

# SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region

## Climate change and water scarcity crisis Threat faces the Arab region

13 CLIMATE  
ACTION



March 2023



## Background

The Arab region continues to suffer from a water scarcity crisis which comes as a direct result of the ongoing climate changes. It is known that the Arab region contributes to climate change with an insignificant amount, but it is the most affected by these changes. 12 countries in the Arab region, topped by Qatar, occupied Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, Kuwait, the Emirates, Bahrain and Oman entered the list of countries with a very high water crisis. There are 27 other countries suffering from severe water shortages, including Yemen, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. During March, many Arab countries participated in the United Nations Water Conference, and the impact of climate change on the increase in the water crisis was highlighted.

Within the framework of its endeavors to protect human rights and promote sustainable societies in a way that preserves human life, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights releases its 14<sup>th</sup> issue of the **SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region** under the title "**Climate Change and Water Scarcity Crisis... A Threat to the Arab Region**" in order to track the good practices as well as the challenges that Arab countries face in achieving SDG13 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The **Observatory** focuses on the actions and measures undertaken by the Arab countries to address climate change and its repercussions, noting that it focuses on the targets specific to SDG 13, including; i) Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries; ii) Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning; iii) Improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning.

The Observatory is divided into two axes; the first discusses the country-focus of this issue and reviews its achievements and failures in the climate change issue in light of the SDG 13 targets, whereas the second axis monitors the most prominent practices and challenges faced by the rest of the Arab countries in this regard.

## Monitoring Methodology:

The SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region adopts a methodology of direct monitoring of previous publications in the Arab, Western and African media about government efforts to promote climate action. The Observatory focused on a number of secondary research sources, open sources such as the Internet, and reliable news sites deeply interested in Arab countries and development paths in general.

The Observatory also relies on information and data published by the Arab environment ministries on their official websites, and what was reported by electronic newspapers and written media about the efforts of the governments of Arab countries in achieving SDG 13 as well as the challenges they faced in order to highlight them.

## Targets of the SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region

The targets and indicators of the SDG 13 Observatory varied according to the scientific agenda, but given the monthly nature of the observatory, it selectively addresses them. Therefore, the **Observatory** highlights the key targets of SDG 13, which included; First: Integrating measures related to climate change into policies, strategies, and planning at the national level, second: enhancing resilience and resilience in the face of climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries, and enhancing resilience to those hazards, third: education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacities to mitigate Climate change, adaptation, mitigation and early warning.

It is noteworthy that the Observatory included monitoring the extent of the success of the Arab countries in achieving these goals in particular, in order to focus on the indicators that can be measured in the short term, and then measure the extent of the success of the countries in achieving them. Given the observatory's one-month time scope, the measure of some indicators of achieving the objectives of SDG 13 requires a relatively long-time span, one year or more.

## Legal Frameworks of SDG 13: Climate Action

The SDG 13 Observatory depends on an international legal reference, which is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change of 1993 (UNFCCC), and the extent of the commitment of Arab countries to this agreement in addition to the Arab strategies developed by the governments that come in light of this agreement, and finally, the national initiatives and programs carried out by the national organizations concerned with climate change issues.

### Axis I: The State Focus of the Issue "Iraq"

#### First: An overview of Iraq's situation in light of climate changes

Iraq's impact by climate change in recent years is very clear, as heat waves have increased continuously and sequentially, and temperatures have reached 50°C, which has had a devastating impact on Iraqi water and food security, which in turn affects the lives of millions of Iraqis. As noted above, temperatures have risen gradually across Iraq since the 1950s, when the average temperature of the country increased by 0.7 degrees Celsius from 100 years ago. Depending on how the world responds to climate change, average temperatures could rise by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius in Iraq over the next 100 years.

As maximum temperatures increased in Iraq, the central and southern governorates witnessed heat waves exceeding 50°C in the past decade, and water resources were severely affected by these temperature changes, and thus the food security and livelihood of the population.

In response, the Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources imposed some regulations to reduce the available land that farmers can use to grow wheat and barley by 50% due to severe water shortages in 2021, and a decision was issued to stop the cultivation

of rice and other vital crops in 2018. In addition to the above; the government provides financial compensation, but it is naturally insufficient for farmers with small land, so this policy cannot be considered a sustainable intervention<sup>1</sup>.

In 2021, Iraq experienced its second driest season in 40 years due to record low rainfall. Over the last 40 years, water flows from the Euphrates and Tigris, which provide up to 98% of Iraq's surface water, have decreased by 30-40 percent. The historic marshlands in the south, a natural heritage wonder, are drying up.

