs and submitting related reports. Achieving success in this endeavor requires large investments in information databases for providing credible and accurate data with the required qualitative classification and on time specified in the 2030 agenda.

In this regard, we are closely working with the national statistics offices as well as data and information production institutions all over the Arab region to enhance capabilities; which will enable providing the information required for achieving the SDGs and enhancing public access to such data so that individuals may exercise their monitoring role and participate in an effective way.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Arab League for holding this important conference as part of “Effective Partnerships for achieving the 2030 SDP” as expressed by the SD’s 17th goal which confirms the significance of building up partnerships for achieving all goals. In this respect, I would like to express our gratitude to all Arab countries for their keenness on establishing partnerships with the UN developmental system on the national and regional levels.

On our part in the UN developmental system, I would like to confirm that we are taking this partnership seriously and we are fully committed to it. We are working with several regional institutions, on top of which comes the Arab League, for mobilizing various “working community” to achieve the SDGs and face priority common challenges hindering the accomplishment of such goals on the regional and state levels. We further coordinate our efforts inside the UN development system than ever before and in a way that would make us more effective for boosting our support for all the member states that we serve.

In this respect, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has agreed on establishing a unified mechanism on the regional level for supporting the achievement of the SDGs. I take this opportunity to congratulate ESCWA on the success of the Arab forum on sustainable development that it organized earlier this month in the Moroccan capital Rabat.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 SDP represents a comprehensive agenda of great importance to the Arab region and we look forward to working closely with the Arab League, all governments, civil society organizations, academia, the media and active players in the private sector across the region to fully fulfill the promise of the 2030 SDP which is "engaging all countries and leaving no one behind while achieving sustainable development".

I hope that your discussions in this conference which begins here today in Cairo will be constructive and bear fruits for all our Arab peoples.

Thank you.



Part #1: Introduction

I would like to thank the Arab League for the invitation to join this important event on the occasion of the Arab League Sustainable Development Week. In particular, I would like to thank His Excellency Ahmed Aboul Gheit (Secretary General) for inviting us to this important event, to our host represented by her Excellency Minister Dr. Ghada Waly (Minister of Social Solidarity), and Dr. Mourad Whaba (Assistant Secretary General, UN Development Group), and Dr. Khawla Matar (Acting Executive Secretary, ESCWA) for their presence in this important event.

This gathering provides a unique opportunity for the Arab League member states to develop a collective vision of the future of the region on the path towards sustainable development.

Building a sustainable economy is not only a concern for policy-makers, but also and more importantly, for businesses and for all citizens. It is also an imperative if we want to protect the gains in development, which globally have been made in the last decades.

We have three strategic objectives:

1. Meeting basic and essential needs (such as food, water, shelter, education, transport, energy).
2. Helping ensure sustainability in order to avoid the depletion of natural resources (i.e. ensuring aquifer recharge to avoid underground water depletion).
3. Promoting long term perspectives in planning investments to ensure they are fit for purpose in the context of changing demographics, climate change and technology.

Development failures often lead to extremism, violence, and even war. We see the early warning signs when public and private institutions lose their broad legitimacy. And we see the warning signs when citizens see themselves excluded from economic gains. This makes it all the more important to achieve sustainable development.

Part #2: Mobilizing Resources in Support of the 2030 agenda

Yet we face multiple challenges towards sustainable development. These include climate change, pandemics and violence that spills across national borders. There is also a substantial gap in the access to investments in human capital -- like education, training, and health care -- and these are creating additional strains on our political institutions. All these challenges are global in nature, meaning that international cooperation at many levels is required to address them.

If these challenges were not enough, today there are 20 million people -- including 1.4 million children -- who are suffering from famine in the Arab world. Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. These

famines are caused by multiple drivers including conflict, civil insecurity, poor governance, large-scale displacement, and water insecurity. There is also a credible risk of famines in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan, with drought conditions extending also to Uganda and Tanzania.

This challenge also easily crosses borders. For example, food insecurity in Somalia and famine in South Sudan are accelerating the flow of refugees into Ethiopia. The UN is already calling this the worst humanitarian crisis since 1945. It is clear that short-term life-saving support has to be accompanied by longer-term development responses that assist countries to develop better coping mechanisms.

The World Bank Group is engaging with countries to protect the poor and vulnerable, and to ensure inclusive and accountable service delivery, with a stronger private sector that can create jobs and opportunities. We also believe that it is important to improve equality for development and growth. Equality between men and women, between urban and rural populations, and between nations.

Official development assistance finance, even when combined with government resources, will never be enough to meet the global challenges we face. Going forward, the core focus will have to be on leveraging and mobilizing global funds -- especially from the private sector and institutional investors -- through innovative mechanisms to meet the extraordinary financing needs of the region.

In the past, we tried to address these longer-term development challenges through the framework of the Millennium Development goals, but progress was mixed.

In 2015, the global community came together to frame the Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs), which are comprehensive, and apply to all countries, not just developing nations.

The SDGs are interconnected and interdependent. The SDG acknowledge that we cannot look at poverty, health, and education as stand-alone achievements.

Each of these will require adequate financial support, and robust participation from the private sector. It will also require good data, and safe delivery to implement these ambitious plans.

The World Bank Group is doing its part, through a variety of mechanisms. To better sequence our interventions, we have developed a “cascade approach” to investment decision-making to encourage access to commercial financing, while leveraging and preserving scarce public dollars for critical public investments.

If commercial financing is available, that is the preferred course. If it is absent, we try to address market failures. If those efforts are unsuccessful, we use utilize risk instruments and our own matching capital to try to crowd in private investment. Finally, if necessary, then public and concessional financing will be used.

It is important to note that countries’ own domestic resources are the largest source of funds available for countries to finance their development.

These new approaches to finance are absolutely necessary if we are to raise sufficient resources to achieve the ambitious SDGs.

Part #3: Water is at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals

I am particularly pleased to be here today representing the World Bank Group and the Water Global Practice. Water is at the center of the sustainable development agenda.

Not only is there a dedicated goal for Water – SDG 6 – managing water will be critical to success in achieving 15 of the 17 SDGs

To name just a few:

- Abundant water supplies are vital for the production of food and will be essential to attaining SDG 2 on food security;
- Clean and safe drinking water and sanitation systems are necessary for health as called for in SDGs 3;
- Water is needed for powering industries and creating the new jobs identified in SDGs 7 and 8;
- Adequate and safe water is important to nourish the planet's life-sustaining ecosystems identified in SDGs 13, 14 and 15.

Part #4: Concluding Remarks

This week ahead of us presents an opportunity to start building these partnerships and collaborations, to ensure that we move together towards the goals.

I hope that we can make the most of this important event, actively join the discussion and be an actor of change towards sustainable development in our area of work and I feel very honored to participate in the launch of the week.

Speech of Ms. Khawla Matar - Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

HE Mr. Ahmad Abul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League

HE Ms Ghada Wali, Minister of Social Solidarity, Arab Republic of Egypt

Dr. Murad Wahba, Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Program

Mr. Abdulla Hamdok, Acting Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa,

Mr. Gwang Chichen, Senior Director, World Water Practices, World Bank;

Your Excellency, Ministers and representatives of the Arab States,



Ladies and Gentlemen Representatives of civil society organizations,

Distinguished guests,

I express my pleasure for participating with you in the inauguration of the Arab Sustainable Development Week. In the beginning, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary General of the Arab League for his generous invitation extended to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). I would also like to express my gratitude for the secretariat of the Arab League and Arab Republic of Egypt for the efforts exerted for organizing this important regional event. I would like to refer to the partnerships made with the World Bank Group, and the UN with the aim of boosting joint Arab action for achieving comprehensive and sustainable development in our region.

During the past years, we all witnessed the formulation of the 2030 SD agenda of 2030. The Arab region witnessed a vital regional movement in which governments, NGOs, private sector, consultancies, regional and international organizations have participated, each in its specialization. The voice of the region managed to reach global dialogues and UN negotiations that came up with collective commitment of achieving common goals. After adopting 2030 agenda in September 2015, we met in several forums to confirm again and again the significance of the regional dimension in the national efforts and stress the interconnection between the objectives of the plan which is an indication of the interconnection of issues confronting the various regions of the world.

Distinguished guests,

There is no country in the Arab region or in the whole world that has enough capabilities and resources that enable it to achieve alone the objectives of sustainable development. Issues that concern us are transcending all geographical, economic, social and political boundaries and it even transcends generations. It encompasses human beings everywhere in the world. To have successful solutions for those issues, we have to learn from failures and success stories. They should be the result of creating a proper regional space for dialogue and establishing strong foundations for joint action.

I should refer here to the theme of the Arab Sustainable Development Week which is “Towards Effective partnership” and its rich and diverse agenda. Partnerships are one of the five pillars of the 2030 agenda. They formed one of the key themes of the Arab forum for sustainable development held early this month within the framework of partnership with the Arab League, UN system working in the region, under the kind patronage of the Moroccan kingdom.

Over three days that were full of talks and discussions, there was consensus that partnerships should be a prerequisite for achieving each goal. To achieve sustainable development, there should be partnerships inside each country among all stakeholders including its government, representative assemblies, NGOs, syndicates, private sector, universities and the media in a supportive environment that clarifies the duties and obligations of each party and protects the rights of all.

In order to achieve development, there should be solidarity, cooperation and integration among the countries of the region. There should be a framework for knowledge and technology transfer, exchange of lessons and experiences, and mobilization of all required resources so that no individual, country or community would be left behind in the process of development. It is necessary to mobilize resources from various funding sources whether public or private, international or local and using them effectively to reduce the deficit in funding and achieving sustainable development. It is also necessary to enhance trade and investments on the regional level as well as activate and enforce the regional agreements. It also entails specifying priorities and get totally familiar with the current achievements and potential ones through statistical and informational systems with qualitative and quantitative measures that would support development policies with facts and evidence and would enhance their impact.

Distinguished guests,

Difficult circumstance our region is going through increases the complexity of development challenges. Procrastination would not lead to overcoming challenges; therefore, we should start working. It is true that peace, security and stability are prerequisites for development, but the eradication of poverty, marginalization and inequality, the protection of our human and natural resources and the empowerment of Arab people are key factors in confronting the wars and conflicts that disturb peace and security and the consequent woes and losses that may not be easy to overcome in the near future.

Several Arab countries have responded to the requirements of the 2030 agenda. A year and a half after the adoption of the plan, its goals and indicators have become part of long-term vision strategies, demonstrating the seriousness of the approach and perseverance to provide the necessary policies, institutions and means of implementation. In the Arab forum we were satisfied to notice good faith and sincere calls for solidarity and cooperation for supporting the least developed countries.

Currently, there are more than one incentive and a call for regional cooperation and coordination between all sides to avoid recurrence of problems and open the way to a better future. The 2030 SDP is an integrated, interrelated and indivisible plan. So let our efforts be integrated, interdependent and indivisible. Let's work together to strengthen our credibility and enhance the exploitation of our resources to serve our region and make the change and transformation that this plan seeks to achieve; which makes it distinct from previous plans.

Thank you again and I wish all the success for your work in the Arab Sustainable Development Week.

High-level Plenary Meeting on "Global Concepts of Sustainable Development" - Grand Hall

Speakers

Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin - Senior Vice-President of the World Bank

Mr. Mohannad Hadi

Regional Director, World Food Program

Mr. Guang Chechin

Senior Director, World Water Practices, World Bank

Dr. Mohamed Omran

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Stock Exchange and Chairman of association of the Euro-Asian Stock Exchanges

The session was chaired by Dr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, WB First Vice President who discussed the United Nations 2030 Agenda and relations with the United Nations and partnerships. He made a major presentation at the session, where he reviewed the most important international developments affecting the formulation of policies and their priorities,



Dr. Mohieldin explained that he sees the international developments as affecting the performance progress of Arab countries in achieving sustainable development. He pointed out that such countries are not isolated from global economic growth. The expectations of Arab countries are not necessarily better than global growth rates. They require exerting a lot of effort in the field of investment, export, and improving public and private consumption affecting growth rates.

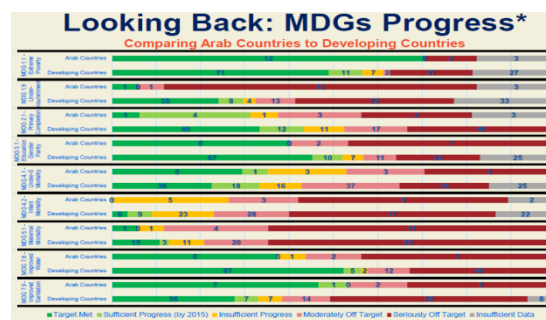
He added that in a rapidly changing world we find out that the economic center of gravity according to “London School for Economic Sciences” has moved during the fifties of the last century from a point between Europe and the USA where growth is achieved and salaries are rising, towards the east to be in a point between India and China which means that the economic impact moved east. This also indicates multiple polarities on the global level and this is confirmed by a study prepared by the World Bank in 2011 in India and China. The economic gravity was in India and china 1000 years ago and here it goes back again to the East.

He said that the question posed here is related to the consequences of this on the Arab countries? What are the implications of moving the economic gravity to the east on investment, infrastructure, humans, international relations, trade, economic growth and relations between countries and its role in sustainable development?

He added that when we talk about the idea of the international economic gravity centers, we should confirm that there are sub-gravity centers in each region too. The estimations of 2011 refer to the fact that Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt formed gravity centers in the region. There are changes in economic growth which show in the form of rise and decline in other places that require addressing those changes whether positive or negative. In spite of the decline of economic growth rates in China, those rates are still high and several countries hope to reach them but a decline took place in the importance of primary commodities and the trade and investment rates.

Development is not achieved in isolation away from the world. What takes place on the international level affects Arab countries. There are six global trends that affect the Arab countries: 1) demographic changes: the change in youth nature and the increase in the average age of the population; 2) accelerated urban growth: represented in the transformation from rural to urban and its impacts on water and agriculture; 3) climate change and changes in natural resources; 4) The Arab region was plagued during the recent years with the refugee problems; 5) threats to food security, famines and epidemics; and 6) economic growth and trade of goods moved to the East and the impacts of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Results indicate that the performance of Arab countries in the field of MDGs was not successful. There is an improvement in poverty indicators – where it was proposed that 50% of the population would go up the abject poverty line. In spite of the modesty of the objective, the performance was not good. The economic and social performance showed big differences. If we took education as an example of human development, in spite of its modest indicator related to finding a place at schools for each child at the age of school, an indicator that did not take the quality of education provided into consideration, the results were very modest too.



Learned lessons from analyzing 17 countries worldwide indicate that the main reasons for bad results were related to claiming that resources are not enough. It is a groundless claim as there should be distinguished coordination in policies and institutional competencies because conducting comprehensive development programs and achieving growth that leaves no one behind requires better data and better growth and specifying the growth priorities as data available on 60% of the indicators were bad.

Comparing MDGs and SDGs refer to the fact that we had 8 goals and they turned to be 17 goals; 21 objectives that became 169; and 60 indicators that became 231. There are growth areas the depended on human development indicators and they started to depend on economic, social and environmental indicators. Development was country focused but it turned to be of global nature.

How can we implement economic, social and environmental policies in any country?

The answer is summarized in avoiding bad and negative measures that lead to deterioration of economic performance which were set up by Michael Spence² which include 12 bad procedures:

- 1- The unemployment issue would not be resolved through mobilizing people in the government and public sectors
- 2- Budget deficit should be cut through reducing investment in infrastructure.
- 3- Subsidies of energy at the expense of education and health care.
- 4- Protecting some sectors that do not need subsidy in spite of the fact that they enjoy competitive or relative advantages
- 5- Interfering in banning exports.
- 6- Paying salaries to government and state employees less than salaries taken by the private sector.
- 7- Interference in the exchange rate systems leading to reducing competition and exports and creating a black market.
- 8- Giving up addressing urban problems and ignoring relevant investments.
- 9- Ignoring environmental conditions.
- 10- Not performing the required role in financial reforms.
- 11- Focusing on the quantitative indicators and ignoring qualitative indicators.
- 12- Ignoring the role of woman in society which indicates wasting an important resource as a result of bad policies, laws and traditions that should be disregarded.

Solutions:
Avoid bad ideas

- Dealing with joblessness by relying on the civil service;
- Cutting fiscal deficits by sacrificing public investment in infrastructure;
- Subsidizing energy except for very limited subsidies to highly vulnerable sections of the population;
- Open ended protection for specific sectors;
- Imposing administrative price controls;
- Banning exports;
- Underpaying civil servants compared to the private sector;
- Exchange rate misalignment;
- Resisting urbanization/underinvesting in infrastructure;
- Ignoring environmental implications;
- Poorly regulating the Banking sector and excessive interference;
- Measuring educational progress solely by higher enrollments and ignoring the quality of education



As for solutions, they are represented in investing in human resources and infrastructure, and building capabilities for resilience towards risks and shocks. Humans need education especially pre-school education. There should be focus on nutrition and good mental upgrading because lack of proper nutrition hinders people development in the future. Women should have their share in investment, education, and job training. In addition, we should invest in the infrastructure like roads and energy. The private sector should share in those investments and investing in risks in all countries especially the Arab countries to reconstruct and restructure them following the events of past years.

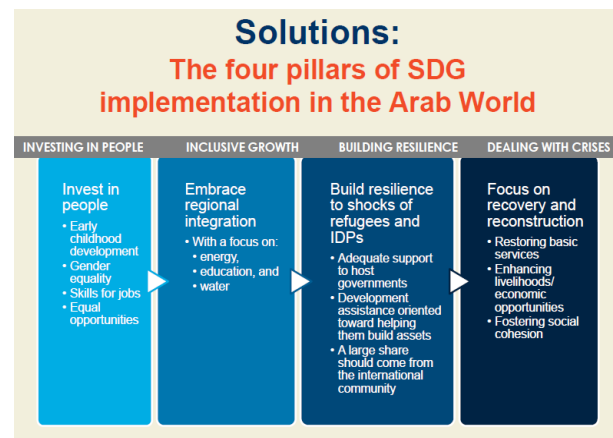
Solutions:
Invest in people, build resilience, and make growth inclusive

INVESTING IN PEOPLE	INVESTING IN INCLUSIVE GROWTH	INVESTING IN RESILIENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early childhood development• Gender equality• Skills for jobs• Equal opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roads• Energy• Sustainable<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greening growth• Water management• Private sector<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fragility & Conflict• Climate and weather shocks• Pandemics

² The report of “In search of growth strategies” prepared by the Growth and Development commission, by Michael Spence, more in annex 4

Where can we get funding?

The traditional answer to this question is always through getting aids from developmental agencies. In fact, available international funding does not exceed 145 billion dollars annually. It is a small figure that is not equal to the amount spent by a country like Netherlands on health care. For a country like Germany, it represents a third of the amount spent on health care.



The fact is we need:

- 1) Developing the domestic resources in the least income countries through raising the efficiency of the tax collection system. Local administrations may increase their resources through getting levying Value Added Tax (VAT).
- 2) Giving greater role to the private sector in infrastructure projects financed by the government sector whenever possible.
- 3) Expanding the savings base in the Arab countries as it is the lowest worldwide. The average of individual savings is 14.5 % while it is 34% in Africa, exceeds 70% in East Asia and 94% in the OECD countries. As a matter of fact, several Arab countries save better outside the Arab region as savings are directed towards real estates, gold and durable goods. In fact the low levels of savings and their nature represent a waste in the investment cycle.
- 4) Attention should be paid to developing the insurance and social security systems. We could benefit from the German experience in encouraging savings as the banking system cooperated with the German government to develop a savings habit through opening a savings account for each child to familiarize citizen with the concept of savings. We can also copy what has been done in Nairobi through using mobile phones and means of communications as a modern and developed way of financial funding.

Financing should not only be central but also on the municipality level for financing education and services. It should not only depend on the state public budget and fees but also on dealing with real estate taxes on the municipality level and the VAT. If such taxes are collected by municipalities, collection would be more efficient and means of collecting them will be enhanced as it occurred in several countries.

Finally, we should confirm that any policies require data which turn into information that lead to increasing our knowledge. Unfortunately, many Arab countries lack, in varying degrees, a comprehensive system. The level of the system is affected by laws and institutions. Some countries have laws that are not implemented. There is a big shortage in data and some of them are obsolete and not reliable for taking decisions by the government, the private sector or individuals. Therefore, it is important to paying attention to data, information and knowledge system. The implementation of 2030 plan requires data that is seriously dealt with to draw up policies and for the operation of institutions. The plan also requires preparing funding. Arab countries have several problems related to achieving sustainable development that make everyone obliged to think of the future and to deal with the concept of progress as a basic idea.

He added that we may quote the saying of Zaki Naguib Mahmoud, in his book entitled “Harvest of Long Years”: “The idea of progress contains the concept of change to cope with successive civilization developments and the evolution that turns the forms of life into higher states. This means that it is important to pay attention to destiny. This does not negate the fact that it should be based on the heritage our ancestors left us. It should not, however, be the end line at our contemporary lives, but it should represent the starting point that we cross to meet the requirements of the present and safe future”.

It is important for our societies that have a high rate of youth among their populations to generate bright ideas. If we adopt this method we can be sure of a better future for the Arab countries.

Dr. Muhannad Hadi, Regional Director of the World Food Program, thanked the Arab League for organizing this ASDW, which is considered an advanced step that reflects the desire of the Arab League to lead an action based on partnerships to implement the SDP. He explained that the key message that he wants to deliver is that implementing the concept of security requires food security; which may not be achieved because many of our problems are man-made. It is sad to say that in 1990, the number of undernourished people in the region was 9 million and now this figure doubled. In 2010, we aimed to provide support for around 7 million people and today we target 30 million people; which require about 50% of the World Food Program budget. This means that half of every dollar of our budget is spent in this region. Instead of using money in development, it is used to protect human life.



Before the deterioration of the situation in Syria, we aimed to educate the girls in the north-east parts of Syria. Unfortunately, the same girls are now displaced. While we are talking now, there are 17 million people in Yemen suffering from food insecurity, 7 million of them are severely affected and do not know when they will get their next meal and the situation is deteriorating. The situation in Iraq and Libya represent a major challenge. The whole situation has become a major challenge for us. The World Food Program (WFP) is exerting tremendous efforts to protect lives and livelihoods simultaneously and it builds the interrelationship between emergencies and development, which is a very difficult challenge for us.

