

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL & SUB-REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SUPPORTING SD IN THE ARAB REGION

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OBJECTIVES OF PRESENTATION

To review the role that international, regional, sub-regional & non-governmental organizations play in the formulation & implementation of SD plans in the Arab Region.

Role of international, regional, & sub-regional institutions

- **International institutions and donor agencies have played a major role in furthering the SD process in Arab countries supplying needed technical, organizational & financial assistance.**
- **This assistance has been provided at the national and regional levels and has ranged from technical and financial support for NEAP preparation to conducting research & providing loans to support the implementation of SD plans.**

A - NATIONAL INITIATIVES

I- National Planning For SD:

1. Technical & financial assistance for NES & NEAP preparation:

- International & regional organizations, such as the IUCN, ESCWA, UNDP, WB & developed countries provided technical & financial assistance for NSDS, NES & NEAP preparation.
- For instance, Jordan worked closely with the IUCN and UNDP to complete its first NES in 1992. It subsequently secured technical assistance and a grant from the WB to complete the 1996 NEAP. Jordan then prepared the draft Jordan Agenda 21 report in 2000 with assistance provided by the UNDP Country Office.
- ESCWA provided technical assistance & project coordination assistance to members of the ESCWA region in support of SD planning.

Country examples:

1. Egypt:

- WB served as the executing agency among financial donor for developing the 1992 NEAP for Egypt with the EEAA. Other donors included Denmark, EEC, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom & UNEP. Informal contribution was also provided by USAID and CIDA.
- UNDP Capacity 21 funded the development of a new NEAP for Egypt and has established an office to conduct the project in coordination with national stakeholders.

2. United Arab Emirates:

- The UAE has sufficient financial capital to fund the preparation & implementation of its own NES & NEAP. Despite its financial resources, the UAE has solicited the technical assistance & organizational expertise of international and regional organizations on a fee-for-services basis to support their SD planning initiatives.
- ESCWA provided technical & organizational assistance to the UAE at the national level and to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi at the local level to support their efforts in developing national and local Agenda 21s, NES & NEAP.

3. Yemen:

- Yemen has limited financial & technical resources. As such, the WB provided Yemen with the technical & financial assistance in 1996 to formulate a NEAP. SD documents thus not only help Governments identify and focus on national priorities, but they also help donors to focus on issues of most concern to the country.

II- Financial assistance for NES & Implementation of NEAP

- Securing financial support from the international donor community is essential for most non-oil exporting Arab countries to materialize SD.

- **These institutions include:**
 1. *Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development (AFESD)*
 2. *Kuwaiti Fund for Development (KFD)*
 3. *Islamic Development Bank (IDB)*

Country Examples

Egypt

Several donor institutions & bilateral aid agencies have supported programs & projects in Egypt in support of implementing NSDS.

- The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has sponsored the EEAA Organizational Support Program, institutional support of the Environmental Information Center, a coastal water monitoring program, support for environmental NGOs, the North Sinai Environmental Action Plan, etc.
- The Overseas Development Agency (ODA) provided financial assistance for the local Environmental Action Plan for Dakahleya & Sohag & capacity building on EIA & industrial auditing;
- The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has supported site management plans for Luxor & the city of Rachid, etc.
- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has worked to reduce pollution from tanneries, improve rural water supply, & implement an integrated management plan in the Siwa Oasis, etc.

Jordan

Several international organization & aid agencies have also assisted Jordan in its efforts to implement NSDS & NSDAP.

- UNDP and the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Program (METAP) provided financial support to the General Corporation for Environmental Protection (GCEP) for institutional capacity building, per the 1996 NEAP, and to prepare a national Agenda 21;
- Government of France assisted GCEP identify & change the site of the solid waste management facility serving Greater Amman. This activity is in accordance with the Phase I priority stipulated in the 1996 NEAP.

III- National Capacity Building Assistance

Several national and regional donor organizations provide capacity building assistance and training to countries in the Arab region. These activities range from supporting policy analysis and legislative drafting to providing training in environmental methods. Often, however, national capacity building assistance is conducted at the regional level by regional organizations so that several countries & stakeholders can benefit from national capacity building initiatives. This also facilitates the exchange of lessons learned & regional networking.

