



Summary of the Side-Event on **Arab Integration ... A Transformative Change for Sustainable Development**
(New York, 1 July 2014)

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), organized a side event entitled “Arab Integration ... A Transformative Change for Sustainable Development” (New York, 1 July 2014). The side-event brought together a distinguished group of Arab country representatives, UN and civil society organizations to highlight the importance of Arab integration for achieving sustainable development in the region, and discuss the outcomes of recent Arab consultations on the post-2015 agenda.

Interventions were delivered by the following speakers:

- **Ms. Rima Khalaf**, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, pointed out the many challenges facing the Arab countries, calling on countries of the region to double their efforts to achieve sustainable development while struggling to establish security and stability. She indicated that enhanced Arab cooperation in the political, cultural, and environmental spheres and an integration scheme that is open to the rest of the world are essential for achieving a transformative agenda beyond 2015.
- **Ms. Sima Bahous**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, reiterated the vital agenda of Arab integration and sustainable development. She gave an overview of the efforts exerted by UNDP in support of the post-2015 process, stating UNDP’s readiness to help national partners to move towards SDG implementation.
- **Ms. Roula Majdalani**, ESCWA, briefed participants on the outcomes of the 1st Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development. A driver of regional integration, the Forum is expected to provide political impetus to sustainable development, review progress, discuss priorities and challenges, and tighten the inter-linkages between the various existing institutional SD processes.
- **Ms. Reem Nejdawi**, ESCWA, highlighted the regional consultation process conducted by ESCWA on SDGs, notably the ESCWA paper on “SDGs ... An Arab Perspective”. She presented the principles, enablers and methodology which have guided the preparation of the paper, noting that the strength of the paper comes from a well-argued narrative.
- **Ms. Shahira Wahbi**, Chief, Sustainable Development and International Cooperation at the League of Arab States, highlighted the recent adoption by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment of the Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development. She also highlighted recent efforts by LAS to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- **Mr. Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil**, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, highlighted a number of important issues that are currently being debated within the context of the formulation of the post-2015 and SDGs, notably issues of accountability, common but differentiated responsibility, and the functions of the HLPF.

Discussions revolved around the issue of peace and security as an enabler of sustainable development and a priority for the region, with focus on the refugees crisis, terrorism and their impacts. Participation of the youth in social, political and economic life was raised, in addition to the added value of developing an Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development. Finally, regional concerns relating to the SDG formulation process were discussed, notably in relation to the scope of the proposed goals.

Please find additional resources and information here:

<http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3493E>