Session Brief
Session 5: Arab Regional and National Initiatives for Sustainable Development

Date/Time: Thursday 30th May, 11:15 – 13:00
Venue: Main Conference Room, Dubai Policy Academy
Moderator: Dr Mostafa Madbouly Nassar, Director, Regional Office for Arab States, UNHABITAT
Panellists: • Mr Mohammed Maktit, Head of the Planning and Forecasting Division at the Department of Environment, Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and Environment, Morocco
• Ms Nuha Ma’aytah, General Federation of Jordanian Women
Expert Presenters: 1. “Update of the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region”
   Professor Ibrahim Abdel Gelil, Professor, Academic Chair, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayen, College of Graduate Studies, Arabian Gulf University
2. “Arab country presentations on national initiatives for sustainable development and post-Rio+20 implementation”
   - “National Roadmap for Green Growth”
   Engineer Aisha Abdoli, Ministry of Environment & Water, United Arab Emirates
ESCWA Coordinator: Mr Cameron Allen (allen6@un.org)

OBJECTIVES:
The objectives of this session are to:
- Discuss the experience with the current SDIAR, including its successes, shortcomings and gaps;
- Identify the best way forward for updating the SDIAR so that it provides an enhanced mechanism for accelerating the implementation of sustainable development in the region, focusing on key regional priorities as well as outcomes from Rio+20;
- Showcase some leading national case studies on the implementation of sustainable development in the post-Rio+20 context and discuss how these might be scaled up in the region.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. What were the key successes and failures of the SDIAR? Did it provide an effective mechanism for implementing sustainable development in the Arab region?
2. How should the SDIAR be updated or replaced to address any shortcomings and accelerate implementation and integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions?
3. What key regional priorities need to be reflected in the updated SDIAR, including those stemming from Rio+20? How should the SDGs and green economy be addressed?
4. What national sustainable development and green economy success stories are there from the region? How can these national initiatives be scaled up through regional initiatives and mechanisms such as an updated SDIAR?
5. What is the role of national governments, regional and international organizations in developing and implementing an Action Plan for the SDIAR?
6. What additional technical and financial resources are needed to implement the SDIAR at the regional level?
7. How can the implementation of the SDIAR be monitored in line with SDGs? Should a regional monitoring framework and consistent set of indicators be developed? What institutions should be responsible for monitoring and follow up?
BACKGROUND FOR SESSION:

The Arab Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and The Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region (SDIAR), presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, have provided the regional framework for coordinated action on sustainable development over the last decade. Focused activities have since been implemented through an Action Plan on promoting peace and security, strengthening the institutional framework, supporting poverty alleviation and addressing other regional priorities related to population and health; education, awareness, scientific research and technology transfer; natural resources management; sustainable production and consumption patterns; as well as globalization, trade and investment.

Three progress reports have been prepared to date on the SDIAR. The latest report was prepared in October 2011 at the request of CAMRE and as an input to the regional preparatory process for Rio+20. There is now a need to update the SDIAR to reflect the changes to the global framework and priorities for sustainable development as agreed at Rio+20. In this context, work has commenced on reviewing and updating the SDIAR to address key ongoing and emerging economic, social and environmental challenges and opportunities for the Arab region, including food, energy and water security, climate change, peace and security, unemployment, poverty eradication and other issues. Any updated or revised SDIAR will also need to take into account the emerging global SDGs and how they might best be adopted, implemented and measured in the Arab region.

A second background paper prepared for the Arab RIM also included recommendations regarding the SDIAR, including that it should be updated or replaced with a regional strategy or framework that addresses key ongoing and emerging challenges for sustainable development as well as priorities stemming from Rio+20. This should be based on a limited number of key priorities for sustainable development in the region, and supported by specific programs or activities on the ground with clear responsibilities, timeframes, indicators and funding to facilitate implementation and follow-up (e.g. an action plan).

Rio+20 agreed to a new framework and tools for sustainable development that can be adapted to regional and national circumstances and should be incorporated into any new initiative: for example, the development of the SDGs can provide the overall direction and framework for measuring progress, the green economy provides the policy tools necessary to transform our economies, while revitalised institutions can provide the structure and frameworks to facilitate and accelerate implementation. Means of implementation such as financing, technology and capacity building will be the cross-cutting enablers to deliver these various outcomes. Negotiation on the global SDGs are still ongoing, however it will be up to countries in the region to define meaningful targets, indicators and policy responses to implement and measure progress against the goals.

