

West Asia Regional Multi-Stakeholder Consultation For Stockholm+50

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Meeting Overview

The Stockholm+50 meeting, which is scheduled to take place from 2-3 June 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden, will commemorate the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment and celebrate 50 years of global environmental action. As part of the preparatory process for Stockholm+50, a series of five regional multi-stakeholder consultations is taking place to ensure inclusivity and participation of regional stakeholders. These consultations aim to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to, among other things, review and assess how the global environment can be supported to help countries and regions attain the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on capacity building and on innovative and enhanced means of implementation.

The West Asia Regional Multi-stakeholder Consultation took place from 11-12 May 2022. Participants highlighted issues of concern to the region, particularly relating to waste reduction and management, water resources management, sustainable agriculture, and poverty eradication. They also made a variety of proposals on actions that should be taken to address the region's challenges, with many emphasizing the need to enact and enforce laws relating to waste management and the protection of rights, and the need for behavioral change to implement a circular economy model. They called for engaging civil society organizations (CSOs), women, and youth in relevant actions.

The regional consultation was organized by UNEP and GO4SDGs (Global opportunities for SDGs).

Opening Remarks

Abdul-Majeid Haddad, Deputy Regional Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional

Office for West Asia, moderated the session. Åsa Hjelt, Counsellor, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Sweden in Lebanon and Syria, said everyone must get involved in environmental protection if we want to succeed, underlining that “we don't have another 50 years to get our act together.” She noted the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic has shown what can be achieved through cooperation, and stressed that the environmental crisis is “no less severe” than COVID-19.

Hjelt noted that the regional challenges are “immense” as Middle East is one of the regions “most dramatically and negatively impacted by climate change,” highlighting that 5,000 people were recently hospitalized in Iraq due to a sandstorm. She stated that environmental protection is often not a priority in the region, given the other problems it is dealing with, which, she said, is as a “mistake.” Hjelt noted that not only can environmental and climate pressures compound existing difficulties but there are also many missed economic opportunities. She highlighted for instance, that a comprehensive circular economy approach can not only reduce the volume of plastic entering the ocean by 80% by 2040, it can also save USD 70 billion dollars globally, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% and create 700,000 jobs, mainly in



Facilitator **Abdul-Majeid Haddad**, Deputy Regional Director, UNEP Regional office for West Asia

developing countries. She said the climate crisis must be regarded as an opportunity, noting that in Sweden, ambitious climate goals have driven innovation, which, she suggested, could be replicated in the West Asia region. Hjelt also outlined some examples of recent work by the Embassy, including working with FabricAID, a social enterprise promoting sustainable fashion.

Sami Dimassi, Regional Director and Representative of UNEP for West Asia, quoted from the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's speech at the 1972 Stockholm Conference, who said "one cannot be truly human and civilized unless one looks upon not only all fellow-men but all creation with the eyes of a friend." Dimassi said now is the time for reflection and recovery, asking ourselves whether "we really are friends of nature." He noted that according to global climate models, West Asia will experience a 20% reduction in rainfall over the next 50 years, and urged all, especially the youth, to work harder towards "a more precise strategy and greater determination and hope."

Mounir Tabet, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), speaking on behalf of Rola Dashti, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, ESCWA, underlined that Arab states are some of the most arid countries in the world, with water and food insecurity presenting real threats to the environment, people, and peace and security of the region.

Tabet outlined some of the Commission's activities in the area. Highlighting youth as agents of change, he stressed that young people must be included as part of the solution for the threats to the region. He said ESCWA is working with governments to promote sustainable consumption and production by improving water use efficiency and promoting green technology and agriculture efficiency. He welcomed the Commission's ongoing work with the Government of Sweden to advance climate resilience to address sand storms, water and food insecurity, and biodiversity loss.

Tabet noted the growing commitment to and action towards recovery in the region, but outlined budgetary constraints, lamenting that the West Asia region receives less than 5% of global climate finance. He highlighted the Climate/SDGs Debt Swap Mechanism launched by ESCWA to support countries in achieving the SDGs. Tabet further reported that ESCWA's Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies is working with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat to develop the Arab States Climate Finance Access and Mobilization Strategy, which will formally be launched during the UN Climate Change Conference in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022.



Abdallah Al Amri, Chairman of the Environmental Authority of Oman

Plenary

Multi-stakeholder discussion: "Reflections from West Asia on 50 years of environmental actions"

Abdullah Al Amri, Chairman of the Environmental Authority of Oman, presented on the environmental actions being taken in Oman, including:

- Recycling and incineration, to help manage issues around garbage and waste;
- Early warning systems and disaster risk reduction plans;
- Limited hunting seasons to ensure animal and fish stocks are not depleted; and
- Encouraging citizens to use solar power and other renewable power sources.

Al Amri underlined that while there has been an increase in public awareness of the current environmental challenges, it is imperative for every individual to be aware of the situation. He emphasized the importance of economic development for a green recovery, and said countries must respect and fulfil their promises to communities and citizens.

Nasser Yassin, Minister of Environment, Lebanon, called for a new approach that leads to a fair, comprehensive, and sustainable recovery that promotes local communities. He stressed the importance of reforming the energy sector to end reliance on fossil fuels and transition to renewable energy, and highlighted the role of the circular economy in addressing issues of garbage and waste. To support a green recovery, he called for:

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships;
- Building the capacity of all sectors; and
- Stimulating transport networks to enable the transition to green technology.

