



Stakeholder Consultative Dialogue on the establishment of an Arab States Green Universities Network (ASGUN)

15-16 September 2015, Amman, Jordan

Meeting Report



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1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

The objective of this meeting was to initiate a dialogue amongst key academic institutions in the West Asia region to prepare for the establishment of an Arab States Green Universities Network (ASGUN). The network intends to feature the regional priorities on environmental education while integrally links to the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES).

The meeting was attended by the heads and high-level representatives from 15 universities and academic institutions from 8 countries in the Arab region, including one university from Europe (the Central European University). Senior officials from the Ministry of Environment of Jordan also actively participated throughout the 2-day meeting.

2. HIGHLIGHTS

The meeting was opened by H.E. Dr. Taher Shakhshir, the Minister of Environment of Jordan, and Dr. Iyad Abumoghli, Director of UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA). Mahesh Pradhan, chief of UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, Environmental Education and Training Unit (DEPI EETU) presented global trends and UNEP's work on education for environment and sustainable development, in the context of ESD and SDGs. Dr. Almoyaied Assayed (consultant) presented a background study on the status of environmental education and green universities in the region. Universities introduced their respective status, initiatives and programmes of environmental education, campus planning and management, students and community engagement.

The meeting provided opportunities with group breakout discussions, focusing on a common vision for ASGUN and collective activities and tasks that should be prioritized by ASGUN in the four main areas: green curriculum, green campus, student engagement and community engagement. The meeting also discussed the issue of ASGUN governance and tentative timelines for the way forward.

3. MEETING OUTCOMES

1. The establishment of ASGUN: The participants unanimously agreed and supported the establishment ASGUN. It was also agreed that a high-level launching event will be organized in June 2016 in Jordan.
2. Common vision: participants agreed that the ASGUN should promote green knowledge and practices in Arab Universities to achieve sustainable development at all levels.
3. Priority tasks, activities on the four areas that the network should focus on, and selected lead focal points and participants:
 - **Green Curricula:** to develop a 3-credit course titled "*Principles on Sustainability for the Arab region*" which initially is intended to be voluntary and then laterally mandatory for all students.

The course should also be adapted to fit the and be further MOOC platform (ZAYED, USEK, AArU, CEU to contribute as advisory and with case studies);

- **Green campus:** to develop a Zero Waste Arab Universities, as an initiative to carry out the assessments on the awareness and willingness (Phase I) and a study on recycling types and rates (Phase II) (JUST, Zayed); green awards for campuses (JUST, UJ, Mohamed V University, all);
- **Community +government engagement:** conduct needs assessment on realistic problems, or challenges in which universities may provide solutions and develop proposals to address , utilizing both top-down and bottom-up approaches (Arab League, ALECSO); green / smart cities, supporting the Eco-city Forum to be held in 2016 in Jordan (Jordan Ministry of Environment, JGBC (NGO), University of Jordan, AUB, SFaX, Gulf U); promoting with Green Awards for campus; and
- **Student engagement:** focusing on a study on green careers and green jobs in Arab States (U. Jordan, Birzeit University, Gulf University); organizing Webinars on student projects(Gulf University, AEEFG, USEK); green awards for individuals (JUST, UJ, Mohamed V University, all).

4. GOVERNANCE

- i. **ASGUN Secretariat:** Jordan University of Science and Technology and Zayed University offered to host the Secretariat. The Secretariat should be formalized by June 2016, while an interim secretariat could serve the function until then. Three governance structures were proposed to the participants: (1) one joint secretariat, (2) rotating secretariat every 2 years; (3) individual universities for each thematic area.
- ii. **Representation of ASGUN in GUPES Steering Committee:** two representatives will be elected to attend the GUPES Steering Committee meeting in December 2015; (U. of Jordan);
- iii. Establish linkages with AArU;
- iv. CAMRE with Education Ministers;
- v. Letters from UNEP ED to universities promoting ASGUN, cc to Environmental Ministers.

5. TIMELINES

- Oct 2015 - ASGUN Meeting Report finalized
- Nov 2015 - ASGUN Status paper finalized
- Dec 2015 – ASGUN Governance options defined
- March 2016 – links to AArU, UAE established
- May 2016 – UNEA: EE/GUPES event (ASGUN to contribute / participate)
- June 2016 – ASGUN launch (High level) in Jordan; Resource Mobilization; launch of pilot projects

- Aug 2016 – ASGUN proposals to Green Climate Fund and tech transfer mechanism
- Sept 2016 – GUPES Partnerships Forum in MIT, Boston
- Jan 2017 – ASGUN Awards – campus, curricula, community and students

Annex: List of participants

Prof. Rochdi Feki	Tunis	Director of Higher Business School	Université de Sfax
Prof. RafikB ouaziz	Tunis	President	Université de Sfax
Prof. Fares Howari	UAE	College of Sustainability Sciences and Humanities	Zayed University
Dr. Mirvat Bulbul	Palestine	Assistant to the President	Birzeit University
Dr. Mohammed Rhachi	Morocco	Vice President	Mohammed V University
Dr. Mona Rashid AlZayani	Bahrain	Chairperson of Board of Directors	Gulf University
Dr. Semia Gharbi	Tunis	Environnementaliste-Consultante	AEEFG, Tunisie, Hub regional IPEN-MENA/ North Africa, Enseignante
Dr. Aram Yeretzian	Lebanon	Professor , Department of Architecture and Design	American University of Beirut
Dr. Lara Hanna Wakim	Lebanon	Dean	Holy Spirit University of Kaslik
Dr. Viktor Lagutov	Hungary	Chair, Eye on Environmental Education Special Initiative	Central European University
Ms. Emily Nilson	Hungary	Project Manager - “In Service ICT Training for Environmental Professionals” (ISEPEI)	Central European University
Prof. Mohamed Abdelbaki Mohamed Ibrahim	Egypt	Head of Urban Planning and Design Department Department of Urban Planning & Design, Faculty of Engineering	Ain Shams University
Professor Hani Abu Qdais	Jordan	Assistant to the President Professor of Water & Environmental Engineering	Jordan University for Science and Technology
Prof. Mashhoor Al-Refai	Jordan	President	Prince Summaya University for Technology
Prof. FalehSawair	Jordan	Director of Accreditation and Quality Assurance Center	Jordan University
Dr. Mohammed Rasool Qtaishat	Jordan	Director of Water, Energy And Environment Center	Jordan University
Professor Nizar Abu-Jaber	Jordan	President	Jordan-German University
Prof. Abdulsalam Ghaith	Jordan		Arabic Universities Union
Eng. Samir Al-Kilani	Jordan	Head of Green Economy Unit	Ministry of Environment
Mr. Raouf Dabbas		Senior Advisor to Minister	
H.E. Dr. Taher Shakhshir		Minister of Environment	

UNEP			
Dr. Iyad Abumoghli	UNEP	Regional Representative and Director UNEP/ROWA	
Mr. Mahesh Pradhan	UNEP	Chief, Environmental Education Training Unit (EETU)	
Mr. Henrik Jakobsen	UNEP	Resource Efficiency Specialist/JPO UNEP/ROWA	
Ms. Rui Zhang	UNEP	Associate Programme Officer UNEP/EETU	
Ms. Lorrain D'Almeida	UNEP	Team Assistant UNEP/ROWA	