The World Food Program (WFP) focuses on the second objective of sustainable development, but considers that Goal 17 as a collective tool for us. In his speech, the Secretary-General of the Arab League stated that there is a link between the goals of sustainable development. This is true. When we look at our problems in the region we find them, to a great extent, interrelated. Therefore, I am talking about the interconnection between gender and education. Any plan that targets the total elimination of hunger in this region will not be achieved without achieving the goal of education. All generations, without exception, should be educated or else we would be fooling ourselves.

We stress the fact that it is difficult to achieve all this except through partnerships. Therefore, it gives me pleasure to see the Arab League leading this trend. The partnerships we seek are not what we read about in newspapers, but they should be performed through our participation in them. We must move forward

together. Indeed, we cannot use the tools of the last century in the current century, so we need to work together. Today one cannot draft a document in a closed room and says that this is my vision and calls on partners. The only way is to find a real partnership and create new work approaches is to plan together from day one.

Discussing the goal of eradicating hunger requires us to link it to education and water issues. The cholera disease that the Secretary-General has told us about today and which is beginning to spread in Yemen should not be the concern of only one organization. Indeed, we should all be concerned.

We need to define our challenges clearly and work together. As a matter of fact, no organization can work alone. We should all talk together. We all are concerned. Partnership must be real. Otherwise, we open the door to terrorists to recruit those we were left behind and marginalized. We will not leave anyone behind and we accept the challenge here and today.

Mr. Gwang Chichen - Senior Director, World Water Practices, World Bank, expressed his happiness to be here today to discuss the relationship between sustainable development and sharing water. The relationship between water and sustainable development goals especially in the Middle East and North Africa region is facing huge challenges.

The main challenge faced on the international level is mentioned at the end of 2015 which is:

- 1) 2.4 billion people do not have access to toilets,
- 2) 663 million people have no access to drinking water,
- 3) 0.67 Million people die prematurely each year.



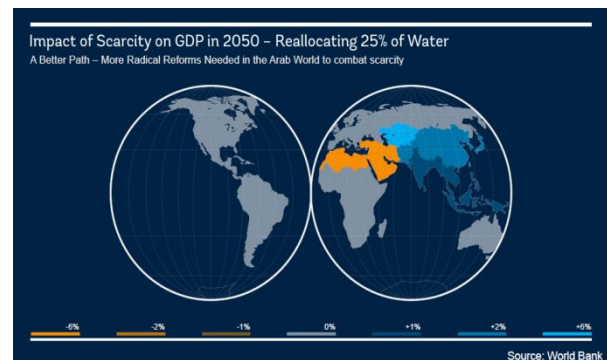
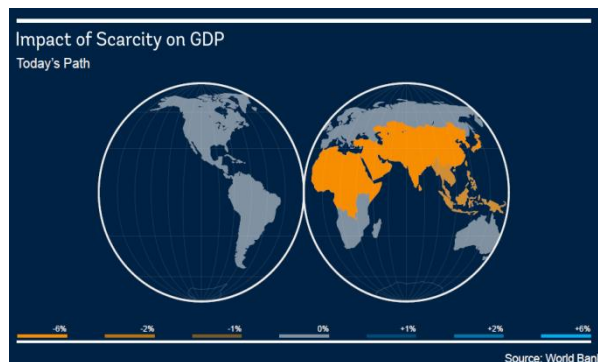
15-20 years from now we expect that energy required to get water will reach 85%. By 2050 the increase will be about 15% in pumping water for irrigation purposes which represents 70% of the water used for food production; in 2025 1.8 billion People will be living in regions and countries suffering from water insecurity.

Therefore, it is a real challenge, and we must work towards achieving global sustainable water security. I will not talk about the relationship between water goal and other sustainable development goals except through giving quick references. For example, 15 out of 17 sustainable development goals are linked to water.

Indeed, if I want to talk about how the water situation will be in 2050 I can put it in the follow phrase "water will be scarcer". The water supply per capita will be less; it will be more polluted and harder to manage. It will be more costly. The increasing trend towards urbanization and industrialization in view of climatic changes will put great pressure on the geographical distribution of water. With seasonal fluctuations of water quantities, the challenges we will face will be worse, and we will find ourselves dealing with areas where there are increasing floods and other areas where there are increasing droughts.



If we make comparison between MENA region and other world regions, we shall find out that the water scarcity represents one of the key challenges and it shall be specially severe in view of the population growth to the extent that water would be 61% while the global average would be 39% and the GDP will be impacted by around 71%. It is a high percentage compared to the global average that reached 27%.



A study on water and climate change referred to the current situation of modeling of the influence of GDP by water pressures and that it indicated that many areas will be most affected in the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia. Until 2050, 25% of water usage is expected to be redistributed. The water consumption in these areas will be reduced in the field of food production. This will reduce water pressures in many parts of the world, but the MENA region will continue to be the most vulnerable, as the demand on water in the region will be growing with the population growth.

Generally speaking, what we call water infertility is a cycle of water pressures and water scarcity that might reach the point of inability to have access to water in the end. I would like to point out that the risks are real and they are quite apparent to us and lots of crises are taking shape nowadays in front of our eyes. We are feeling different levels of food insufficiency in sub-Saharan regions and Yemen. There are 20 million people suffering from hunger, draughts, escalating conflicts, and enforced displacement of millions of people. The chairman of the World Bank allocated 1.6 million USD for supporting the efforts of addressing those emergencies in Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Somalia, south Sudan and Yemen. We believe that addressing such kind of challenges requires working in partnerships inside and among countries and in cooperation with international organizations, private sector, and civil society. Today, I

want to talk to you about the concept of water infertility and food insecurity and their relationship to sustainable development in this part of the world that contain the member states of the Arab League.

Dr. Mohamed Omran, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Stock Exchange and Chairman of the association of Eurasian Stock Exchanges. He wanted to add a 13th mistake to the 12 mistakes mentioned Dr. Mahmoud Mohieddin mentioned regarding on the "Research on Growth Strategies" report prepared by the Growth and Development Committee of Michael Spence and Dr. participated in preparing it. The 13th mistake is related to the saying of Karl Marx that if you commit a mistake once, it is a funny comedy, and if you made it twice it is a painful drama that we unfortunately see frequently repeated in the Arab region, and from our experiences we see economic decisions in which we repeat our mistakes repeatedly.



Before tackling the subject of stock exchanges, I would like to clarify that the report of the Growth and Development Committee on the focus on "high sustainable growth" and "quality of growth" is very important. By high sustainable growth we mean that is not less than 7% for at least 25 years which took place in some 13 countries. We have recently found that our attention has been focused on sustainable and good quality growth, but sustainable growth must be reflected on all people. But in reality this is does not necessarily happen and that when high growth rate is achieved, it is necessary sustainable as long as it does not impact all.

Therefore, we always need complementary policies and government measures to expand the distribution of the fruits so that they will benefit all. We should also take care of the quality of growth, there are what can be called "good growth" and "bad growth" and the latter creates great problems so we call it "cancerous growth". What I have just mentioned is related to the SDGs and the figures are sometimes terrifying. The World Bank reports indicate that due to unhealthy economic practices, 5.5 million people die every year, and that costs \$ 225 billion, and that a country like China is losing 9 % of its GDP because of the bad environmental, social and economic effects of economic activities management.

Studies also show that reducing pollution by 30% may negatively affect GDP growth rates, but it would have a very positive impact on the socio-economic conditions of countries in general. Therefore, we need to gradually shift from the conventional economy to the so-called green economy which is linked to the SDGs.

Green economies require about \$ 4.5 trillion up till 2030, and more than \$ 500 billion up till 2050 to cope with climate change and heat emissions. Therefore, there is a need to mobilize resources which are not just economic policies or reform packages, but also savings and resources management. This brings us to the role of stock exchanges. In 2007, while preparing for introducing social, environmental and governmental dimension to some institutions, India was displaying the experience of the Indian Stock Exchange, and was talking about an index it developed (ESG - more information in Annex 3). It dealt with the criteria of "environmental and corporate social responsibility and governance" in the evaluation of companies listed in stock exchanges. In Egypt, we have prepared this index to be the second country in the world to use it. It has achieved a state of relative competition with other global stock exchanges.

The Egyptian Stock Exchange was invited to a meeting held during the Rio + 20 conference held in Brazil to sign along with four other countries around the world on the document to establish stock exchanges in Egypt, Istanbul, Brazil, South Africa and America.

The role of stock exchanges is linked to about 4 to 5 of the 17 goals for sustainable development and a number of objectives. The fifth goal is related to equality. We were the first to initiate the work of stock exchange using the slogan "Equality and Empowerment of Women" and in the Goal no. 8.8 which is related to "Strengthening the capacity of local financial institutions to promote access by all to banking, insurance and financial services and expanding them", and goal no. 12.6 which is related to sustainability practices "to encourage companies, particularly large and transnational corporations, to adopt sustainable practices and incorporate sustainable information into their reporting cycle". We issued a handbook in December 2016, entitled "corporate commitment to environmental standards, social responsibility and governance". The stock exchange is largely a government institution and therefore it is a unique report in the world.

The world's stock exchanges have 43,000 registered and listed companies with a growth rate of 300% and a market capitalization of \$ 64 trillion, or 96% of the world's GDP. They can play an important role in sustainable development if they adopt environmental standards, corporate social responsibility and governance. Therefore, companies should prepare annual reports on their compliance with these standards in this connection.

Financing instruments are important in achieving sustainable development. We need to have "green bonds - Annex 2" to help through stock exchanges as financial instruments to finance the green economy and sustainable development. Although the world has issued green bonds to the tune of around \$ 42 billion, the share of Africa and the Arab countries is still zero. As regards the carbon markets (to trade emissions - Annex 2) there are 46 markets around the world, but our share in Africa and the Arab countries is still zero, too.

Regarding the Egyptian Stock Exchange and the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR), we started with the Orphan Day, then Autism Day, and recently we established the "Egyptian Stock Exchange Foundation for Sustainable Development" headed by the former President Adly Mansour.

Dr. Mahmoud Mohei El Din opened the floor for discussions:

Ambadress Mirvat Al Talawi: General Manager of Arab women Organization

She believes that the role of international organization should be clearer in their support to address the "losses" of water used in agriculture due to using the flooding irrigation method and loss of taxes from the informal economy which is not covered by taxes due to the difficulty of reaching it.

There should be a role for insurance and that there should be insurance for housewives and the insurance should be used as a sovereign fund owned by the people. Regarding the relationship between the role of women and sustainable development, and the lost role of half the world population without which the sustainable development would be halted, and this half turns into unproductive consumer. There are 1.3 billion ladies who do not know what a bank is. Reality indicates that women spend 90% of their income on the education and health of their children while men spend only 30% of their income on that. Women should know their rights and duties. In addition to their traditional roles, they should play other important

roles. This requires conducting in depth studies by UN, regional and international, institutions so that women would play a clear role and we should not leave any disabled person, elderly person or child behind.

Major General Mahmoud Khalifa: Military Advisor of the Secretary General of the Arab League

He believes that dealing with terrorism requires us to provide basic needs for each person so that he would not be an easy prey for recruitment by terrorist due to poverty. The phenomenon of terrorism has a negative impact on the development rates. We should also pay attention to the cultural development to enhance the thinking abilities of citizens.

Mr. Thabet Taher: Secretary General of Arab Businessmen Federation

He believes that focusing on human development is the basis of sustainable development and that upgrading the human capital is a must. Therefore, education and scientific research should be the essence of development and they should be given a special attention together with culture.

Mr. Dawoud Al Dik: Ministry of Social Development, Palestine

He believes that development cannot be achieved under occupation and occupation is an impediment to development.

Dr. Hussein Al Oteifi: Secretary General of the Arab Water Council

He believes that partnerships should be serious and effective and that mechanisms should be set up for achieving objectives. There should also be a roadmap specifying roles and who are going to perform them in the Arab region. He also confirmed the significance of forming an Arab economic entity to address key issues such as food problems, and decline of oil revenues.

Dr. Emad Adli : Chairman of the Egyptian sustainable Development forum

He believes that when we talked about mistakes, the fourteenth goal is related to the vision that the economic solutions are isolated from social and environmental dimensions and they include preserving resources. However, this vision cannot achieve development. Unfortunately, economists look at environment as a secondary factor. It is an important issue and we should convince economists to focus on the environment. Similarly, partnership with women and youth is important but why do not we talk about the role of civil society. He called everybody to adopt the concept the investment in the role of civil society is one of the means of achieving sustainable development.

Mr. Mohammad El Hawi: Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Yemen

He believes that the decline in financial inclusion and women empowerment means that the sustainable development indicators of the Arab regions will decline as well. However, the reasons of setbacks should be determined and whether they are attributed to inefficiency of institutions, administrative impediments, funding reason or others. Because the economic weight moved from the west to the east without going through the Middle East necessitates that we should work seriously and amend our tack. He added that the food conditions in Yemen require interference from the Arab League.

Dr. Tawfik Khweisa: Secretary General of Arab Hospitals Association, Saudi Arabia

He talked about education and economic growth and called for focusing on health care and clarifying the concept of “sustainable health development” in the recommendations.

Ms Mushira Abo Ghali: Chairman of Arab Youth Council for integrated development

There is no sustainable development without inclusion of youth. We are communities with a majority of young men so we should invest in youth. We should focus on cooperation with our Arab experts in the international community and setting up a vision to move together. The Arab elite should effectively contribute in the achievement of sustainable development.

Ambassador/ Ali Mohammad Ali: Undersecretary of Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs

There are differences in the capabilities of Arab countries. Somalia is going through bad conditions and cannot utilize its resources including the marine resources on the pretext of protection of marine piracy.

In conclusion, the Chairman asked the speakers to direct quick messages to the session

Dr. Omran: My quick message is to raise the efficiency of institutions and decision-making, to activate laws and to use digital standards.

Dr. Muhannad: we should invest in the minds of the Arab citizen.

Mr. Guang: Sustainable development is not targeting a specific sector. Conflicts, struggles and weak natural resources are the most important challenge facing sustainable development in the Arab region.

Dr. Mahmoud Mohei El Din: the World Bank signed a cooperation agreement in the field of education, energy, and water with the Arab League and it shall have impacts on the region towards achieving sustainable development in various countries in spite of their differences.



The ceremonies of signing an MOU between the Arab League and the World Bank at the big hall

An MOU was signed between the Arab League and the World Bank. Ambassador Badr Al-Din Alali, Assistant Secretary-General for Social Affairs signed on behalf of the Arab League and Mr. Hafez Ghanem, Vice President of the World Bank for the Middle East and North Africa signed on behalf of the World Bank. Mr. Hafez Ghanem stressed the desire of the World Bank and the Arab League to build a strong partnership to support development action and sustainable development policies throughout the Arab region.



Water and vulnerability conference organized by the World Bank and FAO - Big Hall (15:30-17:30)

Opening Speech: HE Dr. Badr Eddin Alali

Assistant Secretary-General, Head of Social Affairs, on behalf of HE Secretary-General.

Chairman of the session Senior Advisor / Nada Al-Ajizi

Director of the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, Arab League

Speakers

Mr. Hafez Ghanem

World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa

Mr. Abdel Salam Wild Ahmed

Regional Director, UN FAO

Dr. Ragab Abdel Azim

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation - Egypt

Ms. Rola Majdelani

Director, Division of Sustainable Development Policies - ESCWA

Mr. Hassan Abou El Naga

Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa, Youth Water Parliament

Presentations and discussions

The important points in the speeches of the speakers were:

- Water has played an important role in the creation of civilizations in this part of the world. It has provided humanity with many foods that the world knows today as well as irrigation systems, livestock breeding and others. Water is still important. The Arab region has the largest water storage capacity in the world. It is around 168 billion cubic meters in Egypt and it is about 150 billion cubic meters in Iraq.
- The reality, however, indicates that we are facing a historic turning Pillar: adaptation to water scarcity has become threatened in the Arab region, which is characterized by severe dryness. Most of the Arab region is located in dry and semi-arid areas. This problem is due to population growth and increased demand on water, especially freshwater, which reached 21%. Climate change is escalating and it has negative impacts on renewable water resources; there is also unsustainable water use including groundwater, rapid urbanization, and vulnerable conditions that lead to escalation of violence, displacement and the increase of the number of refugees.

- Water scarcity and its implications on economic, social, environmental and political dimensions are undoubtedly the most important barriers impeding the achievement of the sustainable development goals in the Arab region. According to World Bank studies, water scarcity associated with climate change can lead to a decline of about 6% in GDP up to 2050,
- Water scarcity puts pressures on limited water resources, increases dependence on groundwater the majority of which is non-renewable, affecting the quality and quantity of water available and the ability to access water.
- We must also efficiently deal with the file of shared and cross-border water and build trust and create partnerships.
- The growing water deficit causes severe disturbances to the economic, social, environmental and political conditions. In vulnerable and unstable countries and regions, there will be severe pressures accompanied by climate change. Vulnerable people are less able to cope with these pressures, and opportunities for improvement their conditions are limited. The factors of exacerbation of displacement and conflict are high. The question now is how to achieve sustainable development in the light of water scarcity, vulnerability and conflicts.
- Serious efforts should be exerted to remedy the imbalance between the achievement of water security and food security. Agricultural production provides \$ 95 billion to GDP per annum; agricultural work accounts for 38% of job opportunities; about \$ 20 billion come from secondary sources; the Arab region has the highest calories per capita. On the other hand, agriculture consumes more than 80% of water, and the question is that how can we maintain the share of agriculture of water.



- Insufficient provision of agricultural requirements would lead to immense shocks that would reflect on food security and rural economy in the Arab region. The question here is how can we strike a balance in order to avoid competition that could undermine economic and social stability in view of the current unpreparedness for confrontation?
- If fact, the shocks caused by prolonged droughts that affected rural sector in Syria have caused chaos for lack of preparedness. This requires humanitarian assistance to 1.3 million people and

undermines the stability of rural areas and led to growing instability, increased displacement and conflicts and the rise of the number of refugees who have become a burden for neighboring countries. The same scenario has been repeated in Yemen. As a result of the conflict, much of the water infrastructure was destroyed, and much of its capacity and flexibility was lost, and the number of displaced persons and refugees increased.

- It may be appropriate to take advantage of the Sustainable Development Plan as it represents an opportunity for this region. It forms an integrated, interlinked and accelerated agenda, which requires specifying priorities in coordination with countries according to their capacities and setting a framework for a water development agenda in the Arab region that would address the more interwoven goals such as the goals of poverty eradication, ending hunger, and those dealing with climate change and risk reduction, and terrestrial ecological environments, desertification, forests, marine life, consumption and sustainable production, among others.
- A clear water strategy must be set up. It should be more in line with the sustainable development plan, and it should include policies such as:
 - Following the good governance approach,
 - Provision of reliable services for all,
 - Protection from water-related disasters that may exacerbate instability,
 - Promoting a balanced, long-term approach,
 - Increasing resilience towards long-term climate fluctuations and drought stresses,
 - Diversification and sustainability of water supply sources,
 - Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of water use and recycling it,
 - Increasing the added value for the small farmers, and the productivity of the water unit,
 - Supporting incentives for water conservation,
 - Supporting incentives encouraging private sector investment,
 - Promoting sustainability policies such as cost recovery policies for water-related and maintenance projects,
 - Funding research and technology,
 - Striking a balance between water-consuming sectors,
 - Dealing with hotspots through decentralized actions.
- Efforts must be exerted for building strong partnerships and enhancing water security in the Arab region. It should be a multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder partnership involving all stakeholders, benefiting from all capacities, empowering youth and giving them leadership positions for creating a more stable world. It should be a partnership that is capable of giving technology-based and innovative solutions; it should be an effective partnership that may include different views related to goal attainment. However, it should address clear common goals and is capable of utilizing available opportunities.
- The relationship between investing in water and water returns and the impact on GDP should be established taking into consideration the political, social and environmental conditions associated with this investment. This represents a major challenge. The population growth should be discussed in greater depth and the impact of the expected pressures on urban infrastructure should be understood.

- It is also imperative to adopt the Nexus concept in our plans and programs to achieve the concept of food security and to define and strengthen our trade-off vision while having a better and clear knowledge of the geopolitical relations in our region.
- The UN Food and Agriculture Organization initiative, which enjoys a broad partnership, is a water agenda in the Arab region especially because it integrates with the Water Action Plan of the Arab Water Ministers Council. It organizes a regional cooperation program with six Arab countries. It also emphasizes the balance between supply and demand, and balance between water security and food security, improvement of governance and participation of all, access to water by all, international and regional cooperation and partnership, all of which support the sustainable development agenda and can be built on.
- Effects of climate change should be dealt with by the Arab League and more than a dozen partners. The associated scientific information allows us to identify priorities, trends and places of intervention.



Recommendations

The Water and Vulnerability Forum emphasizes the following:

- 1) The recognition that water is critical to achieving 15 of the 17 sustainable development goals,
- 2) Water in the Arab region, especially in view of the continuity of scarcity of water in the Middle East, threatens economic and social progress and contributes to vulnerability.
- 3) In the meantime, we emphasize that modern management systems and technologies are available on the global level to support Arab States to achieve water security.
- 4) It is very important for the Arab States to reassess their conditions regarding water security on an integrated basis that includes the social, economic and environmental needs of water, as well as the role of water management in supporting urban and agricultural growth.
- 5) The Arab League also looks forward to its partners to support Member States in conducting a water security assessment to provide a basis for proactive policies that promote innovation and sustainable management, including ensuring cost recovery to maintain the provision of water services for all.



Arab Ministerial Forum on Health - Related Sustainable Development Goals - Headquarters of the General Secretariat Hall 2 and 3 (15:00 - 17:30)

Within the framework of the monitoring of the implementation of the Arab Health Ministers' Resolution No. 16 issued by its Ordinary Session (45) March, 2016 on the approval of holding an Arab Ministerial Forum entitled the sustainable development goals related to health 2030, the proceedings of this ministerial meeting was held within the events of the Arab sustainable development week entitled "Towards an Effective Partnership ", which was organized by the Arab League at the headquarters of the Secretariat on 14 May 2017.

Dr. Ahmed Emad Eddin Radhi, Minister of Health and Population, Arab Republic of Egypt, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Bureau of the Arab Health Ministers Council, and HE Dr. Ghassan Hasbani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health, Republic of Lebanon, HE Dr. Nasser Mohsen Baoum, Minister of Health and the participation of representatives of the following Arab States: Bahrain, Tunisia, Sudan, Palestine, Kuwait, Morocco, Libya, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, the Arab Hospitals Federation, UNAIDS, the Arab Organization for Administrative Development, the International Federation of Medical Colleges, and the qualitative Union for health Systems Development Associations, and the Arab Organization for persons with disabilities.

