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**REPORT
OF THE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON THE FIVE
AREAS PRESENTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON ITS EIGHTEENTH SESSION**

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II. TRANSPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB REGION²

A. CURRENT STATUS OF THE TRANSPORT SECTOR IN THE ARAB REGION

6. The Arab transport sector contributes greatly to meeting the requirements of social and economic development needs in the countries of the region, in addition to enhancing regional and sub-regional cooperation through the facilitation of transport of individuals and goods between countries. Despite this fact, transport-related activities have several environmental effects on natural resources, including air and water pollution and related general health problems. The transport sector in the Arab region produces about 22 per cent of the greenhouse gas emissions in the region, 85 per cent of which are due to road transport. Therefore, effective measures are needed to realize the sustainability of the transport sector in the Arab region, while preserving its effective role in achieving development.

1. *Necessary policies and measures to improve the management of the transport sector*

11. Arab countries adopted different sets of policies and measures aimed to improve the management of the transport sector, in particular through the following:

(a) *Developing public transport means* to reduce traffic congestion and limit the commuting time. Metro networks were introduced in Dubai and Egypt, already existing railways networks were developed in Egypt, and planning was made to introduce trains in the Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. However, it is crucial to introduce further measures to support public transport in the region;

(b) *Improving urban planning and traffic management* in several Arab countries to develop infrastructure in their cities and the roads networks for the past years (Egypt, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Saudi Arabia), as legislations and laws regulating traffic were developed;

(c) *Programmes for inspection of the emissions of vehicles* implemented in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic. Studies estimated that the average decrease in fuel consumption for vehicles will reach about 15 per cent;

(d) *Replacing old cars* with new ones in order to reduce air pollution and ensure road safety. Authorities in Egypt and Jordan adopted national plans to replace old taxi vehicles in large cities with new ones, by providing customs and tax exemptions for taxi and bus drivers to enable them to buy new vehicles.

2. *Adopting advanced technology in the transport field*

12. Countries of the region started

building a railway between the Sudan and Egypt; (iv)

- (iii) Improving the efficiency of maintenance and the fuel specifications while implementing emission inspection and testing programmes;
 - (iv) Improving traffic and enhancing road safety;
 - (v) Improving urban planning and using lands in order to shorten commuting distance and improving the infrastructure to become environment-friendly.
- (b) *At the regional level*
- (i) Reviewing current leg

(a) The inclusion of SAICM in the agenda of the Arab team responsible for the follow up on the Multilateral Environmental Agreements on chemicals and hazardous wastes. Its main outputs were as follows:

(i) Establishing the SAICM Arab Coordination Unit on the international management of

(e) Difficulties in the implementation of SAICM due to the existence of multistakeholders and the environmental, economic, social, health and labour aspects. Difficulty in obtaining information about many chemicals currently in use and the lack of updated and complete databases on chemicals;

(f) Insufficiency of mechanisms used to address the social and economic impacts of chemicals on human health, society and environment, and the lack of objective scientific standards, methods and information that enable the evaluation of the chemicals effects and risks at the Arab regional level.

2. Priority areas for action

25. At the national and Arab levels, work should be focused on the following:

(a) Applying the principle of risk calculation, analysis and assessment while adopting standards for environmental economic degradation resulting from the hazardous use of chemicals;

(b) Finding the suitable mechanisms to deal with environmental degradation resulting from the unsafe use of chemicals, including evaluating and accrediting specialized laboratories and plants, in addition to activating and updating legislations and laws that are in line with the relevant international treaties;

(c) Enhancing the partnership principle and ensuring a wider participation of stakeholders in implementing the strategic approach while providing intensive training opportunities on the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of classification and labeling of chemicals;

(d) Preparing the integrated management strategy for chemicals and hazardous wastes;

(e) Providing easy-access databases and information systems for chemicals in use, which cover the life cycle of chemicals. Exchange experiences to promote the transfer of modern technologies and safe alternatives.

26. At the international level, developed countries and the international community need to work on providing international mechanisms and frameworks to enhance the capacities of developing countries in implementing the strategic approach, including the following:

⊃ (a) Including all issues related to chemicals management and of the measures implemented by virtue of the international conventions within the strategic approach, while maintaining the harmony and agreed upon mechanisms in the management of such topics without interference;

(b) Adopting an international sustainable financial mechanism, characterized by its flexibility and coherence, to fill the gaps in the implementation

(f) Strengthening cooperation in the fields

world cannot plainly be incinerated in 445 stations that do not meet environmental conditions, but must rather be done within the framework of a more comprehensive strategy for integrated waste management.

