ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION: INSTITUTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS FOR MOVING BEYOND AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT CULTURE

United Nations
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Preface

This study was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) through its Sustainable Development and Productivity Division. It represents a component of the commitment by ESCWA to its member States to follow up on the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2-11 September 2002), and in accordance with the Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development. The outcomes of WSSD have stimulated renewed thinking with regard to conceptual and institutional frameworks for sustainable development. This study is a product of such renewed thinking.

The preparation of this study was an organic process. First, ESCWA consulted a number of Arab experts, officials and resource persons who provided invaluable comments on earlier drafts. Additionally, ESCWA prepared surveys that were submitted to the appropriate agencies of all member States in order to solicit their feedback and collect relevant data and information from them. Subsequently, in June 2003, a more advanced draft was presented at the inter-ministerial meeting of the Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) and to the technical secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE). Incorporating the comments and recommendations made by both bodies, a final draft was presented to over 40 governmental and non-governmental officials from across the Arab region during a special side event of the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) High Level Meeting on Economic Tools for Environmental Sustainability (Beirut, 25-27 June 2003). During that Meeting, a panel consisting of prominent experts offered insightful and important comments on the draft study, whose proposals were further discussed during the plenary debates.

It is hoped that this study, which has greatly benefited from such fruitful exchanges and debates, can contribute positively to the evolution and effectiveness of governance structures for sustainable development in the Arab region.
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACSAD</td>
<td>Arab Center for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFESD</td>
<td>Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMCEN</td>
<td>African Ministerial Conference on the Environment</td>
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<td>AMFED</td>
<td>Arab Media Forum for Environment and Development</td>
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<td>API</td>
<td>Arab Planning Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARAMCO</td>
<td>Arabian American Oil Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAME</td>
<td>Center for the Affairs of Man and the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAMRE</td>
<td>Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDARE</td>
<td>Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNDD</td>
<td>National Commission for Sustainable Development in Tunisia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITET</td>
<td>Center for Environmental Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESCWA</td>
<td>Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environmental Facility</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross national product</td>
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<td>HCSD</td>
<td>High council for sustainable development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBP</td>
<td>International Biological Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICARDA</td>
<td>International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSDU</td>
<td>International Council of Scientific Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Islamic Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>KFD</td>
<td>Kuwait Fund for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCEDAR</td>
<td>Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAS</td>
<td>League of Arab States</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAP</td>
<td>Mediterranean Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEA</td>
<td>Multilateral environmental agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDRC</td>
<td>Middle East Desalination Research Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCSD</td>
<td>National council for sustainable development</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEA</td>
<td>National environmental agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEAP</td>
<td>National environmental action plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NES</td>
<td>National environmental strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>NSDAP</td>
<td>National sustainable development action plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSDC</td>
<td>National Sustainable Development Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSDS</td>
<td>National sustainable development strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTED</td>
<td>Environment and Sustainable Development Observatory in Tunisia</td>
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<tr>
<td>PERSGA</td>
<td>Programme for the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAPSD</td>
<td>Regional Action Program for Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROPME</td>
<td>Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROWA</td>
<td>Regional Office for West Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSCN</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDFP</td>
<td>Sustainable development focal point</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCED</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Environment and Development</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNU/INWEH</td>
<td>United Nations University, International Network on Water, Environment and Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WSSD</td>
<td>World Summit on Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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References to the Prime Minister in the models presented in this study denote the acting head of Government.
Executive summary

Despite a significant increase in environmental commitment by Arab countries over the past three decades, the national and regional institutions established to manage the sustainable development process remain largely inadequate. While stronger environmental commitments have translated into the establishment of new environmental institutions, which in turn have considerably improved environmental governance in the Arab region, in most cases a significant gap remains with respect to the ability of newly established institutional frameworks to manage effectively the sustainable development process. This is fundamentally attributed to the current culture of environmental management and its associated institutional arrangements and instruments, which take a sector-based approach. The main challenge ahead for Arab countries lies in finding appropriate mechanisms that, while culturally and politically sensitive to the region, can move towards a governance system for sustainable development that is highly integrated, multi-sectoral, process-oriented and participatory.

The transformation in the conceptual framework from sanitary engineering and public health of the 1920s to 1960s to sustainable development of the present has resulted in shared views among most Arab countries in terms of national priorities and perspectives on sustainable development as an environmental issue, and of shared interregional commitments with regard to sustainable development. However, a number of challenges and constraints remain in the Arab region, namely, the formulation of a common definition and understanding of sustainable development; the establishment of a clear and concise political platform defining specific goals and priorities for action; and the adoption of an integrated approach to sustainable development, which can address economic and social issues alongside and in line with environmental priorities. The Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development, advanced by the League of Arab States (LAS) in 2002, represents an important beginning in this conceptual process. Attention must now turn to elaborating on the Initiative and rendering it effective.

Additionally, the institutional framework in the Arab region, which has been influenced by the conceptual framework, remains largely ill equipped to address the expanded multi-sectoral scope of issues that has become part of national and regional platforms on sustainable development. This institutional legacy is the principle challenge to effective governance for sustainable development.

At a regional level, new institutions have been established over the past three decades. The establishment of CAMRE in 1987 by the Arab League was a watershed for the Arab region in that CAMRE provided the first political forum to address environmental matters regionally. The subsequent establishment of JCEDAR to focus on the linkages between the environment and development was an equally significant regional milestone. However, the success of these institutions in advancing sustainable development regionally remains limited due to the difficulty in coordinating sustainable development policies across sectors and ministries at a national level. Moreover, environmental institutions in Arab countries tend to be politically weak. This can be attributed to several factors, including: (a) comparatively recent establishment and restructuring; (b) power politics; (c) limited institutional mandate; (d) comparatively smaller roles as advisors or coordinators; (e) limited budgets; (f) limited capacity to generate income; and (g) overlapping institutional jurisdictions.

While policy platforms and institutional frameworks support the foundation of an effective system of governance for sustainable development, sustainable development cannot be achieved in the absence of operational mechanisms that render the system functional. Consequently, with the aim of operationalizing governance for sustainable development, the following issues need to be taken into account: (a) planning mechanisms; (b) implementing instruments; (c) budgeting and finance; (d) monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement; and (e) public participation. Challenges to operationalizing these mechanisms include the limited availability of Arabic language material on sustainable development, and Government policies and individual practices that withhold information from the public.

With a view to assisting Arab countries in strengthening governance for sustainable development, ESCWA has developed a series of innovative, comprehensive, gradual and culturally sensitive recommendations. At a national level, efforts to strengthen institutions and institutional arrangements can be achieved through the following:
(a) The creation of a high council for sustainable development (HCSD) that is chaired by the Prime Minister of member States and that serves as an inter-ministerial forum to coordinate Government policies and programmes on sustainable development;

(b) The establishment of a national council for sustainable development (NCSD) that serves as a permanent non-governmental counterpart to the high council in order to institutionalize a mechanism for conducting public consultation and securing public participation in the decision-making process;

(c) The appointment of a sustainable development advisor (SDA) to the Prime Minister who is a reputable national expert in environmental affairs and socio-economic development and sits as an independent, non-voting member of both HCSD and NCSD;

(d) The strengthening of the national environmental agency (NEA), whereby the head of NEA continues to play an important role in sustainable development decision-making both as an equal member of HCSD and as the designated national focal point or coordinator for sustainable development representing the country at regional and global forums.

These proposals are presented as a practical model for Arab countries that can readily make use of existing national institutions, political realities and current cultural context, particularly given that non-governmental stakeholders are rarely granted full partnership status with high-ranking members of the cabinet. Consequently, an alternative model merges the functions of HCSD and NCSD into one body for those Arab countries that are anxious to press ahead with a full participatory approach to governance for sustainable development, thereby allowing direct participation by civil society into the decision-making process at a national level.

The key to achieving effective governance lies in operationalizing sustainable development at a national level. Within that context, Arab countries must focus on the following: (a) identifying specific goals and articulating national platforms on sustainable development; (b) prioritizing, integrating and implementing policies on sustainable development; (c) planning financial and budget strategies; (d) establishing monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement mechanisms; and (e) ensuring public participation.

At a regional level and in light of the discussions by JCEDAR in Cairo in October 2002, designated national sustainable development coordinators can meet through the existing regional forum to address environmental issues as one component of sustainable development, and to coordinate regional sustainable development activities. Within that context and in preparation for the twelfth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the first Regional Implementation Meeting for sustainable development is set to convene at the next meeting of JCEDAR (Cairo, 19-21 October 2003). However, the success of such regional forums is dependent on the commitment of Arab countries to root sustainable development in national institutions, which in turn must support local communities to enable them to develop in a sustainable manner. Such local and national institutions are the beginning of a chain of cooperation that extends to regional and global levels.
Introduction

There has been a significant and profound increase in the environmental commitment of most Arab countries over the past three decades. This is manifested by the formulation of national environmental strategies and related plans of action, the ratification of multilateral and regional environmental agreements, and the enactment of a number of laws and regulations in support of environmental policies and directives. Stronger environmental commitments have translated into the establishment of new environmental institutions. Moreover, since the 1990s, these institutions have undergone processes of restructuring and strengthening.

However, despite these improvements in environmental governance in the Arab region, a significant gap remains regarding the ability of newly-established institutional frameworks to manage effectively the sustainable development process. While progress has been achieved in managing such natural resources as air quality and water quantity, and in identifying environmental problems in various sectors, particularly industry and agriculture, there has been little improvement in fostering an integrated approach towards environmental, economic and social policy formulation and implementation. This is fundamentally because the prevailing culture in the area of environmental management and its associated institutional arrangements and instruments are inadequate to achieving integrated and participatory sustainable development.

The limited effectiveness of the current environmental regime is partly due to differences in the vision and purpose of environmental management and sustainable development. While environmental planning and implementation has, by definition, a sector-based orientation, sustainable development requires a broader, multi-sectoral perspective that is process-oriented, strategic and participatory. Moreover, sustainable development addresses such complex issues as poverty, health, trade and education, which go beyond the scope of improving environmental management. Governance systems for sustainable development therefore require integrated approaches to social, economic and environmental policy planning; pollution prevention; implementation and monitoring; and appropriate modalities for public participation. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that sustainable development is not the responsibility of one institution, rather of all institutions and stakeholders.

This study reviews existing governance systems for sustainable development in selected Arab countries and recommends possible institutional configurations and operational mechanisms for improving governance for sustainable development at national and regional levels. Focus is placed on the following: (a) goals and concepts; (b) institutional arrangements; (c) planning mechanisms; (d) implementing instruments; (e) budgeting and financing; (f) monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement; (g) public participation; and (h) regional approaches towards governance for sustainable development. Recommendations for improving the governance for sustainable development in the Arab region are based on the unique political, social, economic, cultural and institutional specificities of Arab countries.

Efforts to manage the sustainable development process in the Arab region have been complicated by the fact that countries have sought to achieve sustainable development goals with the parameters of traditional environmental management frameworks. The scope of this study therefore includes analysing current governance structures for sustainable development in selected Arab countries and proposing institutional configurations and policy instruments for improving governance for sustainable development in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the region.
The timing of this study is crucial given the heightened concern regarding the effectiveness of environmental institutions in the Arab region in meeting the sustainable development challenge. This has been articulated in several regional forums and statements.\(^1\)

ESCWA is in a privileged position to advise Arab States on means of improving governance for sustainable development, given its extensive experience in working with Governments and civil society in the region and its familiarity with the socio-political, economic and cultural specificities of the region. Moreover, the Commission has been formally invited by the Arab League and ESCWA member countries to consider and recommend means of improving governance for sustainable development in the Arab region. Furthermore, ESCWA is a member of the joint secretariat, which was formed in 2001 to coordinate regional preparations for WSSD and which, in collaboration with LAS, is developing a regional strategy for sustainable development in light of the Arab Initiative.

The Arab region has come a long way in improving environmental management over the past three decades. However, the region now needs to move from environmental management to sustainable development. Establishing a system of governance for sustainable development is the first step towards achieving this goal.

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\(^1\) These include decisions by JCEDAR on the proposed regional mechanism for sustainable development (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 20-21 October 2002); CAMRE resolutions from its fourteenth session (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 23-24 October 2002); the Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development (September 2002); the Arab Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (October 2001); the Regional PrepCom for West Asia (Cairo, 24-25 October 2001); the Regional Stakeholders Roundtable in Preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Manama, 23-25 September 2001); the Arab Regional Thematic Round Table (Beirut, 9-13 April 2001); and the Abu Dhabi Declaration on Perspectives of Arab Environmental Action (February 2001).
I. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Environmental thinking in the Arab region has undergone significant transformation over the past three decades. Much of this reflects the global reorientation of environmental goals, which is attributed to an altered perspective from one that was fundamentally based on public health and environmental management to a new vision that seeks integrated sustainable development. The scope of issues encompassed under the sustainable development umbrella integrates issues that go beyond sector-based environmental management. This chapter reviews the origins of sustainable development thinking in the Arab region and the challenge of expanding sustainable development to include cross-sectoral issues.

A. EVOLUTION OF GOALS AND CONCEPTS

Environmental goals and concepts in most Arab countries have evolved. The resulting shift in the conceptual framework can generally be divided into the following three phases: (a) support for sanitary engineering and public health; (b) the shift from public health to environmental management; and (c) the gradual move from environmental management towards sustainable development. This transformation can be witnessed at national and regional levels.

1. Changes in the conceptual framework

(a) Sanitary engineering and public health (1920s-1960s)

Environmental management concepts initially emanated from sanitary engineering and were primarily focused on water quality and waste disposal. Municipalities were responsible for providing access to clean water, waste water networks and solid waste management services. In addition, some regions were engaged in ensuring food hygiene. Environmental health units were established at a national level in most Ministries of Health to conduct inspections and quality control testing in national laboratories. The primary environmental health issues of concern were the quality of drinking water, waste disposal and health hazards, particularly those related to water, habitat and epidemics, and associated with such water-borne diseases as malaria and bilharzia. Consideration of the environment as a public health issue prevailed in most Arab countries until the 1960s.

While managing the environment was initially considered a public health issue, managing such natural resources as oil, natural gas, minerals, fisheries, land and water were considered outside the realm of public health. Consequently, these natural resources were managed separately rather than being included in the environmental paradigm. The origin of this differentiation is partly due to the widespread ethnocentric belief that, while natural resources need to be conserved, they exist for the purpose of serving the needs of humans. This notion is supported by Islamic principles, which hold that people have the responsibility to conserve natural resources in view of the course chartered by God. During those early decades and given only a nascent understanding concerning the scarcity of natural resources, these were developed with limited foresight paid to the needs of future generations. Within the context of legislation, protection and conservation of natural heritage, including biodiversity, only extended to species that had a direct impact on agriculture, particularly pests and predators of livestock, or that were categorized as game. This protection came under the aegis of Ministries of Agriculture, not Ministries of the Environment. Consequently, strategic vision and policy linkages between the environment, public health and management of natural resources were largely absent from development thinking during the first half of the twentieth century in most of the Arab region as in most other regions of the world.

