



SUMMARY OF THE ARAB REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON RIO+20 OUTCOMES: 29-30 MAY 2013

The Arab Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) on Rio+20 Outcomes took place from 29-30 May 2013 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The meeting was convened by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the League of Arab States (LAS). The meeting was part of a series of events organized by the UN Regional Commissions to discuss follow-up on the outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) and the post-2015 development agenda. The Arab RIM provided a regional perspective to these international processes, and discussed possible regional initiatives to complement the elaboration of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the establishment of a high-level political forum (HLPF) to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).

Approximately 130 representatives of governments, civil society, business and international organizations participated in the meeting. A half-day civil society event took place on the eve of the RIM. During the meeting, UNEP organized a side event on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

The Arab region is seen as encompassing large disparities in income, standard of living, and natural and human resource capacities, especially between the Gulf States, and fragile or conflict-affected countries in the region. Delegates commented on the need for sustainable development plans to be tailored to countries' specific national circumstances, and highlighted the importance of peace, security and freedom from fear as prerequisites for progress on sustainable development. They highlighted pressing political challenges in the region, including the Syrian refugee crisis and the situation in Palestine. They recognized the challenge of balancing responses to situations that demand urgent action, with the long-term commitments that are needed to achieve sustainable development.

Other regional challenges that shaped the discussion at the Arab RIM were the prospects of water, energy and food scarcities. Many delegates acknowledged the importance of the water-energy-food nexus, calling for increased coordination among ministries, and highlighting the need to combat

desertification, ensure water security, and create jobs in the region to keep pace with demographic change, favoring SDGs that will address these challenges. In discussions about diversifying energy sources, some countries highlighted their heavy investment in renewable energy, and some also asserted their right to "peaceful nuclear energy."

Concerns persisted on the green economy: while participants agreed it is a useful tool for sustainable development, some insisted that the definition of green economy is yet to be clarified. Some countries preferred to speak of strategies for green growth or "green development," expressing hope that Arab countries will lead in shaping the international discourse and showing examples of best practice. There were diverging positions on development assistance: some states reflected that the Arab region should draw on its own capacities and resources and become exporters of knowledge and technology, while others, in an echo of the pre-Rio+20 discussions, stressed that developed countries should adhere to previous commitments to

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provide financial resources, capacity building and technology transfer to support developing countries in achieving sustainable development.

On the institutional framework for sustainable development, delegates discussed the possibility of establishing a high-level regional forum to spearhead initiatives, stressing that this should not be biased towards the environmental pillar. Many delegates supported the possibility of having a strong regional position on sustainable development issues, to feed into the ongoing global processes shaping the SDGs and the HLPF.

There were impromptu discussions on the sidelines of the RIM as delegates sought to arrive at an acceptable outcome document. By the end of the meeting, delegates agreed on the text of a “Dubai Document” that will be presented to the Council of Arab Ministers on the Environment to inform an update of the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region, which was adopted ten years ago as the regional input to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Dubai Document will also provide regional input to the discussions of the UN General Assembly’s Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs and the HLPF.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES

STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE: The UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 5-16 June 1972, and produced three major sets of decisions. The first was the Stockholm Declaration. The second was the Stockholm Action Plan, containing 109 recommendations on international measures against environmental degradation for governments and international organizations. The third set of decisions was a group of five resolutions calling for: a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons; the creation of an international environmental databank; addressing actions linked to development and the environment; the creation of an environment fund; and establishing the United Nations Environment Programme as the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making.

BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION: In 1983, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) established an independent commission to formulate a long-term agenda for action. Over the next three years, the World Commission on Environment and Development—more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, named for its Chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland—held public hearings and studied the issues. Its report, *Our Common Future*, which was published in 1987, stressed the need for development strategies in all countries that recognized the limits of the global ecosystem’s ability to regenerate and absorb waste products. The Commission emphasized the link between economic development, security and environmental issues, and identified poverty eradication as a necessary and fundamental requirement for environmentally sustainable development.

UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit, was held from 3-14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and involved over 100 Heads of State and Government, representatives from 178 countries and some 17,000 participants. The principal outputs of UNCED were the Rio Declaration

on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (a 40-chapter programme of action) and the Statement of Forest Principles. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity were also opened for signature during the Earth Summit. Agenda 21 called for the creation of the CSD as a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, enhance international cooperation, and examine progress in implementing Agenda 21 at the local, national, regional and international levels.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT: The WSSD convened from 26 August - 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The goal of the WSSD, according to UNGA resolution 55/199, was to hold a ten-year review of UNCED at the summit level to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development. The WSSD gathered over 21,000 participants from 191 governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and the scientific community. The WSSD negotiated and adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI); and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. The JPOI is designed as a framework for action to implement the commitments agreed at UNCED and includes chapters on poverty eradication, consumption and production, the natural resource base, health, small island developing states (SIDS), Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation (MoI) and the institutional framework.

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (Rio+20): The third and final meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Pre-Conference Informal Consultations facilitated by the host country, and the UNCSO convened back-to-back in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 13-22 June 2012. During the ten days in Rio, government delegations concluded negotiations on the Rio outcome document, titled *The Future We Want*. Representatives from 191 UN member states and observers, including 79 Heads of State or Government, addressed the general debate, and approximately 44,000 people attended the official meetings, a Rio+20 Partnerships Forum, Sustainable Development Dialogues, SD-Learning and an estimated 500 side events.