34. **Electronic wastes** (e-wastes) comprise all unused electrical and household appliances. Spreading awareness about their danger is still very limited at all levels in the Arab world. Therefore, the priority in developing management resides in raising awareness and collecting related data, while implementing pilot projects and defining a regulatory

waste”, “the treatment of wastewater”, “recycling plastic waste”, and the “environmentally safe management of electronic and electrical waste”.

C. CHALLENGES AND PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

1. *The challenges*

40. Although a number of countries prepared strategies, policies and plans and implemented several programmes and projects related to waste management in its different forms, achieving sustainable waste management faces many challenges which have led to the delay in implementation. The main challenges are as follows:

(a) Lack of accurate informational or statistical data or reliable inventory processes on the waste quantities from their different sources produced in different sectors in Arab countries;

(b) Insufficiency of legislations and weak implementation. Some countries defined organizational frameworks but they still lack managing capacity as to the implementation and the effective commitment;

(c) Weak infrastructure for waste management including hazardous waste, and the absence in a number of Arab countries of sound waste management capacities;

(d) Lack of comprehensive national plans to deal with industrial waste, and the failure to establish national committees in many Arab countries. As for countries which have established such committees, most of them fail to ensure the participation of all related sectors and stakeholders;

(e) Inadequate efficient specialized human capacities and lack of awareness in Arab countries as to the importance and role of the integrated waste management. Inaction from the governmental institutions, and the lack of investment by the private sector in this field;

(f) The industrial sector, in particular small institutions, does not possess updated and good management systems in most areas of the region, which makes the establishment of an integrated waste management very expensive;

(g) Lack of commitments by developed countries to fulfill their obligations in providing

(c) Establishing monitoring, inspecting and following-up mechanisms in order to provide a chronological data necessary to accurately define the degree of competency and efficiency of any activity, while making use of data collected to update strategies.

42. **At the regional and international levels**, Arab countries must work on:

(a) Establishing an Arab system for data and information that facilitates cooperation, coordination, exchange of experience, planning, evaluation, and defining problems and needs;

(b) Adopting a clear international financial mechanism that works on providing close opportunities for different countries in implementing the goals and activities included in Agenda 21;

(c) Preparing an updatable Arab plan of action that would be coherent with the real needs, and available capacities of the different countries;

(d) U

However, this is still insufficient in comparison with the wealth available

2. Priority areas for action

47. Developing Arab capacities in the field of mining requires the following:

(a) Working on completing the formulation of the strategic plan of action of the Arab partnership for the development of the iel

50. **As to the management of water resources**, the scarcity of water resources forms one of the main challenges obstructing development in the Arab region. Ten of the poorest countries in water are Arab countries, whereas the annual share of water per capita is less than 500 cubic metres in eight Arab countries. Around 50 million people in the region do not have access to safe drinking water

priority areas for action at the national and regional levels. This section reviews the activities included in the 10-year framework of sustainable consumption and production as to the sound management of waste.

57. **As to education and sustainable lifestyles**, Arab countries are working on implementing national programmes to eliminate illiteracy and reform national education systems; however illiteracy still constitutes a clear problem in many Arab countries, as one third of young people in the least developed Arab countries are illiterate. Since the Arab world comprises the larger portion of youth among developing regions, addressing the youth is extremely

61. **In the field of rural development and**

(c) Developing the use of renewable

developing related regulations at the national level, and above all (c) developing national strategies for education and eliminating illiteracy, that take into account sustainability considerations and providing a decent life for the population.

69. The implementation of all major programmes requires governments to play a principal role in achieving the goals as well as developing and implementing programmes and strategies, and calls on other relevant entities to shoulder their responsibilities in this process, in particular in the business and industry sectors, NGOs, the civil society, the media and the individuals.

70. In seeking to achieve targets and goals in the above-mentioned priority areas, Arab countries call on the international community and regional and international organizations to support their efforts through capacity-building programmes, by providing technical assistance mainly in the following fields: (a) capacity-building in the field of cleaner production and supporting the establishment of relevant national centres; (b) using market-based instruments in