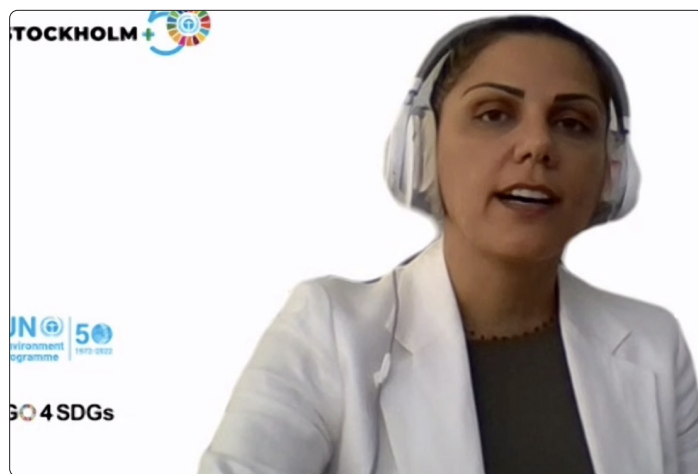
Wejdan Al-Oqab, Chairperson, Kuwait Environment Protection Society, emphasized the importance of cooperation to address environmental problems across the Gulf countries, noting that these countries have similar challenges. She outlined activities being undertaken by her organization to help address environmental problems, including: a documentary on Kuwait's wildlife, which had been shot over seven years; and the National Green Schools Program, which is now in its eighth year.

Al-Oqab underlined the importance of cooperation and collaboration between CSOs and governments, particularly in drafting legislation. She cited the example of Kuwait's Environmental Protection Law that was amended in 2015, with about 70% of its content changed thanks to CSOs.

Key messages from the discussion on 50 years of environmental actions

Panelists highlighted the need for:

- National initiatives, such as recycling and incineration, to help manage issues around garbage and waste;
- Early warning systems and disaster risk reduction plans;
- Limited seasons to ensure animal and fish stocks are not depleted;
- Citizens to use solar power and other renewable power sources;
- Reforming the energy sector to end reliance on fossil fuels and transition to renewable energy;
- Taking the economy into account when promoting a green recovery;
- Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships for a green recovery; and
- Cooperation and collaboration between CSOs and governments, particularly in drafting legislation.



Sabine Sakr, Regional Development Coordinator, Regional Office for West Asia, UNEP

Multi-stakeholder discussion: “RECOVERY & REBALANCE: Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic”

Sabine Sakr, Regional Development Coordinator, Regional Office for West Asia, UNEP, conducted a poll among the participants who emphasized:

- Access to different sources of finance, improved environmental legislative frameworks and policies, and promoting a circular economy and environmental education and awareness raising as the key actions that can accelerate the West Asia region's progress towards a healthy planet and prosperity for all;
- Renewable, clean energy and energy efficiency, agriculture and fisheries, and public health as the most important sectors to enable an inclusive, green recovery from COVID-19 in the West Asia region; and
- The lack of public awareness on impacts of environmental degradation, the lack of enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, and escalation of conflicts and slow peace processes among the main barriers for the West Asia region to take bolder action for a sustainable future.

Carol Chouchani Cherfane, Director, Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies, ESCWA, noted a loss in jobs and increases in poverty and vulnerability since the start of the pandemic. She said the region has experienced about USD 20 billion in fiscal revenue loss, as well as food insecurity due to rising poverty and dependence on food imports. She said more therefore needs to be done to raise resources to achieve the global Goals. Cherfane also underscored that the crisis in Ukraine has led to currency devaluations and increased food security risks. She noted the



Carol Chouchani Cherfane, Director, Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies, ESCWA

escalating debt in the region, suggesting that loans “may not be the answer,” and calling for grants and direct assistance to finance recovery.

Cherfane outlined the impacts of climate change in the region, and said average temperatures have been predicted to increase by 5°C by the end of the century. She called for more scientific evidence to inform regional policy, and noted an increasing number of countries submitting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which include mitigation targets, and address water in the context of adaptation.

Mahmoud Fathallah, Director, Department of Environmental and Meteorological Affairs, League of Arab States, said his organization is working with partners in the region to design a strategy to address solid and plastic waste, and their impact on ocean and water resources in Arab countries. He underlined this strategy will be pivotal for post-pandemic recovery in the region.

Fathallah highlighted a mismatch between available financing and the needs in the region, and called for strong and robust collaboration and new sources of financing to address the region’s environmental challenges. He discussed the work of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), noting that the Council is coordinating efforts to “embark on a green recovery in the region.”

James Donovan, CEO, ADEC Innovations, discussed the role of impact sourcing and the circular economy in the digital transformation for the SDGs. He said the pandemic has accelerated governments’ and businesses’ digital transformation efforts, and underlined that digital transformation can contribute to delivering on the SDGs by, inter alia: modernizing

and keeping up with the times; ensuring efficient delivery on the mission/service; and enabling innovation to happen faster.

Donovan proposed that from now on, all infrastructure projects have a “digital twin,” which would enable tracking of components of any new project or infrastructure to ensure they implement the circular economy through, for instance, reuse and recycling. He also highlighted the challenge of underemployment and unemployment around the world, noting that impact sourcing has impact education embedded in it. Donovan underlined the need to “connect the dots” by not only training the workforce to prepare for new jobs, but also by providing these jobs. He said the commercial and development sectors need to “point together” to develop these “jobs of the future,” noting 600 million productive jobs are needed globally over the next decade to generate sustainable growth and maintain social inclusion.

Hideko Hadzialic, Resident Representative, UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Kuwait, said COVID-19 has accelerated the digital transformation, but lamented the growing problem of e-waste. She outlined the human health impacts of e-waste, such as DNA damage and impaired thyroid function, as well as numerous environmental consequences. She said the extraction of metals needed for technology affects fragile ecosystems, and at local level, exploits vulnerable communities. She urged for policies and actions to counter these negative externalities.