Participants at Rio+20 were encouraged to make voluntary commitments for actions to implement the conference’s goals, with financial commitments from governments, the private sector, civil society and other groups. *The Future We Want* calls for the UNGA to take decisions on, *inter alia*: designating a body to operationalize the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production; identifying the format and organizational aspects of a high-level political forum, which is to replace the CSD; strengthening UNEP; constituting an OWG on SDGs to be agreed by UNGA; establishing an intergovernmental process under UNGA to prepare a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy; and considering a set of recommendations from the Secretary-General for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies.

In addition, the UNGA is called on to take a decision in two years on the development of an international instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The UN Statistical Commission is called on to launch a programme of work on broader measures to complement gross domestic product, and the UN system is encouraged, as appropriate, to support best practice and facilitate action for the integration of sustainability reporting.

The text also includes text on trade-distorting subsidies, fisheries and fossil fuel subsidies. On SIDS, the text calls for continued and enhanced efforts to assist SIDS in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation and for strengthened UN system support to SIDS to address ongoing and emerging challenges. It also calls for the Third International Conference on SIDS to be held in 2014.

UNGA-67: The 67th session of the UNGA adopted a resolution on the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of Rio+20 (A/RES/67/203), which outlines the negotiation process for the creation of the HLPF, and recommends that the CSD hold a “short and procedural” final session following the conclusion of negotiations on the HLPF. The text also calls for the OWG on SDGs to report to the UNGA at its 68th session and to report regularly, taking into account the convening of the first HLPF, and the special event in 2013 to follow up efforts made toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

AFRICAN REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING (RIM): The African RIM took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 19-21 November 2012, together with the Eighth Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development. Recommendations focused on: arrangements for the HLPF; the SDGs, including Africa’s priorities, such as poverty eradication, food security and desertification, among others; and means of implementation. One of the recommendations called for the Africa RIM to be elevated to a high-level regional forum to ensure effective engagement of African countries in the HLPF.

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN RIM: This meeting took place in Bogota, Colombia, from 7-9 March 2013, preceded by a Caribbean Forum on 5-6 March to discuss issues of importance to the sub-region. The Caribbean Forum adopted guidelines on how to continue working towards development in the Caribbean, which contributed towards an agenda for discussions around the Third International Conference on SIDS in 2014. The RIM provided space for delegates to express regional priorities for the post-2015 development agenda, including addressing inequality; sustainable consumption and production; broader measures for assessing sustainable development, including those related to health, education, environment and well-being; and new ways of financing, beyond traditional official development assistance (ODA).

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: The first formal meeting of the UNGA OWG on SDGs took place on 14-15 March 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. Participants shared initial views on both the process and substance of the SDG framework, and suggested priority issues to include in the goals. The main areas emphasized were: eradication of poverty and hunger; employment and decent jobs;

sustainable consumption and production; gender equality and empowerment of women; access to and good management of the essentials of human well-being, such as food, water, health and energy; and means of implementation. Delegates outlined views on integrating the SDGs with the post-2015 development agenda, and maintaining focus on implementation of the MDGs.

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE DISCUSSION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE FOLLOW-UP TO RIO+20: This meeting took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on Tuesday, 9 April 2013. Although the UNECE decided not to hold a formal post-Rio+20 RIM, the discussion was seen as an important contribution to the implementation of Rio+20 decisions in the UNECE context. Participants discussed the relevance of the Rio+20 outcomes for the UNECE’s work, and suggested ways the Commission can contribute to formulating SDGs and the new governance mechanisms, such as the HLPF. Two panel discussions addressed: “The future of sustainability: from transition to transformation;” and “Sustainable development governance: regional implications and perspectives for the post-Rio+20 institutional set up.” Delegates generally agreed that the discussions were useful for: defining regional priorities in the post-Rio+20 period, as well as areas where the UNECE can assure results within its mandate and resources; and understanding the positions of countries and stakeholders in the region at a time when discussions on SDGs and the HLPF are taking shape in New York. A set of Chair’s summaries of the panel discussions was issued at the end of the meeting.

SECOND SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: The second OWG convened from 17-19 April 2013 at UN Headquarters in New York. Discussions addressed conceptualizing the SDGs and the SDG process, as well as poverty eradication. Delegates focused on the overarching framework of poverty eradication and sustainable development and cross-sectoral issues including governance, gender equality and women’s empowerment, human rights and rights-based approaches, and means of implementation. Delegates also discussed the Programme of Work for 2013-2014.

ASIAN AND PACIFIC RIM ON RIO+20 OUTCOMES: The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened this meeting from 22-24 April 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. On the institutional framework for sustainable development, delegates welcomed the establishment of the HLPF and discussed respect for the Rio Principles, and the importance of stakeholder engagement. On SDGs, they addressed poverty reduction, partnerships, and the right to development. On MoI, they discussed the need for: technology transfer; regional and international cooperation; appropriate and accessible technology and finance; trade opportunities; and considering a wide range of financing options in addition to ODA. Pacific SIDS played a prominent role in the RIM, which included a side event on the sustainable development of Pacific SIDS and issues relating to effective management of ocean resources, and preparations for the Third International Conference on SIDS, to be held in Apia, Samoa, in 2014.