Furthermore, since the environment was associated with public health, and given that public health was considered the sole responsibility of the State, the environment was generally not the subject of international attention during this period. Multilateral agreements focused instead on managing such natural

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2 The First International Symposium on the Environment From an Islamic Perspective (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 23-25 October 2000) brought Islamic scholars from around the world to Jeddah to address the moral obligation of Muslims towards protecting the environment.
resources as birds, mammals, plants, fisheries and the sea (see table 1). Indeed, the term “environment” did not appear in the title of an international convention until 1972.

**TABLE 1. MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS PRIOR TO 1972**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Convention</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>International Convention for the Protection of Birds</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Convention for the Establishment of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Convention on Fishing and Conservation of Living Resources of the High Seas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Agreement of the Establishment of a Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Eastern Region of its Distribution Area in South-West Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Fisheries Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Agreement of the Establishment of a Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Near East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>African Convention for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Convention on the Conservation of the Living Resources of the South East Atlantic</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (RAMSAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm)</td>
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*Source: Compiled by ESCWA.*

(b) **Shift from public health to environmental management (1970s-1980s)**

Public health and the provision of environmental sanitary services were traditionally considered the responsibility of the State given their direct relationship to development goals, national welfare and quality of life. International and regional conventions tended therefore to focus on natural resources. However, advances in scientific knowledge and an increase in the awareness of the impact of humans on the environment on a global scale made it harder to disaggregate environmental public health from natural resource management, particularly within a long-term context.\(^3\)

As the development of natural resources was gradually linked with concepts in environmental management, the roots of sustainable development thinking began to take form. This transition was most evident during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the resulting Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan for the Human Environment (1972). The Conference was initiated by reports of Nordic countries on the ecological deterioration of their lakes due to industrial pollution, and concerns related to the impacts of environmental pollution on human health and well-being. At Stockholm, many developing countries reflected on the notion that environmental pollution was the price to pay for industrialization and for catching up with advanced developed countries. Fifteen Arab countries participated in the Conference, namely, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

As a result of such reports and discussions, environment concepts took on a broader scope during the 1970s that involved environmental quality, including the quality of air and water, marine environment and environmental monitoring.\(^4\) This led several Arab countries to endorse the following Conventions: the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution (Barcelona, Spain, 16 February

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\(^3\) G. Hardin contributed to the paradigm shift by clearly exposing the relationship between people and the environment. G. Hardin, “Tragedy of the Commons”, *Science* (The American Association for the Advancement of Science, 13 December 1968), vol. 162, pp. 1243-1248.

\(^4\) Within that context, a water quality monitoring programme was established in Kuwait in 1986 in parallel with an air quality monitoring programme.
1976); the Kuwait Regional Convention for Co-operation on the Protection of the Marine Environment From Pollution (Kuwait, 24 April 1978); and the Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden Environment (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 14 February 1982). Consequently, a shift in the conceptual framework emerged whereby the effects of industry, agriculture, trade and transport became part and parcel of environmental management thinking.

(c) Move from environmental management towards sustainable development (1980s-2002)

Sustainable development was first propounded in 1980 through the report entitled World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development. This document was well-received and inspired widespread national conservation strategies. However, critics noted that the issue of sustainable development was primarily concerned with the ecological sustainability of the biosphere and did not address such socio-economic and cultural issues as poverty, population and equity. This led to the formation of the World Commission on Environment and Development and, subsequently, to a document that was instrumental in giving worldwide currency to the concept of sustainable development. Additionally, this document provided the widely accepted definition of sustainable development in terms of meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.” This definition underlines the ethical notion of equity between generations, and brings the concept a step forward in meeting the requisites of social justice.

Since the 1990s, there has been a gradual movement at the global level to expand dialogue on environmental management towards sustainable development, culminating in WSSD in 2002. The scope of discussion widened to include such topics as poverty, debt burden, education, employment and women. Moreover, there was greater focus on improving the quality of life of people. Table 2 lists the United Nations conferences and conventions on issues related to sustainable development since 1992. Over the past decade, Arab countries have become increasingly involved in preparatory meetings and in negotiations leading to the outcome of these conferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Conference or Convention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo)</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>First International Symposium on the Environment From an Islamic Perspective (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by ESCWA.

While Habitat I in 1976 focused on the public provision of housing, Habitat II in 1996 called for the need for partnerships and sustainable development to address urbanization, urban stress and rural development.

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7 Ibid., p. 43.
2. Evolution of regional commitments

Changes in regional perspectives and concepts regarding sustainable development echo changes in the conceptual framework at national and global levels. The evolution of these concepts at the regional level is best observed in the declarations and initiatives that emanated from regional forums, see table 3.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Declaration or Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Arab Declaration on Environment and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Arab Statement on Environment and Development and the Future Outlook</td>
</tr>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Declaration of the First International Symposium on the Environment From an Islamic Perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Abu Dhabi Declaration on Perspectives of Arab Environmental Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Oman Declaration on Environment and Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Arab Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Joint Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development by the African Ministerial Council on the Environment (AMCEN) and CAMRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by ESCWA.

The evolution and strengthening of commitments to sustainable development has important implications for national and regional governance frameworks. At a national level, environmental institutions alone do not have the competence or the mandate to address all the issues now included under the umbrella of sustainable development. Equally, at a regional level, there is an absence of institutions that can address sustainable development in an integrated manner outside the context of environmental management. More effective institutional arrangements and governance systems are therefore needed at national and regional levels to respond to new concepts and commitments made within the context of achieving sustainable development.

B. COMMONALITIES IN THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK IN THE ARAB REGION

The shift in the environmental conceptual framework from sanitary engineering to sustainable development has resulted in shared views and perspectives on sustainable development in the region.

1. Similar national priorities and perspectives of sustainable development as an environmental issue

To some extent, most Arab countries share similar sustainable development priorities at a national level. Generally, the common concerns of the region relate to such issues as poverty, peace and security, quantity and quality of water, degradation and desertification of land, urbanization, employment, technology transfer, financing and international trade. However, differences between countries due to revenues generated from natural resources give rise to differences in the areas of energy policies, positions on labour migration and poverty.

Moreover, despite the increasingly multi-sectoral scope of issues included in the sustainable development platforms of most Arab countries, sustainable development is still considered an environmental

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8 Regional forums were often attended by all the countries of the Arab region, namely, the 22 member States of LAS. The ESCWA region comprises the following 13 members: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.
matters. This was particularly evident during the Regional PrepCom for West Asia (Cairo, 24-25 October 2001), which was attended almost exclusively by representatives from the Ministries of the Environment or related agencies despite invitations to the Ministries of Finance, and Ministries of Planning and Environment.

This perception is equally widespread in other regions of the world. In Europe and Africa, regional preparatory conferences were similarly dominated by representatives from the environment sector despite the adoption of sustainable development platforms and of priorities that address issues well beyond their environmental mandate. Indeed, the eleventh session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) (New York, 28 April – 9 May 2003), which was the first global meeting to discuss sustainable development following WSSD, was attended almost exclusively by environmental representatives from across the world.

2. Shared interregional commitments to sustainable development

Most Arab countries were represented at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), equally known as the Earth Summit, and have repeatedly articulated their commitment to sustainable development in global forums through interregional venues. Interregional commitments are usually articulated under the auspices of LAS. Moreover, the Arab League signalled its renewed commitment to a comprehensive regional approach to sustainable development by approving the formation of a regional joint secretariat—to assist in the coordination of activities and priorities on sustainable development in the Arab region. As underscored in the Arab Initiative, the ambitious goal of LAS in the wake of WSSD is to develop a regional programme for sustainable development based on the priorities as set out in the Initiative itself. Furthermore, shared regional commitments with African countries were voiced in the Joint Ministerial Declaration issued by AMCEN and CAMRE. Excerpts from these interregional platforms emphasizing the support for integrating social, economic and environmental development goals are highlighted in box 1.

**Box 1. Excerpts from regional platforms on sustainable development**

1. *Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development (LAS) – 2002*

   This Initiative aims at addressing the challenges faced by Arab Countries to achieve sustainable development. It asserts the commitment of Arab countries to implement Agenda 21 and the development objectives included in the Millennium Declaration and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, taking into consideration the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. The Initiative seeks to enhance participation of Arab countries with the aim of strengthening their efforts in realizing sustainable development, particularly in light of globalization and its impacts, as well as finding a mechanism for financing the programmes for environmental protection and sustainable development”.

2. *Arab Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (LAS) – 2002*

   “Achieving sustainable development requires the development of an integrated Pan Arab strategy that takes into account the historical and current conditions in the region and forecasts future changes and global developments with a view to achieving the following objectives: the establishment of peace and security…; curtailing poverty and unemployment; achieving balance between population growth and the available natural resources; eradicating illiteracy…; supporting and further strengthening development and environment institutions…; halting the degradation of natural resources and the environment…; development and integration of Arab production sectors and the adoption of cleaner production procedures; [and] supporting the private sector and the civil society, giving special attention to the role of women to insure their participation in the implementation of sustainable development”.

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9 This regional joint secretariat, which was established in June 2000, comprises the technical secretariat of CAMRE, the Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) and ESCWA.

10 LAS, *The Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region* (LAS, July 2002).
Box 1 (continued)

3. Joint Ministerial Declaration by AMCEN and CAMRE – 2002

“... escalating poverty and high population growth rates [are] key issues that will need to be addressed..., combating poverty represents a basic challenge to efforts of achieving sustainable development in the two regions. Addressing this issue requires the rational utilization of available resources and the encouragement of a conducive environment for investment at (the) national and regional levels. It will also require the identification of practical solutions for debt burden and strengthening of the role of the private sector and civil society, including youth and women, in achieving sustainable development”.

4. Abu Dhabi Declaration on Perspectives of Arab Environmental Action (CAMRE and LAS) – 2001

“... accelerated development has had its impact on environment. This has raised of late, the issue of achieving the optimum linkage between development imperatives, eradicating poverty and protecting the environment. This has revealed several negative aspects... and in particular, the fact that development and raising living standards without concern for the environment resulted in intensive exploitation of natural resources and pollution levels beyond the capacity of nature to promote a healthy and safe environment conducive to achieving sustainable development fulfilling the aspiration of the Arab people. This calls for the adoption of more effective approaches in development based on rational use of natural resources, renewable and non-renewable, as well as their protection from pollution”.

Table 4 catalogues and compares the content of four regional declarations, thereby illustrating the evolution and expansion over the past decade with regard to regional sustainable development. While the orientation of topics still centres on institution building, capacity building, management of natural resources, international cooperation, technology transfer and financing, more recent declarations place greater emphasis on such economic and international issues as trade liberalization, multilateral environmental agreements, debt and financing. Additionally, the later declarations underscore the participatory approaches to sustainable development, particularly among women and youth.

TABLE 4. REGIONAL COMMITMENTS TO ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>Poverty related to ignorance and disease</td>
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<td>Eradicating illiteracy</td>
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<td>Unemployment and social security</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>International trade and trade liberalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic integration and intra-Arab trade</td>
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<td>Industrial development</td>
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<td>Arab, international and the United Nations</td>
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<td>Multilateral environmental agreements</td>
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<td>Private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)</td>
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<td>Production and consumption</td>
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<td>Population policies and family planning</td>
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<td>Development of nomadic areas</td>
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<td>Heritage and rare natural resources</td>
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<td>Safe water and food and chemicals, GMOs</td>
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<td>Financing</td>
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<td>Arab and Islamic funds, and international aid</td>
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<td>United Nations resolutions on the Occupied Territories</td>
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C. CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

1. Definition of sustainable development

The first challenge in achieving sustainable development relates to the definition of terms and concepts that constitute sustainable development.\textsuperscript{11} That challenge arises from the diverse definitions of sustainable development and from the requirement to adapt one such definition to national and regional specifications. While “environmental protection is an integral component of sustainable development”,\textsuperscript{12} improving environmental management is a necessary but not sufficient component of sustainable development. Rather, a broad consensus needs to be reached on a set of principles that guide the actions of institutions towards sustainable development.

Establishing the definition and scope of sustainable development efforts at national and regional levels is an essential first step in developing appropriate institutional and legal governance frameworks for sustainable development. While the Arab Initiative has now provided a common vision, the Arab region has not yet formulated a common definition of sustainable development.

2. Priority setting

Effective governance for sustainable development necessitates the articulation of a clear and concise political platform that defines sustainable development goals and establishes related priorities for action. While policy platforms are often articulated, setting goals and priorities are not always well applied in the Arab region. Instead, issues are often listed in a way that lack hierarchy or means of implementation. Furthermore, national goals and priorities tend to emerge from traditional paradigms, which are premised on national security, economic growth and cultural preservation. Effective national and regional platforms on sustainable development need to build on national interests and identify realistic priorities for action in the short and long terms.

3. Reservations concerning policy integration at the operational level

Conceptual frameworks and sustainable development priorities encompass inter-disciplinary goals. However, countries in the region have been slow to move beyond an environmental management culture at the operational level. As noted above, this is manifested by the fact that Governments in the region still tend to consider sustainable development the domain of environmental institutions and generally send representatives from those institutions to regional and international conferences. While this can be partially attributed to financial limitations, it is equally due to resistance by some environmental officials of extending the mandate for sustainable development to other institutions. This resistance results from concerns that widening the scope of sustainable development can inadvertently marginalize the role of those environmental institutions that have been newly established.

Accordingly, institutional responsibilities need to be revisited and arranged in an integrated manner that provides balance between the important roles that environment institutions and other institutions play in achieving sustainable development. This requires an integrated approach towards thinking about sustainable


\textsuperscript{12} See Agenda 21, chap. 16, para. 16.20.
development that highlights the importance of addressing economic and social issues alongside environmental priorities without downplaying the role of environmental institutions in the sustainable development process.

D. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Given the evolution and expansion of concepts included in sustainable development platforms in the Arab region, it is recommended that Arab countries consider the following:

(a) Refining the scope of sustainable development goals at a national level in consultation with national stakeholders by finalizing a platform and strategy on sustainable development;

(b) Formulating a regional definition of sustainable development and strategy to support the regional platform, through a consultative process among member countries of LAS, with technical support provided by regional organizations and stakeholders;

(c) Developing a relevant plan of action for implementing national and regional sustainable development strategies.
II. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Environmental conceptual frameworks have influenced the structure of institutions responsible for environmental management and sustainable development in the Arab region. New institutional arrangements have evolved from new ways of thinking with regard to the environment. However, the institutional framework that has emerged remains ill equipped to address the expanded multi-sectoral scope of issues that has become part of national and regional platforms on sustainable development. This institutional legacy is the principle challenge to effective governance for sustainable development in the Arab region.

A. TRANSFORMATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Sustainable development concepts in the Arab region are being implemented within an institutional framework that was born from efforts to improve public health and environmental management. Understanding the history of existing institutional arrangements allows for better appreciation of the proposed arrangements within the context of governance for sustainable development. Most significantly, this history reveals the flexibility exhibited by Governments in the Arab region to change institutional structures in order to respond more effectively to changing needs and priorities. Such flexibility in the past is promising for the future and is an indication that, given adequate stimuli, the region can restructure and strengthen existing institutional frameworks to respond to new sustainable development priorities.

1. Changes in the institutional framework at a national level

Environmental institutional arrangements in Arab countries have generally undergone three periods of restructuring, each responding to changes in the conceptual framework regarding environmental management. Table 5 illustrates the transformation of the primary national environmental institution in selected Arab countries over the past three decades. Trends indicate greater support for inter-sectoral cooperation and coordination between public institutions on environmental matters.