The opening session included the following speeches:

HE Dr. Ahmed Emad Eddin Radi

Minister of Health and Population - Arab Republic of Egypt

Deputy Chairman of the Executive Bureau, Council of Arab Health Ministers

His Excellency Dr. Ghassan Hasbani

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health - Republic of Lebanon

His Excellency Dr. Nasser Mohsen Baoum

Minister of Public Health and Population, Republic of Yemen, Chairman of the current session of the Arab Health Ministers Council

His Excellency Dr. Mahmoud Fikry

WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean

His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Abdullah

President of the Federation of Arab Hospitals

His Excellency Dr. Badr Eddin Alali

Assistant Secretary-General, Head of Social Affairs, on behalf of the Secretary-General.

- Dr. Maha Al-Adawi, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), reviewed the definition of sustainable development goals and objectives related to health and plans and regional programs related to their implementation,
- Dr. Randa Hamadeh, Director of Primary Health Care, Ministry of Public Health, Republic of Lebanon, reviewed Lebanon's successful experience in the field of comprehensive health coverage,
- Dr. Tawfiq bin Ahmed Khoga, Secretary General of the Arab Hospitals Federation and former Director General of the of Health Ministers Council of the GCC States, held an open dialogue with their Excellency/ Ministers and the attendees under the theme of health for all everywhere. He stressed the importance of stability in the Arab region as a basis for the development process, and the strive to improve the environmental situation related to provision of clean water and sanitation and unpolluted air as there are some of the indications of environmental stability. It is also the first step on the road of achieving sustainable development in terms of health, and then comes the development of the community through providing good education, employment opportunities, empowerment of women, improvement of economic conditions, creating safe communities through genuine and effective partnerships.

Recommendations

The Arab Ministerial Forum affirms the following:

- 1) Extending thank the Arab League for hosting the Arab Ministerial Forum on Sustainable Development Goals 2030.
- 2) Policymakers should channel more funding into health-related sustainable development goals, particularly in less developed countries and countries facing internal problems as a result of conflicts and struggles, and for the increasing number of displaced persons and refugees in the Arab region.

- 3) Coordinating with WHO Regional Office to address the challenges facing countries where war-related diseases such as cholera, dengue fever, malaria and tuberculosis have emerged.
- 4) Coordinating with the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean to follow up the implementation of the health-related goals of sustainable development through a common framework within the next five years, and to support and assist Member States to achieve these goals, especially the third objective.
- 5) Exerting concerted efforts to eradicate the negative impacts on the health ministries in the Arab countries hosting large numbers of displaced people and refugees in the Arab region and provide the necessary support to them.
- 6) Intensifying efforts and exchanging experiences to treat non-communicable diseases such as obesity, heart diseases, cancer, stress and diabetes; which are dramatically increasing so that the Arab region will not face a big problem during the coming period.
- 7) Achieving the comprehensive health coverage is the overall framework for achieving sustainable development goals 2030.
- 8) The continuation of the health plans and programs and updating them on a continuous basis to meet the challenges resulting from the increase in the incidence of infectious diseases in the Arab region and highlighting the Arab efforts and achievements in this regard.
- 9) Organizing forums in Arab Member States to follow up the progress achieved in sustainable development goals 2030.

A roundtable on management of the risks of draughts in Somalia and the Horn of Africa organized by The Horn of Africa and Sudan Department - Andalusian Hall (17:30-19:00)

The session is moderated by

First Councilor/ Ziad Al Saban

Chairman of Horn of Africa and Sudan Department – the Arab League



Speakers

His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Ali Haj

Minister of State for Planning, Investment and Economic Development - Federal Republic of Somalia

Ambassador Khalil Ibrahim Al-Zawadi

Assistant Secretary-General, Head of Arab Affairs and National Security, Arab League

Ambassador Ali Mohamed Ali

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation - Federal Republic of Somalia

Mr. Mahmoud Hassan Alami

Director of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs - Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Federal Republic of Somalia

Dr. Gamal El Din Gaballah

Director of the Department of Environment, Housing and Water Resources - Arab League

Dr. Abdel Salam Ould Ahmed

Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East and North Africa - Food and Agriculture Organization, UN

Dr. Carlo Scarmella

Deputy Regional Director - World Food Program

Dr. Stephen Schonberger

Director, World Water and Agriculture Practices - World Bank

Dr. Ibrahim Adam Ahmed Al-Dikhiri

Director General of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development

Dr. Mahmoud Abu Zeid

President of the Arab Water Council

Dr. Wadid Fawzi Erian

High-level expert on sustainable development - Arab League

Dr. Mohammed Barqawi,

Dr. Taher Al - Kabeer

Experts at the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands (ACAD)

Presentations and discussions

The most important points that speakers have addressed are:

- In cooperation with the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, the Horn of Africa and Sudan Department organized this roundtable on "Managing Drought Risks in Somalia and the Horn of Africa" during the Arab Sustainable Development Week. There were distinguished participants in line with the decisions of Arab summits related to supporting Somalia to overcome its crisis and to recognize the importance and seriousness of the critical humanitarian situation that Somalia is currently facing due to the successive it witnessed, which has destroyed many factors of stability especially pastoral areas causing great disasters. The aim of organizing this roundtable is to consider the coordination of short term action through coordination of humanitarian support, and the long-term action through building up and supporting the development process.
- Somalia is exposed to natural disasters and man-made disasters due to human inefficiency in the management of natural hazards, especially cycles of droughts and floods that take place in successive periods. This requires transition from existing approach of disaster management to risk management, and building information, capacity and resilience and implementing programs and activities that ensure reducing risks and their impacts on communities, people, animals and the economy of Somalia in which agriculture has high contributions.
- In fact, Somalia is heading towards achieving stability, although at a slow and hard tempo and it is about to restore the state structure. However, there must be a joint Arab-African-international intervention. After the election of former Somali Prime Minister Muhammad Abdullah Faramago

as President of Somalia in early 2017 by parliamentarians who were elected in 2016, this was described as the beginning of the unification of the Somali nation and the start of struggle against Al Shabaab movement and corruption.

- All indicators show optimism as Somali stopped to represent a crisis to neighboring countries and to the world. There is no more marine piracy or any other cross-border problems. This is a good sign for Somalia that has a strategic importance and a stabilizing factor for the Horn of Africa and the Arab region. Somalia has prepared a draft "Comprehensive national plan for national development" that needs Arab, regional and international support, especially from donor countries.
- In the midst of the state of optimism that prevailed in Somalia after the election of the president, a severe drought hit a part of the country because of the El Niño climatic phenomenon that hit eastern and southern Africa. It caused a catastrophic situation represented in a comprehensive famine in Somalia, where half the population (about 6.2 million) is suffering from the current drought. Nearly three million people in Somalia face food shortage crisis, along with dozens of deaths from cholera in the town of Odenly and the Bay region. In addition to drought-induced food shortages, there have been many deaths due to drought; animals also die in large numbers and the cadavers are scattered in open areas. This led President Mohamed Abdullah Mohamed Faramago, to declare that the current drought is a "national disaster."
- Somalia is one of four countries the United Nations has identified as facing a severe famine threat, along with Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. The UN allocated \$ 1.4 billion for this. Along with Arab support and bilateral cooperation, substantial aid has been provided to Sudan and the country's largest concrete dam has been launched. Media campaigns were organized for saving Somalia. Several calls were made by the Secretary General of the Arab League to mobilize global support for Somalia. Several water projects, including artesian wells, drinking water projects were carried out, medical convoys were sent, and support was provided for the distressed areas and areas affected by displacement.
- In fact waves of droughts have been continuing in Somalia since the end of the last century, in a society where rangelands and agriculture are the mainstay of its economy. Agriculture accounts for about 60% of GDP and is highly vulnerable to droughts. It is classified as one of Africa's most affected countries with droughts. The phenomenon of desertification also is one of the most important obstacles facing agricultural development because of the apparent decline in the proportions of vegetation cover, especially the pastoral shrubs, which are cut and used to manufacture charcoal that is exported to neighboring countries.
- Somalia was exposed to a strong wave of droughts in 2011. The United Nations has reported that a famine has stricken some parts of southern Somalia. The UN agencies have warned against the threat of the death of millions of people of starvation. In August 2011, the United Nations warned that the famine was spreading to more areas in the south. UN agencies warned of the critical humanitarian situation amid reports of high levels of malnutrition in parts of southern and central Somalia. These conditions continued during 2012, and thousands of cases of cholera / acute watery diarrhea spread in Mogadishu amid warnings that the number of cases may reach 100,000 cases all over the country. Around 260 thousand people died during the famine that hit Somalia from 2010 to 2012. In addition, approximately 220 thousand others died during another famine that struck the country in 1992.

- Large areas of south and central Somalia, especially rural areas, continue to suffer from the so-called "Islamic Shabaab Movement". Their presence hampers access of humanitarian aids and impedes development activities in many parts of the country.
- There are current problems related to water in the rivers shared with Ethiopia. The Shabelle river, as well as Juba river, is the largest source of water in Somalia. More than 90% of the river water comes from the Ethiopian highlands. The population in the south of Somalia depends on the water of the two rivers for drinking, irrigation and various uses. Many problems erupted with Ethiopia that built the Ethiopian Jodi Dam, which is believed to impede the flow of water to Somalia. According to international law, negotiations are the only solution to deal with this problem in accordance with international agreements.



Recommendations

Participants in the roundtable on Drought Risk Management in Somalia and the Horn of Africa emphasized that:

- 1) The steps taken by Somalia towards regaining stability are encouraging. The presence of an elected administration, the establishment of a Ministry for Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, the drafting of a national development strategy and the spread of security and peace in all parts of the country represent positive trends towards regaining stability.
- 2) The continuation of media campaigns calling for the provision of humanitarian support to the affected areas of Somalia particularly for the elderly, women and children, who are having difficulty leaving affected areas, and for displaced persons and refugee camps until Somalia has overcome this ordeal and humanitarian disaster.
- 3) The importance of working on expanding security and peace as one of the foundations of long-term development.
- 4) The importance of building a strategy for long-term action to support the ability to absorb shocks in view of the existing fragile conditions. This strategy should be supported by partners to move from disaster management to the implementation of a national development-based plan, including:
 - Gathering information on Somalia's natural resources and how to manage them,

- Understanding the nature of drought cycles, realizing the extent of the phenomenon of desertification and identifying necessary plans to deal with them through the concept of risk management,
 - Building capacities and resilience and implementing rural development programs and activities to reduce risks, losses and impacts on communities, individuals and animals,
 - Giving systematic support for building the economy of Somalia, where agriculture contributes in it significantly through implementing an integrated water management program, developing the agricultural sector and related services, and supporting community protection networks,
 - Focusing on to water harvesting projects, supplementary irrigation, introduction of drought-tolerant varieties of crops,
 - Assisting Somali youth in finding adequate livelihoods in the fields of education, health, drinking water, sanitation, and rural water programs and creating small job opportunities to support vulnerable communities to cope with difficult conditions and economic, social and environmental pressures they confront,
 - Creating job opportunities and employment in the urban areas to which young people have moved to transform them into productive elements,
 - Strengthening institutional structures within state institutions to be able to build up their cadres and capacities required to deal with the challenges,
 - Creating an appropriate environment for coordination between the state institutions and international organizations, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations to ensure the non-repetition of calamities and to achieve integration and harmony at work.
- 5) Strengthening the capacity of the Somali negotiator in issues of desertification, climate change, dealing with adaptation funds and the green economy, and cross-boundary water so that he can strongly deal with the international community to get international support for dealing with current and future acute problems.
 - 6) Welcoming the ongoing coordination between the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the Somali Minister of Agriculture, and the ongoing coordination between the Somali Minister of Irrigation and Water with the Arab Water Council, and welcoming the offer of the Arab Youth Council to support youth small projects and involving Somalia in the projects of the Arab Committee and the Arab Fund for Youth. These efforts were requested to be coordinated with the Horn of Africa and the Sudan Department, and the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation for inclusion in the proposal of recommendation 3.

Entrusting the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation in coordination with the Department of the Horn of Africa and the Sudan, the Internal Coordinating Committee of the Secretariat and partners with preparing an integrated project proposal on recommendation 3.

Day 2: 15 May: Nile Ritz Carlton

First Plenary Session: Human dignity and quality of life

President and Speaker: Councilor / Tarek Nabulsi (Human dignity paper Appendix 3)

Director of the Department of Development and Social Policy Arab League

Speakers

Ms. Dalia Abdelkader

Director of Sustainability, Marketing and Media Sector, Arab African International Bank

Dr. Hala Yousef

Data and Policy Adviser, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Mr. Niazi Salam

Founder and Chairman of the Egyptian Food Bank

Mr. Hassan Mostafa

Chairman of CSR Egypt

The attendees discussed the following topics

- The social agenda was the motive of change in the region but we did not see any real changes on the ground
- Quality of life is improved through mainly focusing on education and health care as well as social protection for the neediest brackets of the population and focusing on the age groups that could be used as human resources especially because one third of the population of the Arab countries is young men. However, we should take differences in economic development in each case into consideration.
- The importance of changing the financial and banking way of thinking and working on networking between funds, society and the environment through raising awareness of the fact that you can gain profit from funding SMEs.
- Focusing on value and not profit as investing in value is a long term sustainable investment not like the investment for gaining profits only.
- A sustainable program is a program that aims at developing banking way of thinking in the long run and considering the sustainable funding a priority. Young bankers proved to be creative and responsive in implementing this program that aims at sustainably confronting environmental and social risks.
- The corporate role is very important for achieving human dignity

- Introducing a system that allows for communication between capital and wide sectors of society (persons with disabilities, women,...) for funding micro enterprises and achieving sustainable development.
- Looking at human dignity and quality of life from a demographical perspective as well as a social one
- The UN population fund is working on creating a different quality of life for population taking the changes taking place in the region into consideration
- The demographical perspective is an opportunity provided by the community but is it used properly?
- Success in doing something which is different from success and leaving impact
- The initiative of CSR Egypt related to organizing a forum and a series of conferences for sustainable development and calling on institutions and organizations to cooperate for drafting a roadmap for implementing SDGs through networking and integration
- Sustainable development does not only mean the continuation of achieving a certain level of development but it also means contributing in improving and achieving a better quality of development that has already been achieved.



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- The necessity of reducing birth rates to direct the production surplus towards the most needy brackets of the population and the brackets that are more capable of production in the short and medium term to avoid losing them

- 2- Giving more attention to health rights related to raising production levels and changing the knowledge pattern and culture related to healthy behaviors
- 3- Focusing on the family and considering it the nucleolus of the community through designing and organizing family guidance programs especially for the most needy households, and programs for couples who are about to get married, and working on enhancing the capabilities of persons working in this field.
- 4- The priorities of the demographic investment start from taking care of younger girls in terms of education, health care, vocational training, environmental and social education because the opportunities and demographic returns from this bracket is very high. This cannot be achieved except through establishing partnerships with banking sectors, civil society and public sector.
- 5- Creating a state of integration and networking among concerned parties: the government (it plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of life but it cannot do that by itself. Mechanisms of creating citizens who provide investment and growth opportunities for his country should be devised), the private sector (focusing on workers as they are the capital of institutions. Workers impact the reputation of the institution in a direct way and guaranteeing his rights contribute to the success of the institution. It is proposed that the private sector would have important initiatives that are consistent with sustainable development and focuses on the quality of citizens), digital media and the press (they have an important role to play as they reflect the state of security in the country. Objective media formulate the awareness of the citizens and urge governments to take care of its citizens), the legislative bodies (we cannot preserve the dignity of citizen and provide decent life for them without having a legal system that guarantees that).
- 6- Partnerships must be effective and should have a social impact and makes the citizen feel the role played by the government
- 7- There are no indicators for human dignity like accounting indicators. All available indicators measure the material results and this represents a problem in the way of thinking. If we manage to change the way of thinking, the banking sector may become an effective sector in achieving sustainable development
- 8- There should be measureable indicators to follow up the progress achieved and submitting them on the national, regional and international levels.
- 9- There should be tools measuring progress achieved on the ground. To achieve this, we should have access to demographic-based data (age/gender/geographical distribution/poverty rates/level of disability) and we should have efficient individuals who are capable to generate and analyze such data to probe opportunities of investing resources and conducting progress evaluation to guarantee achieving goals by 2030.

Second plenary Session: Climate risk linkages - Cairo Hall

Moderator: Dr. Jamal El-Din Gaballah

Director of the Department of Environment, Housing and Water Resources - Arab League

Facilitator: Dr. Hamou Al-Omrani

Expert in the Department of Environment, Housing and Water Resources - Arab League

Rapporteur: Dr. Mohamed Abdel Moneim

United Nations Environment Program

Speakers

Dr. Carlo Scaramella

Deputy Regional Director, World Food Program

Dr. Pascal Stedto

Food and Agriculture Organization

Mr. Mattis Bartlez

Director of the Water Project - German Agency for International Cooperation

Ms. Carol Shoshani

Head of Water Resources Sector - ESCWA

Dr. Emad Eddin Adly

Chairman of the Arab Network for Environment and Development - "RAED"



The attendees discussed the following topics:

- The impact of climate change on agricultural production. Rainfall shall decline although it is already limited in amount. Temperature will be higher in summer months and it might not suit the cultivation of current crops. This poses a great challenge in the Arab region as it imports the

majority of its requirements and produces only 50% of such requirements. The Arab region is still in need of reviewing its food security, and human and social stability conditions.

- The climate change affects various natural and environmental risks, and vegetation cover and would lead to migration of lots of the population of rural areas and places of uncertainty; lots of people will lose their livelihoods and the demographic distribution network will change accordingly during the coming thirty years as 70-75% of the population would reside in urban areas. Therefore, there are a lot of decisions to taken today in preparation for the future.
- It is necessary to start dealing with several tools such as governance, and giving a greater role to municipalities and local institutions and enhancing them, and specifying the steps to be taken in vulnerable and marginalized regions and determine the social safety nets needed there.
- There are challenges faced in the Arab region which are related to the escalation of violence, disputes, increase of refugee numbers, and ways of providing their humanitarian and food requirements. The number of persons who are in need for humanitarian aids increased from 5 million people in 2010 to more than 25 million people today.
- When we talk about achieving the sustainable development goals we should use a comprehensive vision in the Arab region. The work capabilities of each country less than the total capabilities of the region as a whole. Understanding the linkage and correlations between development goals related to termination of hunger (2) and water security (6) climate issues (13) represent challenges.
- We realize the nature of basic variables and how to address uncertainty in the field of agriculture and the possibilities of water disasters and the impact of all this on food security and that the agricultural production will be affected with climate, water and environment. It is necessary then to work on reducing waste and the improve ways of consumption and people habits. We should also use technology in desalination of water and using untraditional water supplies
- It is necessary to have linkages between the scenarios is necessary, and our work must be characterized by integration and interdependence. We must practice field work in better way. We should benefit from the concept of regional integration. Arab trade exchange should improve. In order for the region to reach the optimal situation, there is still much to do and we have to believe in building partnerships, and benefiting from the diversity of experiences and solutions,
- Through the results of the Regional Initiative on the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources in the Arab Region - RICCAR, funded by SIDA, the ESCWA, the Arab League and more than 12 partners managed to identify the impacts of climate change and projected scenarios on water resources and communities and individuals in the Arab region. They also managed to identify points of vulnerability and fragility, which supports the process of setting up plans to adapt to climate change,
- Many areas in our Arab region have exceeded the one and a half degrees Celsius increase, and are expected to reach three and five degrees Celsius by the end of the century compared to the beginning of the century. Rainfall in the coastal areas has also fallen and lost around 8 to 10 millimeters per month less than the acknowledged rates in regions with low rainfall rates. These changes together with climate fluctuations and extreme events require setting up regional, national and local-level plans,
- Risk analysis gives us the direction of the change curve. It depends on comparing the current situation to the previous conditions but does not show the extreme events that represent shocks

due to climate change. The better our data is, the better the vulnerability areas and the hot spots would build resilience,

- What we know so far about climate change is not enough. We need more study and research to understand the situation better, because climate change and its effects are very complex. However, what we know now allows us to start working, maintaining ecological balances, and linking technology with our traditional knowledge. We may sometimes have to change the pattern of utilization, and we may convince farmers that the harvesting of the sun energy and the production of renewable energy is more profitable than olive cultivation and exhausting groundwater reservoirs, especially non-traditional ones.
- The role of civil society is important and it started, perhaps in the 1990s, to link between national levels and local levels at work. They have a pivotal role to play in mitigation issues and went a long way in supporting the use of renewable energy, raising the use efficiency of energy and sustainable transportation. They managed to create a social and economic interconnectivity and linked between science and technology and policies. However, their role needs to be understood and given moral and financial support and there should be real involvement by state institutions,
- Countries should be supported to establish projects to benefit from adaptation funds, support of the green economy, and a financing facility for sustainable development should be activated.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

1. Climate change poses a threat to the lives of people in the Arab region.
2. The Arab region contributes to the lowest level of CO2 emissions, but is still the most affected by climate change.
3. In the Arab Region, we know enough about the impact of climate change, and countries are invited to use the climate agenda and sustainable development goals in order to synergize their adaptation efforts in the field of adaptation and demonstrate a proof of the development achieved.
4. There is a need to find clear indicators to follow up the vulnerability problem in the region during the middle and end of the century as part of the progress made towards achieving the climate objective.
5. Establish long-term partnerships such as RECCAR (Economic Sector / Arab League-ESCWA) and ACCOM (Economic Sector / Arab League/GIZ) as excellent examples of successful partnerships used to support countries and the region to achieve Goal 13 on climate and relevant development goals. The results of such partnerships should be improved as a means to achieve goal 13.
6. There are links between sustainable development objectives that address food security, climate change and water, which should be highlighted and reflected in policies at the national level. Countries and the whole region are called upon to promote cross-sectorial coordination, and set up coherent policies and implementation plans.
7. Funding for global climate and opportunities for "financing development" are available. The Arab region should be assisted to take advantage of existing financing opportunities to promote domestic investments at the country level.

8. Climate impacts are complex and will affect all sectors. The Arab countries should use Goal 13 as the point of influence to make national economies indicate dealing with climate change.
9. Analyzes of different scenarios for different systems should be undertaken to find out the most appropriate actions to be taken to achieve sustainable development in view of the climate change.
10. There is also a real need to promote regional integration as a response to climate change and to achieve human security.
11. Civil society organizations at the regional and national levels should be better utilized in various development processes. Mutual accountability among different sectors of society within a shared responsibility of the State and society should be guaranteed.