THIRD SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: The third session of the OWG convened from 22-24 May 2013, at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting focused on two issue clusters: food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, desertification, land degradation and drought; and water and sanitation.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

Rashid Ahmad Bin Fahad, Minister of Environment and Water, United Arab Emirates, welcomed participants, underscoring the aim of the meeting to translate the commitments of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development into realities. He outlined UAE policies that support green economy objectives such as: new technologies in transportation and construction; management of waste; and green investments to decrease impacts from climate change.

Djamel Eddine Djaballah, Director of Environment, Housing, and Sustainable Development, League of Arab States, highlighted the work of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) in launching the Sustainable Development Initiative of the Arab Region (SDIAR) to address the region's challenges, especially on water and arable land. He noted that CAMRE had requested ESCWA to update the SDIAR in light of the Rio+20 Outcome to address emerging issues and make a regional contribution to the HLPF.

Iyad Abumoghli, Director, UNEP Regional Office for Western Asia (ROWA), shared UNEP's perspective that sustainable development is a great responsibility as well as a great opportunity, requiring input from all stakeholders. He said the voice of the Arab region needs to be heard and encouraged the SDGs to go hand in hand in ending poverty, with a focus on education.

Roula Majdalani, Director, Sustainable Development and Productivity Division, ESCWA, recommended that the Arab region review its institutional framework on sustainable development to ensure efficiency, highlighting the importance of scientific cooperation and research. She stressed the meeting's potential to ensure "a decent life" and underscored the issues of water, food and energy security in the region.

Mohamed Ahmed Bin Fahad, Chairman, Zayed International Foundation for the Environment, welcomed experts and activists present at the meeting, looking forward to the meeting producing a roadmap for the region. He highlighted the role of local and national efforts to face the specific challenges in the Arab region such as water scarcity, water security and food security.

SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE MAJOR OUTCOMES FROM RIO+20 FOR THE ARAB REGION

Roula Majdalani, ESCWA, gave an overview of Rio+20 and follow-up actions, and introduced the RIM agenda (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/WG.1/L.1). She looked forward to tangible steps being taken under the SDIAR to build capacity, access investment, and enhance institutional frameworks. She indicated the value in learning from different country experiences as well as the private sector to build a green economy.

Amina J. Mohammed, UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, addressed delegates by video link. She acknowledged development challenges in the Arab world, and assured delegates that ending poverty remained at the heart of the sustainable development process. She urged everyone to strive for an ambitious set of goals and targets, highlighting the universal nature of the SDGs, and saying that the distinctions between North and South, and between donor and recipient, are increasingly irrelevant.

Anhar Hegazi, former Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCWA, highlighted the interlinkages between the Rio+20 Outcome and the Arab Ministerial Declaration for the realization of the MDGs. She said the green economy should be a mechanism and not a barrier to sustainable development, calling for focus on technology transfer and capacity building, and for Arab governments to provide conducive environments to implement green economies, specifically with sustainable production and consumption programmes.

Panellists: Yousef Abu-Safieh, Minister of Environment, Palestine, proposed that sustainable development concepts be included in school curricula in the Arab region. He called for Arab countries to: devote 0.7% of GDP to sustainable development; and raise support for a regional Global Environment Facility mechanism to channel support to such initiatives.

Rashid Ahmad Al-Kuwari, Assistant Under-Secretary for Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Qatar, noted gaps in the implementation of various international environmental conventions. He stressed the value of having a united Arab position and the potential to develop a roadmap for cooperation.

Djamel Eddine Djaballah, LAS, said the problem of terrorism is obstructing sustainable development in the Arab world. He called on countries in the region to count on their own capacities and resources in solving issues.

Jihad Azour, former Minister of Finance, Lebanon, provided suggestions to address the impacts of demographic growth and urbanization in the Arab region on sustainable development, calling for reconsideration of financial mechanisms along with improved ministerial coordination within each government to prioritize the environment.

Discussion: In the ensuing discussion, Jordan urged the Arab region to develop a common position that is also relevant internationally. Several participants requested the outcome document from this meeting to call for: capacity building to address joint concerns facing the Arab region such as water issues, desertification, political problems and food security; and economic diversification to ensure a green economy. Iraq added that the document should include mechanisms to measure progress. The NGOs Major Group considered issues of social justice and poverty as central to the comprehensive approach required to achieve sustainable development, calling for increased accountability and continued opportunity for civil society involvement through access to information, access to natural and financial resources, freedom of speech, and the right to gather.

On inclusion of peace and security, Palestine clarified that no development can occur under occupation and echoed the

suggestion by Tunisia to reflect this as an Arab stance in the meeting's outcome document. Lebanon lamented the absence of political freedom and the politicization of religion in the Arab region, calling attention to the "daily burden" of the Syrian refugee influx into Lebanon, where more than one million refugees are currently registered with the UN Refugee Agency.

Kuwait called for a just international trade regime and attention to developing countries' foreign debt levels. Tunisia mentioned trade negotiations with the EU, commenting "we can't talk about free trade agreements without having sustainable development." He stressed Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on access to information and public participation, citing Tunisia's involvement in a regional World Bank project on data and information with Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco.

