

Statement/ recommendations of the West Asia Regional Consultation Meeting of Major Groups and Stakeholders in Preparation for the 12th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) and 26th Session of the Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-26/GMEF)

30 November- 1 December 2010, Beirut, Lebanon

We, the participants in the Regional Consultative Meeting of the Civil Society Organizations of West Asia, organized by UNEP- ROWA and held in Lebanon-Beirut between 30 November and 1 December 2010,

Recognizing the need for us to contribute effectively in the global environmental decision making process, and our role in preparing for the Twelfth Session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-12) and the 26th session of Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum, which will be held from 19 to 24 February 2011,

Realizing the deterioration in the global environmental systems,

Abiding by the international environmental laws, principles, mandates and conventions,

Agreed on the following statement/ recommendations:

First: International Environment Governance (IEG)

Through our support for the collective efforts being made by various bodies, within the framework of the UN reform, we reiterate our support for the United Nations system and its various agencies and stress the need to enhance its credibility and empowerment to carry out its tasks in a transparent manner and in line with the international law.

We specifically affirm our support for the efforts made with respect of the International Environmental Governance (IEG) in which the Region's Civil Society Organizations played a visible role in the different deliberations and consultation meetings on IEG, the latest being the MGS Consultation Meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 25 October 2010, which confirmed the five options and their detailed amendments as a foundation for the desired reform in the International Environmental Governance. These options are as follows:

1. Creating a strong, credible and accessible science base and policy interface.
2. Developing a global authoritative and responsive voice for environmental sustainability

3. Achieving effectiveness, efficiency and coherence within the United Nations System
4. Securing sufficient, predictable and coherent funding.
5. Ensuring a responsive and cohesive approach to meeting country needs

In addition to the two options which were adopted during the said consultative meeting, namely:

1. Ensuring transparency, meaningful opportunity for public participation and accountability at all levels of environmental governance (local, regional and global) in reforming the governance system through:
 - Finding innovative ways to respond to countries with low I/EG capacity;
 - Providing enhanced IEG training, through training, awareness and education;
 - Setting standards for transparency and dissemination of transparency best practices;
 - Developing standards of public participation and dissemination of public participation best practices; and
 - Ensuring systematic processes to monitor the above practices and outcomes (transparency, public participation and accountability) within an overall institutional framework that is fully in harmony and embodies the principles of the ratified and adopted international conventions, treaties and agreements, namely the Human Rights Charter, International Environment Law and the Women and child Rights conventions, among others.
2. Achieving comprehensiveness to ensure that all significant environmental threats are appropriately addressed, through mechanisms that ensure the following:
 - Continually evaluate the state of the environment and technological developments in order to identify current problems and emerging threats;
 - Respond at the appropriate global, regional, bilateral, national or local level or levels to environmental threats in a coordinated and precautionary manner, including addressing underlying causes of environmental degradation; and
 - Identify capacity building and technical assistance needs

We also emphasize the need to strengthen the science base and policy interface through supporting the developing countries' capacity building and scientific research to ensure their effective participation and solid evidence based interventions.

At the level of reform approach, we recommend, through proper and well-mediated planning, considering concurrently both incremental and fundamental reform options.

Second: Green Economy (GE)

We stress that the green economy concept represents a package of scientific tools and patterns of behavior to be followed when engaging in any economic activity in order to improve the efficiency of natural resources utilization, reduce energy consumption and protect the different environmental resources aiming at meeting the objectives of sustainable development.

We reiterate our support for the efforts made by the UN and its agencies, specifically UNEP, in adopting and disseminating the green economy concept worldwide in line with the Rio 1992 Summit and the resolutions related to climate change in collaboration with government entities, civil society organizations and the Regional Office for Western Asia (UNEP ROWA), provided that the Green Economy should include the following general principles and goals:

1. Ensuring social justice, promoting human values and providing the basic needs for human welfare and poverty elimination through the minimizing the gap between the poor and the rich and creating job opportunities based on knowledge and skills.
2. Promoting the optimum and efficient use of natural resources and waste minimization in its different forms in order to ensure the sustainability of resources for future generations.
3. Halting all forms of activities and practices that lead to the destruction of the various environment resources and stop everything that aggravate the of greenhouse effect and climate change impacts in order to ensure and sustain safe habitat on mother earth

In line with these objectives, we stress the need for the green economy concept to spring from a vision that takes into consideration the specifics of local communities (particularly in developing countries) through defining their economic development priorities and implementation means, ensuring their green economy, meeting their needs, creating new green jobs to ultimately ensure just distribution of the development outcomes, reduce poverty and increase social welfare.

Within the strategies to shift towards Green Economy, We emphasize the following development priorities:

1. Renewable energy: urge states and empower them technologically to use the solar, wind and wave energy among other available clean energy resources.
2. Green building: urge states and promote the application of the green building tools and techniques in their private and public buildings through developing and adopting environmental specifications and standards (such as the use of environmental-friendly materials and efficient techniques for energy and water use and exploitation)
3. Clean means of transport: urge states to provide reliable public transport infrastructure and operations; promote the use of environmental-friendly means through extending incentives for individual to shift to hybrid and electric cars.
4. Water management: urge governments to develop integrated water resource management strategies, and specifically improving the efficient utilization of both conventional non-conventional water resources to the largest extent possible through recycling and reuse of treated effluent of all degrees, as per appropriate specifications, in different sectors such as agriculture and industry.
5. Waste management: urge governments to adopt the integrated waste management approach aiming at reducing waste generation at source, through rationalization of consumption patterns, adopting of the green production inputs and concepts, using high quality commodities, reducing the use of packaging materials; segregating and reclaiming urban waste; ending with safe disposal of toxic waste.
6. Land resource management: urge governments to employ and use integrated regional planning basics for use of land and conserving biodiversity habitats, establishing genetic banks, promoting organic agriculture, reducing the use of agricultural chemicals to safeguard human health and the quality of environment.

We affirm the need to mobilize the efforts of governments, civil society organizations and UNEP and all stakeholders to achieve the following results:

1. Calling on governments to develop Green Economy regulations and legislations, updating and/or enforcing existing ones.
2. Urging governments to provide investment facilities for development projects which adopt the green economy guidelines.
3. Urging governments to support civil society organizations and use transparency in the relationship with them to empower them to play the supportive positive role in achieving the shift towards green economy.

4. Promoting public awareness of green economy concept and tools, and incorporating them into school curricula and educational systems of all levels.
5. Establishing and empowering regulatory entities, both scientifically and technologically, to enable them to evaluate and monitor environmental violations or any act that would prevent the achievement of the values and objectives of green economy.

We finally stress the need for United Nations Environment Program to further support the Regional Office of West Asia (ROWA) to reinforce co-operation among civil society and stakeholders organizations and the governments in disseminating the Green Economy concept and culture, building and establishing an information network for the exchange of good practice among the Region's states.