(a) Shift from the municipalities to the State (1960s-1980s)

Under the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent French and British protectorates in the Arab region, while the management of natural resources remained centralized due to their economic contributions and resulting revenue streams, environmental management was largely the responsibility of municipalities. During the initial years of national independence, municipalities and local communities continued to be responsible for environmental matters until national governance structures solidified.

The shift towards national level responsibility for environmental matters emerged following the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the resulting Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan for the Human Environment (1972) that called on the establishment of appropriate national institutions to be “entrusted with the task of planning, managing or controlling the environmental resources of States with a view to enhancing environmental quality”.13 This set the stage for the establishment of national environmental agencies in Arab member countries.

Given the initial perspective of environment as a purely public health concern, environmental responsibilities were at first carried out by environmental health departments in Ministries of Health to cover such issues as water quality, air quality, noise pollution, radioactive waste, pesticide residue in food and occupational health. However, growing demand for environmental services and infrastructure engendered calls to centralize environmental management. Consequently, the environment became increasingly managed from the top-down according to national development plans, and less by municipalities in response to local needs.

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13 See Principle 17 of the Stockholm Declaration.
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Councils for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment (in each of the 15 Mohafazas)</td>
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<td>Higher Committee for Environmental Protection</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Ministry of Municipal, Rural and Environmental Affairs</td>
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<td>Dissolved</td>
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<td>Oman</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
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<td>Pre-1990</td>
<td>Functional</td>
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</table>

Source: Compiled by ESCWA in consultation with member States in March 2002, and updated in 2003 where data were available.

Note: The titles of the committees and institutions set forth in this table were not submitted for verification. These titles are reproduced in the form in which they were received. Two dots (...) indicate that data are not available or were not supplied by the respective State.
Furthermore, the management of natural resources remained outside the environmental box. National line ministries were created to manage mostly the consumption and not the conservation of natural resources, particularly in the fields of petroleum, fisheries, agriculture and land use planning. However, this does not exclude some noteworthy efforts that were made to protect natural resources in the region, including, inter alia, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) in Jordan, which was established in 1966 with the explicit purpose of managing nature reserves and wildlife in that country. Similarly, Arab member countries participated in various scientific programmes related to issues of natural resource management, including the Arid Zone Programme, conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), from 1950 to 1960; and the International Biological Programme (IBP), conducted by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), from 1962 to 1968. Despite these efforts, however, the conceptual distinction between management of the environment and management of natural resources has resulted in the development of institutional arrangements within the State that hinder integrated thinking and management of the sustainable development process.

It is equally interesting to note that, during this period, NGOs in Jordan and Saudi Arabia were given public responsibility for managing national nature reserves. This provides a successful and enduring model for public-private partnerships and public participation in the region.

As illustrated in table 5, most Governments in the region initially chose to establish environmental committees and councils instead of ministries. Environmental protection councils were often cross-sectoral and addressed issues ranging from water quality to the preservation of wildlife. However, these councils operated mostly at academic and technical levels and rarely at a political level. Moreover, Ministries of Health tended to be the dominant players in inter-ministerial councils and committees until the 1990s.

(b) Strengthening environmental agencies (1990s)

With the advent of the UNCED (1992), a significant restructuring of environmental governance took place in the Arab region. This emanated from the new conceptual framework that expanded the scope of environment management to encompass the environmental effects of development. As such, issues traditionally under the purview of line ministries in the areas of social and economic affairs began to fall within the mandate of environmental institutions. Inter-sectoral issues that caught the national attention include irrigation and water quantity, industry, municipalities and solid waste management, health and water quality, planning and zoning, environmental assessments, education and trade. This increased the scope of issues addressed by environmental agencies, expanded their responsibilities and administrative burdens, and led to overlaps in institutional jurisdictions.

The first response was to strengthen environmental institutions in the Arab region to enable them to handle their new responsibilities. During the early 1990s, the environmental institutional framework therefore changed in most Arab countries, with the exception of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic. As noted in table 5, stand-alone ministers, ministries or joint ministries responsible for the environment were established in the following: Algeria, Bahrain (1995), Egypt (1994), Jordan (2003), Lebanon (1993), Oman (1991), Palestine (1996), Qatar (1995), Sudan and Tunisia (1991). Additionally, new or restructured environmental agencies or authorities were established in Egypt (1994), Jordan (1995), Kuwait (1995), Palestine (1996) and United Arab Emirates (1993). Yemen established an environmental council in 1992 following the end of the civil war in that country. However, despite these transformations, the new environmental framework remained inadequate to address the expanded scope of environmental issues from a multi-sectoral perspective.

The second response was an attempt to encourage institutional coordination between line ministries and Government agencies. There was a general belief that the creation of an NCSD could facilitate the process, particularly following the five-year assessment of UNCED outcomes.

Establishing NCSDs (1990s)

In response to guidelines provided by CSD, most Arab countries established some form of national council for sustainable development to respond to UNCED reporting requirements or to prepare for WSSD.
Within that context, Lebanon created the Inter-Ministerial Council for Sustainable Development, and the Syrian Arab Republic established the Consultative Committee for Agenda 21. Similar councils exist in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen. These councils usually comprise representatives from various ministries responsible for the economy, the environment and foreign affairs, in addition to non-governmental experts. However, these institutions tend to be ad hoc in nature and are generally made operational only to respond to reporting needs or to prepare for international conferences.14

Given the existing function of NCSDs in the Arab region, these councils are not able or mandated to coordinate the integration or implementation of sustainable development policies, even in an advisory capacity. Environmental agencies and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the Arab region are largely responsible for the formulation of national sustainable development positions. While they often base their decisions on recommendations from reports on NCSDs prepared by experts, in their current capacity, these national councils cannot serve as permanent institutional inter-ministerial organs able to support public consultation or inter-sectoral policy coordination.

(c) Rethinking institutional arrangements (early 2000s)

Preparations for WSSD stimulated renewed thinking with regard to institutional frameworks for sustainable development. Some changes have occurred at a national level since 1997, particularly in the context of NCSDs, which have been reactivated from their dormant states. More specifically, changes have occurred in the following: (a) Egypt and Saudi Arabia have established environmental units in some line ministries to facilitate work with environmental agencies; (b) Jordan has established the Ministry of Environment; (c) Oman expanded the scope of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Environment to include the important issue of management of water resources; (d) political exigencies in Palestine have transformed the Ministry of Environment into an authority focused on environmental quality; and (e) Tunisia has created an integrated Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Water. The outcomes of WSSD are expected to further influence national environmental structures in the near future.

2. Changes in the institutional framework at a regional level

At a regional level, new institutions have emerged over the past three decades that reflect changes in the conceptual framework regarding environment and development. The 1960s and 1970s were characterised by the establishment of regional economic and social organizations, which reflected development thinking at the time (see box 2). Several regional environmental institutions and councils were created in the 1970s and 1980s, including CAMRE by the Arab League in 1987, which provided the first political forum for addressing environmental issues in the region.

During the 1990s, two bodies focusing on the environment and development were established, namely, the Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), which was created as a non-governmental think tank; and JCEDAR, which was established under the auspices of the Arab League as an inter-ministerial advisory committee to CAMRE with regional institutions serving as advisors, including ESCWA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). JCEDAR comprises the heads of the national environmental affairs agencies, NGOs, private sector bodies and regional organizations. Its secretariat consists of the Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) and the technical secretariat of CAMRE. However, the success of these institutions in advancing regional sustainable development has been limited given the difficulty of coordinating sustainable development efforts across sectors and ministries at a national level.

In December 2000, the decision by the United Nations General Assembly to launch a 10-year review of the progress achieved in implementing the outcomes of the Rio Earth Summit underlined the need for regional coordination among Arab member States. Within that context, a joint secretariat was formed in 2001 to coordinate regional preparations for WSSD. This joint secretariat successfully organized a number

14 UNCSD was established to assist countries with the process of identifying and formulating long-term sustainable development goals, strategies, networks and processes, and to provide a resource for NCSDs. However, achievements have unfortunately fallen short, leaving many countries to establish and empower NCSDs only to respond to reporting requirements for regional and global meetings.
of events at a regional level, including: (a) a thematic roundtable for eminent persons; (b) four regional forums for NGOs, industry representatives, members of Parliament and regional stakeholders, respectively; (c) a joint meeting of AMCEN and CAMRE; and (d) the Regional PrepCom for West Asia (Cairo, 24-25 October 2001). Additionally, and in the wake of the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, the joint secretariat and LAS have collaborated to establish a regional programme for sustainable development for the Arab region.

Box 2. Emergence of regional organizations supporting sustainable development

1. Selected regional, economic and social development institutions (1960s-1970s)

1970 Arab League Council of Arab Health Ministers
1972 Arab Planning Institute (API)
1973 Islamic Development Bank (IDB) (established 1973, opened 1975)
1974 Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) (established 1968, opened 1974)
1973 Economic Commission for Western Asia (dissolved in 1985 to become ESCWA)

2. Selected development of regional environmental institutions (1970s-1990s)

1971 Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)
1975 Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP)
1977 International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
1978 Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME)
1984 Bahrain Centre for Studies and Research
1985 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
1987 Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE)
1996 Middle East Desalination Research Center (MEDRC)
1996 Centre for the Affairs of Man and the Environment (CAME)
1996 Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA)

3. Gradual emergence of regional sustainable development institutions (1990s-2000s)

1992 Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) (Proposed for establishment by CAMRE in 1992, opened in 1993)
1993 Joint Committee for Environment and Development for the Arab Region (JCEDAR)
1996 United Nations University, International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU/INWEH)
2001 A joint secretariat to prepare for WSSD and follow up on the Arab Initiative (technical secretariat of CAMRE, UNEP/ROWA and ESCWA)

B. Commonalities in the institutional framework in the Arab region

Institutional frameworks for sustainable development in the Arab region have depended heavily upon the structure and strength of environmental institutions relative to traditional line ministries. While these are varied, a review of the commonalities of institutional structures in the Arab region provides the foundation from which recommendations can be offered to improve institutional frameworks for sustainable development.

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1. Environmental institutional models in selected Arab countries

Generally, there are six types of environment institutions that have existed over the past three decades in the Arab region. These are as follows:

(a) Autonomous Ministries of the Environment, which exist in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and which previously existed in Morocco. Ministries of the Environment are autonomous institutions in those countries with their own technical staff, budget allocation and the mandate to implement actions. While these Ministries are legally empowered with the status of other line ministries, in practice, they tend to be politically weaker compared to ministries of economic and social affairs;

(b) Joint ministries, which exist in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, and which previously existed in Bahrain. These provide ministers with joint responsibility over an environmental directorate and one or two related sectors as indicated in the following cases: in Bahrain, the aim of linking national and local environmental issues resulted in the combination of municipalities and environmental affairs under one ministry; in Oman, management of water resources was added to the ministerial set-up; in Tunisia, agriculture, water resources, and environment were combined into one ministry; and in Sudan and Yemen, tourism and the environment were initially combined in the same ministry;16

(c) Independent environmental authorities or commissions that are independent but linked to an environmental minister or to the Council of Ministers, which exist in Bahrain, Egypt and Palestine. In some cases, an independent environmental authority is headed by an inter-ministerial board of directors or council that can include academic experts and representatives from NGOs, which is the case in Egypt. The board of directors tends to be led by a minister from a line ministry exclusively or jointly responsible for environment matters. However, there are no legal ties between the minister and the environmental agency;

(d) Environmental directorates in line ministries, which exist in Saudi Arabia, and which previously existed in Qatar. Typically, an environmental directorate is an agency or department within a ministry. In Saudi Arabia, meteorological responsibilities of the environmental agency are under the purview of the Ministry of Defence and Aviation. In Qatar, during the 1990s, environmental matters fell under the mandate of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture until the establishment of an environmental council in 2000;

(e) Inter-ministerial environmental councils with environmental secretariats, which exist in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, and which previously existed in Yemen. These environmental councils are inter-ministerial bodies with technical secretariats that take action on specific decisions endorsed by the councils. In the United Arab Emirates, the Council of the Federal Environmental Agency is heavily dependent upon the support of the environmental agencies in that country to implement programmes;

(f) Inter-ministerial environmental council led by the deputy prime minister with environmental authority, which exists in Kuwait. This model gives the chairmanship of the environmental council to a high-level politician who promotes those environmental agendas that he or she supports. This gives the environmental authority some means to work outside inter-ministerial politics.

Existing models for strengthening governance for sustainable development

in the Arab region

Among Arab countries, the current models in Kuwait and Tunisia are quite promising in terms of strengthening governance for sustainable development. In Kuwait, the environmental council is headed by the deputy prime minister and comprises five ministers from line ministries directly concerned with environmental matters, several undersecretaries from other ministries and the executive director of the

16 Sudan has subsequently combined the environment with physical development; and in Yemen, a cabinet reshuffle in May 2003 resulted in a joint Ministry of Water Resources and Environment.
environmental authority. The council meets every six months to provide the environmental authority with a policy mandate. Moreover, each ministry represented on the council is responsible for an environment department to follow up on decisions taken within the council with the aim of supporting policy coordination and promoting complementarities between institutions.

This approach adopted in Kuwait takes into consideration several important factors that can strengthen environmental institutions, namely, political leverage, leadership and inter-ministerial coordination. However, given that the council is largely an advisory body, the environmental authority in Kuwait has limited ability to implement legislation. Furthermore, environmental enforcement remains weak and distributed among line ministries. Equally, power politics tend to emerge between the board members of the environmental council that undermine the effectiveness of the environmental authority.  

The experience of Tunisia with the National Commission for Sustainable Development (CNDD) offers perhaps a more important model for the wider Arab region (see box 3). Donors and international organizations alike have recognized achievements by Tunisia in terms of leadership and commitment in the areas of environmental and sustainable development policies. The World Bank praised the “strong institutional set up and legislative framework” represented by CNDD.  

The Commission is chaired by the Prime Minister of Tunisia and consists of a number of ministers concerned with sustainable development, including the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture, and Hydraulic Resources as Vice-Chairman, and representatives from Parliament and civil society institutions (see figure I). Crucially, Tunisia has recently accepted that sustainable development can only be effectively achieved through a participatory approach, and has moved to set up local committees on Agenda 21.

**Box 3. CNDD in Tunisia**

Tunisia established CNDD (*Commission Nationale de Développement Durable*) in the wake of the Rio Earth Summit with the principal objective of coordinating between various national development actors, with the aim of reconciling economic and social development with the preservation of natural resources. The Commission was established in October 1993, two years after the creation of the Ministry of Environment and Land Use Planning, which was subsequently replaced by the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, and Water Resources in September 2002.

CNDD aims at the following:

(a) Adopting and implementing a national strategy and plan of action for sustainable development;

(b) Integrating environmental issues into the sectoral strategies and development plans;

(c) Preserving the rights of future generations to a healthy environment;

(d) Ending ecologically unsustainable production and consumption patterns;

(e) Achieving self-sufficiency and food security;

(f) Guaranteeing the rational use of natural resources, particularly water resources;

(g) Proposing regulations to curb pollution;

(h) Reinforcing institutional structures and procedures to provide for the full integration of environmental and development issues at all levels of the decision-making process;

(i) Providing for the participation of local communities, communal groups and other local, regional and national organizations in the decision-making process;

(j) Developing an ecological accounting system based on new indicators of development;

(k) Engaging in key issues including combating desertification, developing new sources of renewable energy.