Side Session: The role of soft power in sustainable development - Hall of Alf Leila

Moderator

Major General Akram al-Nashar

Financial and Administrative Manager of the Fund of Long Live Egypt - Egypt

Speakers

Mr. Ayman Othman Al-Barout

Member of the Advisory Board of the Emirate of Sharjah

Captain / Tamer Bagato

The Arab Republic of Egypt

Captain / Ahmed Hassan

Former captain of the Egyptian football team – Egypt

Within the framework of the Arab sustainable development week, the General Secretariat organized a workshop on the role of soft power in sustainable development, with the participation of a number of representatives of Arab countries, media professionals and civil society organizations. The session was moderated by Mr. Abbasi, Head of Sehati TV Channel.

This session emphasized the importance of the role of art, sports and culture in supporting sustainable development initiatives in all fields. This role is linked to a number of sustainable development goals 2030, such as the third, fourth, fifth, eleventh, sixteenth and seventeenth goals. The Arab region is still far from the global orientation that started to use art and culture to address global problems and to achieve different types of development. Many initiatives have been launched in Europe to use art to promote sustainable development ideas that takes the environment into consideration.

The importance of emotional development, like urban and economic development, has been stressed as the human factor is the basis of development.

The attendees expressed their thanks to the Arab League for organizing this session and highlighting the role of art and sports in achieving development so that this would be an incentive for more art and sports stars to engage in this distinguished volunteering work.

As for sports and their significance, a documentary film about the role of sports in development through supporting homeless children worldwide and organizing a World Cup for them was screened. The Arab region does not have national teams for homeless children. In a new Egyptian initiative, a football academy will be established for homeless children to be the first of its kind in the Arab region. In the future, such academies would be interlinked to qualify and develop the skills of future generations that deserve this attention for creating peaceful societies where peace and security prevail.

It was also pointed out that the regular practice of sports achieves health and social goals directly and maintains health and averts several diseases, keeps individuals away from harmful behaviors, and achieves internal peace and self-confidence and boosts capabilities of work.

It was agreed that it is essential to establish strong and coherent partnerships to have a real improvement in development and to achieve the sustainable development goals. Art and sports could provide strong networks comprising partners and stakeholders to use art and sports for the purposes of sustainable development.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

1. Using art and sports as a viable tool to prevent conflicts and working on achieving long-lasting peace and establishing just and peaceful societies in which no one is marginalized.
2. The importance of highlighting the slogan of sustainable development in the major artistic and sports events in the Arab world, in order to raise awareness of the importance of partnership for development.
3. Promoting tolerance, respect and participation in the empowerment of women, youth, individuals and societies to achieve the desired goals in the areas of health, education and social inclusion.



Round table: Arab Science and Technology Group - Al Kalaa Hall

Moderator: Dr. Ghaith Frees

Director of UNESCO Regional Office in Cairo

Speakers

Dr. Wadid Fawzi Erian

High Level Expert for Sustainable Development - Arab League

Dr. Essam Shawky

Federation of Arab Universities

Dr. Shadi Abdullah

National Center for Remote Sensing - Lebanon

Dr. Hussein Al - Otifi

Secretary General of the Arab Water Council

Mr. Anders Jagerskog

Senior Water Resources Specialist - World Bank

Mr. Fadi El-Janan

Acting Director, Regional Office for Risk Reduction

The most important round-table discussions focused on:

- The importance of integration between natural and social sciences.
- It is important to transfer technology but adapting and localizing it must be important in Arab policies. Technology should be affordable, socially acceptable and environmentally appropriate.
- The importance of implementing an Arab strategy for scientific research that works on closing the knowledge gap and strengthens the role of scientific research and its ability to answer the questions related to the challenges of sustainable development and its different objectives, their integration and interdependence.
- Building the critical mass of knowledge staff including researchers and securing the bases of their absorption to serve the objectives of the Arab region is the means to achieve success of development plans at all levels.
- It must be emphasized that the progress of nations is related to the knowledge they possess, and that information and data allow the decision maker to take sound decisions.
- The economic weight moves to East Asia across the Arab region without stopping in it, because of the weak scientific and technological capabilities.
- Various ways should be devised to make the private sector closer to researchers so as to benefit from their applied researches and their ability to solve problems that are based on science, technology and innovation.
- The importance of creating national scientific platforms through which the roles of research centers are integrated and linked.
- There is a need to develop a guide for Arab researchers in their fields of specializations.
- The strategies of scientific research are country-specific, and they should be given the necessary support and they should be streamlined to be in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan.



Recommendations

Participants emphasized the following:

There are many successful national and regional experiences. The achievement of sustainable development plans requires getting out of the state of fragmentation and isolation prevailing in our region and identify the questions our scientists are required to answer to address the challenges of achieving sustainable development in an integrated manner using natural and social aspects,

Innovation and the transfer of scientific solutions and technology requires the integration of a number of roles, including the role of the state, the role of the private sector and the role of banking sector and civil society,

It is important to address the issue of the size of the Arab countries' support for achieving the sustainable development agenda 2030 through exerting institutionalized effort to support the role of the Arab League and its departments with Arab, regional and international organizations that can play an important role in activating coordination and cooperation with a selected group of Arab institutions and experts to establish a "group of Arab scientific and technological consultants for sustainable development", and lay down the basis for establishing it and seeking to bridge the knowledge gap, and supporting the creation of the critical mass of knowledge staff comprising Arab researchers, and identifying the challenges to be addressed through applied science and research, and supporting the transfer of technology and empowerment of the society using it, localizing it and supporting innovation and using it to find practical solutions.

In this regard, participants welcomed the preliminary agreement reached between the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation of the Secretariat and UNESCO so that the latter would host the latest Arab Science and Technology Advisors Group for Sustainable Development in its new headquarters and to serve as secretariat for this group. Partners would organize regular meetings to develop the necessary references for the work of this group, and linking it to similar groups on the international level. It would address special files to serve international issues such as risk reduction, climate risks, desertification and drought, water and food security issues, community vulnerability and fragility, etc.,. It would then search into those issues and in the interdependent with the entirety of other relevant sustainable development goals.

The participants from the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation of the Secretariat and UNESCO asked for communicating with partners from the World Bank, United Nations agencies and donors to participate in the membership of the Constituent Assembly and to organize a number of dialogue sessions on papers prepared by a number of Arab and international experts for setting up clear terms of references for the work of this group and way of selecting its members.

Third Plenary Session: Promoting peace, security and justice

Moderator

His Excellency Mr. Haidar Jassem Al-Zamili

Minister of Justice - Republic of Iraq

Rapporteur

Mrs. Rana Abu Amra

Arab League

Speakers

Ambassador Mervat Talawy

Director General of the Arab Women Organization

Major General Mahmoud Khalifa

Military Adviser to the Secretary-General of the Arab League

Dr. Wadid Fawzi Erian

High-level expert on sustainable development, Arab League

The attendees discussed the following:

- Peace, stability and prosperity cannot be achieved without development and without strong and accountable institutions. Justice and peace will not be achieved and the level of human dignity will not be improved unless the fruits of sustainable development covered all levels and no one was excluded,
- Partnerships and cooperation to solve all problems of human, cultural, security and economic dimensions while promoting respect for human rights and promoting fundamental freedoms without any discrimination based on race, sex and religion for achieving sustainable development.
- Sustainable development cannot be achieved without security and peace and halting wars and conflicts. What has happened and is still happening in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen made them lose their capabilities and self-sufficiency and turned its citizens into displaced persons and refugees in camps without education, services, health care or job opportunities. Such conditions impede benefiting from the sustainable development and represent an international, regional and national responsibility. International partner organizations and institutions have a stance against conflicts, violence and struggles, and have one voice before the international community, and they should assume international responsibility to stop the conflict,
- Women are the most affected by the decline of levels of peace and security; 80% of the refugees and displaced persons are women and children. According to international reports, negotiations are improving if women's participation as negotiators reaches 35%; currently it does not exceed 9%. Women must be trained to participate in peacekeeping forces and other areas.
- A national security council should be established in each country to define the "national goals" of the "freedom of the homeland and the citizen" and the "well-being" and "prosperity" which are the bases of setting up various external and internal, agricultural, economic, industrial and service policies. It is worth mentioning that sustainable development and national security affect each other and stable countries strike a balance between them,
- Rumors, epidemics, external threats, interference in internal affairs, infiltration and threat of borders represent national security issues. Terrorism is linked to external interventions seeking to cause internal problems that threaten national security,
- The weakness of any economic or military capabilities affects the "comprehensive state power", and exposes the state to risks. Therefore, the solidarity of states, and their integration strengthens, and leads to the maximization of economic and military capabilities,

- Information wars and attempts to change people's minds in favor of certain causes represent a major threat. This is done through information networks, rumors, which can lead to "self-destruction of peoples"
- Understanding the impacts of climate change and extreme events, especially those that persist for long periods, affecting water, food and the stability of societies especially in areas of vulnerability and fragility. The impact of drought and its continuous cycles has had an impact on the socio-economic conditions and has been reflected in increasing displacement and migration. It also led to adverse conditions and was one of the causes of conflicts and violence especially in the countryside and in the tribal areas,
- Understanding that history contains lessons for the future; history is linked to the present, and what has happened in history on the Arab region has to do with what is going on now; the dryness of rivers, land degradation and the deterioration of economic conditions that took place in the past caused the destruction of civilizations; in the present, such incidents caused instability,
- Security, justice and peace require the dissemination of information and knowledge from credible sources, conscious media, statistics, partnerships and coordination, and is affected by occupation, conflicts and wars,
- Cultural development is an important component of the promotion of awareness and thought. People and individuals are attracted to become terrorists because of a lack of and limited awareness. The more we enhance awareness, the more we form barriers against wrong thoughts.



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- Women play a major role in ending conflicts because they are the most affected by such conflicts. Their role starts through engaging them in the negotiating process to end conflicts. In fact, the level of their involvement in negotiations is low internationally and Arab,
- 2- Raising awareness among peoples that national security means the ability of the state to confront internal and external challenges and that the war of information and rumors and the decline of the economic, political or military capabilities of the state expose its security to great risks,
- 3- Stable countries achieve national security and development in a parallel way,
- 4- There is a continuous relationship between peace and development on the one hand and strong institutions on the other; peace is a precondition for development; real development is the basis for building a peaceful society,

- 5- Without halting conflicts and struggles, there will be no sustainable development. There is a national and regional responsibility for addressing and ending conflicts and wars. The United Nations Development Program and the World Bank must coordinate their efforts in this regard,
- 6- The regional dimension represented in the transfer of threats from one country to another requires the integration and networking to confront threats facing the national security,
- 7- Comprehensive development in different areas and the states utilization of their resources must proceed in an integrated manner with the sustainability of development efforts to ensure their implementation,
- 8- It is important to coordinate and harmonize between Arab, regional and international organizations to provide common ground to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030,
- 9- Climate risks and reliance on one natural resource only jeopardizes stability,
- 10- The Arab League must address the issues of water, desertification and drought as important issues that determine the world's future and achieve sustainable development.
- 11- It is important to reach local communities to address specific problems related to achieving sustainable development which are relevant to women, adaptation to risks and reducing them by building resilience and confronting rumors by providing correct information and creating conscious media by the help of civil society organizations,
- 12- Instability in many Arab countries has been associated with drought rates, as the drought problem is a complex one and is related to a network of challenges that hinder development. It results in large waves of instability, namely displacement and migration; women and children are often the most affected.



Side Session: Social vulnerability in the Arab region and capacity-building to improve social security - Hall of Alf Leila Wi Lila

Moderator Carlo Scaramella

Deputy Regional Director, World Food Program

Speakers

Dr. Hussein Al - Otfi

Secretary General of the Arab Water Council

Councilor / Tarek Nabulsi

Director of Development and Social Policy - Arab League

Ms. Nevin Al Kabbag

Assistant Minister of Social Solidarity - Egypt

Mr. Clemens Preisinger

Director of the Bureau of International Agricultural Policies in Cairo

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- It is important to support the implementation of the objectives of sustainable development in a comprehensive and integrated manner; there is a need to link between various aspects, goals and objectives,
- 2- Social vulnerability, defined as the inability of people, organizations and communities to bear the negative effects of the multiple pressures they are subjected to. It should be the core of any plan or roadmap for implementation that addresses the goals of sustainable development as it is a focal concept linked to the majority of sustainable development goals,
- 3- Social protection and safety nets, ranging from health care and school meals to emergency assistance, education, housing, insurance, pensions and labor-intensive projects, should be considered essential elements of life to avoid the mistakes of exclusion and integration. They should be recognized and capitalized on as being an input to development. they should be considered as additional support for the agricultural sector, and promoters livelihoods of the poor in rural and marginalized areas,
- 4- International indicators for sustainable development are important, but not all of them are relevant to Arab states. Therefore, they should be carefully put in their context and prioritized with regard to setting up baselines and monitoring. In some cases, there is a need to use non-specific indicators of sustainable development to measure progress,

- 5- It is also required to put emphasis on assessing the impact of policies and programs to determine which of them is the most effective in terms of impact and economic feasibility. It is also required to have a stronger focus on education, as well as capacity-building, human capital development and raising awareness required to implement programs of the sustainable development plan,
- 6- There is a need to expand the concept of stakeholders that should not only concern governments, international organizations, etc., but it should include beneficiaries of these programs as a means of supporting the design and implementation of programs,
- 7- Poverty in the Arab region needs to be recognized at the political level and it should be redefined to embrace multiple concepts for poverty dimensions



Side Session: Building the resilience of cities - Al Kalaa Hall

Facilitator: Mr. David Obrey

Director of the Regional Office for Urban Areas of the Arab States

Speakers

Mr. Kishan Codai

Chairman of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) team in the Arab region

Ms. Shahira Wahby

Department of Environment, Housing and Water Resources – Arab League

Mr. Raji Saro

Expert, Regional Office for Risk Reduction in Arab Countries

Ms. Karen Al-Zoghbi

Ministers Cabinet- Republic of Benin

Mr. Mohamed Hassan

Information Center, Ministers Cabinet- Egypt

- A series of global frameworks and agreements were adopted in 2015, including the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (2015-2030), the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Plan of Action and Paris Agreement. We believe that the Arab Sustainable Development Week is a common platform to address and deliver these global frameworks to the Arab region.
- It is essential to recognize that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in the Arab Region will not be achieved unless the inherent vulnerabilities and risks are addressed; development that does not consider risks cannot continue and shall not be sustainable. We must understand that the sensitivity of investment and development to risks is key to ensuring sustainable development and achieving flexibility. 2030 Agenda reaffirms the urgent need to reduce disaster risk, which is essential for achieving sustainable development in the Arab region.
- A Sendai framework focuses on the Arab region and calls for the promotion and provision of adequate, sustainable and timely requirements, including technical and financial support for capacity-building, and the promotion of international cooperation and partnerships at the regional and international levels.

To achieve goal 11: We should make cities and human settlements in the Arab region comprehensive, secure, flexible and sustainable. Therefore, it requires the integration of disaster risk assessments into land utilization, policy development and their implementation, including urban planning, land degradation assessment, informal and non-permanent housing, the use of guidelines and follow-up tools and reporting predicted demographic and environmental changes.

It is focusing on empowering local authorities through organizational and financial factors. It is also required to coordinate with civil society, local communities, indigenous peoples and migrants regarding disaster risk management at the local level.

Organizing effective international and regional campaigns such as “resilience of establishing cities: my city is ready”. The campaign is also useful in boosting awareness and promoting a culture of disaster prevention, resilience and responsible citizenship, understanding disaster risks and supporting mutual learning and sharing experiences.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- Organizing an effective campaign by local governments in the Arab region and take advantage of guidance, tools, resources and partnerships "Making cities flexible". It should be led by the UN

for reducing risks, and achieving greater understanding by urban communities, municipalities and rural areas on disaster risk and actions to be taken to reduce risk.

- 2- Developing a coordination mechanism for local communities to be able to set up public policies through a national-level partnership. (Enhancing local participation in regional forum for disaster risk reduction and "sustainable development" conferences in the Arab region).
- 3- Promoting joint cooperation between Arab cities and cities in general to exchange and transfer knowledge and experience through municipalities and local governments in partnership with the Department of Environment and Housing in the Arab League.



Fourth Plenary Session: Science, Technology and Innovation

Moderator and Speaker: Dr. Ismail Abdel Ghaffar

President of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport

Rapporteur: Dr. Ghaith Freez

Director of the Regional Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Speakers

Dr. Maha Bekhit

Director of Intellectual Property Department - Arab League

Dr. Mohamed Saidam

President of the Royal Academy of Sciences - Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Dr. Zeinab Salman Qurashi

Vice-President of the World Federation of Engineering Societies

Dr. Fouad Murad

Director of the ESCWA Center for Technology Transfer

Attendees discussed the following points:

- The scientific and technological development witnessed by mankind represents a scientific revolution that has caused what can be dubbed as the cognitive explosion, and forms new types of thinking, means of production, and unprecedented international competition. This requires a transition to knowledge-based intelligent development,
- The Arab region is suffering from a very wide knowledge gap. This places a great responsibility on the shoulders of scientists and researchers. Knowledge is the key to renaissance and young people are an active element in the knowledge society. They have an important role to play in the transfer and localization of knowledge, which are considered as important factors for achieving the 2030 Plan for Sustainable Development. Arab knowledge production is weak, and the majority of it is descriptive. Science should be a major focus,
- It is essential to identify the most important factors required for the success of technology transfer, the most important sectors that must be linked during implementation, the critical mass issue of the knowledge sector, and the mechanisms necessary to build this mass,
- A good framework for scientific research requires political will, and many recommendations have been issued in the Arab summits in this context to support education, research and

innovation. It also requires the provision of financial allocations in states public budgets. Scientists should work in an integrated manner in various disciplines; natural sciences and social sciences should also be linked with non-academic decision-makers,

- Intellectual property systems are important in the transfer and localization of technology and there is a party that owns its assets (intangible assets). Intellectual property systems must be produced, and universities should play a role in adopting many ideas for technology production and transfer. Legislations and building negionable capabilities as well as the qualification of human cadres represent important factors in the transfer of technology, Arab universities have made good strides in the technology transfer project. Arab technology transfer centers are being established in five countries and will be the basis for the establishment of the Arab Network for Technology Transfer,
- There is a need to follow different tracks in the field of intellectual property through patent registration, production of prototypes, linking inventors with investors through knowledge markets, protecting the rights of innovators, as well as linking technology transfer policies and intellectual property to the professional promotion of professors and researchers,
- Because the majority of the populations in the Arab region are youth education must be transformed from repetition technique into an interactive one, so young men are able to "create their jobs", and not to depend on the state, especially in view of current great challenges. This acceleration period requires acquiring the ability to communicate, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, which are available now in the Arab world and serves many sectors. Legislations have to be amended to link the researcher to the areas of production; charters of professional and social values should be developed,
- The knowledge explosion society is a community of large open services, which includes knowledge and information that can be used as durable capabilities or exploited for demolition,
- Educational curriculums must be modified to be technology-related, and accredited locally and internationally; they should graduates who are interactive with the requirements of the labor market. Universities should be transformed into integrated campuses using artificial intelligence, encouraging sports activities, business entrepreneurship centers, exchange of knowledge among students, providing scholarships for distinguished students. Applied researches should serve the community and publishing scientific researches in international journals should be encouraged. Libraries and information centers should also be developed. Exchange of knowledge and knowledge based economy should be encouraged.



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- In the Arab region, it is necessary to develop a model of interrelationship and interaction between goals and objectives, based on priorities of Arab action to focus on goals and targets related to key challenges such as education (4) water (6) energy (7) climate change (13) and partnership (17), and their sequential interdependence, which will contribute to the improvement of implementation of other objectives.
- 2- Supporting education, research and innovation, and to allocate funds in the state public budgets for that purpose.
- 3- Scientists should work in an integrated manner between different disciplines, and natural sciences and social sciences should be linked with non-academic decision-makers.
- 4- Creating suitable environments for addressing the intellectual property systems in transport, production and localization. Legislations, building negotiating capacities, and qualifying human cadres are key factors in technology transfer.
- 5- It is necessary that Universities play a role in adopting many ideas related to the production and transfer of technology,
- 6- It is necessary to establish Arab centers in five countries to transfer technology as a basis for the establishment of the Arab Network for Technology Transfer.
- 7- The importance of linking inventors with investors through knowledge markets, while protecting the rights of innovators, as well as linking technology transfer policies and intellectual property to the promotion of professors and researchers.
- 8- Education must be transformed from the repetition approach to an interactive system, so that young people are able to "create their jobs", and not to depend on the state in view of the current big challenges.
- 9- Legislations should be amended to allow the researcher to be linked with the production areas and to develop charters of the professional ethics.
- 10- Educational curriculums must be modified to be technology-related, and accredited locally and internationally; they should graduates who are interactive with the requirements of the labor market.
- 11- Encouraging scientific publication in international journals.
- 12- Developing libraries, information centers, and encouraging the exchange of knowledge, and building a knowledge economy.