Sudan described a national hydropower programme aimed to address economic, environmental and social development challenges and Iraq offered to share the Iraqi definition of green economy.

Yemen highlighted differing national circumstances within the Arab region, and welcomed the approach taken by ESCWA to work with four sub-regions. Tunisia requested the meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing a UNEP office for North Africa.

On green economy, Kuwait expressed concern that it could distract attention from the concept of sustainable development and the lack of fulfillment of previous international commitments.

Egypt urged participants to utilize internal capacity and human resources and move from being recipients to exporters of knowledge and technology. The Science and Technology Major Group called for "change coming from within" to mobilize a paradigm shift required to: utilize the green economy as a tool to achieve sustainable development; support research policy; reform education; and involve women.

SESSION 2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POST-2015

On Wednesday afternoon, Sameer Ghazi, Presidential Deputy for Environment and Sustainable Development, Saudi Arabia, introduced the international process for developing SDGs and welcomed speakers.

Panelists: Michelle Obeid, University of Manchester, presented a background paper, "Key Issues for Consideration on the Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015 Agenda."

She noted that the Arab region's progress in the fields of health, education and environment has been positive, but some countries have failed to tackle issues of inclusion and human rights. Drawing on Arab input to the preparatory meetings for Rio+20, she suggested SDG priorities could be, *inter alia*: peace; security; freedom from violence, including sexual violence; energy; creation of decent job opportunities in the public and private sectors; inclusion of women and minorities; the right to access information; financing; trade liberalization; international partnerships; and South-South partnerships.

Waleed Zubari, Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain, acknowledged the diversity of challenges facing countries within the Arab region and the shortcomings of the MDGs to address the quality of the goals. In considering input from the Arab region to the development of SDGs, he advised prioritizing the

nexus of water, food and energy security and using indicators to measure quality of outcomes in order to contribute to a green economy and improved policy coherence.

Discussion: Algeria reiterated concern for peace, security and the fight against terrorism. Tunisia asserted the right to development is not enough and that people should also be free from torture and fear of violence, lamenting the absence of national consultations on these issues. Morocco shared experiences from focus group meetings, including youth, rural communities, nomads and private sector representatives, concluding that good governance at the local level is important.

Egypt anticipated that the SDGs would be developed by 2014, and said there is agreement they should be universal, flexible, and limited in number. Jordan recalled advice from Jeffrey Sachs to avoid repeating the same approach to the MDGs, and urged a broad and integrated approach to the SDGs. Iraq said the SDGs should be specific, and should prioritize: combating desertification; increasing national disaster preparedness; and preserving biodiversity. The UAE agreed that SDGs should be specific, calling for the use of renewable energy for the desalinization of water to be included.

Saudi Arabia lamented the division between the Western and Arab priorities for sustainable development and Egypt described the differences between the position of the G-77/China and that of developed countries. Egypt further explained that developing countries want fulfillment of earlier commitments, while developed countries want a shift away from ODA and to give aid only to the poorest countries. He noted that some developing countries prefer to extend the MDGs beyond 2015. He said developed countries want to eradicate "extreme poverty" defined as income of less than US\$1 a day, while the G-77/China prefers to eradicate "poverty" defined as income of less than US\$2 a day.

On financing sustainable development, Egypt said that donors preferred middle-income groups to shoulder responsibility for their own initiatives, and for financing to go to the poorer countries only. Syria supported countries taking responsibility within the region, without losing sight of the responsibility of developed countries to support capacity building, transfer of technology and mobilization of financial resources.

The Science and Technology Major Group called for better cooperation between governments, NGOs and all sectors, highlighting the role of science to inform decision makers with objective and neutral data. Youth called for the sustainable development process to be transparent and needs-based, urging greater focus on the girl child, education, healthcare, access to clean water, protection from crime and violence, and gender equality.

Algeria encouraged implementation of a green economy roadmap and honoring of commitments made in order to ensure prosperity in the Arab region, highlighting the important fight against desertification. The Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) challenged Arab countries to reduce water use by half, while doubling the quantity of production.

SESSION 3: GREEN ECONOMY ROADMAP FOR THE ARAB REGION

This session on Wednesday afternoon was moderated by Iyad Abumoghli, UNEP.

Panelists: Reem Nejdawi, ESCWA, discussed how to shift green economy from being a concept to becoming a plan, citing various national initiatives, calling for time frames, policies, and interlinkages between policies and development indicators. She shared the work being done by ESCWA to conduct surveys and launch programmes at the rural community level to develop green technologies to improve livelihoods.

Mohamed Abdrabo, University of Alexandria, presented preliminary results from a study of possible green economy investments, describing the economic conditions and pressures in the Arab region. He highlighted needs for: increased job creation; capacity building; support for innovation; and a legal framework to govern the shift. He said the low pricing of energy is not encouraging investment in renewable energy or energy efficiency measures.

Khaled Irani, former Minister of Environment and former Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Jordan, remarked on the need to highlight success stories to attract investors from the private sector. He advised that the green economy should provide clear exemptions, duties, procedures and regulations in order to be successful.

Hussein Abaza, Advisor to the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Egypt, indicated that there should not be a debate on moving to a green economy, rather discussion on how to adopt the approach, requiring coherent policies between the three pillars of sustainable development. He described the starting point as investment in the environment and human resources and active civil society participation.