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17 This analysis is based on discussions with M. Homad, Project Officer at UNDP-Kuwait, held during the Workshop on UNDP/Capacity 21 National Assessments (Beirut, 19-21 September 2001).

conserving biodiversity and ecosystems, and transferring environmentally-sound technologies.

Box 3 (continued)

CNDD is composed of the following members (see figure I):

(a) Prime Minister of Tunisia (Chairman);
(b) Minister of the Environment, Agriculture, and Hydraulic Resources (Vice-Chairman);
(c) Other concerned ministers;
(d) Representatives from Parliament;
(e) Representatives from professional organizations and trade unions;
(f) Representatives from the National Women’s Union;
(g) Representatives from NGOs active in the areas of environment and development;
(h) National Environmental Protection Agency (Rapporteur).

CNDD is assisted by a Technical Committee for Sustainable Development, which is chaired by the Minister of Environment, Agriculture, and Hydraulic Resources and comprises officers in charge of environmental affairs within other concerned ministries and organizations. Representatives from academic institutions and NGOs serve as non-permanent members on this Committee. In effect, the Technical Committee has the same membership as CNDD, but on an expert level rather than a ministerial level.

A number of subsidiary bodies review specific development issues according to their respective expertise. At a sectoral level, these include committees to investigate such fields as agriculture and industry. Other bodies formed as national committees include the National Committee to Combat Desertification, and the National Committee on Biodiversity and Biosecurity. The work of these committees is subsequently examined by the Technical Committee, which can submit recommendations to CNDD for review and adoption. Within the framework of that process, CNDD adopted the following important plans:

(a) National Agenda 21 Plan (1995);
(b) National Action Plan to Combat Desertification (1998);
(c) National Action Plan for the Sustainable Management of Biodiversity (1998);
(d) Environmental and sustainable development indicators.

The Environment and Sustainable Development Observatory in Tunisia (OTED), which was established in 1994, monitors the implementation of the national and sectoral sustainable development objectives set forth by CNDD. However, given that Tunisia recognizes that sustainable development can only be effectively achieved through a participatory approach, it is now seeking to reinforce the institutions at a local level. With that stated aim, local committees on Agenda 21 are being established at various local and regional levels in Tunisia to oversee the effective implementation of such policies.

Source: Based on information obtained from The National Report on Tunisia’s Achievements in the Area of Sustainable Development and in Implementing Agenda 21 (Ministry of Environment and Land Use Planning, Tunisia, August 2001) and from the web site of CNDD, which is available at: http://www.environnement.nat.tn.

2. Common functions of environmental institutions

While the scope of issues included in the sustainable development paradigm has widened, the mandate of environmental institutions in the Arab region has generally remained constant. Typically, environmental institutions in Arab countries are responsible for the following: (a) planning and coordinating relevant policies; (b) formulating environmental regulations and standards; (c) assessing, monitoring and inspecting the environmental sector; (d) promoting multilateral agreements with regard to the environment; and (e) raising awareness and promoting education on environmental issues.

Moreover, given their principal objective of promoting sustainable development, environmental institutions in the Arab region are typically required to report their activities and adopt negotiation positions, usually in close collaboration with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. In addition, the Ministries of Planning
in some Arab countries can be involved in authorizing funding for specific activities in the area of sustainable development.
Figure I. Organizational chart of CNDD

Source: Based on information obtained from The National Report on Tunisia’s Achievements in the Area of Sustainable Development and in Implementing Agenda 21 (Ministry of Environment and Land Use Planning, Tunisia, August 2001) and from the web site of CNDD, which is available at: http://www.environnement nat.tn.
3. Common achievements of environmental institutions

Over the past decade, environmental institutions have been strengthened in most Arab countries, which has resulted in improvements in environmental management. Within that context, some achievements include: (a) enacting environmental decrees, regulations and standards; (b) improving the capacity to formulate environmental strategies and plans of action; (c) enhancing the technical capacity for data collection and monitoring through investments and training in the use of geographic information systems and other information tools; (d) improving awareness and education programmes with regard to the environment; and (e) providing a greater understanding of such global environmental issues as climate change and biodiversity.

Despite this progress, however, improvements have remained within the domain of environmental management, not sustainable development.

4. Common characteristics of governance systems

While they are varied in form, governance systems in most Arab countries have some common traits that need to be considered when formulating effective systems for sustainable development. Efforts to strengthen governance for sustainable development in the Arab region need to take into consideration these characteristics, rather than to seek to import models from other regions of the world that can be unsuited or inappropriate to national or regional settings. This can lead to the establishment of systems of governance for sustainable development in the Arab region that are at variance with those in other regions. However, this does not discount the validity of such home-grown systems if they prove effective in improving the processes of sustainable development. Commonalities between governance systems in Arab countries are investigated below.

(a) Strong national leadership

Governments in the Arab region are generally led by strong leaders who play vital roles in determining national policy directions and priorities. The region is characterized by kingdoms, sultanates, emirates and republics whose presidents are re-elected for several terms. This allows for general continuity in executive decision-making and for consistency of leadership. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to push forward and implement policies over the long term, provided that the executive head of State remains politically committed to those policies.

(b) Centralized governance and limited decentralization

Centralizing the decision-making process tends to be the norm in the Arab region. A federalist form of Government exists only in the United Arab Emirates where each Emirate has autonomy in most areas, except in matters of defence and foreign policy. In other Arab States, municipalities are generally managed through national governance structures, which is typically the Ministry of Interior or another ministry responsible for municipalities. Municipalities are rarely empowered to raise funds, and their budgets are nearly always allocated from the national purse. Fees or taxes collected by municipalities are usually transferred to the national budget and then reallocated to local governments.

A lack of decentralization limits the ability of local governments to formulate or implement local strategies based on Agenda 21 and related plans of action, and impedes their ability to apply economic instruments that influence local behaviour outside national policy frameworks. While some efforts at decentralized governance exist in the region, notably in Egypt, centralization remains a major obstacle to implementing local initiatives in sustainable development.

19 Lebanon is a notable exception.
Top-down political culture and limited public accountability

Heads of governmental institutions and agencies, including environmental agencies, tend to be appointed, not elected. This makes them accountable to heads of State, rather than to the public. This provokes a serious gap in communication between public stakeholders and heads of governmental institutions. Consequently, public participation and bottom-up consultative approaches to decision-making remain limited.

This top-down approach to environmental management and decision-making limits the responsiveness of environmental authorities to public concerns, particularly those that might run counter to Government interests. It must be recognized, however, that while this characteristic is not unique to the Arab region, it is amplified by the top-down political culture of most Arab countries, which minimizes opportunities for public accountability of actions by Governments.

Resistance to institutional change

While heads of Government can be amenable to appointing new ministers or creating new institutional frameworks, the ability of leaders to quickly impose such changes can be hindered by bureaucracies that are averse to risk and that fear openness and transparency of their operations. Accordingly, while heads of Government can favour novel approaches, public institutions are generally resistant to change and often find ways to maintain old administrative modalities despite restructuring directives.

C. CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

1. Structural challenges facing national environmental institutions

Regardless of the institutional framework for environmental management, there are common challenges facing environmental institutions in Arab countries. Most strikingly, all these institutions are politically weak. This can be attributed to the following:

(a) The comparatively recent establishment and restructuring of national environmental agencies in the Arab region. These were established less than thirty years ago, while ministries of economy, trade and natural resources were created upon independence. Furthermore, environmental institutions in many Arab member countries have been restructured and have taken on many forms, which has hindered their ability to become institutionalised and to develop strong networks;

(b) Power politics, which sideline environment agencies relative to ministries of economic and social affairs, including those responsible for such natural resources as oil, minerals, water and fisheries;

(c) Limited institutional mandate, which usually provides environmental institutions with meagre or no legislative, enforcement or licensing authority. Furthermore, some activities and sectors are outside the legal jurisdiction of environmental authorities, particularly large-scale development projects of political and economic significance, and oil companies in the Gulf region. Additionally, environmental institutions are, by definition, responsible for addressing environmental matters and do not have the unilateral mandate to address such cross-sectoral issues as poverty, trade, education and shared resources;

(d) Comparatively smaller roles as advisors or coordinators, which limits the ability of environmental agencies to enact and implement policies or programmes that are not palatable to politically more powerful agencies;

(e) Limited budgets, which constrain the ability of environmental authorities to implement programmes, monitor environmental compliance or develop technical capacity;

20 Most oil companies in the Gulf region have good environmental performance records and follow environmental compliance policies set by their mother corporations in Western countries. However, lack of governmental reporting mechanisms and oversight still place them above of the law.
(f) Limited capacity to generate income, which limits the influence of environmental agencies in the decision-making process, particularly relative to ministries of economic and trade affairs. This is amplified by the fact that these agencies are rarely empowered to collect licensing fees or apply other economic instruments that could contribute to national revenues or the institutional budgets;

(g) Overlapping institutional jurisdictions, which result in frictions between environmental agencies that have been established relatively recently and those pre-existing line ministries with more political clout, including ministries of agriculture, industry, municipalities and water. This has led to policy conflicts, programme duplication and inefficiency. These challenges are difficult to overcome in an institutional framework that lacks adequate mechanisms to facilitate policy integration, coordination and complementarities between institutional bodies seeking to achieve similar goals.

2. Limited effectiveness of NCSDs in the Arab region

In most Arab countries, NCSDs are often established or re-established on an ad hoc basis, including the specific task of reporting to secretariats of international conventions. These reports, which are produced by NCSDs or by institutions commissioned by the national councils, are usually written by consultants outside these organizations with limited substantive input from other institutions and public stakeholders. Consequently, the end result is generally a descriptive account of the prevailing state of affairs without reference to political strategies or goals that need the sanction of the Government. This situation therefore prevents NCSDs from serving as a mechanism for facilitating policy integration, and from coordinating complementarities among governmental institutions. Additionally, in their current form, national councils cannot adequately facilitate consultation with non-governmental stakeholders.

3. Inadequate regional framework for addressing sustainable development

JCEDAR has had limited success in advancing the sustainable development agenda in the Arab region. This is because, while JCEDAR is inter-ministerial in its official capacity, in practical terms, only officials from environmental ministries and authorities attend its proceedings. Furthermore, given that JCEDAR is an advisory committee to CAMRE, this reduces its ability to access or engage non-environmental ministers on matters of sustainable development. Accordingly, existing regional institutions serving Arab countries are inadequate to handle the task of supporting regional progress towards sustainable development from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

However, within the context of the Arab Initiative, LAS has taken an important step in addressing this institutional weakness by requesting regional assistance from the joint secretariat in establishing a regional programme for sustainable development. This is a promising development, and the Arab League must be encouraged to continue its support for and the effective implementation of such a mechanism.

D. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Governance for sustainable development cannot be the responsibility of a single environmental institution. Rather, it requires the engagement of a series of ministries, agencies, councils and committees whose responsibilities and areas of competence touch upon different aspects of environmental management and sustainable development. Public consultation is an important component of this process, which cannot be satisfied by national environmental authorities or NCSDs in their current form. An effective sustainable development institutional framework requires clarity, coordination, financing and oversight.

Given the common characteristics, challenges and constraints facing environmental institutions and institutions responsible for sustainable development issues, the region needs to aim at the following: (a) improving inter-ministerial coordination through an inter-ministerial body for sustainable development; (b) institutionalizing public consultation through permanent NCSDs; (c) strengthening national environmental institutions, thereby responding effectively to environmental management components of sustainable development; and (d) establishing a regional institution for addressing sustainable development issues at a regional level with an inter-sectoral mandate.
III. OPERATIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

While policy platforms and institutional frameworks support the foundation of an effective system of governance for sustainable development, the latter cannot be achieved in the absence of operational mechanisms that render the system functional. Consequently, with the aim of operationalizing governance for sustainable development, the following issues need to be taken into account: (a) planning mechanisms; (b) implementing instruments; (c) budgeting and finance; (d) monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement; and (e) public participation. The status and challenges facing these integral components of governance for sustainable development are addressed below. Means for improving these mechanisms are provided in chapter IV.

A. PLANNING MECHANISMS

Within the context of sustainable development, the main purpose of planning is to support policy integration and to guide effective policy implementation. To facilitate this planning mechanism, Agenda 21 calls on countries to prepare national sustainable development strategies “to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations”.21 However, while most Arab countries have begun or completed the task of developing a national environmental strategy (NES) or a national environmental action plan (NEAP), progress in formulating an umbrella, national sustainable development strategy (NSDS), remains limited. This is partly attributed to the perception that the preparation of NES and NEAP are a substitute for the wider NSDS and for the formulation of a national sustainable development action plan (NSDAP). This has resulted in national strategies and plans of action being focused on environmental management, rather than on sustainable development. Only a few Arab countries have therefore prepared NSDSs that are distinct from NESs or national platforms on Agenda 21, see table 6.

Given their sector-oriented focus on environmental issues, NSDSs and NESs have had limited success in supporting policy integration in the planning process of sustainable development. This is due to the observation that existing NSDSs and NESs in the region, and their respective NEAPs and NSDAPs whenever these exist, have been unable to foster effective policy dialogue and coordination across institutional lines, and have been incompatible with sectoral strategies.22 Other key obstacles include the following: (a) NSDSs and NESs are not sufficiently based on policy assessments or cost-benefit analyses; (b) they do not sufficiently prioritize between goals or formulate criteria for prioritizing goals; (c) these strategies inadequately assign institutional responsibility for implementation; (d) they lack synchronization of policy measures to be implemented by different institutions; and (e) NSDSs and NESs result in the formulation of wish lists that lack mechanisms for financing, coordination, implementation and oversight.

Furthermore, sustainable development and environmental strategies and plans of action in Arab countries outside the Gulf region tend to be financially supported by international development agencies. In some cases, NESs and NEAPs are prepared by foreign consultants. Accordingly, ownership by Governments and local stakeholders of the planning process remains limited. Moreover, strategies and plans of action are generally prepared in the political peripheries and have little leverage on national development plans and budgets. Sustainable development goals and activities therefore remain marginalized and unfunded, particularly if they conflict with national economic priorities, including oil revenues, or if they do not receive international donor assistance.

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21 See Agenda 21, chapter 8, paragraph 8.7.

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<td>Coastal Zone Assessment/Action Plan</td>
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<td>Oman</td>
<td>National Environmental Strategy</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<td>Palestine</td>
<td>Environmental Note</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<td>Country</td>
<td>NES or NSDS</td>
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<td>National Environmental Action Plan (EPC &amp; Ministry of Planning &amp; Development</td>
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<td>NEAP update (with UNDP support)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Compiled by ESCWA in consultation with member States in March 2002, and updated in 2003 where data were available.

*Notes:* The titles of the national strategies and action plans set forth in this table were not submitted for verification. These titles are reproduced in the form in which they were received. Two dots (...) indicate that data are not available or were not supplied by the respective State.
Government officials and stakeholders are often sceptical regarding the potentials and realities of implementing NEAPs, much less NSDSs and NESs.23 Failures in implementing sustainable development and environmental strategies are often attributed to a lack of political will on the part of governmental institutions and officials, in addition to challenges associated with achieving inter-sectoral coordination and consensus.