Organizations providing this type of assistance include:

- METAP – a cooperative initiative between the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, UNDP (the Arab Bureau & the Capacity 21 Unit), & the WB – has provided capacity building assistance to the Mediterranean region for nearly the past decade.
- Med-Policies Initiative – part of the METAP program, but funded by the WB in coordination with ESCWA – is building national capacity & regional awareness on economic & environmental policy-making.
- The Center for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) is an independent, non-profit regional institution is working to increase the capacity of national institution to enhance environmental management and SD.

B- REGIONAL INITIATIVES

- International, regional, & sub-regional institutions & donor agencies also focus on activities at the regional level to help countries place national initiatives within the context of regional SD concerns.
- In addition, Governments need formal channel of communication & cooperation to engage in dialogue on regional issues of SD.
- Several regional and sub-regional institutions have thus taken a lead in assisting governments formulate mechanisms for promoting SD in the Arab region.

- The League of Arab States (LAS) established the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) with the support of the region's governments to discuss and coordinate Arab issues on SD & environmental management. LAS has also sought to address the environmental aspects of SD by establishing an office for environmental & SD issues in the General Department for Economic Affairs. This illustrates LAS awareness of the linkages between economic & environmental issues in achieving SD.
- (CAMRE) meet on a regular basis to discuss key issues concerning the Arab region regarding the environment. CAMRE is now moving in the direction of discussing cross-sector issues, which is more conducive to SD.
- With technical assistance of ESCWA, CAMRE adopted the *Regional Action Program for Sustainable Development* (RAPSD) to support Arab cooperation on the implementation of Agenda 21. Also ESCWA developed a study on governance for SD to support Arab Countries move from traditional environmental management to SD.
- A joint secretariat was developed to include LAS, UNEP-ROWA and ESCWA to follow-up on the implementation of JPOI by realizing the Arab Initiative for SD.
- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – The GCC maintains an environmental office and adopted a 1995 framework for EIA. The council is currently initiating a regional SD strategy & action plan with the support of ESCWA.

Regional Strategies of donor institutions

In order to better manage the supply assistance to Arab countries, donors often develop their own regional strategies for SD.

- IUCN: IUCN advocacy formed the basis for NES & NEAP concepts that were strengthened at & after the Rio Conference.
- WB – MENA: WB has updated its regional SD strategy for the MENA Region.
- OECD: The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) 1996 strategy document, sets 2005 as the target date for achieving progress in implementing NSDSs in all countries.

C- RESEARCH & STUDIES ON **REGIONAL PRIORITY SD ISSUES**

Several international, regional, & sub-regional institutions serve the Arab region by conducting research & studies in support of SD.

- International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) conducts research on ways to increase agricultural productivity, especially in the low rainfall areas.
- WHO/EMRO: cooperates with several organizations (UNICEF, ESCWA) and experts to conduct research and disseminate studies on human health.
- FAO, through its SD Department conducted many research activities & WS in support of SD in the Arab region. These include studies on women, agriculture & rural development; water resource issues in the Arab Region; the decentralization of natural resource management, etc.

D- REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Several regional & international organizations have identified capacity building as an essential part of their assistance strategies to Arab States. This is because the prevalence of environmental management culture in the region & the limited amount of technical skills available for SD planning & implementation. Some examples of organizations providing capacity building services to the Arab region include:

ESCWA capacity building services to the region are varied & include:

- Assisting countries develop & draft environmental policies such as EIA, water quality standards, & environmental enforcement mechanisms;
- Providing advisory assistance on issues such as environment, trade, industrial development, & social issues;
- Preparing reports & publications on issues pertaining to SD management.
- Hosting regional conferences, IGM & EGM to discuss pressing regional SD issues.
- Organizing preparatory meetings for Rio + 5 and assessments of progress in achieving SD & preparing for WSSD.

CEDARE has also conducted several campaigns to increase awareness & understanding on SD issues. The Center manages a few research groups & identifies technical experts that can assist countries conduct work on environmental and development issues.

E- ASSESSING PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING SD GOALS

Several international institutions have engaged themselves in program assessments & reviews to assess regional & national progress in materializing SD. For example,

- [ESCWA](#) conducts regional assessments of progress in achieving SD, which are provided in its biennial *Survey of Economic & Social Developments in the ESCWA Region*, as well as in sector-specific publications. Also
- [WB](#) conducts assessments & reviews of progress in achieving SD.



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ATTENTION**