Discussion: Responding to Abdrabo's presentation, Tunisia asked why a multi-criteria analysis approach was used in the study, in preference to other economic models. Saudi Arabia said the study does not provide anything new, stressing that the green economy has not yet been defined. He called for attention to well-being and equality in order to ensure justice for all. Moderator Abumoghli clarified that the study is not being issued by the meeting, but is only being presented, and that the study will be referred to CAMRE.

On green economy, Tunisia asked what changes would be seen as beneficial in the area of trade. Saudi Arabia asserted that the workforce is not at the heart of the green economy, but rather the need to address deterioration of some industries, which in turn is related to deterioration of the natural resource base. Palestine said that there remains a lack of clarity on the definition of a green economy, and that it should be referenced as a tool for sustainable development. The Science and Technology Major Group underscored the opportunity for the Arab region to undertake green economy initiatives by drawing on indigenous knowledge, and requested that new indicators go "beyond GDP."

Panelists responded to the comments, agreeing that the name "green economy" in itself is not important, but rather implementing policy change over the long term. Abaza called for a regional center of excellence on the green economy to be established, noting the Republic of Korea's success in embracing the green economy and its establishment of a Global Green Growth Institute. Nejdawi emphasized the green economy is not one economy but many, because each country must define its own priorities. She highlighted the need to think about impacts on future generations.

The UAE outlined efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Morocco shared efforts to restructure agricultural and environmental tax systems, recycling programmes, introduction of renewable energies, a national framework for agricultural development, and programmes to support agricultural cooperatives and assist male and female farmers to access financing. Jordan cited examples from an exploratory study, conducted in cooperation with UNEP, on investing in the green economy.

The Farmers Major Group requested that: the outcome document outline regulations that empower small farmers; and UN organizations and donor countries increase allocations to NGOs that work with small farmers, to ensure that small farmers and women benefit from the green economy. An organization for the management of dryland and desert areas highlighted the urgency for action in the Arab region, due to water scarcity, population increase and loss of arable land, calling for a long-term approach and the setting of goals up to 2040. Moderator Abumoghli noted the need for exchange of expertise among the various UN organizations.

SESSION 4: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INTER-LINKAGES

Moderator Zahwa Al-Kuwari, Director, Environmental Policy and Planning Directorate, Bahrain, introduced the session and the Secretariat distributed the "Background Paper on Institutions for Sustainable Development."

Panelists: Irena Zubcevic and David Le Blanc, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, reported on New York discussions on the proposals for an emerging institutional framework for sustainable development, illustrating the links between Rio+20 follow-up and other international initiatives. They outlined the lessons learned from the CSD, underscoring the need for the HLPF to create review mechanisms, recommendations and indicators to better support national reporting, strategies and indicators, and to more systematically engage regional perspectives.

Melanie Hutchinson, UNEP, described changes to institutional arrangements for international environmental governance emanating from paragraph 88 in the Rio+20 outcome document, including universal membership of UNEP's Governing Council and strengthening of its regional offices. She noted the paragraph's emphasis on the science-policy interface and stakeholder engagement, highlighting that UNEP is encouraging regional agreements on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on stakeholder participation. She also noted the establishment of a nine-member international council to advance the aims of the 2012 World Congress on Justice, Law and Environmental Sustainability.

Riccardo Mesiano, ESCWA, discussed enhancing Arab regional institutions for sustainable development, in particular, the role of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region through expansion of its membership and mandate; establishing a coordination mechanism between the LAS Council and the relevant sustainable development committees; and setting up a sustainable development working group. He encouraged countries to ensure that sustainable development at the national level engages

the relevant social and economic ministries, and not only environment ministries.

Mona Makram Ebeid, American University of Cairo and National Council for Human Rights, Egypt, identified the key role of parliaments to achieve priorities and endorse sustainable development commitments within the Arab region. She proposed an updated view of sustainable development, in which the Arab region could be the pioneer, “where the economy is a service to society and thrives in a secure natural environment.” She quoted Albert Einstein that the solution to a problem can be achieved by asking the right questions, urging that the emerging SDGs be measurable, achievable and inspirational.

Mehdi Jaaffar, Oman Environment Society, Oman, called for a short, medium and long-term roadmap for shifting to a green economy that considers national specificities and adopts various models of economic development. He stressed that emerging institutions must be established with good governance and transparency, and improve the engagement of NGOs and civil society in the Arab region.

Discussion: Saudi Arabia emphasized successes of the institutional framework for sustainable development in the Arab region, including early establishment of CAMRE, LAS adoption of sustainable development priorities, and a regional workshop held in Jeddah, which had made recommendations to Rio+20. Yemen said the concept of sustainable development should include the cultural aspect and recommended spreading success stories from the Arab region.

On improving regional coordination, Tunisia posed a question regarding the political challenges barring progress at the international level, showing support for the model utilizing councils as an effective approach to push the sustainable development agenda forward. Hutchinson, responding to Tunisia, noted that UNEP has been discussing a regional approach on Principle 10. Saudi Arabia stressed that previous economic summits have addressed sustainable development issues. Iraq noted that ministerial conferences have been held on topics other than “environment,” for example, on transport and electricity, and that there is a need to consider sustainable development leadership in the region. He called for a Council on Sustainable Development to be established for the Arab region.