Implementing instruments of a legal nature include laws, decrees and regulations, which have increased in number over recent years. Regulatory, economic and voluntary instruments for policy implementation, however, have had relative success. Regulatory frameworks are constrained by limited technical capacity and financial resources to enforce environmental compliance. Moreover, most regulating standards and criteria were adopted from models provided by European countries and the World Health Organization (WHO), which has rendered many regulations unattainable or inapplicable to local circumstances. However, progress has been achieved on some fronts, particularly the preparation of environmental assessments prior to issuing permits.

The application of economic instruments remains limited and severely handicapped due to a number of factors, including the inadequacy of environmental monitoring systems, the lack of environmental health records, poor ecological and health risk assessment, and the lack of environmental accounting and valuation of natural resources.24 Moreover, health and ecological impacts of pollution are not properly assessed with regard to developing economic instruments that influence the behaviour of polluters and that generate funds to compensate for the incurred costs. Inadequate monitoring infrastructure and social and political constraints prevent the implementation of user fees or pollution taxes, including paying for waste water discharges, air emissions, solid waste disposal, or water use. Limited regional and international governance frameworks further prevent the implementation of effective management instruments for water resources.

Despite the existence of self-regulating arrangements, voluntary instruments are rarely used. These are largely present in such key economic sectors as oil and gas, industrial zones and some large-scale national development projects with significant socio-political ramifications, particularly public utilities and infrastructure projects. Some of these activities are legally exempted from complying with national environmental laws and standards, particularly requirements related to environmental impact assessment. Furthermore, some companies are not involved in the monitoring, oversight and enforcement competence of environmental institutions.

The principal problem with regard to self-regulating voluntary arrangements is that follow-up and reporting to Government regulators is rare, even when the standards established are higher than those set by national regulations. This causes problems when unintentional or unanticipated environmental impacts occur, including oil spills or leaks. Given that smaller-scale incidents tend to remain unreported, Government regulators tend to be unaware of the scale of environmental problems until it is too late. This can be problematic if numerous small oil spills occur over a short period of time, which, cumulatively, can amount to a large-scale spill.

Consequently, challenges to the effective implementation of policy instruments include the following: (a) inadequate use of policy analysis to determine the most effective instrument to adopt; (b) lack of selection criteria for identifying the best policy, including cost effectiveness, technical feasibility and political and cultural acceptability; (c) poor synchronization of policy measures; (d) limited technical, human and financial capacity; (e) legal exemption of some activities from environmental oversight; (f) inadequate monitoring of environmental conditions and pollution sources; (g) inability to enforce reporting and compliance requirements; and (h) lack of indicators to assess progress and effectiveness of policy measures.

23 See the mission report to the Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Housing, Municipalities and Environment in Bahrain, entitled “Project document: Preparation of National Environmental Strategy (NES) and National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) for the State of Bahrain”, p. 17.
to improve implementation of future policies. Equally, political constraints that hinder the removal of subsidies or the use of environmental taxes prevent the application of economic instruments.

C. BUDGETING AND FINANCE

Adequate budgeting and financing are necessary components of effective governance for sustainable development. However, most national ministries of planning and finance do not have systematic means to allocate, secure and monitor funding for sustainable development initiatives. While plans of action in the area of sustainable development need to play an important role in prioritizing activities for funding, the integration of these initiatives into national development plans and sector plans remains limited and therefore reduces their opportunities for funding from national budgets.

However, while national budgets need to contribute a significant portion to supporting sustainable development, regional and global donor institutions play an equally important role in providing funding for sustainable development. Within that context, bilateral donations from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have generously supported development initiatives in the Arab region, in addition to similar funding from such organizations as the Kuwait Fund for Development (KFD), AFESD and IDB. Development assistance from international donors is equally important for the region, particularly from the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, there is a lack of complementarities, coordination and synchronization of financial support. Consequently, in addition to securing necessary funding for sustainable development, recipient Governments need to catalogue and monitor the effectiveness of allocated funds.

Furthermore, there is a vital need to identify alternative funding sources and incorporate them into sustainable development strategies and plans of action as both instruments and funding mechanisms. Within that context, partnerships with civil society institutions and the private sector can be expanded, along with public-private partnerships and privatization initiatives, thereby generating additional Government revenues and rendering public activities more efficient and profitable. Decentralizing revenue collection schemes can be a way of supporting local initiatives in sustainable development.

D. MONITORING, REPORTING, ASSESSMENT AND ENFORCEMENT

Environmental compliance cannot be achieved without the support of an effective system for monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement. Monitoring involves the capacity of environmental institutions to collect environmental data and to inspect those facilities that are potential polluters. However, these mechanisms are significantly lacking in the Arab region, which has led to endemic failures to meet national environmental standards. This can be attributed to the following: (a) lack of political will; (b) limited legal and institutional mandates; (c) overlapping institutional jurisdictions; (d) limited technical and human capacity; and (e) lack of funding.

Existing command and control systems of enforcement are similarly ineffective in the region due to the following: (a) enacted environmental regulations are sometimes unenforceable given defects in their design or approach to implementation; (b) activities by some industries and individuals exceed the law; (c) implementing and enforcement agencies lack adequate technical, human and financial capacity to enforce regulations; and (d) some regulations do not differentiate between scales, which sometimes impose a greater regulatory burden on small polluters than on larger polluters. Moreover, resorting solely to command and control systems of enforcement does not ensure the implementation of sustainable development goals. There is an additional need to adopt “market based instruments and other policy and social initiatives”.

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Public participation was not highlighted in the Stockholm Declaration or emphasized formally by the international community during the 1970s. However, the concept quickly developed during the 1980s and 1990s and was highlighted in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. Indeed, public consultation and civil society institutions play key and effective roles in operationalizing governance for sustainable development. The Rio Declaration states that environmental issues are “best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level”. It is important to recognize this caveat since participatory arrangements must take into account the prevailing political culture if they are to be effective. In the Arab region, the prevailing culture, traditions and political norms, and the top-down approach to decision-making cannot easily tolerate public pressure, public accountability or participatory bottom-up approach to policy formulation. Additionally, some senior decision-makers have expressed concern that access to information and a vocal public expression can cause public panic and confusion or dissuade investment and tourism. There is further concern that local NGOs could seek to exert pressure by emulating those international environmental groups that adopt aggressive actions.

At a national level, the Rio Declaration states that “each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided”.

Indeed, sustainable development cannot be realized without public information and without appropriate valuations of human and environmental resources. This is due to rational actor principles, which form the basis of traditional economic development and growth models, and which assume that individuals seek to maximize individual benefits. This maximization calculus, however, can only support sustainable development if resources are appropriately priced. Given the difficulty of valuing all resources, public awareness and information allows rational actors to maximize individual benefits, but within the context of societal constraints. Unless the public has appropriate information and relevant laws that are enacted and at least socially enforced, the absence of such awareness can lead to public distress.

Civil society and public participation in decision-making are essential for strengthening governance for sustainable development in the Arab region. However, expanding the inclusiveness of governance mechanisms is a long-term process that requires the political will of leaders and their commitment to public empowerment. While most Arab countries have initiated this process, relevant institutions remain to be established. However, efforts to move towards sustainable development cannot be delayed as these institutions evolve. Political realism therefore dictates that systems must be put into place to initiate the process of integrating sustainable development goals into policy formulation and implementation according to current and effective systems of governance. This allows sustainable development initiatives to move forward, and can indirectly further the process of empowering the public without overtly threatening existing institutional power structures and practices.

In view of these concerns, appropriate mechanisms for public participation and consultation need to be adopted and institutionalized in the Arab region. While legal and institutional arrangements that take into consideration local circumstances and national governance arrangements are an important component, environmental education, awareness, training, information disclosure and information dissemination are equally needed to support these efforts. Challenges to operationalizing these mechanisms include the limited

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26 See Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration.
27 ESCWA, “Governance for sustainable development in the Arab region: institutions and instruments for moving beyond an environmental management culture”, which was presented at the Thematic Round Table for the Western Asia Region in Preparation for the “Rio + 10” World Summit on Sustainable Development (Beirut, 9-11 April 2001).
28 See Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration.
availability of Arabic language material on sustainable development, and Government policies and individual practices that withhold information from the public.

Despite all these challenges, environmental awareness has increased. Several ESCWA member countries have instituted national days for the environment to support environmental awareness, including the following: Environment Day in the United Arab Emirates, 4 February; Gulf Environment Day, 24 April; Arab Environment Day, 14 October; and World Environment Day, 5 June, which is recognized and celebrated by most countries in the region.\(^{29}\)

However, environmental education and training can be improved. Furthermore, mechanisms for information disclosure and dissemination require further strengthening. Such processes are important for the following reasons: (a) information disclosure allows public stakeholders to participate more effectively in the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes; (b) dissemination promotes understanding with regard to environmental threats and challenges; and (c) access to relevant information encourages public stakeholders to make more informed decisions concerning their consumption and production patterns, which can consequently increase demand for goods and services that are more environmentally friendly.

Crucially, the role of the Arab media in promoting sustainable development needs to be enhanced in the Arab region. In order to fulfil their considerable potential and to maximize their impact on sustainable development policy making, the Arab media could rally public participation in the decision-making process by forming stronger connections with other civil society sectors, including NGOs and academic and scientific institutions. Moreover, they could adopt proactive approaches by exposing environmental violations, by following up on enforcement of environmental laws, by ensuring the sustainability of development projects, and even by rating manufacturers and producers according to their environmental performance. The Arab media need to affirm the inter-connectedness of development, health, and environmental issues as a matter of everyday coverage, and not just in such emergency situations as reporting on environmental or ecological accidents. This results in a more informed public, which in turn can demand more sustainable policies from their respective Governments.\(^{30}\)

The Arab media have taken an important first step by recently establishing the Arab Media Forum for Environment and Development (AMFED). The main objective of AMFED is to educate and train Arab journalists with regard to issues of sustainable development and to empower them to be more effective in transmitting their message to the public. Towards this end, and in light of WSSD outcomes, ESCWA hosted a training workshop for AMFED members.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{29}\) The World Environment Day is scheduled to be hosted by Lebanon in 2003, which represents the first such hosting by an Arab country.

\(^{30}\) ESCWA, “Impact of the media on the formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies in the Arab region” (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2003/WG.2/14), which was presented at the Workshop for Strengthening the Role of Arab Media in Achieving Sustainable Development (Beirut, 25-27 February 2003).

\(^{31}\) The Workshop for Strengthening the Role of Arab Media in Achieving Sustainable Development (Beirut, 25-27 February 2003).
IV. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

With a view to assisting Arab countries in strengthening governance for sustainable development, ESCWA has developed a series of innovative, appropriate, comprehensive, gradual and culturally sensitive recommendations for consideration. Identifying appropriate systems based on shared values, beliefs and goals requires an appreciation for cultural values and traditions shared by Arab countries and a respect for cultural diversity.32

These recommendations build upon acquired regional experience and progress achieved in improving environmental management, and are based on the unique political, economic, social, institutional and cultural characteristics of the Arab region. Moreover, they take into consideration existing environmental arrangements in the region with the aim of minimizing the cost and time of transition. ESCWA hopes that these recommendations can stimulate constructive dialogue on means of improving governance for sustainable development in the Arab region. The recommendations focus on the following: (a) strengthening institutional arrangements; (b) improving operational mechanisms; and (c) adopting regional approaches to governance for sustainable development.

A. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Efforts to strengthen institutions and institutional arrangements in the area of governance for sustainable development in the Arab region need to aim at the following: (a) improving inter-ministerial coordination; (b) institutionalizing public consultation; (c) facilitating the processes of governance for sustainable development; and (d) strengthening key institutions. In order to achieve these objectives, four recommendations are proposed, namely, to create an HCSD; to establish a national council, or NCSD; to appoint a sustainable development advisor (SDA) to the Prime Minister of respective States; and to strengthen the NEA. Figure II illustrates the institutional linkages between the proposed institutions.

1. High council for sustainable development (HCSD)

In individual Arab countries, the Prime Minister in consultation with the Council of Ministers needs to establish a high council to serve as an inter-ministerial forum that coordinates Government policies and programmes on sustainable development. The Prime Minister can chair the council or otherwise designate a representative with the requisite authority to speak on his or her behalf. The composition of HCSD could be proposed by the Council of Ministers and be represented at the level of minister or director general. As a minimum requirement, HCSD needs to include the head of the national environmental authority and the ministers responsible for planning, economy, agriculture, industry, water, finance and foreign affairs. An advisor to the Prime Minister, typically the afore-mentioned SDA, could participate in the high council as a non-voting member and provide advice and substantive input as requested by members. Under the prevailing political conditions and in order to promote discussion on national priorities and confidential matters of State, non-governmental stakeholders cannot be members of HCSD.

The purpose of HCSD is to facilitate policy integration, programme coordination and public oversight of the national sustainable development process. Within that context, the high council identifies, approves and reviews national priorities and proposes a national platform on sustainable development. This platform can subsequently be stated as a national strategy, or NSDS, that forms the basis for sustainable development policy coordination over a fixed period of time. Moreover, by convening regularly, the high council can present, coordinate and update sector strategies, programmes of work and activities based on NSDS. During the interim period between the meetings of the high council, each member of HSDC can facilitate policy coordination and communication between ministries and governmental agencies by appointing a sustainable development focal point (SDFP).

32 Cultural diversity was identified as an important dimension of sustainable development in a report of a workshop co-chaired by the Presidents of the Brussels EU-Chapter of the Club of Rome and the “Factor 10 Institute” and entitled “Visions and roadmaps for sustainable development in a networked knowledge society” (February 2002).
Moreover, within that framework, HCSD becomes responsible for oversight of the national sustainable development process. This can take the form of a regular reporting mechanism that allows members of the council to identify complementarities and synchronize policies and programmes pursued by different institutions. Policy inconsistencies requiring consultation between agencies could be resolved through such mechanisms as bilateral ministerial task forces or inter-ministerial technical committees. Members of HCSD need to be kept informed of the outcomes of these consultations and encourage their conclusion in a timely manner. A review of the composition and function of HCSD is provided in box 4.

**Box 4. Composition and function of HCSD**

1. **Composition of HCSD**

   In individual Arab countries, the high council can be chaired by the Prime Minister and comprise ministers and heads of governmental agencies concerned with sustainable development. The membership of HCSD can therefore be country-specific and be determined by the Prime Minister based on recommendations provided by the Council of Ministers. As a minimum requirement, HCSD needs to include the head of the national environmental authority and the ministers responsible for planning, economy, agriculture, industry, water, finance and foreign affairs.

   Non-governmental stakeholders are not expected to be represented on HCSD in order to allow the Prime Minister and senior Government officials the liberty to engage in open discussions on issues that are deemed politically sensitive.

   The high council is different from the Council of Ministers due to the specialization of its mandate and the inclusion of heads of governmental institutions that are not ministries, including, inter alia, water authorities, environmental agencies and public utilities.