In preparation for the Arab RIM, a draft framework for an updated SDIAR has been prepared. The paper proposes that the updated SDIAR focus on a short-list of priority issues for the region:

- Peace and security
- The water-energy-food nexus – water security; energy security; agriculture, rural livelihoods and food security
- Climate change
- Green economy

At the national level, several countries in the Arab region have also shown significant leadership in developing national responses and implementation arrangements for Rio+20 commitments. These leading examples can provide insights and lessons for other countries in the region. Presentations will be made by Tunisia and the UAE on their national initiatives.
FURTHER READING – BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Arab RIM background paper on regional and national institutions for sustainable development in the Arab region (Mr George Akl);
- Arab RIM background paper on a draft proposal to update the SDIAR (Professor Abdel Gelil).

BIONOTES:

**Dr. Mostafa Madbouly** is the Regional Director for UNHABITAT Regional Office for the Arab States. Dr Madbouly is an Urban Planner and Architect by profession with extensive experience of 25 years in the field, including 15 years with international organizations and partners. Dr. Madbouly is a Professor and holds a Ph.D. in Urban Planning from Cairo University and Post Graduate Diploma in Urban Management from Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies “IHS” Rotterdam. Prior to his current position, he was the Chairman of General Organization of Physical Planning, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development in Egypt for more than 4 years. He has contributed to developing the new national urban strategies in Egypt and shifting the planning paradigm from the traditional physical planning approach to strategic urban planning which focuses on sustainable integrated development with strong participation from involved stakeholders. Dr. Madbouly’s experience has also been built through work as an international and local consultant with the World Bank, UNDP, UNHABITAT, ILO and Cities Alliance.

**Ms Nuha Ma’aytah** is President of the General Federation of Jordanian Women. For the past 25 years Nuha has served in many women NGOs. She was elected for president of General Federation for Jordanian Women four times and has established the “University for Women Organization”. She was also elected internally as a member of Parliament in 2003. In addition to her current position she works with government entities, private sector, civil society and international organizations as a consultant, advocate and mentor in the areas of women leadership, knowledge transfer on the laws that are related to women matters and gender equality. She also conducts successful trainings in women issues in the Jordanian governorates. Ms Nuha has extensive experience in gender equality within the Jordanian society and is a supporter for the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As a renowned woman activist, Ms Nuha was selected in many reputable national and political subcommittees to represent Jordanian women, including the Royal Commission on the national agenda, Interfaith Coexistence Center, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Mu’taa University of Jordan, the Board of Trustees of the National Centre for Human Rights, the National Council for Family Affairs, the Jordanian Society for anti-smoking, the Jordanian Society for Environment, and the Jordanian Association for Family Planning and Protection.

**Mr Mohammed Maktit** is the Head of the Planning and Forecasting Division at the Department of Environment, Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and Environment, Morocco. Recent projects include the follow-up on the completion of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, follow-up on the National Report on Sustainable Development: Achievements and Prospects from Rio to Rio+20 (which was submitted on the sidelines of Rio+20), completion and tracking of several environmental studies including the national plan to combat climate change, and the development of several environmental programs including national programs on waste and wastewater treatment. Mr Maktit holds a degree in physical sciences from the Faculty of Science in Agadir, and a post-graduate diploma from the Faculty of Sciences in Rabat.
**Prof. Ibrahim Abdel Gelil** is currently the professor of the academic chair of Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan, Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain. He was the CEO (1997-2002) of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), and the chairman (1994-1997) of the Egyptian Organization for Energy Planning (OEP). He was in the forefront of Egypt’s energy and environment policy for more than 10 years. In addition, he was a board member of many Egyptian national Committees, including the World Energy Council, the National Specialized Councils, the National Council of Natural Resources and Environment, the Egyptian Academy for Science and Technology. He provides consultancy services to national, regional and international organizations in the fields of energy, environment, and development. He has published intensively in the same fields.

**Ms Monia Braham Youssfi** is the Director of Economic-Environmental Analysis and Studies, and Planning in the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Tunisia. She is a Public Services Advisor (graduate of Tunis ENA), and holds two masters in law. She entered the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and represented Tunisia in bilateral negotiations (2000-2003). In 2003, she joined the Cabinet of the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources to ensure the implementation of the project “The Africa Stockpiles Program (ASP) on obsoletes pesticides elimination” funded by GEF-FFEM and managed by the World Bank. In 2006, Ms Youssfi was appointed Deputy Director in the Directorate General of Sustainable Development for Planetary Issues at the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. She was the negotiator of Tunisia for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio +20 and is preparing the national roadmap for the follow up to the conference. Moreover, she is responsible for launching the National Green Economy Study, and monitors two national programs: the Program for the Modernization of Information Systems and Statistics on Sustainable Development, and the National Program on Sustainable Finance.