Side Session: Climate and environmental sustainability: an integrated vision - Al Kalaa Hall

Moderator

Mr. Anders Jagerskog

Senior Water Resources Specialist - World Bank

Speakers

Dr. Benoit Bellare

Director, Middle East and North Africa - World Bank

Dr. Wadid Fawzi Erian

High Level Expert for Sustainable Development – Arab League

Dr. Shady Abdullah

National Center for Remote Sensing - Republic of Lebanon

The discussions addressed the following:

- The relationship between land degradation / desertification, dust, sand storms and air pollution as it showed the relationship between increasing land degradation rates and opportunities provided by programs to restore and rehabilitate the natural features of land surfaces. It also showed that the dust comprises natural materials, as more than 50% of it is particles (original materials) in the Arab region (i.e. cities of the Middle East and North Africa) at present time.
- An assessment should be made to determine the extent to which dust storms increase due to human activities such as climate change and land degradation and to determine the relationship between dust and its impact on people's health and the economy, and types of policies that should be taken to mitigate adverse effects.
- The concept of environmental sustainability depends on the measurement and link with what we call "natural capital accounting". The relationship with development objectives requires a better understanding of sustainable economies, natural capital elements of sustainability, environmental aspects of sustainability, and other aspects.
- Studies and informational aspects on the regional and national levels (Lebanon model) were addressed. Current studies on rate and level of land degradation and drought studies, sharp changes in natural vegetation cover due to wars, usage of heavy equipment and reconstruction in areas that have been coherent for hundreds of years and have begun to be exposed to wind, increased the rates of dusty days and hot pores that represent a source of dust.
- Land degradation and man-made adverse environmental factors negatively impacted the Arab economies as a result of environmental displacement, internal migration from rural areas and degraded lands to cities. They created social and economic pressures and increased shanty areas in cities.
- Systems have been developed to study many risks such as land degradation, landslides, droughts, forest fires and means of early warning systems in some Arab countries with varying degrees.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

The necessity of activating cooperation between the Arab League and the World Bank in the fields of:

- 1- Environmental sustainability, drawing out the features of various natural hazards in Arab countries, assessing their social, economic and environmental impacts, and determining their impact on the sustainable development in Arab countries and local communities.
- 2- Enhancing the measurement systems and identifying elements linking "natural capital accounting", sustainable economies and natural capital elements of sustainability, environmental aspects of sustainability, etc., to the objectives of sustainable development.
- 3- The importance of cooperation between the Arab League and the World Bank in developing a broad multidimensional analysis of dust storms and their development as a negative phenomenon affecting the social, economic and environmental aspects, and identifying hot pores and how to deal with them on a large scale.
- 4- Paying due attention to the phenomenon of land degradation / desertification in the proposed cooperation between the Arab League and the World Bank, as it comprises risks to the stability of societies and due to the dimensions of these social, economic and environmental impacts, and determining its impact on the sustainable development of Arab countries and local communities, and means of addressing it through the environmental sustainability framework,
- 5- Supporting climate change studies and their relation to risks and identifying areas and elements of vulnerability.



Fifth Plenary Session: Empowerment of women and protection of children and the family

The first part of the session was on "Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development 2030"

Facilitator: Ms. Inas Mekkawi

Director of the Department of Women, Family and Childhood – Arab League

Rapporteur: Ms. Jehan Abu Talib

Department of Women, Family and Childhood - Arab League

Speakers

Professor Hanan Gries

National Council for Women - Arab Republic of Egypt

Dr. Salma Al - Nems

Secretary General of the Jordanian National Committee for Women - Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Dr. Sheikha Rana bint Isa Al Khalifa

Member of the Supreme Council for Women

Assistant Undersecretary for Arab and Afro-Asian Affairs and Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Kingdom of Bahrain

Dr. Mohammed Al - Nasiri

UN Regional Director for Gender and Women's Empowerment

Mr. Karim Al-Atassi

Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Arab League

Dr. Amina Al-Rasheed

Regional Adviser on Women's Issues to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Discussions

The questions posed during the session included the following:

- What are the most important priorities for implementation in the Cairo Declaration on Arab Women and the Strategic Plan of Action and what role can the United Nations Women's Commission play in this context?
- How can the fifth objective of "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls" and gender-sensitive goals be integrated into the national plans of your esteemed state?
- Does the issue of data availability represent an obstacle to achieving sustainable development goals in the Arab region?
- The Arab Sustainable Development Week is held under the slogan of "Towards an Effective Partnership". In your opinion, what are the means and mechanisms of partnership that you see most effective and successful in implementing the goals of sustainable development in relation to women's issues?

- What are the key implications of the current situation of the Arab region on women and the means of re-empowering them in the region in view of migration and displacement conditions?
- How can men and boys be fully involved as catalysts and beneficiaries from change to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls?



Part II of the session focused on "Protecting Children and Strengthening the Family's Status in view of Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030"

Facilitator: Ms. Inas Mekkawi

Director of the Department of Women, Family and Childhood – Arab League

Rapporteur: Ms. Maggie Mina

Department of Women, Family and Childhood – Arab League

Speakers

Professor Maisa Shawky

Deputy Minister of Health and Population - Arab Republic of Egypt

Dr. Ensherah Ahmed

Regional Adviser on Gender, Human Rights and Culture at the UNFPA Regional Office in Cairo

Professor Hayat Osairan

Regional Adviser on Child Labor Control Issues at the Regional Office for Arab States - ILO

Dr. Nihad Gowhar

Expert on child rights issues

Dr. Elie Mikhael

Expert in Family Affairs and Child Rights - Republic of Lebanon

Discussions

The questions discussed during the session included the following:

Commitment to children's issues is a national, moral and developmental commitment and investing in them promotes sustainable development opportunities by breaking the cycle of poverty, combating students' dropouts, eliminating child labor, providing adequate health services, etc. Egypt is in the process of issuing a strategy for children. Can you show us how children's rights were integrated into the sustainable development agenda?

What are the key goals related to the rights of children in the sustainable development agenda 2030 and the specificity of the Arab situation in implementing this agenda? (taking the economic and political differences and conditions of instability in the countries of the region into consideration).

What are the key challenges impeding the achievement of the goals of sustainable development and the implementation of children's rights in the Arab region?

In your point of view, what are the relationship / significance / of the issues of enforcing children's rights and children's protection in view of the current situation in the Arab region and the problems and challenges faced by children, taking the unprecedented number of refugee and displaced children into account when achieving sustainable development?

How can we raise awareness of child rights enforcement issues? (Poverty - dropout - protection - participation - early childhood development - protection of children from all forms of violence against them - the worst forms of child labor).

Does the issue of data availability represent an obstacle impeding the achievement of the objectives of sustainable development in the Arab region?

Other related issues (funding, legislation, coordination and monitoring mechanisms...)

How can we build sustainable partnerships to implement children's fundamental rights at this unprecedented stage?

What are the key changes that have taken place in the conditions of families in the Arab region and what are the key factors leading to it and what are their implications on the shape, functions and roles of the family in society?

What is the nature of the participatory relationship between achieving development goals and enhancing family cohesion?

What are the mechanisms of integrating the family empowerment perspective into the implementation of the 17th sustainable development goal?

What are the implications of the current situations in the Arab region on the role of the family and ways to re-empower it view of the conditions of displacement and migration?



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

In the field of women:

- 1- Exerting concerted efforts and strengthening the role of more inclusive and effective institutions and enhancing partnerships among concerned bodies to ensure meeting commitments to achieve the gender-sensitive sustainable development agenda 2030, as well as implementing **Cairo Declaration on Arab Women and the executive Strategic Plan of Action for Women in the Arab Region 2030** adopted by the Council of the Arab League at the summit level at its 28th ordinary session held in March 2017 and to submit a progress report every four years on the progress made in this regard.
- 2- Promoting designing and collecting reliable and high-quality data disaggregated by gender, age, income and other characteristics of interest in national contexts and to guarantee access to it.
- 3- Inviting Member States to consult on a large scale with all stakeholders, including civil society, women's organizations and youth-led organizations, to implement inclusive and participatory policy-making processes, and to integrate the rights of women into national policies and strategies and to participate in the process of reviewing progress made in the implementation of the sustainable development goals.
- 4- Achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls is a prerequisite for achieving the goals of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. Given the goal of "leaving no one behind," it is essential to ensure that the requirements of women are integrated into all the goals of the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

In the field of family:

- 1- **"The plan of Action for the Family in the Arab Region within the framework of the goals of sustainable development 2030"**, adopted by Resolution 833 of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs at its 36th ordinary session (December 2016), is considered the regional reference to the issues of family empowerment in the Arab region. It is considered the first document at the regional and international level that sets the issues of family empowerment on the 2030 agenda for sustainable development according to specific benchmarks within the 17 themes of this agenda.
- 2- It is necessary to develop an operational strategy for the "plan of Action for the Family in the Arab Region within the framework of the goals of sustainable development 2030" during 2017, to serve as the mechanism for implementing the vision of the plan.

In the field of childhood:

- 1- Confirming the importance of the issues of the enforcement of children rights and their protection as a priority in the implementation of sustainable development goals and the 2030 Development Agenda being a strategic issue for the Arab region.
- 2- Activating the mechanisms of partnership in implementing the **"Development Agenda for Investment in Childhood in the Arab World 2030"** and working on eliminating all forms of violence against children, enforcing their basic rights and protecting them from armed conflicts and wars.
- 3- Supporting and strengthening programs and policies, and developing and enforcing laws and legislations that will put an end to abuse, exploitation, trafficking in human beings and all forms of violence against children and torture (Goal 16.2) and building effective partnerships for achieving this goal.

Side Session: Civil society techniques In support of the implementation of national plans for sustainable development, Maat's experience as a model - Al Leila Hall

Moderator

Mr. Ayman Aqeel

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Maat Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights

Facilitator

Ms. Fatima Othman

Director of Programs of the Maat Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights

Speakers

Mr. Hazem Mounir

Editor-in-chief of Al Hayat Today TV program

President of the Egyptian Foundation for Training and Human Rights - Egypt

Mr. Hassan Thabet

Former undersecretary of the Ministry of Information and Vice President of TV News Sector and Nile International TV Channel

Dr. Hoda Badran

Founder of the Arab Women League - Arab Republic of Egypt

Ms Ola Shousha

Journalist- Arab Republic of Egypt

Discussions

On the sidelines of the first edition of Arab Sustainable Development Week, Maat Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights held a regional meeting entitled “Civil Societies Techniques of Supporting the Implementation of National Sustainable Development Plans”. It is worth mentioning that Maat Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights that has an advisory role in the UN Economic and Social Council, pays a growing attention to enhancing the role of civil society in following up and supporting the fulfillment by states of their international commitments emanating from the international and regional mechanisms for protecting human rights and achieving sustainable development and it participates in an ongoing way in the UN relevant events. It reviewed its experience and its vision regarding the role to be played by Arab civil society in following up and supporting the fulfillment by Arab governments of the international obligations related to human rights and sustainable development. It is a vision and experience based on the experience of Maat in dealing with the international mechanisms of protecting human rights over ten years and the periodical comprehensive review project used as a tool for improving general policies which has been implemented by Maat in collaboration with the EU since early 2016.

Maat foundation discuss the following issues in the meeting that comprised representatives of all concerned Arab parties:

- The techniques of following up and supporting the implementation of national commitments related to the issues of human rights and sustainable development.
- The role of media in supporting civil society efforts to help governments meet their commitments.
- Civil society alliances and how NGOs can help governments meet their commitments.
- Maat’s adoption of the principles of dialogue and participation in the reform efforts it is conducting.
- Maat’s emphasis on the role of civil society as a partner in development, especially in view of the challenges faced by the Arab region such as the growing terrorism and hatred and the crushing economic pressures facing the countries of the region.
- Identifying six main themes adopted by Maat in following up and supporting the fulfillment by the state of its obligations under the UN mechanism, including 1) public awareness, 2) field

monitoring, monitoring and documentation; 3) capacity building and mobilization of civil society efforts; 4) communication with the media, dialogue and submitting alternatives for commitments, 5) reporting, and 6) liaison with UN and international bodies.

- The civil society should work on the concepts of taking the initiative and voluntary work. It needs a degree of independence and it should not be subordinate to governments as stipulated by some existing laws or draft laws. It should also be emphasized that civil society organizations are a genuine partner in the development process and have their tools in this regard.
- The importance of making alliances between NGOs and their relationship with the government and the international community.
- Some media channels contribute to giving a negative image of civil society organizations, which weakens the ability of the two parties to contribute to the process of sustainable development, which primarily target future generations, which distinguishes it from the prevailing pattern of development, which does not take into account of the idea of justice between generations.



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- The importance of adopting a comprehensive Arab monitoring mechanism under the umbrella of the Arab League to follow up the conditions of human rights and sustainable development in all Arab countries. The mechanism should include real and institutional participation of all parties

(governments, national institutions, NGOs and national stakeholders). Maat affirms its initiative to participate in any training programs or technical support offered to Arab organizations by the Arab League, where Maat will use the expertise of its staff and consultants to serve this issue in a voluntary way.

- 2- The importance of having an integrated view of human rights and sustainable development, which requires governments and civil society to deal with the goals of sustainable development and human rights issues as two sides of one coin.
- 3- Establishing the "Arab Network for monitoring the international Commitments in the Field of Human Rights and Sustainable Development" as a networking entity that comprises Arab civil society organizations. It will work in coordination with the Arab League to assist States in fulfilling their commitments related to human rights and sustainable development.

It is worth mentioning that the Maat Foundation for Peace, Development and Human Rights, which enjoys consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, is paying increasing attention to strengthening the role of civil society in monitoring and supporting the fulfillment by States of their international obligations stemming from international and regional mechanisms for the protection of human rights and achieving sustainable development. It also participates in an ongoing manner in relevant UN events.



Dialogue Session: Climate Risk Interaction Initiative - Al Kalaa Hall

Moderator

Dr. Mahmoud Abu Zeid

Head of the Arab Water Council

Co-moderator

Mrs. Nada Al-Ojaizi

Director of the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation – Arab League

Facilitator

Dr. Wadid Fawzi Erian

High Level Expert for Sustainable Development - Arab League

Speakers

Mr. Kishan Coday

Chairman of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) team in the Arab region

Mr. Oscar Akdal

Regional Coordinator - World Food Program

Mrs. Jida Haddad

Regional Coordinator for Africa and the Middle East, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), for funding initiatives

Dr. Hussein Al - Atfi

Secretary General of the Arab Water Council

Mr. Fadi Janan

Acting Director, Arab Office for the United Nations Risk Reduction

Discussions

- The 2030 Plan for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals stresses that to have sustainable development in the 21st century, it should be resilient to increasingly complex risks including climate change. The Middle East is one of the priority regions in this regard, since

it is a part of the world that suffer from water scarcity it is a region that depends on food imports. Climate change contributed in increasing poverty, social vulnerability, conflicts and migration in recent years. To achieve Goal 13, it is necessary to build a close relationship with other goals, to support the social agenda, and to help communities withstand the risks they are facing now due to climate change.

- The biggest challenge is represented in finding innovative forms of financing. This has a particular significance and opportunity to achieve the goal of more flexible and risk-based forms of development. On the global level, it is estimated that the implementation of national climate plans (national data centers) will require more than \$ 53 trillion of fresh investments in the clean energy sector by 2030. To provide such amount of capital we need to use new and innovative policies. The low risks faced by investors in enhancing solutions to reduce carbon in the public and private sectors plays an important role in this regard, on the global level and on the level of the Middle East.
- Through this, the Arab League, the Arab Water Council, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the Regional Office for Risk Reduction (GEF) established the "Facility" for the purpose of linking climate risks. The facility plays a leading role with the Department for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation of the Arab League.
- The facility also supports the achievement of the objectives of “the initiative of the relationship between the Arab League and Climate Risk to coordinate addressing risks of food security, water scarcity and social vulnerability in the region. "the facility" will serve as an implementing facility for the initiative; it will focus on assisting countries to integrate climate risks into local communities and identify interventions procedures, with a particular focus on assisting in the establishment and implementation of innovative financial instruments and partnerships for the achievement of Goal 13 in the region, including the joint benefits relevant to sustainable development objectives.
- The Facility will provide the following support services to the Arab States:
 - Clarifying what we mean by the relationship between the goals of sustainable development and the work climate in the context of the Middle East and displaying opportunities for the relationship between climate and various objectives of sustainable development and priority sectors
 - Supporting measures aiming to support climate resilience.
 - Specifying quantitative results of climate risks within the objectives and investments required in the social sector.
 - Presenting opportunities for the relationship between climate and various sustainable development objectives and presenting priority sectors.
 - Developing models for predicting changes, early warning and early action mechanisms.
 - Providing insights into the role of development policies and the financial sector to address climate changes in an integrated manner and to build the capacity of national and local leadership to engage in finding risk-based solutions capable of addressing the risks of climate change.
 - Developing capacities and general policies tools by partners and financial institutions to reduce the financial risks of climate change and accelerate the transition to development tracks that are capable of addressing climate risks.

- Engaging the financial sector as a future leader to develop a resilient climate.
- Exploring innovative financing initiatives, including Islamic finance, to enhance the relationship between investments used in the field of climate and to present the results of the financial opportunities of the advanced climate market across social sectors.
- Establishing a regional platform for addressing and sharing experiences and education about the relationship between methodologies, funding conditions and best practices.



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

Partnerships should be an essential element in the implementation of sustainable development goals in the Arab region, particularly programs, policies and initiatives, such as the establishment of the "Climate Impact and Risks Facility in cooperation with the Arab League ", which provides complementary perspectives and supports an integrated approach to sustainable development that supports and encourages member states and communities in achieving the sustainable development plan in the "Arab region".



Day 3: 16 May 2017 – Nile Ritz Carlton Hotel

Sixth Plenary Session: Towards sustainable economic growth in the Arab region

Facilitator

Ms. Lisel van Ast

Signed Relationship Manager - United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) for funding initiatives

Rapporteur: Ms. Jida Haddad

Coordinator of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

Speakers

Mr. Walid Adel Fawzi

Head of credit and investment risk management at Commercial International Bank - Egypt

Dr. Hussein Abaza

Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Ministry of Environment - Arab Republic of Egypt

Dr. Antoine Hobeish

Senior expert in the Union of Arab Banks

Dr. Bahjat Abou El-Nasr

Director of the Department of Economic Integration – Arab League

Mr. Anders Jagerskog

Senior Water Resources Specialist - World Bank

The attendees discussed the following:

- The implementation of sustainable development requires funding to support the implementation of the Climate Agreement and the green economy, and improving the efficiency of energy utilization and expansion of renewable energy. The banking sector plays an important role in cooperation to meet the needs of sustainable development. Supporting sustainable funding is important in this area. It is estimated that 80-85 billion dollars are required annually to achieve sustainable development in the Arab region,
- There is a need for forming partnerships and local and international cooperation, as well as community, private and public funding for sustainable development. The best practices and tools to overcome the challenges of obtaining the right funding should be identified. We should also

identify how the subsidy of fossil fuel, which is estimated at around \$ 500 billion worldwide, into subsidy for the green economy,

- The economy is unstable in the Arab region in light of the challenges facing it, such as the high unemployment rate estimated at 16%, the high level of inflation of about 30% in some countries of the region, and the high proportion of individuals living below the poverty line which is estimated at more than 40% in a large number of Non-oil countries, the low quality of services and high illiteracy level of more than 20%



- The economy in the Arab region is unstable and therefore unsustainable. Its current features can be described as a revenue economy (dependent on revenues of tourism, oil, trade routes, expatriate remittances, real estate revenues and mining products); it is characterized by its sectorial focus. The GDP may depend on a certain sector. Therefore, it is severely affected by the fluctuations of such a sector. It is an economy that is affected by shocks. (attacking the World Trade Center, the mortgage crisis, the political strikes in 2011 and 2012, the decline in oil prices, the debt crisis of the European Union), the fluctuation of investment flows and the decline in capitals which must not be less than 25-30%, while is in fact does not exceed 4.5% and does not achieve economic growth; it is an economy affected by the magnitude of environmental degradation and its impact on GDP, which leads to wasting 4.3% of the total GDP,
- Sustainable funding requires: 1) improving the business environment, giving attention to productive sectors, agriculture, industry and manufacturing, diversifying sources of generation of outputs, participation of financial institutions, building partnerships among the private and public sectors and financing institutions; 2) giving attention to SMEs and using them as a tool for poverty reduction 3) ensuring quality of production and sustainable consumption, availability of basic services, decent work opportunities and environmentally friendly activities 4) improving the quality of life for all at a lower cost and in a better shape, and reducing the use of resources while increasing yields,
- For the banking sector to be effective it is necessary to 1) raising awareness inside banks and among clients of the significance of development 2) strengthening the institutional structure of

the banking sector and to provide access to information on institutional support 3) having appropriate social and environmental databases, especially for small and medium economic institutions, and means the progress achieved 4) providing a relatively long term funding at a reasonable interest rate (10-15 years) to make investors more interested and achieve gains for the bank; 5) lack of coordination and common language among banking professionals and the need to support increasing investments in areas that achieve sustainable development,

- Sustainable financing will be achieved with the increase of public awareness, availability of political will, introducing strategies, providing logistical support, and incentives for bank financing and investment. All these elements are parts of a connected cycle. The completeness of this cycle with all its dimensions, and through a coherent vision that allows for a minimum divergence of visions and differences, present an opportunity for banks to finance sustainable development, and to create an understanding and a common base for active partnerships,
- The financial sector and its structure is concerned with the material and economic returns. It is not interested in the development returns. This is an important subject as the way of thinking of banking sector should be changed. All banks and private banks will not intervene without getting incentives encouraging it and the private sector. It is important to determine the returns of the current and future development processes and their impact on risk reduction. It is also important to determine the financial returns of the development process. Moreover, it is important to enhance this concept through the policies of countries to stop adhering only to traditional investments because it supports sustainable development. There are promising investments and open markets in the fields of renewable energy, waste recycling, water desalination, infrastructure of water, sanitation and public transport projects as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Such new investments represent an opportunity and an outlet for competition,
- The banking sector, with its expertise and competencies, is capable of studying new projects that achieve sustainable development. It may present its suggestions and visions. It is also able to spend on guiding decision makers. For the first time in its literature, the United Nations gave the banking system a full paragraph of the 2030 agenda, and that it should play a role in achieving sustainable development, and that every citizen should have the opportunity to have a bank account.
- State energy, water and other projects must be based on the "cost recovery" principle because the cost of construction, management and maintenance, if not covered, will be unsustainable. Governments must be realistic in improving collection systems and their efficiency, reducing waste and assessing the causes of losses, and finding financial sources for the services they provide. Financial support in the end does not achieve sustainable development; it is achieved however by the taking procedures to support social protection networks and stimulate social responsibility,
- It is essential to support private-public partnership, especially in the infrastructure projects,
- The unstable conditions of the Arab region require taking non-traditional action, giving strong incentives, facilities and exemptions for investment. This action should be clearly integrated in the orientation of the state and its strategies. In addition to the incentives there must be punitive measures against all those who do not meet the criteria of "carbon footprint"



- The transfer of banks from the paper work to the digital transactions, and the expansion of the use of renewable energies in the structure of banks are good opportunities towards the practical realization of sustainable development,
- Evaluating, monitoring and collecting information in a transparent, was the enable measurement. Things that cannot be measured cannot be fixed. Assessment and monitoring improve opportunities of achieving sustainable development,
- Supporting banks' opportunities to share experiences with the whole world, identifying successes, lessons learned, new experiences, being involved in operations of institutionalization, raising awareness of the available opportunities, realizing the orientations of international institutions, supporting the community of businessmen and investments, facilitating introducing sustainability into banking work and achieving good profits, all represent positive steps for achieving sustainable development,
- There are strong developments in the roles of central banks, changing their traditional roles, turning risks into opportunities, placing greater contributions on stimulus and handling of collaterals, guiding lending, supporting technology and innovation, education and youth, supporting green economy, and enhancing production and sustainable consumption to support sustainable development.