2. **Function of HCSD**

   The high council can provide a regular mechanism for consultation between governmental institutions engaged in sustainable development, with special emphasis on ensuring conformity with the national platform on sustainable development. HCSD can identify and review the top sustainable development priority areas for action and include them in a succinct national strategy, or NSDS, that can subsequently be used as the basis for coordinating sustainable development policies and programmes between governmental institutions. With the support of the Council of Ministers, NSDS could be incorporated into the national development plan.

   Moreover, the high council can provide a forum through which the Government and ministries coordinate national and sector strategies and plans of action, thereby ensuring integration of policies and complementarities of programming in support of sustainable development goals. This helps to avoid duplication and inefficiency. During the interim period between the meetings of HCSD, each member of the high council can facilitate policy coordination and communication between Government ministries and agencies by appointing a coordinator on issues of sustainable development, or SDFP.

   Within such a framework, members of HCSD are responsible for oversight of the sustainable development process through a reporting mechanism. This responsibility empowers the members to identify policies and programmes of counterpart institutions that conflict with sustainable development goals or that are not adequately coordinated with similar activities being conducted by other governmental agencies. Upon being notified of such conflicts, the Prime Minister or HCSD can collectively organize an ad hoc inter-ministerial task force to address the matter, or conduct consultations between the concerned ministries in order to resolve the conflict, thereby ensuring coordination and complementarity of activities.

   The high council cannot be responsible for the implementation or enforcement of policies or programmes. These executing activities need to remain under the competence of individual ministries and agencies represented on the Council of Ministers. However, decisions taken by HCSD, which result from consultation, coordination and oversight of activities performed by existing institutions, can be approved and decreed by the Prime Minister. The resulting NSDS needs to be reviewed and approved by members of Parliament.
Figure II. Organizational chart of HCSD and NCSD

Prime Minister

High Council for Sustainable Development (HCSD)
- Minister of Finance
- Minister of Planning
- Minister of Economy and Trade
- Minister of Energy/Oil
- Minister of Agriculture
- Minister of Industry
- Minister of Municipalities
- Minister of Labour
- Minister of Education
- Minister of Communications

National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD)
- Minister of Health
- Minister of Municipalities
- Minister of Industry
- Minister of Agriculture
- Minister of Communications

Board of directors of the national environmental agency (NEA)
- Director General of NEA
- Minister of Water Resources
- Minister of Energy/Oil
- Minister of Agriculture
- Minister of Industry
- Minister of Municipalities
- Director General of governmental agencies

Sustainable development advisor (SDA)
- Secretariat
- Board of directors
- Secretariat

Multi-sectoral NGOs
- Universities and academic experts
- Media outlets

Private industry associations
- Women's groups

Community-based organizations
- Religious organizations

Community-based organizations
- Cultural institutions

Universities and academic experts
- Women's groups

Private industry associations
- Media outlets

Community-based organizations
- Cultural institutions

Universities and academic experts
- Women's groups

Private industry associations
- Media outlets

Community-based organizations
- Cultural institutions
(a) Sustainable development focal points (SDFPs)

The national coordinator on issues of sustainable development is expected to be the Minister of the Environment or the Chairman of the Board of Directors of NEA. However, each minister and director general represented in the high council can appoint a focal point within his or her institution to follow up on decisions taken by HCSD. Additionally, these SDFPs can advise their respective institutions on means of integrating national sustainable development priorities into their respective sector strategies, plans of action and programmes of work. Given the importance of such a task in terms of policy planning, coordination and oversight, SDFPs are expected to include the chiefs of division within the respective institutions. However, when an institution has an established environment unit, this task could be housed through that unit as long as the focal point is given an expanded mandate to address issues of sustainable development, and not only environmental matters. Moreover, SDFPs from selected institutions could serve on the Board of Directors of NEA (see below).

2. National council for sustainable development (NCSD)

The high council proposed above is designed to facilitate coordination and policy integration between governmental institutions. However, under the current prevailing political conditions, HCSD cannot admit non-governmental stakeholders given the high level of representation of its membership. This ban is recommended partly to ensure frankness and confidentiality of discussion among Government officials. Moreover, in the Arab region, it is currently difficult both culturally and politically to give standing to non-governmental representatives on equal footing as the Prime Minister, ministers and director-generals in a regular forum. Placing ministers and non-governmental representatives on the same council could equally skew discussions in favour of issues that the Government views as least controversial. Consequently, a national council, or NCSD, can be established to provide non-governmental stakeholders with an alternative forum to discuss and deliberate issues of sustainable development.

This national council can serve as the non-governmental counterpart to HCSD, comprising heads of NGOs, community-based organizations, private sector business associations, women’s groups, organizations for youth and children, universities and academia, religious and cultural institutions, and media outlets. Moreover, NCSD can be structured as a non-governmental association with institutional members who elect a board of directors, and could serve as a forum for deliberating priorities of and approaches towards achieving sustainable development. Opinions, concerns and recommendations emanating from the national council can subsequently be prepared in a report and transmitted to the high council through the offices of an appointed advisor to the Prime Minister, the afore-mentioned SDA (see below). Additionally, NCSD could use its members, particularly the media, to inform the public concerning the outcomes of its deliberations and to serve as a watchdog on all relevant matters.

The office of the Prime Minister needs to initiate the process of establishing such a council by issuing a call for proposals inviting NGOs and private associations concerned with sustainable development to submit a plan for a national council that can represent the diverse and multi-sectoral interests of the country. The Government could subsequently adopt the most suitable plan, which needs to detail the funding and organizational requirements, and nominate the host organization, providing it with seed money to form the national council. Subsequent funding for NCSD activities, including the establishment of a secretariat responsible for facilitating communications, coordinating meetings and issuing press releases, can be provided by a reasonable, uniform fixed fee paid annually by members of NCSD. Additionally, the host organization needs to be empowered to solicit funding from national and regional donor organizations and foundations on behalf of NCSD and to support its operations.

33 This formulation of a national council differs significantly from the prototype suggested and adopted by several countries following UNCED, particularly OECD member countries, which seek to form a joint committee of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. This alternative is suggested because the prototype, while successfully adopted in Tunisia, has had limited appeal or success in countries of the ESCWA region.

34 The host organization could direct NCSD during the initial years of inception, after which another NGO or private association could serve as host.
During the initial phase, while the Government needs to facilitate the formation of NCSD, it is vital that this national council does not become a governmental institution, thereby ensuring its political and ideological independence. Furthermore, the host organization must take the lead in drafting a charter for establishing the national council that serves as the enabling document for securing the necessary approval from national authorities. Components of a sample charter of a national council are proposed in box 5.

### Box 5. Sample charter of NCSD

The charter of NCSD must abide by the national laws and regulations regarding the formation of social associations. Generally, the charter needs to include the following components:

1. **Name of organization, abbreviated name and address**

   National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) of _______ name of the member State, based temporarily in ________ name of the Host Organization.

2. **Function of organization**

   To provide a forum for discussion on issues of sustainable development among heads of non-governmental organizations with the following aims: (a) to identify national priorities and concerns in the area of sustainable development; (b) to identify opportunities and challenges facing sustainable development with regard to policy coordination and implementation; and (c) to formulate positions for submission and consideration by the High Council for Sustainable Development.

3. **Administrative structure of the organization, its board, membership and terms of appointment or election**

   The Host Organization has been designated by the Government of the member State to form an interim Board of Directors for the National Council for Sustainable Development and based on the terms of the proposal approved by the Government of the member State.

   The interim Board of Directors shall remain in place until a sufficiently large membership is formed and that is sufficiently representative to elect a regular Board of Directors for a five-year term.\(^5\) Subsequent elected Boards shall serve equivalent terms, on the proviso that the permitted number of consecutive terms by any organization on the Board has not been exceeded, as stipulated by this Charter.

   Members of the Board of Directors, who shall be recognized on documents issued by the Council during their term in office, shall not receive financial compensation. These Directors shall be nominated and selected from among heads of organizations that have standing before the Council. The Board of Directors must be representative of the major non-governmental stakeholder groups concerned with sustainable development, namely, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, women’s groups, youth and children’s organizations, private business and industry associations, universities and research institutions, religious and cultural institutions, and media outlets. Representation on the Board of Directors must be balanced and not favour one interest group over another.

   Members must be organizations or associations that have been registered with the appropriate authorities in the member State with established interest in sustainable development as determined by its charter, reports on its past activities or current plan of activities. While individuals cannot be members of the Council, these can participate in discussions and activities under the auspices of a member organization in which they are members.

4. **Methods and procedures of acquiring membership of the Council**

   The Board of Directors must approve all applications for membership of the Council.
Box 5 (continued)

Each member of the Council shall maintain its membership provided that it abides by the rules of the Charter, that there is no change to its own charter, that it remains active in the field of sustainable development, and that it regularly pays its membership dues.

5. Rights and responsibilities of members

Each member shall be responsible for paying a reasonable, uniform annual membership fee that contributes towards covering the expenses of the Council.

Each member shall be responsible for covering the cost of its own participation in meetings of the Council, unless the Council determines at a future time that a fund be established and allocated to support the incurred costs for such participation, including travel arrangements for members based in areas far from meeting sites.

Members in good standing shall have the right to nominate and vote for candidates to serve on the Board of Directors.

Members shall have the right to propose topics for inclusion in meeting agendas, submit prepared position papers and policy briefs on selected topics for discussion to meetings of the Council, receive timely advance notice of these meetings and attend all such meetings, with the exception of those meetings of the Board of Directors deemed to be closed sessions.

Members shall have the right to receive annual reports and financial statements issued by the Council.

6. Sources of existing and potential funding

Initial funds to establish the National Council for Sustainable Development shall be provided by the Government of the member State and shall be issued to the Host Organization with the objectives of forming the interim Board of Directors, of soliciting and processing applications for membership, and of conducting such activities as are deemed necessary to institute the Council.

The interim and subsequently regular Board of Directors shall be empowered to solicit external funding for activities on behalf of the Council and its members.

The Council shall collect uniform reasonable annual membership fees from all its members.

7. Terms by which the Charter can be amended

The terms of this Charter can be amended based on proposals endorsed by the Board of Directors and further approved by at least seventy-five per cent of members in good standing.

8. Terms by which the Council can be terminated

The Council shall be deemed terminated only with the consent of at least seventy-five per cent of members who have important status.

\(^a\) This is a suggested term in office.

The establishment of a national council for non-governmental stakeholders is a necessary component of a governance framework for sustainable development. While principally an advisory body, it represents an important forum where non-governmental stakeholders can coordinate their views on sustainable development and voice their concerns to policy-makers in the Government when policies are still in the drafting stage. Moreover, NCSD provides a lively forum for discussion among non-governmental stakeholders, given that the views and perspectives of its members are not necessarily similar. By regularly reporting to the high council on the outcomes of its deliberations, the national council could effectively
contribute to the decision-making for sustainable development. The communication channel to HCSD can be facilitated through the offices of an appointed advisor to the Prime Minister, the afore-mentioned SDA, who, in addition, could serve as a non-voting member of the board of directors of the national council, thereby providing technical guidance as requested.

Furthermore, the national council needs to be provided with means of contributing directly to environmental decision-making, thereby increasing the capacity of non-governmental stakeholders to influence the direction and implementation of environmental policies. Selected members of the national council could therefore be nominated to sit on a board of directors of NEA alongside the focal points from the high council (see this chapter, section 4).

By establishing a permanent non-governmental forum for sustainable development and providing representation to NGOs on the national environmental authority, NCSD provides an institutionalized mechanism for conducting public consultation and securing public participation in decision-making in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to the political culture of the region.

3. Sustainable development advisor (SDA)

Effective management of the process of governance for sustainable development requires a strong understanding of the relevant issues, close coordination between institutions and open communication between public and private stakeholders. Given the busy schedule of the head of Government, it is unlikely that the chairman of HCSD, namely, the Prime Minister, could allocate adequate time and resources to the high council. Consequently, this proposal recommends the appointment by the Prime Minister of an SDA who could be nominated by the high council and whose principal tasks consist of advising the Government on pressing matters and facilitating the process of governance for sustainable development. Moreover, this advisor along with a small supporting secretariat could be based in the office of the Prime Minister, thereby providing direct access to the head of Government and safeguarding against political influences. Furthermore, SDA could participate as a non-voting member in both the high and national councils in order to provide advisory support, as requested, on major concerns of national sustainable development. Within that framework, the advisor can serve as a conduit through which NCSD transmits its reports and opinions to the Prime Minister and HCSD.\(^{35}\)

This advisor needs to be a reputable national expert in environmental affairs and socio-economic development. Additionally, he or she could be assisted by a small secretariat within the office of the Prime Minister in terms of the following: coordinating meetings, preparing agendas, providing technical support, identifying and overseeing settlements of policy inconsistencies identified by members of the high council, facilitating training and communication between the focal points of HCSD, and assisting in the preparation of reports to international organizations. The proposed terms of reference for SDA and the secretariat are suggested in box 6.

The purpose of appointing such an advisor with a concomitant secretariat is not to create an executing agency for sustainable development. Indeed, the formulation, financing and implementation of sustainable development policies and programmes must be the strict responsibility of existing ministries and institutions. Rather, the duties of SDA need to alternate between advisor, coordinator and facilitator of the sustainable development process. The advisor must report to both HCSD and NCSD and support them in their deliberations, while being accountable to the Prime Minister.

This position of advisor therefore calls for complete independence from political interference, which constitutes the main challenge in the Arab region. Clearly, this challenge necessitates an open process whereby independent monitors can be authorized to assess the objectivity of SDA. On the other hand, countries that fear an advisor could enjoy too much authority under the proposed structure can consider an alternative model, as detailed in figure III.

\(^{35}\) However, the advisor is not empowered to alter or veto the opinions of the national council in any way.
Box 6. Terms of reference for SDA

1. Qualifications

The Sustainable Development Advisor (SDA) must be a well-respected national expert who has a strong understanding of the national socio-economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The candidate must be a highly effective manager and skilled negotiator who can solicit compromise between senior policy-makers of various disciplines from potentially different points on the political spectrum. Candidates need to be knowledgeable of the system of governance and political culture that characterize the country and must have 20-25 years of experience in at least three of the following fields: environment, social affairs, economic development and law.

2. Responsibilities

The Advisor is expected to serve as the national coordinator for the Prime Minister on matters related to sustainable development and the governance process. Performing his or her duties from the Office of the Prime Minister, the candidate will oversee and be assisted by a small secretariat of approximately five members of staff who will be organized according to specific needs. The principal responsibilities of the Advisor include the following:

(a) Prepare agendas and background material for meetings of the High Council for Sustainable Development (HCSD) and assist the Prime Minister to chair these meetings;

(b) Review national development plans and sector strategies and solicit input from members of the High Council to identify potential inconsistencies with the national sustainable development platform, thereby highlighting and recommending possible areas for improving coordination between national institutions;

(c) Prepare and transmit reports outlining the agendas and outcomes of meetings of the High Council and of the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD);

(d) Receive the reports of the National Council and relay their concerns and opinions to the Prime Minister and to the High Council;

(e) Advise both Councils on specific issues requested by their members, including multinational environmental agreements and other international agreements that relate to sustainable development;

(f) Organize training for sustainable development focal points (SDFPs) in member institutions of the High Council with the aims of informing them on issues of sustainable development and of supporting them in their role in the process;

(g) Facilitate information sharing, policy integration and programme coordination between governmental institutions;

(h) Identify targets and indicators for assessing progress in improving governance for sustainable development;

(i) Prepare and present an annual report assessing progress in improving governance for sustainable development that highlights successful cases and outcomes of policy integration, in addition to identifying institutions and areas where policy integration and coordination require further improvement;

(j) Facilitate the preparation and coordination of reports to international organizations on sustainable development.