Hadzialic outlined five broad policy responses:

- Using local communities as partners in small-scale mining enterprises, which can lead to sustainable mining;



Hideko Hadzialic, Resident Representative, UNDP in Kuwait

- Promoting sustainable manufacturing practices, such as reusing non-toxic materials that can increase the product's lifecycle;
- Changing consumer behavior through advocacy and awareness raising to encourage recycling and the circular economy;
- “Categorization and standardization” of recycling to help avoid hazardous practices; and
- E-recycling, which “makes business sense,” and can lead to the formation of new enterprises.

During an open discussion on: actions for recovery in key COVID-19-affected sectors and value chains; harnessing innovations and technologies, including digital technologies for transparency and disclosure; and leveraging global, South-South, and triangular cooperation, participants:

- Urged more be done on climate change adaptation as people are already suffering from the effects of climate change;
- Called for the least developed countries in the region to be provided with expert support to have a sustainable, inclusive, and green recovery from COVID-19;
- Noted that blended models of education, both virtual and in-person, have allowed for the expansion of capabilities; and
- Stressed there is no common fund for the environment for Arab states.

Key messages from the discussion on recovery and rebalance

- The Arab region needs additional climate finance, in the form of grants, not loans.
- Circular economy models, such as e-recycling, should be promoted. It “makes business sense,” and can lead to the formation of new enterprises.
- Sustainable mining is key, and can be supported by using local communities as partners in small-scale mining enterprises.
- The commercial and development sectors must work together to not only train the workforce on digital skills, but also provide needed jobs.



Fatema Frutan, UNEP Regional Facilitator for West Asia, Bahrain Women Association for Human Development

Parallel Working Groups on the Leadership Dialogues and Priority Sectors

Working Group on “REFLECTION: Urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all”

On how we can restore and regenerate a positive relationship with nature, participants called for:

- Enacting and implementing policies, laws, and regulations;
- Introducing mandatory environmental projects in schools, and environmental and climate science in educational curricula;
- Enforcing an obligation to conduct environmental impact assessments of all projects that could affect nature;
- Following a human rights-based approach for a healthy planet;
- Promoting cross-sectoral environmental planning;
- Providing green funds for vulnerable countries and stakeholders and encouraging sustainable financing models;
- Engaging Major Groups in decision-making processes;
- Ensuring social inclusion, which strengthens community participation and enables achievement of the SDGs;
- Stepping up climate and environmental protection ambition by accelerating action, such as by measuring, reporting, and verifying the objectives of the project to map 1,000+ green buildings, neighborhoods, and cities with technology promoting the “green buildings” concept in Saudi Arabia and the Arab world;
- Aligning all actions with integrated SDGs, including, for instance, aligning local and



Sayeed Mohamed, Director of Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar

national development plans and NDCs with the goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050;

- Providing payments for ecosystem services to those who “inhabit and protect the environment”;
- Establishing tree planting projects;
- Improving the sustainability of agri-food systems and transforming the way food is produced and consumed;
- Promoting the “One Health” approach; and
- Implementing an integrated strategy for environmental protection.

Regarding actions that can help scale up the change towards a healthy planet, participants identified the need for:

- Reducing toxic and other waste, including by making and enforcing relevant regulations;
- Providing guidelines, knowledge outputs, and best practices for the sustainable use of natural resources;
- “Rationalizing” water use for all sectors and reusing wastewater in agriculture to relieve pressure on fresh water resources;
- Developing and training leaders that are able to make good decisions and initiate the needed change;
- Establishing a carbon pricing mechanism;
- Raising awareness, and promoting access to and affordability of sustainable and healthy diets while reducing food loss and waste, and raising awareness of the true cost of food and of environmental and social externalities of food production;
- Investing in access to energy-efficient and climate-smart technologies for small producers in agri-food value chains;
- Promoting and investing in recycling and reuse across food systems;

- Revising organizational structures to include green jobs and encouraging youth to work in the environmental field;
- Providing environmentally-friendly options for countries affected by conflict, such as Yemen, which is “suffocating from plastic, and individual efforts to limit or reduce its use are not enough”; and
- Implementing the objectives of 6 November, the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict, in order to prevent land degradation and the destruction of the environment and natural resources through depletion or pollution.

On how marginalized and vulnerable groups can benefit from policies and initiatives designed to restore a more sustainable and resilient relationship with nature, participants called for:

- Advocacy support for marginalized groups;
- Tailored capacity-building and awareness-raising programmes on the SDGs;
- A safe environment for members of vulnerable groups to share their thoughts and concerns;
- Transparent stakeholder engagement;
- Provision of information and data to vulnerable groups to enable them make informed decisions;
- Using social media to help marginalized groups;
- Regional, national, and local platforms for the exchange of best practices among vulnerable groups;
- Proper grievance mechanisms;
- Provision of housing to vulnerable groups and protection of their property and livelihoods, enshrined in law; and
- Green job opportunities.

On safeguarding the rights of nature and people, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, environmental defenders, women, youth, and future generations, participants stressed the need for:

- More opportunities, financial support, and information and data;
- National legislation to guarantee human rights as well as the rights of nature;
- Transparency, participatory planning, and multi-stakeholder engagement, such as by including local communities in the protection and management of protected areas;

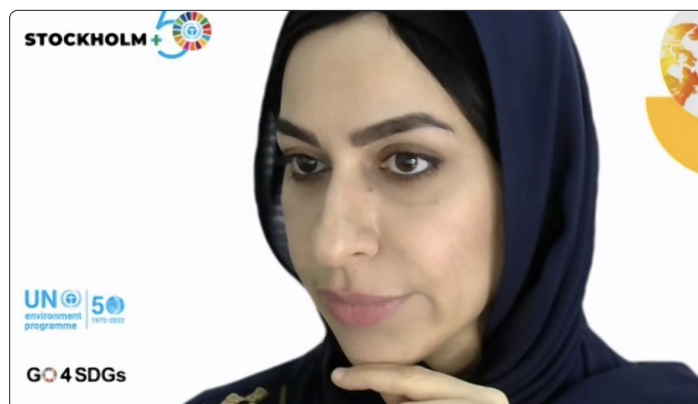
- Education and awareness raising on women's and children's rights among women, and mothers and their children; and
- Stabilizing and enhancing the economy and enhancing poverty eradication efforts because "when people cannot feed their children, they may not care about protecting the environment."