Recommendations

Participants affirmed the following:

- 1- The implementation of the Sustainable Development Plan requires an integrated vision and consideration of the elements of alignment, cohesion, information, science and technology and institutional structure.
- 2- Financing and investments will be available at the banking sector only when the concepts of this sector which is concerned with investment and economic growth and it develops understanding of sustainable development objectives, tools and methodologies. Thus it turns into a positive sector and it acquires new mechanisms that support Arab countries' plans effectively.

- 3- Guaranteeing that partners, financial institutions, and regulators are developing capabilities and instruments of the public financial policies related to the sustainable development plan and accelerating the transition to development tracks that are capable of meeting development needs and taking advantage of available opportunities.
- 4- There is a need to involve the financial sector as a leader to develop flexible mechanisms to support sustainable development. The partnership between the Department of Sustainable Development and international cooperation with UNEP through the funding initiative is important as it includes a large number of major international financing institutions, insurance companies, stock exchanges and the banking sector. It is also key step for supporting the role of financing the Sustainable Development Plan 2030 in the Arab States.
- 5- It is important to explore innovative financing roles, including Islamic finance, to enhance the relationship between investments to work in the field of climate and to present the results of the financial opportunities of the advanced climate market in various social sectors.
- 6- Cooperation with international organizations to support building statistical capacities in the Arab countries, which includes statistical institutions and statistical units in ministries and in various governmental and private sectors that can produce official statistical data.
- 7- Development of the use of information technology for preparing statistical data and the collection, production and dissemination of updated statistical data and high quality indicators in accordance with international standards to serve the sustainable development goals.
- 8- The partnership between the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation with the "Financing Initiative - UNEP" is important because the latter deals with and includes among its members a large number of international financial institutions, insurance companies, stock exchanges and the banking sector. This partnership is an important step towards supporting the role of financing the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan in the Arab States.



Seventh Plenary Session: Comprehensive and sustainable manufacturing, economic growth and infrastructure

Welcome speech

Ms. Giovanni Kigeli

Mir Regional Office of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization - Arab Republic of Egypt

Facilitator: Dr. Hussein Mansour

Head of Food Safety Management Unit, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Egypt

Rapporteur: Ms. Shirin Khalaf

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Mr. Mohamed Kamal

Arab Organization for Industrial Development and Mining

Dr. Khaled Al - Sakti

Dean of the Faculty of Transport and Logistics - Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport

Mr. Danny Gadoun

Director General of the Ministry of Industry - Republic of Lebanon

Ms. Margaret Davidson

Consultant of the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation

Mrs. Samia Muammar

Director General of Organic Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Republic of Tunisia

Dr. Emad Khatib

University of Applied Sciences - State of Palestine

Mr. Mahmoud Bassiouni

Executive Director of the Chamber of Food Industries - Egypt

Dr. Hossam Allam

Regional Director for Sustainable Growth, Center for Environment and Development of the Arab Region

The attendees discussed the following:

- The development of industry is of great importance because countries that achieve clear industrial development are better able to reduce poverty and unemployment because of the ability of manufacturing to create job opportunities that are more stable and more profitable than other jobs in the economic sectors.
- Industry serves many of the goals of sustainable development. It serves the goals of poverty, food security, production and sustainable consumption, and it supports the growth trend that benefit everyone, and covers women and youth.
- Industry is responsible for many problems, including the fact that it is the source of one third of the gas emissions, and several types of pollution; it also consumes high rates of natural resources. Therefore, giving a push to the green industries sector is very important to support SDG9
- It is important to achieve Arab integration and coordination, develop capacities in the field of industry and mining, improve productivity and its quality, quality and competitiveness, and prepare industrial projects at the national and regional levels that attract good investments. It is also necessary to work on standardizing the quality of distinguished products that drive trade and support technology and technical coordination between Arab countries and developed and developing countries.
- Developing strategies for the quality of infrastructure is important in stimulating regional trade, strengthening regional cooperation tools, identifying international best practices to introduce a world class product, upgrading Arab services and products, and evaluating conformity and accreditation systems.
- Transportation is the pillar of domestic and international trade. As 93% of world trade is transported by sea, accounting for 86% of the physical value of world trade, it is important to realize the concept of sustainable transport. The adoption of renewable clean energy and the use of new technologies, and environment friendly systems, green routes, intelligent transport services and smart seaports, lead to significant impact on reducing negative environmental impacts. Despite the global slowdown, the growth rate of trade by sea is almost constant, and is estimated at 3.4%.



- Focus should be given to sustainable transport, planning and investment in smart transportation, through the development of a governmental and administrative system that takes the economic, social and environmental dimensions into account, developing the means of transport system, building of the necessary technical capacities, and international partnerships and partnerships with supporting banks, promoting traffic control efforts to reduce waste, cooperating for creating a mindful user, using monitoring, measurement and evaluation systems, developing policies that encourage the role of the private sector, increasing development funding and financing climate funds to support sustainable transport and diversifying sources of funding.
- It is necessary to pay attention to the industrial zones, and to focus on and enhance the concept of specialization in national industries, because competition is great, and it requires integration between countries to be able to stand competition. It also requires a clear distribution of work between productive sectors, human resources development and adopting the concept of teamwork rather than the concept of individual work, creating a real partnership between the public and private sectors to create jobs, investments and real economic development,
- Small and medium enterprises are important, especially in locally originated products. Biological (Organic) products offer opportunities for vulnerable communities that can improve the economic returns of poor households and introduce products with high competitive marketing value. This production can be linked to bio-tourism routes to support it. The importance of the SMEs lies in providing work for women, youth and marginalized groups, and generating adequate income for them.
- Sustainable consumption and production is important for rationalizing consumption, reducing pollution and loss. As a matter of fact, adjusting and rationalizing consumption changes the demand of the consumer and thus the nature of the product. This is one of the most important policies to be integrated in initiatives, activities and national plans.
- During the discussions related to the preparation of the objectives of sustainable development, the Arab Group was a strong advocate for the inclusion of industrialization as a goal and insisted on

the importance of seizing this opportunity to launch a regional initiative on industrial development in all Arab countries.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- It is important to develop the industry to build the capacity of countries to reduce poverty and unemployment rates and create more stable and more profitable jobs than other jobs in other economic sectors.
- 2- Supporting the regional initiatives related to industrial development which cover all Arab countries. It was reiterated that regional activities focusing on industrial development represent a priority for the Arab region, and that assistance provided by UNIDO, the Arab Industrial Development Organization and SIDA would be highly appreciated by the Arab countries for implementing the resolutions of the relevant Arab summits.
- 3- It is important to praise and support UNIDO's various activities in the region, starting from industrial parks, agricultural value chains, SME development and green industry.
- It is significant to pay attention to sustainable transport, planning and investment in smart transportation through the development of a governmental and administrative system that takes the economic, social and environmental dimensions into account, developing the system of means of transport, building the necessary technical capacities, making international partnerships and partnerships with supporting banks, cooperating for creating a mindful user, using monitoring, measurement and evaluation systems, developing policies that encourage the role of the private sector, increasing development funding and financing climate funds to support sustainable transport and diversifying sources of funding.
- 4- It is important to rationalize consumption, reduce pollution and loss, modifying and rationalizing of consumption through raising the awareness of the consumer and modify the demand and therefore modify the nature of the product. This is a key policy that must be adopted through initiatives and activities and national plans.

Dialogue session: The role of modern technologies in sustainable development in the Arab region - Alf Leila Hall

Moderator: Dr. Mahmoud Abu Zeid

Chairman of the Arab Water Council

Facilitator: Dr. Hussein Al-Otifi

Secretary General of the Arab Water Council

Speakers

Ms. Owen Lee

Senior Water Resources Officer - World Bank

Mr. Atef Sweilem

Senior Researcher, Integrated Water and Land Management Program, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas

Dr. Mohammed Al - Barkawi

Water expert at the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands

Dr. Khaled Abu Zeid

Director, Regional Program for Water Resources, Environment and Development Center for the Arab Region and Europe

Mr. Hani Sweilem

Head of hydrological changes and water resource management



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- It is very important for decision-makers and those in charge of water issues files in the Arab region to recognize the importance of adhering to the "International Agenda for Sustainable Development" and to initiate a new phase of development in interconnecting between water, energy and food as a key concept.

- 2- It is important to upgrade the use of modern science and technology in the management of natural resources, taking the capacities of farmers into account.
- 3- It is necessary to establish strong partnerships to ensure better planning of future strategies and introduction of new business models for technology adoption and localization of appropriate green technologies.
- 4- The necessity of redefining some indicators of sustainable development and proposing the use of alternative indicators that fit the relevant local conditions and are better reflected in the Arab region to achieve the goals of sustainable development.
- 5- It is necessary to introduce distinguished innovative solutions to shift from current practices to best practices to achieve the highest possible production capacities. This requires the mobilization of financial resources and the integration of new technological input factors at work to strike a balance between environmental, economic and social dimensions.
- 6- Considering the outcome is a key feature of using science and technology to serve "sustainable development", which requires more than mere generation of new knowledge; it requires the application of this knowledge in solving actual daily problems. It is also necessary to establish networks, share knowledge, successful experiences and good practices to follow an integrated multidisciplinary approach.
- 7- Poor management of irrigation water in addition to the effects of climate change lead to rapid land degradation; therefore, it is vital to establish an effective and sustainable, economical management of irrigation and monitoring systems.
- 8- The clear model of the benefits gained from the utilization of new technologies in water resources management depends on the use of remote sensing for water detection and transgressions and illegal irrigation practices.

Dialogue session: Water, food and energy interconnection - Al Kalaa Hall

Moderator: Dr. Hamou Al-Omrani

Expert in the Department of Environment, Housing and Water Resources – Arab League

Rapporteur: Dr. Nesreen Laham

Climate Change Adaptation Adviser - German Agency for International Cooperation

Speakers

Mr. Mattis Bartlez

Director of the Water Project - German Agency for International Cooperation

Dr. Ann Ulrich

Expert

Dr. Hussein Abaza

Advisor to the Minister of Environment - Arab Republic of Egypt

Ms. Carol Shoshani

Head of Water Resources Sector, ESCWA

Dr. Nadim Farag Allah

Professor at the American University, Beirut, Lebanon



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- Linking between water, energy and food is considered as a mechanism for achieving sustainable development and ensuring the sustainability of the supply of water, energy and food resources. Thus it guarantees the security and stability necessary to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030.
- 2- Linking between water, energy and food security is a model for inter-sectorial coordination in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development. This can enable us to benefit from the activities that have been implemented in the region and in some countries through the Arab Ministerial Council for Water and the Arab Ministerial Council on Electricity and Energy and through establishing a successful partnership between the Arab League and regional and international partners.
- 3- The interdependence and transformation can be shifted from the level of regional policies to the level of development projects in the Arab countries and among the Arab countries and this is considered an opportunity to activate Arab economic integration.
- 4- Calling on the Arab countries to create a mechanism for coordinating the implementation of the sustainable development agenda 2030 and the Paris Climate Change Agreement to mobilize the necessary financial resources to activate the link between water, energy and food as an input to the achievement of goals 2, 6, 7 and 13 through establishing partnerships at the Arab, regional and international level as indicated in SDG17.

- 5- It is necessary to link between the financing of development projects based on the coordination between the sectors of water, energy and food security and the engagement of actors and stakeholders.
- 6- It is necessary to strike a balance between drafting policies and building the necessary capacity at the level of senior officials, decision-makers, the executive level, civil society organizations and the private sector.
- 7- Raising awareness among partners and stakeholders of the economic, social and environmental gains of the interdependence and using the existing institutions and not creating new institutions and enhancing the level of harmonized coordination and planning to avoid conflict of sectorial policies.
- 8- Activating the mechanisms of exchanging expertise and experiences among Arab countries and disseminate the success stories that have been made in some Arab countries in the framework of pilot projects.



Eighth Plenary Session: Water and food security within the framework of 2030 Agenda in the Arab region

Moderator: Dr. Hamou Al-Omrani

Expert in the Department of Environment, Housing and Water Resources – Arab League

Rapporteur: Ms. Morel Kalo

World Food Program expert

Speakers

Mr. Carlo Scarmilla

Deputy Regional Director - World Food Program

Dr. Abdel Salam Ould Ahmed

Regional Director of FAO

Dr. Mahmoud Abu Zeid

Former Minister of Water Resources of the Arab Republic of Egypt - Chairman of the Arab Water Council

Dr. Ibrahim Adam Ahmed Al-Dakhiri

Director General - Arab Organization for Agricultural Development

Ms. Shahira Wahby

Department of Environment, Housing and Water Resources – Arab League

Attendees discussed the following:

- The dialogue depends on the complementary relationship between water security and food security, and possible solutions in view of the key challenges such as water scarcity, population growth and urbanization, climate change, crises and conflicts that generate large scale displacement and suffering, increased dependence on agricultural imports, and the suffering of vulnerable groups to fluctuation of international food prices.
- The 14 Arab countries that managed to achieve the Millennium goals in terms of hunger, have adopted good water management and agricultural systems, and adopted systems to ensure access to food by the hungry, and to guarantee that the rate of calories obtained from food in the Arab region equivalent to a number of developed countries,
- The increase of agricultural production at the expense of the consumption of high proportions of water in the agriculture sector at the expense of other sectors, and the depletion of non-renewable groundwater are considered as negative aspects which affected the sustainability of water resources. We get 50% calories from grains while the international rate is 30%; one of the negative aspects also is to have high rates of waste of food and loss of agricultural production,
- We should focus on 1) agriculture should be consistent with water resources, 2) climate change and its impact on production and water should be taken into consideration, 3) conflicts and violence are obstacles to development and that the numbers of displaced persons and refugees have an impact on the economy of the countries receiving displaced persons and refugees and put pressure on resources their resources and that establishing peace is the solution for the problem of food security, 4) low oil prices will be reflected on investment in food security,
- The per capita water supply in the Arab region is declining (to 688 cubic meters per capita), which represents one-third of its value 50 years ago. The gap between supply and demand in 2014 reached 50 billion cubic meters and will reach 100 billion cubic meters in 2025, and 220 billion cubic meters in 2050,
- The water security strategy addresses five objectives. The third objective deals with non-conventional water, such as desalinated water, and treated wastewater and agricultural drainage, semi-saline groundwater and water harvesting. In 2012, this type of water reached about 62 billion cubic meters, or 8% of the total traditional water resources,

- Integration in the Arab region is the solution to achieve the link between water security, food security, funding, human capacities and knowledge. However, it is not enough to have strategies and policies at the regional level. We need a political will, political commitment and operational skills. We also need integrating initiatives and strategies into programs and activities on the ground. The current level is not enough so far,
- The 2030 Sustainable Development Plan provides a new opportunity for cooperation between Arab countries and integration that can enhance food and water security in the region. Prioritization of the goals related to hunger and water is a strong basis for achieving the 2030 agenda because they are linked to other goals. The goal related to partnership is the most important goal and it represents the key foundation of work. We should translate policies into programs and we should work on raising the capacity of rural farmers to be more able to use technologies.



- It is necessary to find the right solutions through the exchange of experiences and relinquishing wrong proposals. We should try to achieve integration, and the ability to review and change strategies. We should depend on "change management" concept in the vision and integration frameworks and leaving spaces for developing implementation mechanisms,
- Key challenges highlighted by speakers on food security and water scarcity
 - Scarcity of water resources
 - Population growth and urbanization
 - Climate change
 - Crises and conflicts generate widespread displacement and suffering

- Reliance on agricultural imports and exposure of vulnerable groups to fluctuations in international food prices
- Regional policy of addressing the main challenges facing us:
- There is a number of Arab strategies that precede the 2030 agenda, including the Arab Framework Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Arab Energy Strategy, and the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Climate Change Action Plan. This demonstrates the political will of Member States to address the key challenges.
- In addition, the Global Agenda 2030 offers new opportunities for cooperation and integration among Arab countries that can enhance food and water security in the region but achievements at the ground are still inadequate.

Solutions:

- At this stage, we need political commitment to mobilize financial, human and technical resources in the region to implement the plans.
- Plans and policies should be in line with sustainable development goals.
- Integrated frameworks and vision achieved through partnerships (SDG17) are needed to achieve the objectives.
- Suggesting implementation mechanisms for plans and policies, including legal infrastructure to support implementation.
- Suggesting a number of technical solutions for water treatment and food insecurity including the development of non-traditional water resources (desalination and wastewater treatment), reforming the food subsidy systems, reducing of food loss and waste, harmonization of production systems with available water resources, improving irrigation network, providing social protection based on early warning systems and responding to shock forecasts, and linking humanitarian and national safety nets for providing social protection, among other things.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- It is necessary to have political will, commitment together with operational capacity to mobilize financial, human and technical resources across the region to implement the required plans at this stage and propose implementation mechanisms for plans and policies, including legal infrastructure to support implementation.
- 2- Changing and reviewing strategies and managing the process through the concept of change management in the vision and frameworks of integration, and leaving spaces to develop implementation mechanisms, and reviewing plans and policies that are in line with the objectives of sustainable development,
- 3- It is necessary to benefit from integrated and interrelated frameworks in the goals related to hunger and water, and linking them to the vision achieved through partnerships (SDG17) to achieve the goals in a sustainable manner,
- 4- There are a number of technical solutions for water treatment and food insecurity that include the development of non-conventional water resources (desalination and wastewater treatment), reform of food subsidy systems, reductions in food loss and waste, harmonization between

production systems and available water resources, improving irrigation networks, social protection based on early warning systems and response to shock forecasts, and linking humanitarian and national safety nets for providing social protection.

Dialogue session: Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development - Alf Leila Hall

This session represent a part of the events of the third national sustainable development day

Under the sponsorship of HE Prime Minister of Arab Republic of Egypt, the Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development organized the third national week for sustainable development under the title of “sustainable cities and regions” in parallel with holding the Arab Sustainable Development Week. It was attended by a panel of key figures, development experts, key civil society representatives in Egypt in addition to specialists and academics from various Egyptian universities. The week was concluded with a number of key recommendations the most important of which was launching a joint imitative with the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban communities that calls for implementing the new capital city on the model of sustainable cities. Sustainability criteria should be applied in all sectors and services in the city. It was also recommended that a protocol be signed between the forum and the Ministry of Education for spreading sustainability education in addition to forming groups of youth from various universities and working on making the forum a continuous link with them and benefiting from the experiences of experts and academics among the forum groups.

Arab sustainable development forums

Moderator: Dr. Emad Eddin Adly

Chairman of the Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development

Speakers

Dr / Malak Rifai

Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development

Dr. Hala Yousry

Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development

Dr. Magdy Allam

Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development

Dr. Mohamed Fotohi

Arab Network for Environment and Development "RAED" - Kingdom of Morocco

Dr. Malik Ghandour

Arab Network for Environment and Development "RAED" - Republic of Lebanon

On the sidelines of the Arab Week for Sustainable Development, the Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development organized an "Egyptian NGO", a side event on promoting the idea of establishing a national forum for sustainable development in the Arab countries based on the lessons learned and successes achieved by the Forum since its foundation in 2012.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- Attendees lauded the successful Egyptian experience which is considered a pioneering model for achieving good governance and participation in decision making on the national and local levels.
- 2- Participants confirmed the necessity of establishing entities comprising members from various Arab societies including civil society, government and private sector, media, academicians, experts and others. Such forums should seek to establish the idea of sustainable development in those societies and building capabilities of communities and relevant bodies to achieve this purpose.





Ninth Plenary Session: The Role of Civil Society in Implementing the Sustainable Development Plan 2030

Moderator: Ms. Alia Ghannam

Director of Civil Society Organizations - Arab League

Rapporteur: Mr. Walid Joda

Management of civil society organizations

Speakers

Professor Ziad Abdel Samad

Executive Director of the Network of Arab NGOs for Development

Dr. Moushira Abu Ghali

Founder and Chairman of the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development

Dr. Amani Kandil

Civil Society Expert and Executive Director of the Arab Network of Organizations

Mr. Niazi Salam

Founder and Chairman of the Egyptian Food Bank

Ms Amira Hussein

Director of Education Program - CARE International in Egypt

Mr. Ayman Al-Barout

Member of the Advisory Board of the Emirate of Sharjah

Dr. Sana Ali Al-Asfour

Member of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Sociologists Association

Dr. Emad Eddin Adly

President of the Arab Network for Environment and Development "Raed"

Dr. Abdul Mohsen Al Diri

President of Bahrain Projects Association

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- It is necessary to issue an official declaration of the priorities of the Arab region in the field of development, which corresponds with the objectives of sustainable development and with the capabilities and potentials of the private sector.
- 2- It is important to create indicators to measure the effectiveness of performance, and the capacities of associations and NGOs that they are able to work on achieving sustainable development.
- 3- Building up strong and effective partnerships between governments, the private sector and the civil society sector on the ground.
- 4- Emphasizing the creation of the political, legislative, social and economic environment that supports the civil society organizations to play an active role.
- 5- Collective work within the framework of national Arab networks to work on the achievement of the goals of sustainable development.
- 6- Effective coordination with all relevant parties (governmental, non-governmental, local, regional and global), and convincing them of the principle of partnership.
- 7- It is necessary to set short and long-term objectives to engage civil society in the implementation of sustainable development goals.
- 8- Focusing on the principle of continuity of business as a fundamental principle to achieve the desired success of the work of civil society organizations.