Under such a model, while the role of SDA is still important, it is comparatively diminished. Rather than serve as a crucial link between non-governmental stakeholders on NSCD and the official stakeholders on HCSD, the advisor remains an independent advisor to the Prime Minister. Consequently, while still working from the office of the Prime Minister and with the task of facilitating the process of governance for sustainable development, the altered role of SDA consists mainly of protecting the Prime Minister from political influences.
In the Arab region, NEA, whether a ministry, council, committee or authority, has traditionally and understandably played an important role in supporting the sustainable development process. However, the mandate and capacity of most NEAs in Arab countries have not kept up with the expanded scope of sustainable development platforms. Moreover, while these agencies have integral roles in the sustainable development process in the region, NEAs cannot and must not work towards planning and achieving sustainable development on their own.

Furthermore, by definition, NEAs cannot manage a task that runs outside of their institutional jurisdiction. At a national level, HCSD is best placed to serve the role of facilitating intra-governmental communication and coordination on sustainable development matters, while SDA ensures regular consultation with non-governmental stakeholders on inter-disciplinary matters. However, the head of NEA can continue to play an important role in sustainable development decision-making as an equal member of the high council, and can serve as the national focal point or coordinator for sustainable development, thereby representing the country at regional and global forums.

A board of directors of NEA needs to be established, where such a board does not already exist in member States, which further strengthens inter-ministerial coordination and non-governmental consultation for sustainable development. This board could be responsible for coordinating environmental policies, programmes and standards that concern more than one governmental institution, thereby ensuring consistency, complementarity and synchronization of activities. Under this proposal, members of the board comprise the director general of NEA, SDFPs from at least six governmental institutions that are represented on and selected by HCSD, and at least four non-governmental representatives nominated by the NCSD.

By convening on a biannual basis, the board of directors can provide continuous guidance and firm direction to NEA. This needs to include but not be limited to the following: (a) overseeing the completion or updating of the national strategy and plan of action for the environment, or NES and NEAP, thereby ensuring consistency with the overall national strategy, or NSDS; (b) organizing ad hoc technical working groups; (c) approving environmental standards; (d) approving draft decrees and draft legislation requiring executive or parliamentary approval; and (e) approving work plans, budgets and financial statements of NEA prior to submission to the competent authorities.

(a) **Ad hoc technical working groups**

Under this proposal, the board of directors of NEA has the authority to establish ad hoc technical working groups that address specific technical matters requiring inter-ministerial coordination. For instance, a working group could be formed to review air quality standards and their enforcement through such mechanisms as environmental reporting systems, inspections and pollution taxes, and which could require consultation and coordination between NEA and the ministries of industry, economy, finance, interior and municipalities. Equally, an environmental assessment for a large-scale development project could require the formation of an ad hoc technical working group. It is important to note, however, that while members of the board of directors of NEA comprise SDFPs and non-governmental stakeholders, these technical working groups are expected to consist of specialists and Government experts who can propose technical standards and draft legal documents for submission, review and approval by the board.

5. **Alternative models for institutional framework for sustainable development in the Arab region**

The institutional framework for sustainable development presented in this study is a practical model for Arab countries that makes use of existing national institutions, political realities and current cultural

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36 A review needs to be conducted in those member States where such boards already exist in order to assess their current composition, structure and function, and to establish their adequacy in supporting sustainable development policy integration with respect to the programme of work of respective NEAs.
context whereby NGOs are rarely granted full partnership status with high-ranking members of the cabinet. It is therefore not intended as an ideal, permanent structure, but rather a transitional framework whereby non-governmental stakeholders play an important, albeit indirect role.

Within that context, the ultimate goal of sustainable development is indeed the full, direct participation of the public in the sustainable development process. Consequently, it is useful to consider an alternative model for those Arab countries that are anxious to press ahead with a full participatory approach to governance for sustainable development. Essentially, this alternative model merges the functions of HCSD and NCSD into one body, thereby allowing direct participation by civil society into the decision-making process at a national level (see figure III). Under this alternative model, the role of non-governmental representatives is integral to the governance process and their number can be reduced to include representatives from the following fields: NGOs, the private sector, academic institutions, community-based organizations and possibly one other non-governmental representative. Moreover, the national council remains as an independent forum for non-governmental stakeholders to meet, exchange information, select their representatives for the high council, and disseminate information to the public.

In a third model, the appointed advisor to the Prime Minister, the afore-mentioned SDA, is replaced by a small steering committee composed of selected members of both the HCSD and NCSD. While the function of such a committee remains intrinsically the same as that of SDA, this model encapsulates two key advantages, namely, it limits the authority and power of a single advisor whose independence could be called into question; and it enhances the direct participation of civil society in the sustainable development process.37

B. OPERATIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. Identifying goals and articulating the national platform on sustainable development

Sustainable development is common terminology for a universal goal that needs elaboration and specification at a national level. The process of identifying a national platform on sustainable development that articulates national goals is a complex process that requires consultation and deliberation among stakeholders. While some countries in the Arab region have prepared national platforms on Agenda 21, these platforms need to be more clearly defined. The establishment of HCSD and NCSD could greatly facilitate and contribute to the preparation or clarification of a national platform that consequently serves as the basis for planning exercises aimed at improving policy integration and implementation.

2. Prioritizing and planning policies

The adoption of a national platform on sustainable development is the first step towards preparing a national strategy and plan of action on sustainable development, or NSDS and NSDAP, respectively. While NSDS must clearly outline national priorities, NSDAP needs to outline implementing mechanisms, including institutional responsibilities, targets, triggers and indicators for assessing progress in achieving those national priorities. The prioritizing process can be conducted in tandem with the preparation of the national platform on sustainable development, or subsequent to its adoption. Moreover, while final approval of NSDS and NSDAP rests with the Prime Minister and, typically, the national Parliament, the high and national councils can serve as effective forums for deliberating and identifying national priorities and for implementing relevant mechanisms. The national priorities and implementing mechanisms need to be reviewed every five to ten years. Additionally, prioritizing programmes and projects requires a realistic timeline for achieving goals in certain sectors. Box 7 provides further recommendations on means of improving the formulation process of NSDS and NSDAP.

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37 This model was suggested at a Governance for Sustainable Development side event held in ESCWA in June 2003.
Figure III. Proposed institutional framework of governance for sustainable development (alternative model)

Prime Minister

High Council for Sustainable Development (HCSD)

Secretariat

Sustainable development advisor (SDA)

Board of directors of the national environmental agency (NEA)

Director general of NEA

Minister of Economy and Trade

Minister of Planning

Minister of Finance

Minister of Water Resources

Minister of Energy and Oil

Minister of Agriculture

Minister of Municipalities

Minister of Industry

Minister of Public Health

Director General of governmental agencies

Minister of Labour

Minister of Education

Minister of Communications

NGOs

Private industry associations

Academic institutions

Community-based Organizations

National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD)
Box 7. Recommendations for formulating an effective NSDS and NSDAP

The following components are needed for formulating an effective NSDS and NSDAP:

(a) Base efforts on a clear and succinct national platform on sustainable development that identifies national goals;
(b) Differentiate between short-term and long-term goals;
(c) Prioritize goals;
(d) Identify relevant actors, including ministries, agencies, NGOs and private enterprises with competence in those areas, and allocate responsibilities between institutions;
(e) Incorporate national and sector-based targets and triggers on sustainable development that need to be achieved within a specified period;
(f) Include indicators for evaluating progress towards meeting national goals;
(g) Develop policy integration guidelines on sustainable development to facilitate the implementation process.

3. Policy integration and implementation

The national platform, strategy and plan of action on sustainable development are the framework documents that institutions need to consult when preparing sector-based strategies and programmes of work for funding and implementation. Within the framework of the model proposed in this study, the high council discusses, initiates and coordinates sector-specific strategies during its meetings, while the sustainable development advisor, focal points and ad hoc technical working groups of NEA follow up on those high-level discussions to facilitate policy integration. The sound formulation of policies and programmes for implementation must rely heavily on policy analysis and technical assessments. Moreover, economic and voluntary instruments need to be adopted and incorporated into plans of action. Outcomes of operational discussions can, consequently, be approved between the parties or reviewed during the next meeting or a special session of HCSD.

Additionally, the high council needs to facilitate policy integration with regard to the negotiation and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other international agreements relevant to sustainable development. Within that context, HCSD could advise the board of directors of NEA to form an ad hoc technical working group that addresses a certain set of MEAs, in addition to including specialists and technical experts from relevant member institutions on the high council.

Policy integration can be supported by preparing the following: (a) integration guidelines to assist ministries with the process of integrating socio-economic and environmental considerations into their policy decisions and programmes; (b) indicators for assessing progress in implementing sustainable development goals, thereby improving policy integration in follow-up activities; and (c) strategic impact assessments, which identify social, economic and environmental impacts associated with certain policy measures with the aim of strengthening proposed policies.

Furthermore, in addition to adopting economic and voluntary instruments, policy analysis needs to be explicitly supported. Arab countries can pursue voluntary arrangements through the use of guidelines and standards of good practice that can be developed in cooperation with members of NCSD, namely, the non-governmental stakeholders, thereby encouraging environmentally friendly practices. Such guidance, which could be based on success stories and past experience, could recommend the adoption of sound technologies, business procedures and processes. Additionally, guidelines can be developed to promote environmentally friendly practices among people and local communities, particularly in such areas as conservation of energy, recycling programmes and changes in consumption patterns. These initiatives need to be linked to public education and training programmes that are sponsored by ministries in coordination with international donors and NGOs with the aim of increasing awareness and engaging the public in the goals of sustainable development.
4. Budgets and financial strategies

Since most Arab countries maintain central finance institutions, a national strategy and plan of action on sustainable development, or NSDS and NSDAP, which have been prioritized and approved by the Prime Minister, could facilitate the process of approving institutional budgets and funding for sustainable development programmes. However, additional and alternative financial arrangements need to be considered in order to augment national budget allocations, including decentralizing revenue generation, partnership arrangements, privatization and the use of economic instruments.

(a) Decentralizing revenue generation

Decentralizing revenue generation can provide a major opportunity. Municipalities could be empowered to raise funds independently for local initiatives on sustainable development, including local initiatives on Agenda 21. These efforts could be supported by a national database that tracks progress in implementing NSDAPs. Additionally, municipalities need to be empowered to raise funds from environmental taxes or pollution charges that are reinvested into the community for local environmental improvements. This provides local communities with more ownership over the sustainable development process, particularly if municipalities can showcase benefits linked to improved environmental practices by local businesses, utilities and individuals.

(b) Partnership arrangements

Partnerships can be forged with NGOs, local stakeholders, development funds, international organizations and the private sector to secure additional sources of funding from international organizations that complement national initiatives. Indeed, partnerships with the private sector and NGOs could be supported as a means of securing complementary funding for public sector programmes. Given that NGOs can often access funds directly available to Governments, coordination between Governments and NGOs can be a means of increasing financial resources for mutually supported initiatives.

(c) Privatization and using economic instruments

In addition to encouraging environmental compliance, additional funds can be secured in the following ways:

(i) By providing access to new areas of investment;

(ii) By supporting privatization efforts, which, while largely successful in various countries of the region, need to be further elaborated and improved, particularly in terms of regulations that correct the public-private imbalances in the areas of risk-sharing, liability and performance standards;

(iii) By introducing and subsequently expanding such economic instruments as tradable permits and rights, which have not been introduced to the region mainly due to the lack of property rights and the inadequacy of systems needed for the elimination of obstructions to trading permits.

5. Monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement

Given limited resources available for oversight of the sustainable development process in most Arab countries, monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement need to be approached through regulatory and voluntary means. Recommendations for improving monitoring and compliance include the following: (a) instituting mandatory and voluntary environmental reporting systems; (b) enacting public right-to-know and access to information; (c) empowering monitoring and enforcement authorities to collect fines or issue criminal citations to those charged with non-compliance; (d) providing adequate training in monitoring methods and ethics on governance; (e) increasing the technical capacity and accreditation of monitoring authorities through such mechanisms as, inter alia, certified laboratories and proper sampling procedures; and (f) establishing effective mechanisms to resolve disputes.
Moreover, most Arab countries need to establish a database of national activities with regard to the priority areas on sustainable development.\(^3\) Institutional oversight of policy and programme implementation can take place through self-monitoring and reporting before the high council and based on targets, triggers and indicators outlined in NSDAP. Additionally, the national council and SDA can identify instances where policy integration and implementation need to be improved in relevant reports to HCSD. Any such improvements or gaps identified by the high council can subsequently be resolved by focal points in each ministry and by ad hoc technical working groups.

(a) **Inter-ministerial oversight**

Within the framework of HCSD, ministries need to be empowered with the role of a watchdog over the actions of other ministries that affect their areas of competence. Alternatively, a public-private NCSD can become a forum through which non-governmental stakeholders present and are presented with cases of non-compliance or non-integration with regard to sustainable development goals. Ultimately, it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister, either directly or through the appointed advisor, SDA, to resolve difficulties in achieving compliance and policy integration and to determine whether these constitute outright acts of non-compliance, dissent or negligence.

Within a multilateral context, sustainable development goals can be clustered, particularly to respond to such pressures that arise from international reporting requirements. Since responsibility for these multinational agreements can be carried out by different departments and ministries, a committee of the high council and sub-committees for each thematic cluster of agreements can be formed to facilitate coordination, communication, monitoring and reporting on responsibilities towards various multilateral agreements that affect progress towards sustainable development.

Furthermore, there is a need to address procedural, substantive and ethical issues by establishing mechanisms to settle disputes and institutions that have competence before local communities, NGOs, stakeholders and other governmental agencies and businesses.

6. **Public participation**

In addition to the creation of NSDC aimed at institutionalizing public consultation, public participation requires supporting measures to be effective. This involves increasing the following:

(a) Environmental awareness, which can be achieved by informing the public of the national platform on sustainable development and sustainable development linkages as they apply to their local community and everyday needs, including water, energy, health and employment; by placing greater emphasis on the role and responsibility of individuals, communities and the private sector in supporting progress towards sustainable development; and by promoting the role of the media in covering environmental issues;

(b) Environmental education, which can be fostered by integrating the environmental priorities into school curricula;\(^3\) and by pursuing research and development and training in environmental sciences and environmental economics at a university level;

(c) Access to environmental information, which can be enhanced by increasing the type of information released that, within this context, could involve legislation to promote community right-to-know; by expanding the ways in which information is released, including press releases, media outlets and the Internet; and by encouraging officials to abide by directives issued by the Government with regard to disclosing and disseminating information.

\(^3\) This database needs to detail both planned and current priority areas.