Regarding new or prioritized metrics and indicators for monitoring progress towards a healthier and more prosperous planet, participants supported tracking:

- The environmental or carbon footprint;
- The amount of money spent on climate mitigation and adaptation or on environmental policies generally;
- The level of efforts to achieve climate security;
- Legislation-related indicators; and
- The SDGs.

Key recommendations from the working group of reflection

- Introducing mandatory environmental projects in schools, and environmental and climate science in educational curricula;
- Providing green funds for vulnerable countries and stakeholders, and encouraging sustainable financing models;
- Ensuring social inclusion, which strengthens community participation and enables achievement of the SDGs;
- Revising organizational structures to include green jobs and encouraging youth to work in the environmental field;
- Providing payments for ecosystem services to those who "inhabit and protect the environment"; and
- Investing in access to energy-efficient and climate-smart technologies for small producers in agri-food value chains.



Sumaya Yusuf Hasan, Chairperson, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain

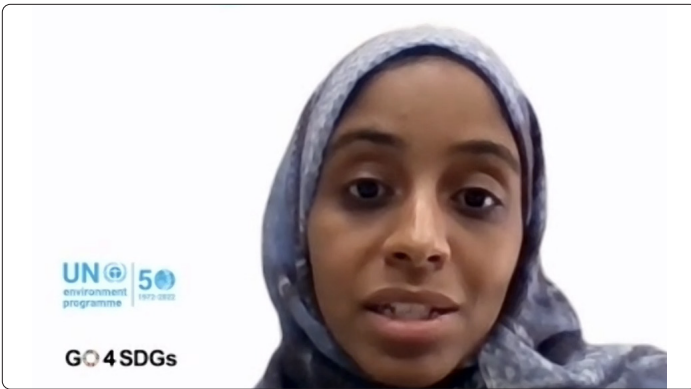
Working Group on "Zero plastic pollution: A time to change our behavior towards single-use plastic production, consumption, and disposal"

Regarding the policy instruments available for achieving zero plastic pollution and lessons learned from their implementation in West Asia, participants recommended:

- A regional approach to banning single-use plastics;
- Government incentives for the private sector to invest in recycling technologies;
- Policies enforcing segregation of waste at source;
- Laws to reduce plastic use and monitor plastic pollution;
- Applying extended producer responsibility and the polluter-pays principle in waste management;
- An "if it can't be recycled then it should not be sold or produced" approach to consumer goods;
- Banning single-use plastic bags and using biodegradable, multi-use bags;
- Identifying pathways for innovative plastic alternatives and investing in transitioning away from plastic;
- Facilitating private sector action; and
- Developing a sustainable waste management system, including a possible rewards system.

Among best practices to inspire behavioral change and social responsibility among citizens and consumers to end plastic pollution, participants identified:

- Educating people, especially children and youth, about the impacts of plastic use;



Farah Shawqi Al-Barwani, Research and Development Manager, Be'ah, Oman

- Leading by example and being visible role models;
- Engaging the tourism sector in activities to minimize plastic use;
- Providing alternatives to plastics;
- Citizen engagement through calls to action to modify behavior and boost behavioral change;
- Focusing on what one can do, for instance, “I cannot litter, I can recycle, I can be an activist, I can be a change agent, I can be a green entrepreneur”;
- Addressing production-side dynamics, such as through limiting annual plastic production;
- Targeting consumers who will make spending decisions based on their sustainability beliefs, for instance, by developing a “sustainable plastic or plastic-free” label; and
- Awareness campaigns that put out clear, evidence-based messages in an easy-to-understand format about the scale of and solutions to the plastic problem.

On how to strengthen waste management systems in West Asia to control and prevent plastic pollution, participants underlined the need for:

- Accessibility of disposal points so people can “do the right thing”;
- Countries to have recycling programmes that are accessible to the public;
- Strategy for environmentally sound waste management;
- A law that brings together all countries in the Mediterranean basin to reduce and eliminate single-use plastics and move towards integrated management of production, use, and consumption of plastics;
- Plastic recycling factories;
- Implementing circular economy models;

- Policies targeting each stage of the plastic lifecycle to resolve the issue in an environmentally sound manner;
- Incentivizing and empowering the private sector to valorize recyclable plastic waste;
- Implementing best practices from countries that lead on waste management, such as Singapore and Sweden;
- Preventing the production and import of plastic extrusions that can be dispensed with, such as dishes and mugs;
- Implementation of the Basel Convention to eliminate transboundary transportation of plastic waste;
- Rural waste management systems, as rural areas often lack viable waste segregation, collection, and safe disposal options;
- Taxing products that pollute the environment; and
- Promoting recycling, for instance, by collecting a deposit for drinks in single-use plastic bottles and returning that money back to the customer if the bottle is recycled.

Regarding how the West Asia region can promote regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation to address plastic pollution, participants called for:

- High-level coordination to encourage dialogue;
- More regional engagement to form a “common front” and develop a common policy to guide the process;
- Supporting multi-stakeholder cooperation, for instance, by establishing a multi-stakeholder forum, supported by a regional office, which includes representatives from each country in the region;
- Exchanging information and sharing experiences and modern technologies on the disposal of plastic, including at the regional level;
- Regulations and instructions on preventing the use of plastic products in tourist and natural areas;
- Marine protected areas for iconic species in the Gulf, such as whale sharks, dugongs, and turtles;
- Awareness raising on protecting human health and the environment from toxic chemicals;
- Taxation of plastic products; and
- Multilateral commitments, such as a Gulf Cooperation Council-wide ban on single-use plastics.

