

## **West Asia Regional Major Groups and Stakeholders Messages to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eleventh special session**

### **Management of Chemical Substances:**

- All West Asia CSOs to coordinate with each other in an active effective role in order to raise awareness on hazardous chemical substances and emphasize on relevant government agencies to strengthen the means and mechanisms for monitoring, storage and disposal of chemical waste with regard to relevant conventions and international treaties.
- West Asia region environmental CSOs call on governments to put out all necessary efforts in building national capacities to enable them to use all various means to detect harmful chemicals composing manufactured and imported products; appeal to regional governments to activate the system rules and regulations for the strategic prudential management, compliance with the system, assure appropriate ways and mechanisms for monitoring verification and compliance with rules.
- West Asia CSOs call on UNEP to duplicate interest and contribute to regional capacity building to enable them to participate in activating treaties regarding prohibited hazardous chemical substances and means of detection, and defining legal rights of the affected countries.

### **The Green Economy:**

Environmental CSOs of the West Asia Region, assure their concern on what came in the United Nations third millennium statement and the Johannesburg's statement of which calls to reduce poverty rates, mortality rates of infants at birth and before their fifth year caused by low levels of health care and high rates of poverty and malnutrition and lack of access to safe drinking water, healthy housing, and sanitary sewer, and going with the advantages of this data, the CSOs are calling for the following:

- Enable CSOs to strengthen their efforts to contribute in shifting towards a green economy and green constructions, and to facilitate private investment in renewable energy projects and to commit to the sustainable use of natural materials and use of environmentally friendly construction materials.
- Demand from regional governments to work on increasing attention to these guidelines (the green economy) of what benefits it has to the environment, human and sustainability of resources, in addition to what will be taken out from lowering consumer spending over medium and long-terms.
- CSOs in the region support the Arab Council of Ministers responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) resolution at its twenty-first session, regarding the New Green Global Initiative launched by UNEP, and calls for deep cooperation with CSOs to translate those resolutions into action plans, appropriate national mechanisms and work programs.
- CSOs demand from relevant official bodies in their countries to enact legislation for healthy housing standards and work to ensure such healthy and environmentally safe standards, and consider indoor air quality (IAQ) one of the basic criteria of green buildings.
- Invite governments to promote green economy, increase concern over sustainable procurement (staying away from unsustainable consumption patterns) as long-term investments, develop required skills and capacity building, especially for future generations by adopting all possible means with an emphasis on including such knowledge in curricula of various grades to ensure proper guidance of youth and giving focus on environment-friendly industries such as reusing and recycling of materials.

### **Biodiversity:**

CSOs in the West Asia region note a wide range of problems and challenges that face biodiversity in arid environments (deserts) and forest areas rich in ecosystems, in addition to negative effects of external coercive factors such as war, international and national conflicts, and other forms of unguided development which puts those ecosystems to forms of exploitation and depletion of wildlife aquatic resources including marine environments, therefore:

- CSOs call upon all official bodies and civil society sectors to work on limiting loss and decline of biodiversity of freshwater ecosystems in the Arab region as a result of urbanization of coastal parts and fertile agricultural regions and forested areas, as it emphasizes the importance of preserving sensitive desert and "Badeia" ecosystems.

- CSOs for environment recommend that regional countries establish gene banks and germplasms to ensure conservation of biological diversity and give necessary attention to biodiversity in arid and semi-arid regions by establishing representative reserves for various natural environments.
- CSOs for environment look into the seriousness of groundwater salinization as a result of sea-water intrusion due to attrition of water, and call the competent official bodies to take adequate actions to reduce and stop such problems.

**Other urgent issues:**

- Precautions on dangerous waste materials resulting from wars in the region, including nuclear waste and calls on governmental intervention to prevent and mitigate risks and ensure that they are not placed in rivers, bays and seas and to address and solve out its serious impact upon the environment.
- CSOs call their governments to reconsider using the additive MTBE substances in motor fuel because of its adverse effects on health, water resources, soil and air.
- Supporting the use of renewable energy except that it should not be at the expense of food availability, staple food of the poor and environment sustainability.