- 9- Focusing on attracting and qualifying the human cadres necessary to help achieve the goals and efforts of civil society organizations.
- 10- Coordinating between civil society organizations within each country and among civil societies in the Arab countries and achieving integration among them.
- 11- Transferring experiences of successful models as well as knowledge to sisterly Arab states that need them.
- 12- Developing mechanisms to ensure implementation of the recommendations of the conference as well as mechanism to monitor and measure the rate of implementation and success.
- 13- Prioritizing the work of civil society according to set priorities and develop implementation strategies and timeframes for them.
- 14- Monitoring and evaluating the experiences of institutions and NGOs in the 17 areas of sustainable development objectives.
- 15- Having effective coordination with governments on how to transform sustainable development objectives into policies and laws and benefiting from the experience of experts in each area.
- 16- Setting Arab and national priorities for each sustainable development objective, and identifying the needs and capacities of each Arab country according to the available potentials.
- 17- Holding an annual joint Arab forum to share experiences and support the newly established civil society institutions.
- 18- Developing a database and statistics for Arab women to facilitate the scientific research tasks.
- 19- Encouraging the enrichment of dialogue at the national level and benefitting from the experience of the Egyptian Forum for Sustainable Development to support dialogue and partnership among

stakeholders to achieve integration between economic, social and environmental development and to integrate all parties into an effective system to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

- 20- Engaging civil society organizations concerned with women's issues in the dialogue on legislation and laws with the Committee on Women and the Family within the Nation's Assembly / People's Assembly.
- 21- Calling on the Department Of Civil Society Organizations in the Arab League to develop a plan of action in which civil society participates with governments in implementing the goals of sustainable development.
- 22- It is necessary to have direct communication between civil society institutions in all Arab countries with the Department Of Civil Society Organizations in the Arab League and hold training and educational courses in all development fields.
- 23- Calling on Arab civil society organizations to be guided by the document of the Arab Decade of Civil Society Organizations issued by the Department of Civil Society Organizations in the Arab League and adopted by the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers that acts as a road map to achieve the sustainable development goals.
- 24- Closing ranks to face the Zionist entity, which impedes the implementation of the sustainable development goals in the Arab countries.

Dialogue session: Arab Women and the 2030 Development Agenda towards supporting national and regional efforts to achieve a comprehensive and balanced development in the Arab region - Alf Leila Hall

Moderator: Ambassador Mervat Tallawy

Director General of the Arab Women Organization

Co-moderator: His Excellency Mr. Haidar Jassim Al Zamili

Minister of Justice - Republic of Iraq

Facilitator: Ms. Zeina Ali Ahmed

Deputy Director, Regional Center, United Nations Development Program

Major General Abu Bakr al-Gendi

Head of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics - Arab Republic of Egypt

Dr. Nehal El Megharbel

Deputy Minister of Planning, Follow-up and Administrative Reform

Ms. Hibak Osman

Chairman of Karama Foundation



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- It is necessary to adapt technological methods to open new horizons for the empowerment of women in all fields.
- 2- It is necessary to enhance financial inclusion especially for women in the Arab region, with the aim of expanding their participation in the financial system in order to promote economic growth and integrate the parallel economy into the formal economy.
- 3- It is necessary to find political solutions for the ongoing crises and armed conflicts in the Arab region because they have negative effects on the Arab peoples in general and on women in particular and because they represent a challenge to the implementation of the sustainable development goals in the Arab region.
- 4- It is inevitable to integrate women into the implementation of all 17 goals.
- 5- It is necessary to build the capacity of the Arab statistical offices to produce and develop gender-responsive data and indicators and fill the statistical gaps related to data in the development agenda.



Dialogue session: Mitigation of the effects of land degradation Castle Hall

Moderator: Ms. Sabeen Sakr

United Nations representative for the Arab region on combatting desertification

Speakers

Dr. Talal Darwish

Expert on losses of "organic carbon in soil" in Arab countries

Mr. Raed Bani Hani

National Focal Point - Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Mr. Fadi Asmar

National Focal Point - Republic of Lebanon

Mr. Mohamed Lameen Abdelkader

National Focal Point - Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Dr. Wadid Fawzi Erian

High Level Expert for Sustainable Development - Arab League



Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- It is important to "neutralize land degradation" in the Arab region as part of the sustainable development agenda for 2030, and raise awareness and creating wider Arab participation in the program of neutralizing the effects of land degradation and giving it special importance in the programs of the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan in the Arab region.
- 2- Strengthening the targeted program of "neutralizing land degradation" by inviting Arab countries to share their experiences in this program, emphasizing regional cooperation, building partnerships with other organizations and exploring available opportunities for implementing projects.
- 3- It is important to protect Arab societies and their various environments from the risks of climate change and land degradation and advocating the minimization of their economic, social and environmental impacts by neutralizing the effects of land degradation and achieving other relevant sustainable development goals.
- 4- Emphasizing the necessity of cooperation with all local communities to address the social, economic and environmental dimensions in a balanced manner in the targeted areas to rehabilitate them, especially vulnerable communities such as Bedouins and shepherds communities in degraded pastoral areas.



Dialogue session: Arab youth: challenges and aspirations - Alf Leila Hall

Moderator: Ms. Moushira Abu Ghali

Founder and Chairman of the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development

Speakers

Ms. Mai Selim Al-Tabal

Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development - Republic of Lebanon

Ms. Fida Turki

Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development - State of Palestine

Dr. Idris Demba Corriere

Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development - Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Mr. Mohammed Al-Hajiri

Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development - Saudi Arabia

Discussions

More than 100 young men and women from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Mauritania and Morocco attended the meeting at an invitation from the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development. The meeting was attended by Sheikha Dr. Hind Al Kasami, Chairperson of Emirates International Club for Businesswomen and an accompanying delegation of Arab businesswomen and businessmen. The session was also attended by a number of public figures, university professors, specialists and representatives of civil society organizations.

The participants welcomed the selection of the title of "Arab Youth: Challenges and Aspirations" as part of the activities of the Arab for Sustainable Development Week, which represents an important platform for dialogue. The session presents the vision of the Arab youth regarding the huge challenges face by the Arab nation that impede the implementation of the SDGs and the aspirations of the Arab youth regarding the implementation of the 2030 development agenda, which gives an important indication of the importance of involving youth in the implementation of the development agenda.

Dr. Moshera Abougali presented the initiative of the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development for the establishment of the Arab Fund for Youth Support. She pointed out that the initiative was one of the recommendations of the Arab Youth Forum regarding the objectives of sustainable development and Arab national security organized in February 2017 by the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development in cooperation with the Department of Sustainable Development and the Arab National Security Sector under the auspices of the General Secretariat of the Arab League.

Objectives of establishing the fund:

- 1- Establishing projects that support the Arab economy to solve the problem of unemployment and achieve economic integration.
- 2- Linking vocational training and employment to support Arab industries.
- 3- Investment in the Arab region through establishing youth projects according to the investment map.
- 4- Investing in the demographic factor in Arab countries and transforming it into a productive force rather than leaving it to be a burden on the Arab economies. The Arab nation is a young nation and the Arab countries must invest in their youth to qualify them and pump their capabilities into the Arab market.
- 5- Benefiting from the innovative ideas of creative Arab youth through opening up new fields of work that support development and contribute to solving the problem of unemployment and establishing a bank that preserves these ideas.
- 6- Preserving Arab identity and heritage and making young people acquainted on the importance of the sense of belonging and loyalty to the homeland.
- 7- Supporting the innovations and inventions of young people and striving to implement them to develop Arab industries.
- 8- Supporting scientific research to contribute to the development of the Arab economy.
- 9- Supporting poor young people complete their university education.
- 10- Supporting handicrafts and technical education.

Functions of the Fund:

The Fund provides financial support for programs and projects that support Arab youth in several developmental fields as follows:

- Supporting youth in the fiend of economic development
- Supporting youth in the fiend of cultural development
- Supporting youth in the fiend of educational development
- Supporting youth in the fiend of research and scientific development

- Establishing the Bank of Ideas



The participants also discussed a paper on the impact of young people on achieving security and peace for human development and the importance of participation of youth in the development. This leads to making the individual realize his own importance and value. When the youth participate in the plans, this gives consensus to the implementation of the project. The youth participation also strengthens the relationship between society and the various state agencies and help new local community leaders to surface, which enhances the chances of success of development projects and gives them continuity through real participation. This also reduces government expenditure due to local contributions, which emanates mainly from the sense of responsibility and belonging. To instill values in young men, we should integrate the value of sense of belonging into all educational programs, raise awareness of the importance of preserving the values of enhancing national unity, recognize the intellectual and cultural diversity within each country, and enact and implement laws that protect national unity and supports national belonging. In addition, all individuals and educational institutions should instill, promote and protect the sense of belonging and requirements of national unity.

The participants also discussed the role of entrepreneurship in achieving the objectives of "creative youth experiences" which dealt with the role of the first incubator for Palestinian businesswomen that implemented about 100 projects and cooperated with many Arab and European support bodies.

The participants also discussed a paper on the concept of young people in the UN documents and the Arab Charter for Youth and the empowerment of young people to achieve self-development and making use of young people's energy for the benefit of youth themselves and the society as well. They also discussed vocational guidance and scientific qualification of the youth to be economically

productive and the importance of providing physical, psychological, mental and health care to youth. They also addressed opportunities to increase the productivity of the youth and giving them the opportunity to exercise responsibility that develop commitment, discipline and social balance.

They also discussed a paper on Arab youth and using innovative thoughts for achieving a faster development “a discussion on the investment of human minds.” It included the call to support the creativity of young people and their innovations, noting that the problems of young people in the age of globalization included intellectual deviation and having plenty of leisure time, drug addiction, unemployment and lack of desire to participate in the community activities. To save youth of all this, we must build their capabilities to boost their self-confidence and the role they can play through involving them in community system, supporting their creativity and innovations, empowering them as a decision makers and involving them in the development of strategies.

Sheikha Dr. Hind Al Qasimi gave a speech to the youth in which she pointed out that the youth must be interested in science, education, perseverance and do not give up their ambitions. She stressed that all hardworking people must achieve success and that those who start the journey of their lives by hard work, will reap the fruits of their efforts. She called on youth not to let challenges impede their ambitions and to exploit the surrounding environments in the doing useful things confirming that successful businesses have not been created in closed offices.

At the end of the session, the participants praised the topics discussed, especially the initiative of the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development which is related to the establishment of the Arab Fund for Youth Support. They affirmed that this initiative will be the foundation of an Arab community movement that supports the Arab society and achieves the development goals. One of the participating businessmen expressed his desire to donate a plot of land for establishing an incubator in Egypt for young entrepreneurs. One of the professors at Ain Shams University also expressed his desire to participate in establishing the incubator and participating in the training process. The former governor of Alexandria expressed his desire to participate in establishing the incubator and supporting its operational studies.

Recommendations

Participants confirmed the following:

- 1- Requesting the Arab League to support the initiative of the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development for establishing the Arab Fund for Youth Support through the support of the Arab Fund for Development to be a source of funding for the implementation of sustainable development goals programs.
- 2- Paying attention to training and qualification by developing an Arab plan for training and qualifying youth and pumping them into the labor market.
- 3- Calling on the Arab League to develop an Arab strategy based on transforming the outputs of scientific research into marketable products on the local and international levels in support of young innovators and researchers.
- 4- Calling on the Arab League to invite the concerned parties to launch an Arab campaign to support national products.

- 5- Enacting legislations that compels the private sector to support scientific research and innovation and provide the necessary financial support to develop distinguished researches.
- 6- Calling on the Arab League to involve youth in the development of government strategies and plans and to involve them in decision-making.
- 7- Stimulating the media to play a developmental role in educating young people on entrepreneurship and acquisition of skills and producing drama that advocates work and development and highlights successful experiences.



Day 4: 17 May 2017 – Arab League Secretariat Premises

Final communiqué For the Arab Sustainable Development Week

Under the patronage of His Excellency President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the General Secretariat of the Arab League organized the "Arab Sustainable Development Week " during the period from 14-17 May 2017 in cooperation with the Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the World Bank and the UNDP (Chairman of the United Nations Development Group).

The events of the first and last days of the week were held on 14/5/2017 and 17/5/2017 respectively at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Arab League. The events of the second and third days, however, were held on 15/5/2017 and 19/5/2017 respectively at the Ritz-Carlton Nile Hotel.

Representatives of Arab countries, a number of diplomatic missions accredited to the Arab League, Arab organizations, UN specialized agencies, the World Bank, regional and international organizations, representatives of civil society, the private sector, a number of academics, journalists

and parliamentarians attended the event. A distinguished presence of women and persons with disabilities marked the events.

On the first day of the week, the Arab League and the World Bank also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the fields of sustainable development.

The Arab Week for Sustainable Development discussed several issues of concern to the Arab region in the framework of following up the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan in nine plenary sessions that included the following themes:

- 1) Human dignity and quality of life
- 2) The link between climate risks
- 3) Promoting peace, security and justice
- 4) Science, Technology and Innovation
- 5) Empowerment of women and protection of children and the family ... pillars of achieving sustainable development
- 6) Towards achieving sustainable economic growth in the Arab region
- 7) Comprehensive sustainable manufacturing, economic growth and infrastructure
- 8) Water and food security
- 9) The role of civil society in the implementation of the sustainable development plan 2030

The week included a number of side events devoted to discussing issues of particular interest to the Arab region, including the Water and Vulnerability Forum organized by the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Arab Ministerial Forum on Health-related Sustainable Development Objectives, organized by the Department of Health and Humanitarian Aid, a roundtable on drought Risk Management in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, organized by the Horn of Africa and Sudan Department, and the Department for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, and a Round table on the formation of the Arab Group for Science and Technology to support sustainable development in the Arab region organized by the Sustainable Development and International Cooperation Department, in collaboration with UNESCO. Key concepts and trends of sustainable development, social vulnerability issues, neutralizing the effects of land degradation, using new technologies in natural resources management, significance of networking in achieving SDGs were discussed. Special sessions were also organized for young people, women, the private sector and civil society with its various focuses.

At the end of the week, participants issued the following communiqué:

We, **participants in the Arab Sustainable Development Week**, welcome the initiative of the General Secretariat of the Arab League (the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation) to hold the Arab Sustainable Development Week and the efforts made in preparing the meetings and topics discussed during its proceedings. We call on the General Secretariat of the Arab League and all Arab and regional organizations to expedite activating the motto of the week which is “Towards an Effective Partnership” to provide the necessary support to the Arab States to implement the goals of sustainable development and to continue to build and expand partnerships for the effective implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Plan in the Arab region.

We **commend** that the Arab Sustainable Development Week has succeeded in covering the global frameworks and agreements of 2015, including the Sendai Risk Reduction Framework for the period 2015-2030, the Sustainable Development Plan 2030, the Addis Ababa Plan of Action, the Paris Agreement and the Marrakech Declaration. Thus, this week has become an important platform for addressing the implementation of these global frameworks in the Arab region in a coherent and mutually supportive manner and with full coordination and integration based on partnerships among all stakeholders.

In this regard we **emphasize the need to adopt the conclusions** of the week, the most important of which were:

- 1- Sustainable development is characterized by being coherent, interlinked and indivisible. The efforts of the Arab countries must have the same characteristics to improve their credibility and increase their resources in the field of sustainable development to become a means of changing the way of life in the Arab societies. Partnerships between all the development parties is the way to achieve development,
- 2- It is necessary to provide assistance to the less developed Arab countries, which reflects the interdependence and complementarity among them. No country is capable of achieving the goals of sustainable development on its own. The challenges and concerns are cross-boundary and even cross-generational. This requires enhancing the concepts of solidarity and partnership.
- 3- It is important to promote peace, security, justice, ending violence, occupation, conflict, rehabilitation and reconstruction of post-conflict areas are the key to achieving sustainable development in the Arab region,
- 4- Encouraging the concepts of harmonization and coherence, preparing indicators, collecting information, enhancing institutional structure, informing decision makers at all levels, especially local communities, to support making appropriate policies to address the challenges facing their communities and support them in building capacities and resilience,
- 5- It is important to support the Arab Ministerial Councils and Arab Labor Organizations in their efforts to implement the goals and objectives of sustainable development, taking the concepts of alignment with the objectives of sustainable development and the interrelationship between economic, social and environmental dimensions while working on the preparation of programs, projects and activities and integrating all parties to form an effective system to achieve the sustainable development goals into consideration,
- 6- Inviting Arab, UN, regional and international organizations to provide technical support to countries when preparing their reports on the progress made. It is important to build clear indicators and develop statistical work to measure progress achieved,
- 7- Urge Arab, UN, regional and international organizations to work with the General Secretariat of the Arab League to build appropriate mechanisms to secure the necessary funding to support Arab countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Plan 2030,
- 8- It is important to protect the Arab societies and their various environments from the risks of climate change and land degradation and adopt criteria of neutralizing the effects of land degradation to reduce their economic, social and environmental impacts on achieving the sustainable development goals,
- 9- The Sustainable Development Plan 2030 represents a new opportunity for the Arab region to promote Arab cooperation and integration that can support food and water security in the region,

- 10- It is necessary to work on diversifying production structures in the Arab countries in order to maintain sustainable growth, and improving the business climate in the Arab countries to create an Arab environment that attracts national and international investments. That Arab banks should assume their social responsibility by providing funding for supporting the sustainable development plan 2030 and small and medium enterprises especially green ones,
- 11- Encouraging and enriching the dialogue at the national levels and benefiting from the pioneering Arab experiences in the field of supporting dialogue and partnership among stakeholders to achieve the goals of sustainable development,
- 12- The importance of building strong and effective partnerships with civil society organizations, the private sector, scientific research centers and all stakeholders for the implementation of sustainable development goals,
- 13- Integrating women in the implementation of the goals of sustainable development, clarifying their role within each objective, and using technology to empower women economically,
- 14- Engaging young people in the development of strategies, action plans and in decision-making, preparing databases for Arab researchers, establishing an entity for them that supports scientific research that aims to serve the objectives of sustainable development, achieve empowerment and localization of technology, secure the provision of knowledge to the Arab countries that need it, bridge the knowledge gap, provide firsthand data and information and promote transfer of successful experiences, models, raising awareness and institutional structure,
- 15- Adopting measures and policies to ensure that persons with disabilities, including women, children, youth and elderly persons, are protected from poverty and guaranteeing that they have equal access to economic resources, basic services and new technology and their right to enjoy the highest standard of healthcare without discrimination by making all levels of health care systems comprehensive and easy to access by them,
- 16- Activating the resolutions of the Arab summits on the creation of a favorable political, legislative, social and economic environment and enhancing educational and health services targeting the Arab citizen while supporting the active role of the private sector and civil society organizations,
- 17- The importance of activating the Arab contract for civil society organizations to implement sustainable development plans,
- 18- Welcoming the results of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development held during the period 3-5 May 2017 in Rabat,
- 19- Emphasizing the call for holding the Arab Sustainable Development Week periodically to support the Arab countries' efforts to implement the 2030 Plan in coordination with the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development,
- 20- Monitoring the implementation of the outputs of the Arab Sustainable Development Week in cooperation with all partners,

In conclusion, we thank the government and people of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for hosting the Arab Sustainable Development Week and for the generous patronage of President Abdelfattah Al Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt for this week.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Remarks by the Representative of China

Mr. President, Your Excellences,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Chinese government, I would like to congratulate the opening of the Arab Sustainable development Week.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (“2030 Agenda”) was adopted by the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, which points out the direction for national development of all countries and international development cooperation.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is the central task in the international development endeavor and the common task for the international community. All countries should include the implementation of the 2030 Agenda into its national development strategy, pushing forward the sustainable development. At the same time, the international community should commit to building the new type of global development partnership, and forming the cooperation pattern with the United Nations as the core, South-North Cooperation as the main channel, complimented by South-South cooperation. The developed countries should honor the commitments, and help the developing countries to obtain more resources for development.

The developing countries should deepen the South-South Cooperation, realizing the united strength and consolidating the good momentum of international development cooperation.

China is implementing the sustainable development agenda in an all-round way, and has achieved periodical progress. Last year, China linked the implementation of sustainable development agenda with the 13th Five-Year Plan and domestic mid-and-long term development strategies, and set up an inter-agency coordinating mechanism, which consists of more than 40 governmental institutions. We have reduced the population living in poverty by 12.4 million, started the construction of innovation demonstration zones for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with the effort to provide duplicable and scalable experience and share China’s development concepts and experience with other countries, especially the developing countries.

As the Chair of the Group of Twenty (G20) in 2016, China pushed the G20 Hangzhou Summit to draw up action plan on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and put the issue of development in a very important place in G20 macro policy coordination. During the General Assembly of the UN last year, Premier Li Keying chaired the symposium on sustainable development, and discussed the general plan for sustainable development with the heads of 16 main international organizations, including then Secretary General of the UN, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. At the symposium, the Chinese side announced the “China’s National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and circulated as the UN document, which provided experiences for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for all countries. Nevertheless, China also made the voluntary national review of the implementation of 2030 Agenda in the first round.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking into future, China will continue to implement the 2030 Agenda domestically, and to provide other developing countries with assistance within China's capacity. This year, China will host the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and Xiamen Summit of BRICS. In both meetings, we will place the development issue at a prominent position, and promote international development cooperation.

China and the Arab League are all active promoters of global sustainable development. China is willing to share the experiences with developing countries, to deepen the South-South Cooperation and to realize common prosperity and sustainable development.

Thank you.

WANG Young'un

Counselor (Political Affairs)

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Cairo

Paper presented to the Arab Week for Sustainable Development

Prepared by:

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Office of the Head of the Social Affairs Sector

First: Introduction

The dignity of man and the quality of life, is a short phrase that contains everything about us and everything found around us in our lives; there are many concepts and definitions of dignity which are related to all aspects of life and various religions and cultures, and are confirmed by the religious and worldly principles. Islam stressed the dignity of human beings, and considered man the successor of God Almighty on earth and he should play the role of constructing it, establishing justice in it, and being fair in his dealings, respecting other human beings, not go be unjust, not to be a slave of persons or money. The dignity of course includes all human beings. God says, "We have honored the sons of Adam." This is also the case for all the heavenly religions, which concentrated in their entirety on man, his life and his relationship with others in a framework of justice.

Various constitutions emphasized in many of their texts the dignity of the human beings, and stressed that it should be enjoyed by all people of different social and professional statuses. It should be noted here that the Irish are the first people to introduce the term human dignity in their Constitution in 1937, and stressed that it is an untouchable principle that must be respected and protected by all authorities.

As for the quality of life, we found out that the quality of life index includes health, family life, social life, physical welfare, political stability and security, climate and geographical location, job security, political freedom, and gender equality. We should refer here to the Living Conditions Index, which includes all the physical needs and capabilities of the individual, such as food, drinks, clothing and housing, as well as social needs and basic services such as education, treatment, transportation, means of transportation and the environment. The World Bank stated that the average individual income in the family is considered an indication of the standard of living.

Social justice is based on the principles of equality, equity, rights and participation, making it a major global goal, because the feeling of injustice is one of the most important causes of instability in societies and the consequent political, social and economic upheaval, especially in areas that are vulnerable as a result of conflicts, as is the case in the Arab region.

In spite of the importance of economic growth in the Arab region as a result of technological progress and the positive effects of globalization, it is more important to achieve tangible benefits for all brackets of society. Therefore, we must focus on labor market reform to provide decent jobs, which are considered the bases of social cohesion and social justice as emphasized in the Sustainable Development Plan 2030.