Regarding key barriers to implementing readily available solutions and how these can be overcome, participants highlighted the need for:

- Behavioral change, as plastic has become a daily essential for many people;
- Overcoming political, financial, technical, and management challenges to ending plastic pollution;
- Prioritizing environmentally sound end-of-waste policies and excluding disposal methods that create toxic emissions from plastics, such as incineration and waste-to-fuel practices;
- Speeding up government implementation of reforms or bans on single-use plastics;
- Global compacts on plastics, such as a guided principles for companies and industries;
- The circular economy to form part of the solution;
- Transformative regulations to treat plastic waste in an environmentally sound manner; and
- Government incentives for the private sector to invest in recycling technology.

Key recommendations from the working group on zero plastic pollution

- Citizen engagement through calls to action to modify behavior and boost behavioral change;
- Legislation enforcing circular economy models such as recycling and reuse;
- More regional engagement to form a “common front” and develop a common policy to guide the journey towards zero plastic pollution;
- Multi-stakeholder cooperation, supported by a regional office that includes representatives from each country in the region;
- Targeting consumers who will make spending decisions based on their sustainability beliefs, for instance, by developing a “sustainable plastic or plastic-free” label; and
- Government incentives for the private sector to invest in recycling technology.



Natalia Boulad, International Union for Conservation of Nature

Working Group on “Action: Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development”

Among the biggest challenges the region is facing in implementing the 2030 Agenda and other environmental commitments, participants identified:

- Prevalence of North-based technology holders and limited opportunities for franchising and developing in the region, which leads to losing valuable resources and employment opportunities;
- A lack of cooperation between actors, including regionally, as well as self-interest and conflict of interest;
- A lack of citizen awareness;
- A lack of data, legislation, and good governance practices;
- Excessive bureaucracy, which slows down implementation, which can be overcome by establishing a regional office that hosts representatives from each country in the region;
- Continuing wars and conflicts in the region, which affect the environment;
- Misuse of water resources;
- The difficulty and complexity of the global SDG indicators, resulting in countries’ inability to follow up and monitor progress using these indicators; and
- A lack of financial resources, and technology transfer and sharing.

Among the good practices and pathways that should be scaled up to accelerate implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the context of the Decade of Action, participants identified:



Mr. Abdelmenam Mohammed

Abdelmenam Mohamed, Regional Coordinator for Science, Regional Office for West Asia, UNEP

- Closer cooperation between development financiers and private sector actors;
- Intensifying environmental awareness campaigns as part of national efforts to achieve sustainability in comprehensive development projects;
- Promoting environmental education, environmental justice, and commitment to stopping environmental degradation;
- Reliance on a constantly updated spatial information database, including statistics and surveys, for decision making;
- Supporting community participation and inclusion;
- Strengthening supervision, inspection, and enforcement of laws, and integrating ecosystem services into development plans;
- Digitalization; and
- Stimulating the private sector to invest in implementing environmental interventions.

On how to transform governance and legal systems so that they maintain long-term economic stability and ecological and social wellbeing for all, participants called for:

- Adequate information and relevant data for decision making;
- Integrating content related to the environment into educational curricula, and conducting research and field studies;
- Coordination and alignment of practices between government and civil society, and more exchanges of good practices among relevant actors;
- Decentralization of environmental decision making;
- Financial support;

- Preparing the “legislative climate” to accommodate the requirements of sustainability;
- Ensuring transparency, building a regional database, and providing data for evidence-based capacity building;
- Adapting governance systems to ensure flexibility to respond to emerging changes; and
- Raising awareness of local and international realities.

Regarding measures needed to align public, private, and development finance with existing commitments and priorities, participants called for:

- Identifying and developing win-win business models;
- Evaluating and supervising implementation of existing environmental commitments;
- Green and smart financing, and support for countries unable to access global funds, as is the case with Palestine and the Global Environment Facility;
- Mechanisms to streamline project development and implementation to avoid repetition and duplication of efforts;
- Enabling local communities to compete for project funding, including by raising awareness about available opportunities;
- Maximizing the use of international funds and setting up a unified portal to receive support and funding;
- Transparency about spending budgets, and monitoring and follow-up of financial support;
- Stimulating private sector involvement and investment; and
- Developing environmental and climate taxes and collection systems.

Regarding the types of partnerships from the UN and beyond that are needed to accelerate a green and sustainable economic transformation that leaves no one behind, participants called for:

- Increased engagement with CSOs, youth, and universities and scientific research institutions;
- Appropriate technology transfer partnerships;
- Technical support partnerships, capacity building, and transfer of expertise;
- Partnerships between local charitable and voluntary organizations and their international counterparts; and
- Financing partnerships.



Hussain Hassan, Associate Professor of Food Science and Technology, Director of Academic Compliance, Lebanese American University

On the capacities and technologies needed to improve human wellbeing in harmony with nature, participants underlined the need to:

- Develop multi-actor value chains;
- Promote a clean environment; and
- Provide technologies based on ecosystem services and develop the capacity to use these technologies.

Key recommendations from the working group on action

- Intensify environmental awareness campaigns as part of national efforts to achieve sustainability in comprehensive development projects;
- Promote environmental education, environmental justice, and commitment to stop environmental degradation;
- Maximize the use of international funds and set up a unified portal to receive support and funding;
- Decentralize environmental decision making;
- Prepare the “legislative climate” to accommodate the requirements of sustainability; and
- Stimulate the private sector to invest in implementing environmental interventions.