Sudan requested ESCWA to form a bureau to gather information and document country positions on the SDGs for submission to the LAS to develop a unified Arab position, with a first report to be submitted by September 2013. Abumoghli suggested holding an Arab high-level regional forum on sustainable development. Roula Majdalani noted that shedding light on weak points, “does not neglect the progress made,” and supported holding such a forum. She informed delegates that ESCWA is working with countries to update information on national actions, and to share success stories from different sectors.

Iraq recommended formulation of national committees for sustainable development, which should be affiliated with cabinets. Yemen recommended involving ministries of planning. Mesiano observed there was general agreement that sustainable development efforts should be scaled up, going beyond ministries of environment to the level of Prime Ministers’ offices.

Jordan, pointing out the lack of mechanisms for implementation, proposed upgrading the international framework to address current economic crises. Oman recalled the G-77/China’s efforts in the negotiations at Rio+20, urging delegates not to change the basic points that were agreed upon. Egypt spoke on the need to implement decisions already taken and improve coordination of ministries to improve institutional frameworks for sustainable development. Egypt, supported by Jordan, noted that the CSD was comprised mainly of Ministers of Environment, evading the balance of representatives from all three pillars of sustainable development and thus crippling progress. He commented on current negotiations on the role of the HLPF, urging the outcome of this meeting to call on the HLPF to have balanced representation, and a broad sense of sustainable development.

The NGOs Major Group proposed: ensuring the emergent HLPF truly represents the three pillars of sustainable development with a clear mandate to oversee the implementation of Rio+20 and the forthcoming SDGs; at the regional level, restructuring CAMRE to include all sectoral ministries, not only environment; and for governments to consider Major Groups and all stakeholders as partners in implementing the future we want, and to make information accessible to all. He called for 2015 to be declared the international year of evaluation.

SESSION 5: ARAB REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Secretariat distributed a background paper “A Framework for an Updated Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region (SDIAR),” and moderator Mostafa Madbouly, Director, Regional Office for Arab States, UN-HABITAT, framed discussions by reiterating the need to develop MoI and coordinate ministries within the Arab region.

Panelists: Ibrahim Abdel Gelil, Arabian Gulf University, provided suggestions to update the SDIAR. He urged the Arab region to “move from words to action” by strengthening MoI through: building an Arab Environment Facility in the style of the Global Environment Facility; increasing regional capacity to access international financial mechanisms and attract private investment; monitoring progress; indicating time-tables; and developing national and regional guidelines for implementation programmes.

Monia Braham Yousfi, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Tunisia, presented Tunisia’s roadmap for green growth based on principles of national sovereignty, integration into the world system, and defending a balanced multilateral system. She reported the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has supported Tunisia’s adoption of the green economy concept, and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has supported a “green employment” national strategy. She described efforts to enshrine the rights of future generations in the constitution.

Capricia Chabarekh, ECODIT Liban, Lebanon, summarized the national strategy on sustainable development. She said that Lebanon has yet to receive compensation from Israel for damage to its territory at the cost of US\$200 million, despite several UNGA resolutions. She called for the right of refugees in Lebanon to return home.

Mohammed Maktit, Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and Environment, Morocco, reviewed the national experience of balancing the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, underscoring the value of a participatory approach to involve all citizens.

Nuha Ma'aytah, General Federation of Jordanian Women, encouraged participants to learn from success, study the gaps, promote regional exchange and improve short- and long-term adoption of strategies with specific time-tables, indicators, improved governance, participation and accountability. She called on governments to become partners with NGOs and civil society.

Discussion: Jordan said the Arab region has excelled in developing plans and strategies but needs to improve MoI, lamenting the lack of inclusion of peace and security in the international discussions on sustainable development.

The AOAD called for: civil society participation in the updating of the SDIAR; an "awareness day" to be organized to promote the updated SDIAR to ensure that it is supported by other national strategies; and Arab financing for sustainable development.

Egypt praised Ibrahim Abdel Gelil's presentation, and reported on the work of a think-tank on sustainable development in Egypt, established after Rio+20, which has convened 14 working groups on sectors such as agriculture, tourism, among others. He put forward the case that sustainable development should remain the responsibility of environment ministries, and emphasized the need to have a structure that includes all stakeholders.

CLOSING SESSION: DISCUSSION OF THE RIM OUTCOME DOCUMENT AND REPORT

On Thursday afternoon, Fatma Sahib Al Habshi, on behalf of Aisha Abdoli, Ministry of Environment and Water, UAE, presented national actions for green growth. She described the national plan to introduce the concept of green growth to all public and private sectors, mentioning six targeted sectors: oil and gas; water and electricity; transport; construction; waste management; and land use. She noted the UAE's plans to diversify its energy sources.

Co-Chairs Fadhil Abbas Ahmed, Ministry of Environment, Iraq and Djamel Eddine Djaballah, Director of Environment, Housing, and Sustainable Development, LAS, presented the draft outcome document, explaining that recommendations are not binding, and will help guide the New York-based sustainable development-related negotiations.