Second: challenges of achieving the integrated model of human dignity and quality of life in the Arab region:

The Arab region possesses a cultural, civilizational and religious heritage, and enormous potentials related to nature, geographical location and climate; it also possesses as a large number of enlightened, educated young people. It has constitutions and legislations that, if all are exploited optimally, can achieve a large proportion of this model of development, which of course has not been achieved 100% in any region of the world.

The Arab region faces major challenges in face of achieving the integrated model of human dignity and quality of life, including high unemployment rates, particularly among women and youth, the existence of a large informal sector and social exclusion, different levels of poverty and inequality based on wealth, gender, water scarcity and conflicts. Those challenges, with other challenges, such as demographic changes, increase the number of people who need protection against poverty, economic shocks and natural disasters.

The challenges aggravated in the Arab region, especially due to the Syrian crisis, and the increasing waves of terrorism and extremism, and conflicts in other countries and the resulting numbers of displaced persons and refugees, which are the highest in the world, and the additional burdens this represents on the countries of the region. We should not also forget the main Arab issue - the cause of Palestine and the brutal violations committed by the Israeli enemy. So, how can the region achieve this model in light of all this?

The Arab region faces another major challenge, namely ending the exclusion of the marginalized, and vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, elderly persons, and children and women involved in armed conflicts.

Third: Human dignity and quality of life in sustainable development plan 2030:

At its 70th session, the United Nations General Assembly launched the "Sustainable Development Agenda 2030", which included 17 development goals and 169 targets to achieve the goals. The goals and targets are relevant to all the social, economic and environmental aspects to be achieved.

The opening lines of the declaration stated "In the name of the peoples we serve, we have taken a historic decision on a set of global, long-term, comprehensive global goals and targets that target all peoples and let to transformation. We are committed to tirelessly work on fully implementing this plan by 2030. We realize that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including abject poverty, is the greatest challenge facing the world and an indispensable precondition for the achievement of sustainable development".

Paragraph (3) of the Declaration of the Heads of State and Government meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 25-27 September 2015, stated: "We intend to work now and until 2030 on eradicating poverty and hunger everywhere, fighting all forms of inequality within states and among them, building peaceful, just and inclusive societies, protecting human rights, promoting gender equality, empowering women and girls, and ensuring the permanent protection of the Earth and its natural resources. We are also determined to create the proper conditions for sustained and continuous economic growth that covers all, achieving lavish prosperity providing decent job opportunities for all, while taking into account different levels of development and national capacities.

Paragraph 3 of the Declaration on Sustainable Development clearly summarizes the targets of the three economic, social and environmental dimensions, and emphasizes that the primary objective of these targets is to eradicate poverty with all its dimensions and to ensure that no one is left behind. If this is

achieved, it shall contribute to the realization of the model we aspire to regarding human dignity and quality of life.

Fourth: Efforts exerted by the Arab League to achieve social justice in the Arab region as one of the fundamental elements in the framework of human dignity and quality of life.

1- Through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Plan 2030:

The issue of sustainability is not just an environmental issue. There is a social dimension of sustainability which is related to the social capital resulting from relationships, networks that arise among people, the degree of trust between them, and relevant issues of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization. Therefore, it is important to focus on creating an environment-friendly social climate stressing equity in the distribution of income and wealth, equal rights and equal opportunities, empowerment, and the provision of other factors of social integration and cohesion.

Therefore, it is impossible to talk about sustainable development without including social justice as being a big part of it.

The Plan of Sustainable Development 2030 was designed to cover the three dimensions of sustainable development; world leaders, including Arab leaders, expressed their commitment with them in September 2015. The Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs organized the first regional ministerial conference on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Plan 2030 - Which came out with important outcomes and recommendations that were adopted by the Arab leaders at the Arab summit held in Nouakchott in 2016, which aimed at achieving social justice in the Arab region.

2- The Five-Year Plan of the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers (2017-2021)

The five-year plan entitled: “towards the implementation of social dimensions of the sustainable development plan 2030”, was developed for the Arab citizens. Its title was reflected in activities and projects seeking to contribute to achieving social justice, through addressing social exclusion of vulnerable brackets including persons with disabilities, and senior citizens, and working on continuing to support the policies of eradicating all forms of poverty.

3- The first Arab report on multidimensional poverty

In implementation of the resolutions of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs, the Arab League, being the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the University of Oxford, is preparing the first Arab report on multidimensional poverty in the Arab States, that aims at participating in assessing the Arab policies for eradicating poverty and achieving social justice.

4- A study on the rights of elderly persons of access to social and health care:

The elderly persons forms a part of vulnerable groups that may not get their rights of the development which may raises doubts about the possibility of achieving social justice. Therefore, The Arab League, through its specialized ministerial councils, seeks to contribute to the inclusion of this group. In this context, a committee was formed to examine the rights of elderly persons in social and health care in the Arab countries, in coordination with the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs and the Council of Arab Ministers of Health, in cooperation with the United Nations specialized agencies. The study is expected to contribute to the preparation of a guiding Arab law on the protection of the rights of senior citizens.

Annex (3) - Definitions

- **index of "Environmental, Corporate Social Responsibility and Governance" criteria**
- **Green bonds**
- **Carbon markets**

– **What is the 'Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Criteria'**

The Environmental, Social And Governance (ESG) Criteria is a set of standards for a company's operations that socially conscious investors use to screen investments. Environmental criteria look at how a company performs as a steward of the natural environment. Social criteria examine how a company manages relationships with its employees, suppliers, customers and the communities where it operates. Governance deals with a company's leadership, executive pay, audits and internal controls, and shareholder rights. Investors who want to purchase securities that have been screened for ESG criteria can do so through socially responsible mutual funds and exchange-traded funds.

BREAKING DOWN 'Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Criteria'

Environmental criteria look at a company's energy use, waste, pollution, natural resource conservation and animal treatment. They also evaluate which environmental risks might affect a company's income and how the company is managing those risks. For example, a company might face environmental risks related to its ownership of contaminated land, an oil spill it was responsible for, its disposal of hazardous waste, its management of toxic emissions or its compliance with the government's environmental regulations.

Social criteria look at the company's business relationships. Does it work with suppliers that hold the same values that the company itself claims to hold? Does the company donate a percentage of its profits to the community or perform volunteer work? Do the company's working conditions show a high regard for its employees' health and safety? Are stakeholders' interests taken into consideration?

With regard to governance, investors want to know that a company uses accurate and transparent accounting methods, and they want to see that common stockholders are allowed to vote on important issues. They also want companies to avoid conflicts of interest in their choice of board members. Finally, they prefer not to invest in companies that engage in illegal behavior or use political contributions to obtain favorable treatment.

What constitutes an acceptable set of ESG criteria is subjective, so investors will need to do the research to find investments that match their own values.

Read more: Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Criteria | Investopedia
<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/environmental-social-and-governance-esg-criteria.asp#ixzz4kAQhaELE>

– **What is a 'Green Bond'**

A green bond is a tax-exempt bond issued by federally qualified organizations or by municipalities for the development of brownfield sites. Brownfield sites are areas of land that are underutilized, have abandoned buildings or are underdeveloped, often containing low levels of industrial pollution. Green bonds are short for qualified green building and sustainable design project bonds.

BREAKING DOWN 'Green Bond'

Green bonds are created to encourage sustainability and the development of brownfield sites. More specifically, green bonds finance projects aimed at energy efficiency, pollution prevention, sustainable agriculture, fishery and forestry, the protection of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, clean transportation, sustainable water management, and the cultivation of environmentally friendly technologies.

The tax-exempt status makes purchasing a green bond a more attractive investment compared to a comparable [taxable bond](#), providing a monetary incentive to tackle prominent social issues such as climate change and a movement to renewable sources of energy. To qualify for green bond status, the development must take the form of any of the following:

- At least 75% of the building is registered for LEED certification
- The development project will receive at least \$5 million from the municipality or state
- The building is at least 1 million square feet or 20 acres in size

LEED Certification

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a rating system created by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to measure the environmental impact of buildings, such as homes, commercial offices and schools. Among other factors, the USGBC evaluates buildings based on water and energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. There are four possible designations that a building or project can receive: Certified; Silver; Gold; or Platinum. Gaining a LEED certification fosters a positive image in the community and translates to energy conservation and cost savings.

Green Bond Issuance

In 2016, green bond issuance soared to a record high, accounting for \$93.4 billion worth of investment worldwide, according to the latest report from ratings agency Moody's. Green bond issuance is expected to surge to more than \$200 billion in 2017, Moody's estimates. As recently as 2012, green bond issuance amounted only to \$2.6 billion. The surge was attributable largely to Chinese borrowers, who accounted for \$32.9 billion of the total, or more than a third of all issuances. But the interest is global, with the European Union and the United States among the leaders too.

The World Bank is a major issuer of green bonds. The institution has been very active through 2016, especially in the United States, where its issuances total over \$500 million in U.S. dollars, and in India, where its issuances total over \$2.7 billion Indian rupees. World Bank green bonds finance projects around the world, such as India's Rampur Hydropower Project, which aims to provide low-carbon hydroelectric power to northern India's electricity grid.

Read more: [Green Bond](#)

<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/green-bond.asp#ixzz4kAhXdOya>

- **Carbon market: to reduce and exchange emissions; to create new energy**

Michael Group stated that there is a new alliance that implements a carbon trading programs, despite political constraints, and thus it rewrites the map of climate diplomacy.

Approximately 15 years ago, the Kyoto Protocol presented a blueprint for the pathway through which carbon dioxide levels could be reduced in the atmosphere. One of the main actions proposed by Clinton administration was to expand the use of free market by allocating relative quotas of emission rights to reduce pollution levels, and to trade these rights internationally, thereby allowing the market to find the cheapest solution to achieve the desired goal.

Emissions cap schemes are one of two ways of setting a financial price for pollution; the other way is taxation. Emissions trading programs have been successfully implemented through the Clean Air Act of the United States of 1990 to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide, one of the causes of acid rain.

The United States has introduced an international emissions trading model in the Kyoto Protocol that allows industrialized countries to implement their emission reduction commitments with the greatest flexibility by purchasing emissions rights through establishing projects in developing countries. This model was important in agreeing to set national emission reduction ceilings to reduce emissions during the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (2008-2012).

Time was long enough to agree on an international and unified regime for the cap of emissions trading. The United States has never ratified the protocol, and the EU ETS has faced several problems. However, unexpected matter has happened; a series of small carbon pricing programs surfaced around the world (see "Carbon Traders"). This renewed momentum can produce impressive results.

A bumpy road

Even if the idea of an emissions trading originated in the United States, it impressed the European Union that applied it to carbon dioxide after US President George W. Bush gave his back to the Kyoto Protocol in 2001. The speed with which the EU set up a second emissions trading system for Carbon dioxide produced by power plants and industries and pricing it in 27 countries (plus some neighboring countries) is an astonishing achievement. The "EU ETS" has emerged in several stages. In the first three years (2005-2007) the price of carbon reached zero at the end of this period in the field of industry. This raised concerns regarding shortages of emission rights. However, a surplus was achieved in these rights, as a result of excessive commitment to reducing emissions.

The second phase of the EU ETS coincided with the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. The EU managed to win a historic legal and political battle imposing a cap on emissions across all EU member states, so that the ceiling meets the obligations of those countries under the Kyoto Protocol. To avoid another collapse of prices, criteria allowed for depositing the surplus of emission rights in banks for later use. During the first four years of implementation of the EU ETS, emissions were estimated to be reduced by 40-80 million tons per annum, or about 2-4% of total emissions identified specified by the cap.

Post Kyoto period: The Legacy of the Climate Treaty

Driven by apparent success, the EU promoted the establishment of an international carbon market in the same way of action in the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) by 2015, so that it will include all major contributors to emissions by 2020. Having the administration of President Barack Obama, who advocated the emission trading cap scheme in his election program in 2008, in power, it seems as if such a vision could be realized. In the meantime, the US Congress began debating the Waxman-Markey Bill that focused was on emissions trading.

Several events and factors have intervened to make the desire for the success of trading carbon decline. The credit crunch has reduced confidence in complex trading instruments. The "EU ETS" has witnessed some scandals such as theft of rights from emissions records, and complex cross-border tax related cases of fraud.

The Waxman-Markey bill collapsed in July 2010 in the US Senate, based on a consensus at the time that

the United States would not dare to go ahead with carbon pricing, as the public opinion would never accept imposing more taxes. The Senate also rejected the other and only alternative. At the same time, it was clear that the EU would exceed its pre-set targets for reducing carbon emissions in the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol, as a result of the economic recession and the significant advances in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

In order to give the industrial sector more time to plan, the third phase of the EU ETS was extended to 2020. However, it turned out this postponement was detrimental. In fact, the excess in emission rights in the second stage was so large that all projected emission reduction levels are covered by 2020, which makes the ceiling for phase III inappropriate. Consequently, the price of carbon in EU ETS has fallen to around 7 euros (\$ 9) per ton, which is less than a third of the price estimated before the European recession. This little price will not provide incentives to invest in low-carbon technology, and it has destroyed the returns that were expected to provide financial support for innovative technologies such as carbon capture and sequestration. On the contrary, old plans to build coal-fired power plants have been implemented, assuming that the emission surpluses of the "EU ETS" will keep the carbon price low until 2020. In the absence of any significant changes, the future of "EU ETS", regardless of its role in driving emission reduction initiatives, looks bleak.

Many experts hastened to declare the collapse of the concept of emissions trading, and academics described the targets and the caps of emissions as a "top-down" political process that did not keep pace with the movement of the world. A panel of thinkers and scientists submitted an alternative "bottom-up" vision. It includes local efforts to reduce emissions, and it is not based on a specific emissions ceiling or global negotiations². Such contributions emphasized the importance of developing domestic policies and gave renewed attention to energy efficiency and innovation programs. The alternative vision, however, was also far unrealistic because it was unable to provide answers to three basic questions.

The first question relates to the fact that large investments depend on economic returns. It goes as follows: If there is no carbon pricing, why would investors choose not to use it? The alternative is developing a legislative organization to control fluctuation of prices, which is not favored by conservative critics. The second question is related to how to reduce emissions through a number of steps. Why does not the identification of specific targets motivate practical steps to reduce emissions? The third question is refers to that innovation requires several years of development, support, marketing and growth, based on the potentials of market profitability. Its content is why low-carbon technologies are created faster, with no specific targets and clear prices of emissions that are equal to and helping in financing such innovations?

Some promoters of this new vision use the example of the decline in US emissions, although there is no carbon price, as an evidence of the success of Concept 3, but they do not follow the view that carbon trading and pricing are not appropriate. Several factors contributed to the decline in carbon emissions from the United States, including high world oil and coal prices, enhancing energy efficiency programs and renewable energy policies, as well as the availability of large quantities of cheap shale gas. Therefore, pricing factors and non-price factors are together very important. Low gas prices will reduce emissions if coal is replaced by renewable energy. The positive results of the reduction of CO₂ emissions in the coming years will be evident if there is no carbon pricing to ensure that gas remains cheaper than coal in energy production.

New rules

In fact, current events pose a challenge to both top-down and bottom-up planning concepts, as well as the

assumed leading role of developed country governments. In view of the national growth slowdown, and a mix concerns about climate change, energy security, investment and innovation stimulation, several countries and cities, including emerging economies, have been pushing ahead with local carbon taxes and implementing trading policies⁴.

Asian economies were quick to fill the gap in the carbon market. In 2009, South Korea adopted the world's most environment-friendly stimulating economic system. Legislations for emissions trading were passed by parliament in May 2012. Starting 2015, the system will set a cap for the facilities that are responsible for 60% of the country's carbon emissions⁵.

In China, the National Development and Reform Commission launched a pilot project in July 2010 on "low-carbon development ranges" in five provinces and eight cities. Within the five-year plan (2011-2015), five cities (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Chongqing and Shenzhen), in addition to two other provinces (Guangdong and Hebei), will set up pilot systems for trading emissions. Therefore, adopting a national system for trading emissions by 2015 seems possible, but with the high speed of development in China, who knows what may happen!

India has developed a "perform, achieve, trade (PAT)" scheme for the implementation of energy efficiency targets through three phases (2012-2020) with respect to the same sectors covered by the "EU ETS".

In richer countries, some regional governments have started to implement such policies. In October 2012, California organized its first ever auction of its emissions trading system, which is also associated with the Canadian province of Quebec. It is worth mentioning that in 2008, British Columbia approved the first carbon monoxide tax system since it was approved by Scandinavian countries 20 years ago and the price of a ton reached \$ 30 in 2012. In Japan, Tokyo became the first city to adopt a municipal carbon emissions cap scheme. It is a scheme applied by Rio de Janeiro ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) held in Brazil in 2012.

Australia has stuck to its domestic program, which took effect this summer through imposing a carbon tax for 3 years that turns into a trading system linked to the "EU ETS" in 2015. On 9 November 2012, the Australian Government announced that it intends to join the European Union in signing a second commitment period related to the Kyoto Protocol.

By 2013, about 10% of total global emissions will be covered by carbon prices, while by 2015 Korean and Chinese programs will increase this rate to 15%, with more plans being developed and are emerging. The results of these efforts will not be the same as that of the Kyoto Protocol or the idea of the EU regarding a large OECD market. However, it will be the first big step towards the emergence of a "coalition of the willing" that deals with carbon pricing as a key element in any credible strategy for the growth of sustainable low-carbon economy.

The dual division between "bottom up" and "top-down" policies is a wrong division. It is similar to the debate regarding "whether a giant ship needs a powerful motor, or a captain on bridge". Christina Figures, the executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (See go.nature.com/mievx3) stated that the impetus of reducing emissions is undoubtedly a "bottom-up" policy, and its elements must be combined with those of efficiency, pricing and innovation. However, "top-down" strategies that include national goals and international negotiations are inherently essential for guiding those efforts, facing common challenges, and providing the required international support for

achieving progress on a global level.

The major plan of the Kyoto Protocol may be over, and so is the opposite scenario. It is worth noting that the carbon pricing market is growing and thriving. Last year, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, launched negotiations aiming at reaching a global consensus by 2015. This could enhance, link and guide these efforts.

Next steps

There are three objectives that should be achieved. First, it is necessary for the United States to rejoin international efforts. Since the eruption of Hurricane Sandy, Michael Bloomberg Mayor of New York and Chris Christie Mayor of Los Angeles have opened a political door to renew the debate on climate change. It is said that the Obama administration needs to reassert the message that the dual impact of climate science and market economics requires carbon pricing, whether through taxes or trading.

Second, the European Union needs a coherent system of policies that address energy efficiency, pricing and innovation. The "EU ETS" is a pricing tool and a possible pathway for financing projects and procedures of raising efficiency; but that is not all that is required. The most important problem now is to shift investments from new coal plants to other low carbon sources of energy. There are justifications for removing excess emissions rights resulting from the EU ETS. This would determine the minimum price of these rights in the future, which in turn could help prevent the construction of new coal plants and make the system, in general, more resilient to future shocks.

Third, many developing countries in the United Nations take negative negotiating positions that are outside the context of reality and also contradict with their own development and strategic interests. This is not a zero-sum game. Continuation in bargaining for "sharing burdens" is not a viable solution. Emerging economies must abandon the game of blaming others and using international negotiations to support their domestic efforts so that development based on sustainable and clean energy sources can replace of carbon-intensive energy around the world. Upon taking such steps and initiatives at different locations, a strong alliance could be built to achieve a dramatic reduction in emissions and contribute to advancing progress towards reaching targeted global agreement by 2015.

The World Bank's 2009 State and Trends of World's Carbon Market Report indicated that the market size doubled and reached \$ 126 billion, an article entitled "Carbon finance is a key component in the fight against climate change in the future".

News of a reduction in the value of finance transactions of reducing emissions emanating from actual projects by about 12% to reach about \$ 6.5 billion in 2008 were not highly welcome.

This decline is attributed to a complex set of factors related to the difficulty of access to financing by the environment-friendly enterprises during the financial crisis, the delays resulting from regulatory and administrative procedures and the state of uncertainty related to the future of the market in view of the new Global Climate Change Agreement which is expected to enter into effect in 2012.

"There is a need now more than ever for innovative financing in the fight against climate change if we are to face what appears to be a major threat to the development priorities of poorer countries and local communities," said Joel Chassar, director of the World Bank's Carbon Finance Unit.

Michael Spence,

A Nobel laureate in economics, is Professor of Economics at NYU's Stern School of Business, Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Advisory Board Co-Chair of the Asia Global Institute in Hong Kong, and Chair of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on New Growth Models.

He was the chairman of the independent Commission on Growth and Development, an international body that from 2006-2010 analyzed opportunities for global economic growth, and is the author of *The Next Convergence – The Future of Economic Growth in a Multispeed World*.

Milan - In 2008, the Growth and Development Commission, which I had the honor to chair, presented a report to update us on sustainable growth patterns. At the time, as is the case today, only one thing was clear: policies that support decades of high growth, structural transformation, high employment and income, dramatic reductions in poverty rates are reinforcing each other. The effect of each is amplified by others. It is the ingredients that are found in successful recipes and as is known in recipes, the lost elements can undermine the result to a great extent.

To understand the fragile, degraded and vulnerable growth patterns that we see today in many countries and in the global economy as a whole, one has to compare what actually is taking place to what the overall growth strategies look like. Of course, there are many policies that support high growth and they are country-specific to some extent. However, there are a few common key components among all known successful cases.

The first component includes high levels of public and private investments in successful developing countries. Investment reaches or exceeds 30% of GDP. The public sector component (infrastructure, human capital, knowledge of economy and technology base) remains within 5- 7%. Public and private sector investments are complementary: the first increases the rate of return of the latter and thus raises its level.

Domestic and foreign private investment is affected by a host of other factors, which in turn reflect on risks and returns. These factors include: labor, property rights security, relevant legal institutions and ease of doing business (e.g., conditions and time required to create a business, lack of stagnation in their products and market factors related to labor, capital and raw materials).

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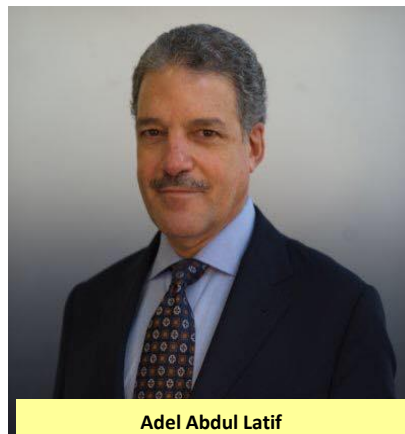
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