Working Group on “Addressing food waste: Impacts and opportunities”

Regarding what they would like to see Stockholm+50 consider as priorities in addressing food waste challenges in the West Asia region, participants called for:

- National governments to embrace “nudge policies” as they are not too expensive and have proven to be effective in food waste reduction;
- Raising awareness among consumers through campaigns and training in schools;
- Involving retailers and caterers in launching initiatives to reduce food waste;
- Developing policies to tax restaurant clientele on leftover food;
- Establishing a baseline for food waste generated in each country;
- Improving consumer understanding of date labels (most common date labels distinguish between quality, for instance, “best before,” and safety, for instance, “use by” or “expiration date”) and food items storage;
- Including food waste reduction and prevention strategies in national strategic planning;
- Taxing buffet-type restaurants to encourage distribution of leftovers through food banks and other networks;
- Promoting policies and incentives to prevent and reduce food waste;
- Implementing SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production;
- Recycling and digital transformation initiatives;
- Promoting holistic partnerships with all segments of society;
- Promoting data collection on food waste;
- Transfer of technology for food recycling;



Wardah Mamukoya, Founder and Managing Director, Wahab, Qatar

- Helping young people to actively engage with agri-food production;
- Establishing community partnerships with all sectors of society, government, the private sector, CSOs, and other stakeholders;
- Composting leftover food;
- Implementing farm-to-table concepts;
- Promoting food sharing and food recovery, particularly in urban areas;
- Establishing food banks;
- Ensuring a proper transportation and storage network is in place for the food cold chain;
- Promoting public-private initiatives that support food waste reduction;
- Using role models and influencers to encourage lifestyles that reduce food waste;
- Helping farmers plan food production to meet consumer demands and supporting sustainable agricultural practices;
- Using technology to encourage climate-smart agriculture;
- Accelerating the supply chain in local communities; and
- Ensuring access to market for local food producers.

Among technologies that can be implemented to reduce food waste across the food value chain, participants identified technologies for:

- Measuring food waste at household level;
- Creating recipes from leftovers;
- Using food waste for compost for food production; and
- Community fridges to donate food.

On the types of partnerships that can help achieve SDG 12.3 (by 2030, halve per capita global food waste), participants called for:

- Food banks to have a good relationship with the local communities so that anybody can approach them for help or donate to them;
- Partnerships with schools and universities to create awareness from an early age and carry out research projects on behavioral change;
- Partnerships that encourage sustainable food practices;
- Partnerships that promote local food production; and
- Partnerships incorporating climate-smart agriculture.

On measures to further accelerate inclusion of the most vulnerable, including women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, to ensure fair and transparent food system transformation, using

lessons learned from the pandemic and its effects, participants called for:

- Ensuring gender is mainstreamed in policies related to food loss and waste;
- Empathy and understanding, including highlighting that using food banks is not shameful; and
- Food sustainability programmes.

On how to promote sustainable lifestyles effectively and finding effective ways to engage people, participants suggested:

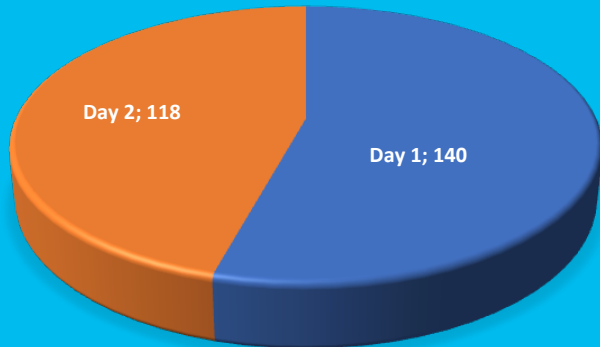
- Involving influencers to share messages around food waste;
- Not going hungry to supermarkets;
- Practicing “clean cooking” in order to save time and materials;
- Implementing extended producer responsibility and “anti-waste” laws, such as taxation on restaurant leftovers and buffets;
- Educating youth to trigger behavioral change; and
- Shortening food supply chains.

Key recommendations from the working group on addressing food waste

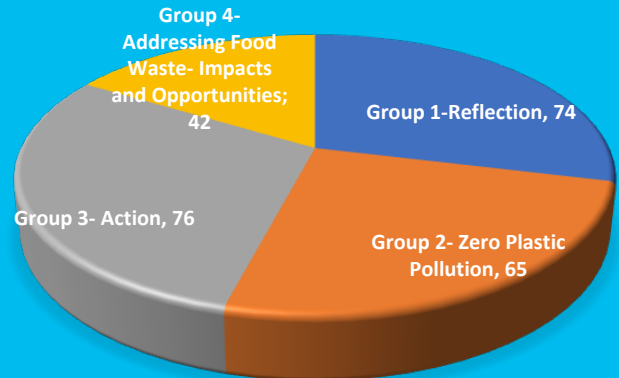
- Promote data collection on food waste and establish a baseline to formulate impactful policies;
- Encourage donation to and use of food banks, and conduct outreach to show that using food banks is not shameful;
- Promote use of the farm-to-table concept, and encourage food purchases from local suppliers only;
- Use technology to promote smart agriculture techniques and to encourage practices such as “food sharing”;
- Implement SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production; and
- Use policies and programmes to address food waste, including “nudge policies” that are low-cost and effective in reducing food waste.

