STATEMENT TO THE

ARAB CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON AN
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR THE
POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

By

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Your Excellency, Ambassador Al-Saleh, Assistant Secretary General and Head of the Social Affairs Sector, League of Arab States; Mr. Nadim Khoury, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCWA; Mr. Adel Abdelatif, Chief, Regional Programme Divisions, UNDP Regional Bureau of the Arab States; Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I am here today to represent the United Nations Environment Programme at the Arab Consultation on an Accountability Framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and to be back here in the beautiful country of Tunisia. On behalf of Mr. Iyad Abumoghli, the Regional Director and Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme in West Asia and the overall coordinator of UNEP’s work in the Arab region, I would like to thank our partners ESCWA for spearheading this initiative, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and our other UN system partners.

Since a number of us were last gathered here, the Open-Ended Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals has reached a consensus on 17 overarching, integrated goals and related targets, providing a path for the post-2015 development agenda. This is a huge achievement. The proposed goals set a clear commitment to poverty eradication, focussing on a future of dignity for all, and filling some of the gaps which were evident in the Millennium Development Goals. At the regional level regional priorities have been defined to ensure that these universal goals take account of Arab regional and national diversity.

From the perspective of UNEP, with its role and mandate as the arm of the United Nations with responsibility for the environment, we have engaged in the consultative process at the global and regional levels to promote the full integration of the three pillars of sustainable
development; the economic, the social and the environmental. The discussions held last April at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development saw a consensus amongst participants that such integration is important at the regional level also.

As we move into the discussion around means of implementation and the accountability framework, UNEP is continuing to make efforts to support and strengthen the outcome of the consultation process; from our ongoing work focusing on the science-policy interface, to identifying and supporting the role of Ministers and Ministries of Environment in the process. Indeed, the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its means of implementation were central to discussions at the first United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEA held in June, at which those Ministers present reaffirmed their commitment to an integrated and inclusive approach engaging all stakeholders.

UNEP continues to emphasise the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner as we move the discussion to the accountability framework. Implementation can be strengthened through coherence and coordination amongst governments, stakeholders and development partners, building on and bringing together existing accountability structures such as those enshrined in the multilateral environmental agreements.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Another area of focus when we talk about the accountability framework will be monitoring, and tied closely to this is data. The availability of sound data and statistics was raised at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development in April, and also at the UN General Assembly Interactive Dialogue on the Accountability Framework held in May. Data is the
essential raw material for any accountability framework, and as we discuss what form an accountability framework may take, we should also consider the data that will be needed to monitor and report and the existing capacities and gaps in this regard.

Our rich agenda over the coming two days provides us with an opportunity to discuss and deliberate on a regionally relevant accountability framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, recognising that the achievement of sustainable development is the responsibility of us all.

There is an overarching consensus that the accountability framework should have a broad-based ownership, engaging people at all levels in order to set up a universal transformative agenda responding to global, regional and national realities and priorities. We are here to add the voice of the region to the debate on the accountability framework, to make sure that the region and its specificities are well considered and that the stakeholders of the region are ready to take on the responsibilities of its implementation.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

With this in mind, I wish you a fruitful and productive Regional Consultation and look forward to the outcomes we will achieve.

Thank you once more to our partners in this process and to the Government and people of Tunisia for welcoming us here again. I hope everyone will have a chance to enjoy the beautiful scenery and Tunisian hospitality while we are here.

Thank you.