

Position statement of the Major Groups, Stakeholders and Civil Society¹

Arab Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM)

Dubai May 29-30, 2013

General Overview

The Major Groups and Stakeholders and Civil Society (MG&S) attending the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting (RIM) for the Twentieth Session of the United Nations, Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-20) – Follow-up on Rio+20, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 29-30 May 2013, welcome the invitation and the opportunity to participate in such an important multi-stakeholders event with the representatives of the Arab governments, UN agencies and experts, especially that the region is witnessing tremendous and challenging changes.

This is in line with the final declaration of the Rio+20 reiterating the full engagement of the different stakeholders in the implementation process as prerequisite for its success.

However, the MG&S and CS attending the RIM look forward for a more active participation in the whole process of the implementation of the Rio+20 declaration. Such partnership brings in various perspectives of the different stakeholders and echoes grassroots realities. As such, it is imperative for the success of the implementations of “The Future We Want”.

The MG&S and CS are confident that the future we want in the region is best communicated by the citizens of the region. We trust that preparation and engagement in the RIM and beyond to be more participatory, open, independent and inclusive to reflects people's aspirations, perspectives and ensure their voices are well reflected and communicated to the governments representatives.

Overview on the implications of the major outcomes from Rio+20 for the Arab region

RIM MGS&S participants stress that the Sustainable Development Goals should:

- 1- Be strongly linked to Agenda 21 (1992), Millennium Declaration (2000) and Johannesburg plan of action (2002), hence be holistic addressing the dimensions of SD, including its political enablers (addressing the participatory governance, rights based approach to development, financial transformative structures, etc.)
- 2- Complement and build on the lessons learned from the MDGs, particularly the lack of sectoral coordination and the weak international partnership for development.
- 3- Be universal in application while allowing for regional and national realities, priorities and capabilities.
- 4- Build capacities in Arab region countries, increase the transfer of appropriate technologies and strengthen education and training, with financial and technical assistance from developed countries and International organizations
- 5- Be time-bound and easily monitored
- 6- Invest in Knowledge transfer and capacity building as an essential tool for the ownership and localization of technology
- 7- Integrate sustainable development in at all educational levels
- 8- Initiate and enhance research focusing on sustainable development and green economy

¹ Participating MG&S present in RIM included representatives from: NGO, Science and Technology, Farmers, academia, Women and youth groups.

- 9- .Spread out the National level consultations to cover more countries in this region to ensure that the perspectives from a broad base of civil society, marginalized groups, and others previously left out of discussions on development priorities are taken into consideration. The national consultation process should involve all major group and civil society views equitably in all aspects of agenda setting, policy and implementation in order to reflect the multiple realities of local community needs
- 10- Prioritize on access to education, better health care, clean water and sanitation and protection against crime and violence against children especially the girl child

While highlighting the need for the SDG process to be de transparent, inclusive, gender sensitive, participatory and open to civil society as full partner

Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015

RIM MG&S and CS participants highlighted the need to discuss the new development paradigm in order to achieve the goals; such a paradigm should take into consideration the need to rethink the role of the state, the economic objectives and the redistribution policies. The Rio+20 declaration mentioned “inequalities” in all their forms as a key challenge that should be addressed at the national and regional policy levels which .reiterates the nexus between the three pillars (economic, social and environmental). This process should be coupled by the political and cultural enablers where good governance, transparency, accountability, participation, partnership, the respect of Human Rights and gender balance are prerequisites to meet the goals.

Institutional framework for sustainable development: global, regional and national inter-linkages

We reiterate the need to improve the institutional framework for sustainable development while learning from the CSD lessons in the last 20 years to ensure a holistic oversight of sustainable development dimensions and goals with universal periodic high level monitoring of the progress on that front.

At the regional level, we call to establish the regional institutional framework for sustainable development that builds on the cooperation and partnership between civil society and the governments.

We believe that action, implementation and accountability must be at the core of the foundation of the HLPF (high-level political forum). There must be a mechanism for tracking progress on the Sustainable development goals in this forum. We call for greater and more transparent engagement of civil society and all stakeholders at all levels of decision making with regards to agenda setting, policy making and implementation. This engagement should be inclusive with a seamless information flow, so that all sections of civil society from all backgrounds, including groups traditionally marginalized from the decision-making process, are made a part of this engagement. Measures must be taken to include input and interventions from MGs and civil society in all high-level meetings and modalities for civil society participation must be well established taking into account the diversity at a local and regional level.

A green economy roadmap for the Arab region

RIM MG&S and CS participants consider that efforts to reach developmental goals should be sustainable; we thus consider that the green economy is an important tool to achieve sustainable development. However, we reiterate that this can't be unless it is coupled with a paradigm shift in the economic model that moves from "rentier" model of economy to a diversified, productive, job generating, gender sensitive and distributive economic model with minimal ecological footprints.

Arab regional and national initiatives for sustainable development

RIM MG&S and CS participants are committed to initiate and support national and regional initiatives on sustainable development. We anticipate that these initiatives ensure the healthy dialogue among all stakeholders.

RIM MG&S and CS participants call for the governments to enhance the regional cooperation toward the "Arab Common Markets"². We believe that region cooperation is a strategic choice for the Arab region to be able to face the challenges of the integration in the global economy and international trading system. There are real opportunities for a regional cooperation in terms of:

- 1- Implementing the political commitments and decision for the regional integration
- 2- Building and sharing capabilities and technologies,
- 3- Devising mechanisms for redistributing resource wealth in the region through directing the development funds toward sustainable development initiatives.

Conclusions

The Major Groups and Civil Society attending the RIM call for the governments to actively participate at the global arena to protect the interests of the rights of the citizen in the region, which necessitate developing the technical and negotiating capacities and skills of the negotiators for a better performance in this regards.

MG&S and CS encourage the Arab governments to consider developing the regional SDGs addressing our environment threats/needs and aspirations.

Finally we underline the importance to develop sustainable development strategies and set proper, equitable and inclusive implementation mechanisms in place. We would stress on the need to position assessment and evaluation at the heart of any sustainable development framework and post 2015 agenda. In this regard, we would support the global civil society efforts to designate 2015 as an international year of evaluation, and pledge the Arab governments to support so.

² With reference to the decision of the league of Arab States to create a costume union by 2015

Major Groups, stakeholders and Civil Society participating in the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting; (Dubai 29-30 May, 2013):

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3. Développement Sans Frontières 'Kassem El-Saddik' <kelsaddik@gmail.com>;
4. Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED): Imad Adly, 'eadly@hotmail.com';
5. University of Calgary ; Maha Al-Zu'bi' <mahazubi@gmail.com>;
6. Oman Environnent Society; Mehdi A. Jaaffar; 'mehdi.jaafar@gmail.com';
7. General Federation for Jordanian Women , Noha Maayta, 'nuhamaayta@yahoo.com';
8. Friends of Ibrahim Abdel Al, Eman Abdel Al; 'abdelal@cyberia.net.lb';
9. University of Bahrain; Najat Eshaqi 'neshaqi@uob.edu.bh';
10. UNEP-MGFC Major Group for Children and Youth; 'Kehkashan Basu' <kehkashanbasu@gmail.com>;
11. Specific Union for Farmer women in Jordan Zeinab Al Momany; zainab_almoumani@yahoo.com';
12. Friends of the Environment Center –Qatar; Mohammed Al Sayrafi; 'alsayrafi@adlqatar.com';
13. Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Ziad Abdel Samad abdel.samad@annd.org