Annex 1

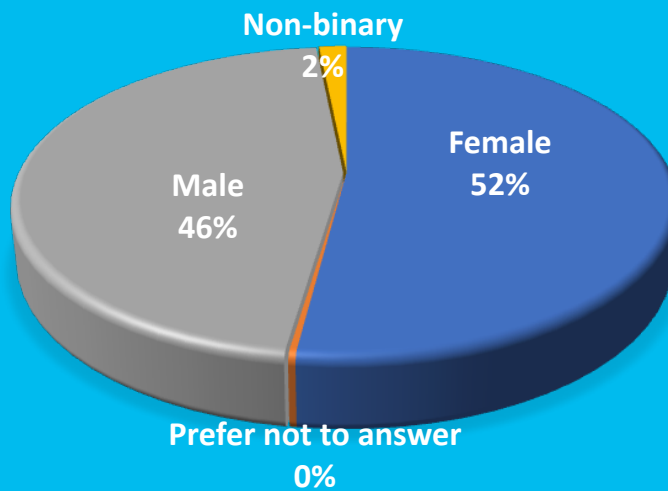
Number of Participants of the West Asia Consultation



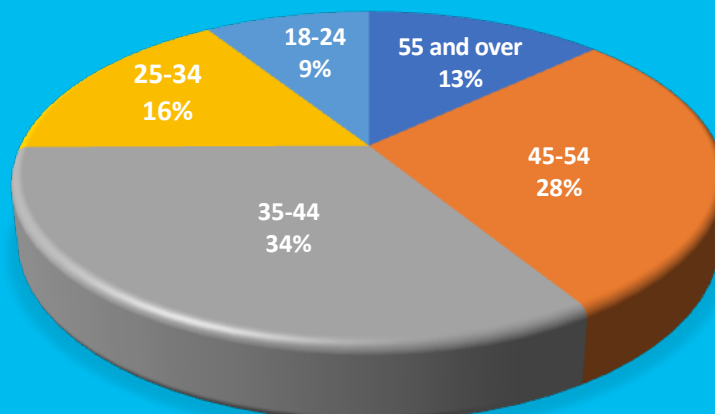
Number of Participants of the Working Groups



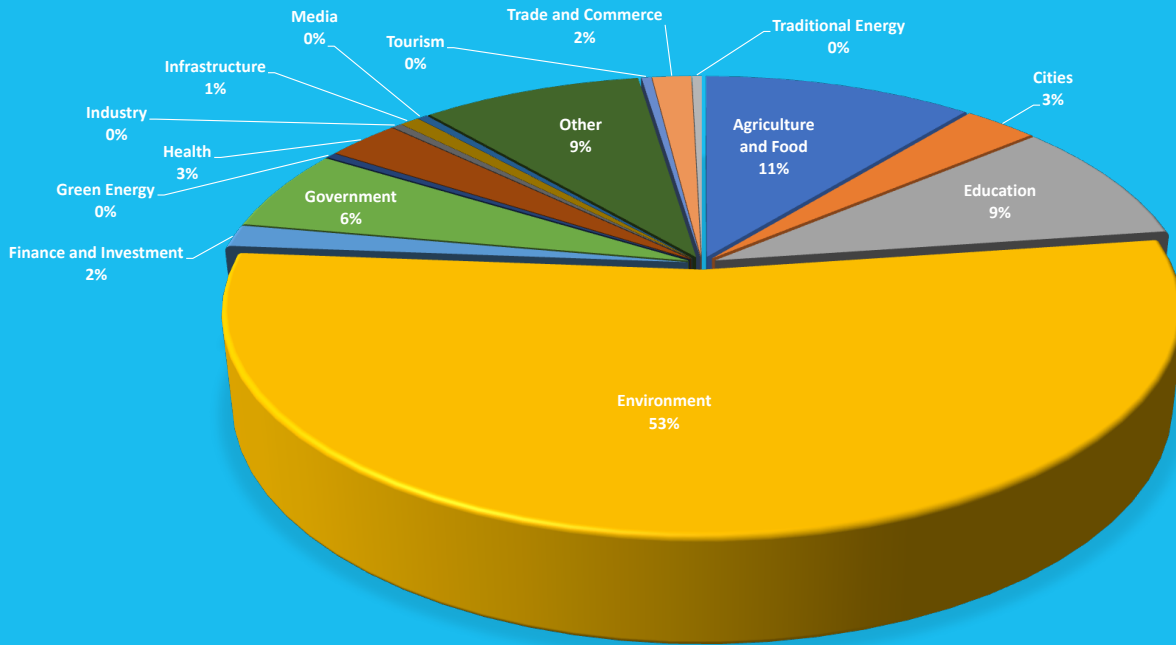
Gender of Participants of the West Asia Consultation



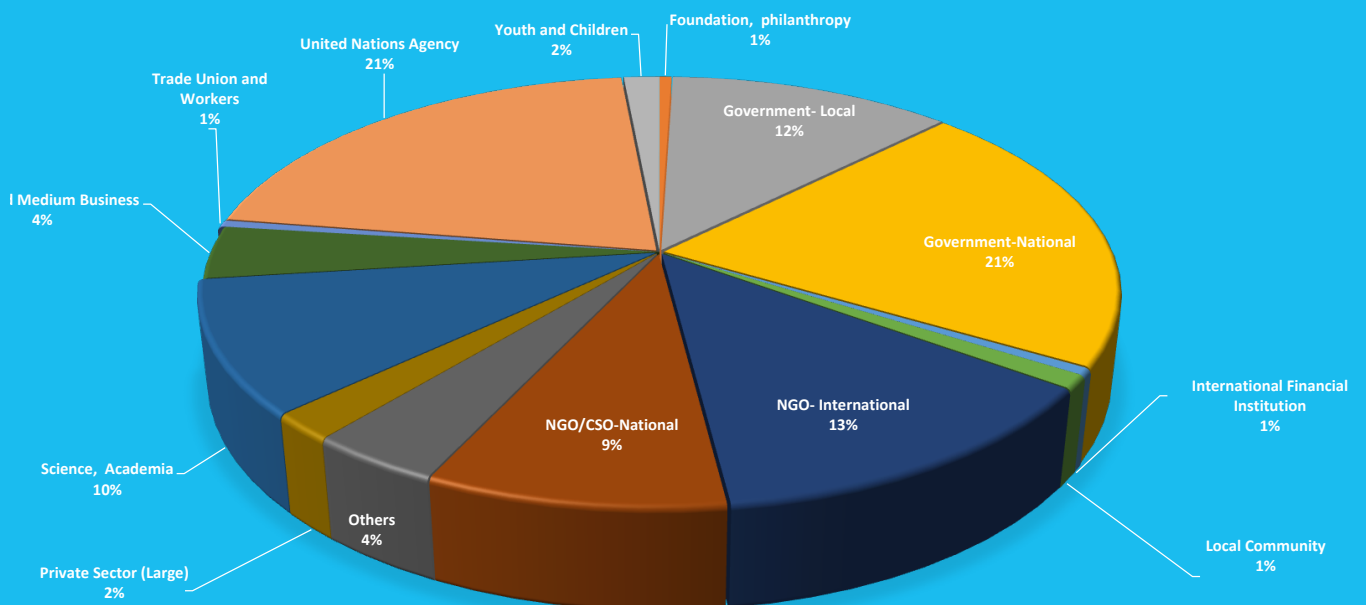
Age Range of Participants of the West Asia Consultation