Saudi Arabia, supported by Qatar, opposed calling the draft outcome the "Dubai Declaration," stating that a declaration implies political authority. Participants agreed with Co-Chair Djaballah's suggestion to change the title to "Dubai Document for the Implementation of the Rio+20 Outcomes in the Arab region."

On the preambular paragraphs, Saudi Arabia suggested removing a reference to the Arab Ministerial Declaration that was issued before Rio+20, saying the focus in the document should be on Rio+20. Jordan proposed that the "specificity of each country" should be acknowledged in the text. Delegates discussed textual precedents from a UNEP workshop on the

"Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region" held in October 2011, and the 2002 Arab Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

On achieving sustainable development through institutions that are "democratically accountable at all levels," delegates agreed to replace this with "participation of society at all levels."

On a proposed paragraph about "the right to development," Saudi Arabia, supported by Jordan, requested deleting "a gradual transition to a green economy," asserting that the term had not yet been defined. The UAE and Co-Chair Djaballah recalled discussion of the green economy in other forums. Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan questioned the term "green development," as it refers only to one type of national strategy.

On peace and security, Tunisia suggested illustrating the priority given to peace and security by moving it to the top of the list. Syria proposed "ending...economic sanctions that obstruct sustainable development." Co-Chair Djaballah observed that countries cannot do anything about UN economic sanctions.

The AOAD suggested emphasizing the importance of LAS's role, calling for the LAS to provide financial resources to implement programmes. Yemen, Palestine and Egypt proposed inviting the Arab Development Fund to make financial allocations to support sustainable programmes in the Arab region. Tunisia added that funds should be directed to least developed countries in the Arab region. Saudi Arabia and Morocco said the RIM did not have a mandate to make financial commitments, suggesting the proposal be forwarded to the Council of Arab Ministers on Finance. Palestine argued the clause is a recommendation, not a commitment.

On partnerships for the implementation of international commitments, Saudi Arabia acknowledged the contribution of civil society and the NGOs Major Group offered text from the Rio+20 principles on the subject. Participants acknowledged the LAS cooperation with civil society.

Saudi Arabia asked to delete a paragraph that emphasized the importance of strengthening the role of UNEP, arguing that support for UNEP equated a bias towards the environmental pillar.

On clean technology, delegates discussed whether technology transfer should include mention of "cleaner fossil fuels," eventually agreeing to mention "efficient fossil fuel technology."

On updating the SDIAR, Saudi Arabia, supported by Qatar, requested deleting a reference to action on dirt and dust storms, and leaving only approved programmes in the recommendations. In discussion on the recommendation to conduct "a proper assessment" of progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of major international conferences on sustainable development, Co-Chair Djaballah clarified that this should refer specifically to a report on the progress on the SDIAR.

On diversification of energy sources, the NGOs Major Group preferred speaking of "alternative" energy sources, and not mentioning nuclear power. Others emphasized the right of Arab countries to diversify energy sources, and to use "peaceful nuclear power." Saudi Arabia proposed that text regarding energy sources should be clarified as renewable or non-renewable energy sources.

On obligations of developed countries, Egypt proposed including a clause offering an exchange of payment for debt with sustainable development programmes.

On the use of information networks and data to inform decision-making processes, participants added a reference to the Abu Dhabi Environmental Initiative “Eye on Earth.”

Participants discussed the formation of a high-level Arab forum on sustainable development, including whether guidelines or assessments are needed.

Sudan requested ESCWA to produce a follow-up report on Rio+20 outcomes and mechanisms that could be adopted by the LAS.

The NGOs Major Group drew attention to the joint position statement from “Major Groups, Stakeholders and Civil Society.” The statement was on behalf of five Major Groups—NGOs, Science and Technology, Farmers, Women and Youth—and also represented the views of academia. They stressed that SDGs should, *inter alia*: link to existing international frameworks for sustainable development; complement and build on the MDGs; be universal; build capacity in the Arab region; be time-bound and monitored; invest in knowledge transfer; integrate sustainable development in education on all levels; enhance research focused on sustainable development and green economy; increase national consultations; and prioritize health care, clean water, sanitation, protection against crime and violence against children, especially for the girl child. They highlighted the need for the SDG process to be transparent, inclusive and gender sensitive and for paradigms to achieve these goals to address inequalities and enable good governance, transparency, accountability and partnership.

On Arab regional and national initiatives for sustainable development, Major Groups called on governments to enhance regional cooperation toward the “Arab Common Markets” in order to: implement political commitment; build and share capacity and technology; and devise mechanisms for redistributing resource wealth. In conclusion, they underscored the importance of sustainable development with equitable and inclusive implementation mechanisms, calling on Arab governments to join global civil society efforts to designate 2015 as the international year of evaluation.