\(^3\) While relevant lessons and past experience can be taken from international NGOs and more developed countries, these need to be adapted to local environmental circumstances and priorities.
Public participation can only be effective if Governments make a proactive choice regarding the disclosure of information. While, in the short term, right-to-know legislation could be too aggressive to propose in the region, Governments need to provide communities with information regarding potential risks associated with current or planned activities. Information on planned activities could be shared through processes that assess environmental impact. However, it is equally necessary to update communities regularly regarding potential threats to their health and safety posed by existing activities being conducted by public or private sector operators. Additionally, Governments could regularly report on national expenditures per institution, thereby removing the blanket of secrecy that usually exists and encouraging sound spending practices. This can have the added benefit of increasing public confidence in the Government in such instances where spending is reasonable and success stories are identified.

There are a number of instruments available to Governments for disseminating environmental information to governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including, inter alia, press releases to media outlets, and public announcements at cultural or religious community centres. Within the context of the former, a first step is to ensure that each governmental agency has a public affairs office that can issue press releases, respond to requests for information and distribute declassified documents. Larger ministries can maintain a library that is accessible to the public, as is often the case in Ministries of the Environment throughout the Arab region. At a national level, selected university libraries could equally be used as documentation depositories to keep copies of past studies and statements issued and released for distribution by specific ministries. This can help communities living outside the capital gain easier access to information and allows studies to build upon one another, rather than duplicate each other. Moreover, up-to-date national registries of laws, regulations and standards must be available nationwide and be easily accessible to both the local population and to foreign donors and investors.

Internet-based media in the Arab region, including Web pages of ministries and public institutions, have become an increasingly useful and accessible tool for securing information. However, the content of such web pages need to be improved in order to provide more substantive and timely information on monitoring and reporting activities, and to disseminate current and planned programs of work. Moreover, promoting easy access to information can help Governments respond to international pressures that call for greater transparency in decision-making and better governance.

Finally, public officials need to be encouraged to comply with policies on information disclosure, particularly if officials feel that such disclosures can reduce their influence or expose deficiencies. Within that context, ministries and their officials could be rewarded on the basis of their outputs and on their ability to provide annual reports on the number of outputs completed. Consequently, at the end of every year, specific outputs could be released for public review based on executive decisions.

C. REGIONAL APPROACHES TO GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Preparations for UNCED (1972) and WSSD (2002) generated a process by which regional platforms on sustainable development and assessments of progress were prepared and supported by Arab countries. However, the articulation of a regional platform of priorities and actions for sustainable development requires the establishment of a plan, institutional mechanisms and means of coordination at a regional level.

1. Regional sustainable development action plan

The Arab Initiative identifies issues of utmost concern for the region, as endorsed by Arab countries. However, this Initiative is embodied in a declaration, which therefore necessitates the preparation of a strategy and plan of action to make it effective. Consequently, member States need to work together in order to prioritize regional goals on sustainable development and identify implementing mechanisms for achieving those goals.

2. Regional institutional framework

Until recently, regional institutions that could adequately address sustainable development from a regional and inter-sectoral perspective did not exist in the Arab region. Within the Arab League, CAMRE
and JCEDAR have sought to provide forums for discussion on sustainable development. However, as described in this study, the focus of their mandates on environmental affairs and the limits of their membership have prevented them from acting as inter-sectoral authorities and as effective institutional mechanisms for deliberating and issuing regional policies on sustainable development.

However, during its meeting in Cairo in October 2002, the joint secretariat reached an important agreement that aimed at establishing a regional institutional framework that could modify existing regional institutions, thereby making effective use of them. There was a general consensus that a crucial prerequisite for an effective regional mechanism was the creation of some form of national council for sustainable development in member countries. Moreover, following the establishment of such councils, each NEA could appoint a national sustainable development coordinator, typically the head of NEA, whose new function could be separate from his or her role as the representative of the environmental agency. These national coordinators could subsequently meet through existing regional forums for the following dual purposes: (a) to address environmental issues as a component of sustainable development; and (b) to coordinate regional sustainable development activities, appropriately balancing social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

The regional implementation of the Arab Initiative could necessitate the creation of working groups that address each priority area using an integrated cross-cutting approach. The option of renaming their forum or any additions of new functions are to be left to the current regional forum to decide.

Member States need to move to implement the above proposal by the joint secretariat for a regional mechanism, but only once national sustainable development institutions have been created. A regional mechanism can only be effective if it is rooted in national institutions.

3. **Interregional coordination in the wake of WSSD**

The eleventh session of CSD (New York, 28 April – 9 May 2003), which was the first global meeting devoted to issues of sustainable development following WSSD, was attended almost exclusively by environmental representatives from across the world. The high-level participants supported increased attention to the regional level and the involvement of regional organizations in the work of CSD. Specifically, there was a general consensus that regional implementation meetings needed to be convened on an annual basis in order to build partnerships and to “promote a fruitful exchange of experiences and to catalyze actions that will advance implementation of sustainable development” 40. The outcome of these regional meetings could subsequently be presented and discussed at a global implementation forum where interregional experiences could be exchanged.

As the United Nations Regional Commission for Western Asia, ESCWA has been handed the responsibility of hosting such meetings in collaboration with its regional partners and the joint secretariat. 41 It is therefore all the more important for the mandate of JCEDAR to be expanded in order to meet this new challenge.

The success of such regional forums are dependent on the commitment of Arab countries to root sustainable development in national institutions, which in turn must support local communities to develop in a sustainable manner. Such local and national institutions are the beginning of a chain of cooperation that extends to regional and global levels.

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41 Within that context and in preparation for the twelfth session of CSD, the first Regional Implementation Meeting is set to convene at the next meeting of JCEDAR (Cairo, 19-21 October 2003).
V. CONCLUSIONS

Despite a significant increase in environmental commitment by Arab countries over the past three decades, particularly since the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, the national and regional institutions established to manage the sustainable development process remain inadequate.

Several efforts were made to change the institutional framework for sustainable development in the Arab region, whose environmental and sustainable development institutions face common characteristics, challenges, and constraints. At a national level, environmental institutions in Arab countries have been considerably strengthened since the Earth Summit, while a number of Arab countries have set up NCSDs. However, for the most part, these environmental institutions are politically and structurally weak and cannot adequately address the expanded scope of environmental issues from a multi-sectoral perspective. Moreover, these national councils tend to be ad hoc in nature and are generally unable to coordinate the integration of sustainable development policies effectively even among non-governmental stakeholders.

At a regional level, the establishment of CAMRE in 1987 by the Arab League was a watershed for the Arab region in that CAMRE provided the first political forum to address environmental matters regionally. The subsequent establishment of ICEDAR and CEDARE to focus on the linkages between environment and development from, respectively, the governmental and non-governmental perspectives were equally significant regional milestones. However, the success of these institutions in advancing sustainable development regionally remains limited due to the difficulty in coordinating sustainable development policies across sectors and ministries at a national level. In other words, regional coordination is set to remain weak without effective national institutions and a coordinator capable of competently representing all the national stakeholders in sustainable development.

The main challenge ahead for Arab countries lies in finding appropriate mechanisms that, while culturally and politically sensitive to the region, can move beyond the current environment management culture towards a governance system for sustainable development. This involves shifting from a sector-based approach to a system that is highly integrated, multi-sectoral, process-oriented and participatory. Governance for sustainable development cannot be the responsibility of a single environmental institution. Rather, it requires the engagement of a series of ministries, agencies, councils and committees, in addition to an effective public consultation mechanism that involves the diverse components of civil society in Arab countries.

This study proposes a series of recommendations for strengthening governance for sustainable development in the Arab region at both national and regional levels.

At a national level, efforts to strengthen institutions and institutional arrangements for governance for sustainable development in Arab countries must seek to improve inter-ministerial coordination, institutionalize public consultation, facilitate the governance processes for sustainable development, and strengthen key institutions. These objectives can be achieved through the following:

(a) The creation of a high council for sustainable development that is chaired by the Prime Minister and that serves as an inter-ministerial forum to coordinate Government policies and programmes on sustainable development. Its main task involves the drafting of a national sustainable development strategy that is based on priorities discussed and approved by HCSD, and that subsequently forms the basis for coordinating policies on sustainable development over a fixed period of time;

(b) The establishment of a national council for sustainable development that serves as a permanent non-governmental counterpart to the high council in order to institutionalize a mechanism for conducting public consultation and securing public participation in the decision-making process. While it is mainly an advisory body, NCSD can be a forum for deliberating national priorities and approaches towards achieving sustainable development and a means for non-governmental stakeholders to coordinate their views and voice their concerns to government policy makers;
(c) The appointment of a sustainable development advisor to the Prime Minister who is a reputable national expert in environmental affairs and socio-economic development and sits as an independent, non-voting member of both HCSD and NCSD. Based in the office of the Prime Minister, where he or she manages a small secretariat, SDA serves as an advisor to both councils and to the Prime Minister;

(d) The strengthening of the national environmental agency, whereby the head of NEA continues to play an important role in sustainable development decision-making both as an equal member of HCSD and as the designated national focal point or coordinator for sustainable development representing the country at regional and global forums.

These proposals are presented as a practical model for Arab countries that can readily make use of existing national institutions, political realities and current cultural context, particularly given that non-governmental stakeholders are rarely granted full partnership status with high-ranking members of the cabinet. Consequently, an alternative model merges the functions of HCSD and NCSD into one body for those Arab countries that are anxious to press ahead with a full participatory approach to governance for sustainable development, thereby allowing direct participation by civil society into the decision-making process at a national level.

The key to achieving effective governance lies in operationalizing sustainable development at a national level. Within that context, Arab countries must focus on the following: (a) identifying specific goals and articulating national platforms on sustainable development; (b) prioritizing, integrating and implementing policies on sustainable development; (c) planning financial and budget strategies; (d) establishing monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement mechanisms; and (e) ensuring public participation.

At a regional level and in light of the discussions by JCEDAR, the designated national sustainable development coordinators, typically the heads of NEA, can meet through the existing regional forum to address environmental issues as one component of sustainable development, and to coordinate regional sustainable development activities. However, such a regional governance mechanism can only be effective once national mechanisms are put in place.

It is hoped that this study can provide a blueprint for discussion that allows Arab countries to manage effectively sustainable development in all its complexities at both national and regional levels. Ultimately, sustainable development is a process and a goal. It provides Arab Governments and citizens with a continuously shifting target that requires priorities, plans and policies to be adopted. Establishing a system of governance for sustainable development is crucial to managing this process in the Arab region.
يشكل مما يلزم على البيئة انتقال وفلسفة توصية الثانية بهندسة وسلامة واتخاذية واتخاذية الإدارة ووحدة العربية.

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التعرف على النص:

التعرف على النص:

التعريف في العملية الصناعية الحالية، وأزمنة في التشريعي، والتعليم، والصحة، كليًا في التغييرات، وتطوير، وتشكيل، وإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج الطبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج الطبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج طبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج طبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج طبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج طبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج طبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة، والتعليم، والإدارة، والمجالات، حيث يشمل، إلى النسيج طبيعي، وتطور، بالمشاركة، والإدارة،
ليس من الراجح أن تلتزم بالآلاس، لأن ذلك قد يكون مثيراً للشك، ويتطلب القليل من الإبهام.

بخصوص القانون، إذاً، فقد يكون من الراجح أن تلتزم بالآلاس، لأن ذلك قد يكون مثيراً للشك، ويتطلب القليل من الإبهام.

من الراجح أن تلتزم بالآلاس، لأن ذلك قد يكون مثيراً للشك، ويتطلب القليل من الإبهام.
تأثر في كُلِّها بِصفرة نفثًا بالنار وَلَكِ. لَأَنَّ كُلِّينَا، كُلُّ نَاسٍ وَكُلُّ قَارِنٍ، نُذْهَبُ نَحْنُوُا لِغَيْرِ نَفْثِيَّةٍ وَحِرْقِيَّةٍ، الَّذِينَ يَحْبُسُونَ نَفْثًا بِنَفْثٍ وَفُضْلًا، فَلَنْ نَقْلَ نَفْثًا وَفُضْلًا. لَكِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ يَحْبُسُ نَفْثًا بِنَفْثٍ وَفُضْلًا، فَلَنْ نَقْلَ نَفْثًا وَفُضْلًا.

كَيْفَ بُعِدَتْ النَّاسُ وَالْأَرْضُ، وَهَلْ يَقُولُ نَفْثًا وَفُضْلًا؟ لَكِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ يَحْبُسُ نَفْثًا بِنَفْثٍ وَفُضْلًا، فَلَنْ نَقْلَ نَفْثًا وَفُضْلًا.

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نكهة التدابير كافة كافية لوفقية التشريعات التي تتمتع بها المو fas x

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لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي بشكل صحيح. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة في شيء ما، فلا تتردد في طرحه.

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 материалов: 59

( HGSD) دفتر الدائرة العامة

(NDPS) دفتر إدارة الأحوال العامة

 arabic
للمؤسسات التشريعيّة والتنفيذية، فإن هذا القرار هو مثير للإهتمام. وهو يأتي في إطار الاعتراف بالمشاريع التنموية المستدامة ومناقشة الأشكال المختلفة للمشاريع التنموية في الأنظمة الحكومية. 

وبالعودة إلى الواقع العملي، يعود النهج التشريعي والتنفيذ في المشاريع التنموية المستدامة، حيث يتضمن ذلك مشاريع التدريب الشاملة والتشريعيّة، والتي تساهم في تحسين الأداء العام للدول وال颂ات لتحقيق التنمية المستدامة. 

من ناحية أخرى، يدعم القرار الاعتراف بالمشاريع التنموية المستدامة في إطار الأنظمة الشاملة والتشريعيّة، والتي يجب أن تتضمن الأشكال المختلفة للمشاريع التنموية في الأنظمة الحكومية والتشريعيّة. 

وبالنظر إلى الواقع العملي، يتعين على الأنظمة الحكومية والتشريعيّة أن تتضمن الأشكال المختلفة للمشاريع التنموية في إطار الأنظمة التشريعيّة والتنفيذية، والتي يمكن أن تؤدي إلى تحقيق التنمية المستدامة في الدول وال颂ات. 

وتبعاً لذلك، يمكن أن تتصدر الأنظمة التشريعيّة وتنفيذية المشاريع التنموية المستدامة في إطار الأنظمة التشريعيّة والتنفيذية، والتي يمكن أن تؤدي إلى تحقيق التنمية المستدامة في الدول وال颂ات. 

وبالنظر إلى الواقع العملي، يتعين على الأنظمة التشريعيّة وتنفيذية المشاريع التنموية المستدامة في إطار الأنظمة التشريعيّة والتنفيذية، والتي يمكن أن تؤدي إلى تحقيق التنمية المستدامة في الدول وال颂ات.
الحدود والملاحظات للمؤسسات للتنمية البيئية

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المنطقة للمنطقة الإقليمية المستدامة،

الอำนาจية الفعالة للمسؤولين البيئية المستدامة؛

العربية عمل و التنمية جيدة 2002 أكتوبر 

تتولى الإدارة والطريقة المستدامة سياستى

 Gundja tóm Júxiydý ykJóyniráyí LinkedIn– útil

تعد يز أوئزف إوسأ سأول جزء كروف - تدارية التصميم المستدام

تعد يز أوئزف الإدارية أو الإبلالة إليه أوئزف أو أباد أي أباد

كازاخستان 1988 من التعليم المستدام والاقتصاد

كازاخستان أو الإبلالة إليه أوئزف أو أباد

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