Number of Participants from Each Sector



Participants' Affiliations



Annex 2



West Asia Regional Multi-stakeholder Consultation

Towards Stockholm+50 a
healthy planet and prosperity
for all

11-12 May 2022



GO 4 SDGs



Programme

DAY 1: 11 May 2022, 10:00 – 12:30 (EEST +1, Beirut)

10:00-10:20:

- 1. Welcome:** Mr. Abdul-Majeid Haddad (Facilitator), Deputy Regional Director, UNEP Regional office for West Asia
- 2. Opening Remarks:**
 - Ms. Asa Hjelt Counsellor/Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of Sweden in Lebanon and Syria
 - Mr. Sami Dimassi – UNEP Representative, Regional Director for West Asia
 - Dr. Rola Dashti, Under-Secretary general and Executive Secretary of ESCWA – Statement on her behalf, Deputy Executive Secretary Mr. Mounir Tabet

10:20-11:30:

- 3. First Plenary: Multistakeholder Discussion 'Reflections from West Asia on 50 years of Environmental Actions'**

Panelists:

- H.E Minister of Environment in Lebanon Dr. Nasser Yassin
- H.E Dr. Abdallah Al Amri, Chairman of the Environmental Authority of Oman
- Ms. Wejdan Al-Qqab, Chairperson of Kuwait Environment Protection Society

11.30-12.30:

4. Parallel Working Groups on topics of Leadership Dialogues and priority sectors

(Starting with Setting the Scene by the facilitators)

Working Group 1: “REFLECTION: Urgent Need for Actions to Achieve a Healthy Planet and Prosperity of All”

(related to Leadership Dialogue 1, [background paper here](#))

Key themes:

- Transforming our relationship with nature
 - Producing and consuming sustainably & fighting pollution
 - Justice, inclusion and intergenerational equity
- Co-facilitators:
- Mr. Sayeed Mohamed, Director of Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar
 - Ms. Fatema Frutan, UNEP Regional Facilitator for West Asia-Bahrain Women association for Human Development

Working Group 2: “Zero Plastic pollution: A time to change our behavior towards single-use plastic production, consumption and disposal”

Key themes:

- Policy instruments
 - Social responsibility and behavioural change
 - Strengthened waste management systems
- Co-facilitators:
- Dr. Sumaya Yusuf Hasan, Chairperson of Natural Resources & Environment Department Arab Gulf University in Bahrain
 - Ms. Farah Shawqi Al-Barwani Research and Development Manager in Be’ah Oman

DAY 2: 12 May 2022, 10:00 – 12:30 (EEST +1, Beirut)

10:00-10:30:

1. **Welcome and Summary of Day 1:** Ms. Sabine Sakr (Facilitator), Regional Development Coordinator, Regional Office for West Asia.

10:30-11:30:

2. **Second Plenary Multistakeholder discussion: RECOVERY & REBALANCE: Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the coronavirus pandemic** (related to Leadership Dialogue 2, [background paper here](#))

Panelists:

- Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane, Director, Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies at ESCWA
- Dr. Mahmoud Fathallah, Director of the department of Environmental, Meteorological Affairs (EMA) League of Arab States.
- Mr. James Donovan, CEO ADEC Innovations
- Ms. Hideko Hadzialic, Resident Representative UNDP in Kuwait

3. **Open Discussion on key themes**

- Actions for recovery in key COVID-affected sectors and value chains
- Harnessing innovations and technologies, including digital technologies for transparency and disclosure
- Levering global, South-South and triangular cooperation

11.30-12.30:

5. **Parallel Working Groups on topics of Leadership Dialogues and priority topics**

(Starting with Setting the Scene by the facilitators)

Working Group 3: “Action: Accelerating the Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development” (related to Leadership Dialogue 3, [background paper here](#))

Key themes:

- Accelerating mobilization of finance
- Governance and institutional reform
- Digital transformation and effective partnerships
- Collective actions and strengthened cooperation

- Co-facilitators:
 - Ms. Natalia Boulad, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
 - Mr. Abdelmenam Mohamed, Regional Coordinator for Sciences, Regional Office for West Asia

Working Group 4: “Addressing Food Waste - Impacts and opportunities”

Key Themes

- Best practices to reduce food waste
 - Infrastructure and investment for food waste reduction
 - Behavior change
- Co Facilitators:
 - Ms. Wardah Mamukoya, Founder & Managing Director of WAHAB in Qatar
 - Dr. Hussain Hassan, Associate Professor of Food Science and Technology, Director of Academic Compliance – Lebanese American University, Lebanon

Visit the website and webstreaming of the West Asia Consultation at:

<https://www.stockholm50.global/processes/regional-multi-stakeholder-consultations/west-asia>