The Co-Chairs informed delegates that the ESCWA Secretariat would circulate a final version of the Dubai Document in the coming days. They expressed gratitude to the Government of the UAE for hosting the meeting, and thanked the meeting organizers and all participants for their contributions. They declared the meeting closed at 6:29 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

International Labour Conference: The 102nd session of this conference is organized by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and will include the presentation of a paper and general discussion on “Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs.” **dates:** 5-20 June 2013 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Official Relations Branch, ILO **phone:** +41-22-799-8944 **fax:** +41-22-799-7732 **email:** RELOFF@ilo.org **www:** <http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/102/lang--en/index.htm>

Regional Workshop on “Oil & Gas Pricing Parameters Influencing Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Activities: Organized by the ESCWA and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), the workshop will build capacity of regional stakeholders and promote the exchange of experiences and lessons learned. **date:** 11 June 2013 **location:** Kuwait **contact:** Mongi Bida, ESCWA **phone:** +961-1-978526 **fax:** +961-1-981510/1/2 **email:** bida@un.org **www:** <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=2136E>

High-Level Conference of Middle-Income Countries: The conference aims to create a platform for knowledge exchange and connection by middle-income countries. It will develop a joint action plan and declaration feeding into discussions of the post-2015 development agenda and facilitate network governance structures for knowledge sharing. The conference will be hosted and organized by the Government of Costa Rica and facilitated by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) initiative, Networks for Prosperity. **dates:** 12-14 June 2013 **location:** San José, Costa Rica **phone:** +43-1-26026-0 **fax:** +43-1-2692669 **email:** MIC-Conference@unido.org **www:** <http://micconference.org/conference/>

Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: The fourth session of the Open Working Group will focus on employment and decent work for all, social protection, youth, education and culture; and health and population dynamics. **dates:** 17-19 June 2013 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1636>

2013 United Nations Public Service Forum, “Transforming e-Government and Innovation: Creating a Better Future for All:” Organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), and ESCWA, in collaboration with the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to promote and exchange experiences, ideas and best practices concerning innovations in governance and public administration in order to contribute to social development, economic growth and environmental protection. **dates:** 24-27 June 2013 **location:** Manama, Bahrain **contact:** John-Mary Kauzya, DESA **email:** kauzya@un.org **www:** <http://www.unpan.org/2013unpsa>

20th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and first meeting of the High Level Political Forum: The 20th and final session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 20) will take place back-to-back with the first meeting of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). **dates:** September 2013 (tentative) **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1211>

UNGA Special Event to Follow up Efforts made towards achieving the MDGs: The UN General Assembly will hold this one-day event during the 68th session of the UNGA. This will represent the occasion for leaders to identify actions to complete the MDG process and to provide guidance on priorities. **date:** 25 September 2013 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Saijin Zhang **phone:** +1-212-963-2336 (General Assembly Affairs), +1-212-963-7172 (Protocol and Liaison) **fax:** +1-212-963-1921

www: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/info/meetings/67schedule.shtml>

SDG Consultative Dialogues: This meeting is organized by ESCWA as a regional consultation on the SDGs. **dates:** late September or early October 2013 (tentative) **location:** Cairo, Egypt **contact:** Reem Nejdawi, ESCWA **phone:** +961-1-978 578 **fax:** +961-1-981510 **email:** nejdawi@un.org **www:** <http://www.escwa.un.org>

SDG Consultative Dialogues: This meeting is organized by ESCWA as a sub-regional consultation on the SDGs. **dates:** November 2013 (tentative) **location:** Tunisia **contact:** Reem Nejdawi **phone:** +961-1-978 578 **fax:** +961-1-981510 **email:** nejdawi@un.org **www:** <http://www.escwa.un.org>

First Annual Sustainable Development Implementation Forum: The UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) will host the first annual Sustainable Development Implementation Forum (SDIF), which aims to serve as a global platform for sharing best practices in formulating and implementing sustainable development programmes, reviewing evidence of impacts, and charting out new and improved pathways for sustainable development implementation. The programme of the annual SDIF also will include topics related to: scaling up implementation; finding effective solutions to address implementation constraints and challenges; examining emerging issues in the context of planning and implementation; promoting the science-policy-practice interface to ensure the transition towards sustainability; and promoting and facilitating partnerships, as well as building communities of practice. **dates:** 5-7 November 2013 (tentative) **location:** Incheon, Republic of Korea **contact:** SDIF Secretariat, UNOSD **phone:** +82-32-822-9088 **fax:** +82-32-822-9089 **email:** unosd@un.org **www:** <http://www.unosd.org/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=16&menu=177>

Fifth Session of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: The fifth session of the OWG will focus on sustained and inclusive economic growth, macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial system and external debt sustainability), infrastructure development, and energy. **dates:** 25-27 November 2013 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>

Sixth Session of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: The sixth session of the OWG will focus on means of implementation; global partnership for achieving sustainable development; needs of countries in special situations, African countries, LDCs, land-locked developing countries, and SIDS as well as specific

challenges facing middle-income countries; and human rights, the right to development, and global governance. **dates:** 9-13 December 2013 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>

Seventh Session of the UN General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: The seventh session of the OWG will focus on sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production (including chemicals and waste); and climate change and disaster risk reduction. **dates:** 6-10 January 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>

Eighth Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: The eighth session of the OWG will focus on oceans and seas, forests, biodiversity; promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment; and conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance. **dates:** 3-7 February 2014 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1549>

GLOSSARY

AOAD	Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
CAMRE	Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
ESCWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
LAS	League of Arab States
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoI	Means of implementation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official development assistance
OWG	Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
RIM	Regional Implementation Meeting
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (or UNCSD)
ROWA	Regional Office for Western Asia
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
SDIAR	Sustainable Development Initiative of the Arab Region
SIDS	Small island developing states
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNCSD	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20)
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNGA	UN General Assembly