Iraq's temperatures are soaring, with the highest of nearly 54°C recorded in Basra. Low river water means seawater is pushing into southern lands, with salination threatening agriculture. The livelihood and even the existence of entire communities are at stake.

It should be noted that Climate change in Iraq not only affects Iraq's agricultural sector but also is a severe threat to fundamental human rights, creates barriers to sustainable development and worsens the country's environmental, security, political, and economic challenges<sup>2</sup>.

Regarding the impact of climate change in Iraq on human rights, according to UNICEF forecast for Iraq is especially worrisome, with only 6% of Iraqi children exposed to severe heatwaves in 2020, the 2050 forecast confirms that every child in Iraq is exposed to frequent extreme heatwaves, longer periods of wave and sharply high temperatures. Millions more children will also be exposed to severe heatwaves and extreme temperatures depending on the degree of global heating reached. 23 countries currently rank among the highest exposure of children to high temperatures and the number will rise to 33 by 2050, of which Iraq will be one.

Currently, 9 out of 10 children in Iraq are exposed to severely high temperatures, and it will only get worse. More children in Iraq will be affected by more severe and more frequent heat waves in the next three decades, threatening their health and safety<sup>3</sup>.

### Government Policies in the Face of Climate Change:

The government of Iraq ratified the Paris Agreement in 2021, and accordingly, the government made many advances in order to improve its response to the effects of climate change by developing strategies for adaptation and mitigation of climate change and its impacts. One of the most prominent drivers of Iraq's desire to obtain climate financing through the Green Climate Fund is linked to fulfilling the conditions stipulated in the Paris Agreement, and this in turn is partly driven by the need to compensate for the loss of income from the drop in oil prices during the "Covid-19" pandemic.

<sup>1</sup> TAHRIR INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY ، استجابة العراق لتغيّر المناخ: القطاع الخاص والمجتمع المدني، 26 مايو 2022،

<https://bit.ly/3zZT4u2>

<sup>2</sup> أخبار الأمم المتحدة، تغير المناخ أكبر تهديد يواجه العراق على الإطلاق، لكن هناك أمل في تغيير مجرى الأمور- مقالة بقلم نائب الممثلة الخاصة في العراق، 13 نوفمبر 2022،

<https://bit.ly/408DwyR>

<sup>3</sup> اليونسيف، تقرير لليونسيف - بحلول عام 2050، سيتعرض كل طفل في العراق لآثار موجات الحر المتكررة، 26 أكتوبر 2022، <https://uni.cf/407gN6d>

Low oil prices aggravated the financial crisis in the country, especially since more than 90% of government budget revenues were previously sourced from the oil sector. In addition, Iraq hopes to attract more foreign investments in clean energy that can also improve agriculture and food production, which is also largely dependent on fossil fuels.

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, Iraq terminated its **previously mentioned nationally determined contribution (NDC) in December 2021**, pledging to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions from 1 to 2% by 2030. The plan also includes reducing emissions by up to 15%, provided there is international technical and financial support, as well as national stability in the political and security sectors. The goals of this plan will focus on the oil, gas, electricity, and transportation sectors that collectively produce 75% of Iraq's total greenhouse gas emissions.

The development of the nationally determined contribution (NDC) will pave the way for investments of up to US\$100 billion to help make the economy unaffected by climate change over the next 10 years, which is an important step forward in enhancing food and water security and to enhance Iraq's ability to endure climate change. **The previous government re-established the Ministry of Environment** after merging it with the Ministry of Health in 2015 to reduce expenditures. Moreover, the previous government is working on the launch of the "Green Paper" that includes defining a concrete climate change strategy.

Despite the government's high-level political support for dealing with the effects of climate change, Iraq still faces many important challenges. These include the inadequate institutional capacity to translate adaptation policies into projects on the ground, insufficient data and analysis on the impacts of climate change on various sectors and societies, weak monitoring and reporting procedures, as well as ineffective financing strategies.

The policies adopted in Iraq's Nationally Determined Contributions related to the provision of food and water emphasize the importance of making these sectors resilient through the development of a comprehensive strategy for water and land that will continue until 2035. Corruption in the allocation and expenditure of budgets and the application of the law impedes the proposed solutions to protect water resources or stop the commercial or private use of agricultural land.

## **Second: Efforts to Achieve Target 13 and to Enhance Climate Action**

Iraq has made efforts to ensure its contribution to the protection of the environment and its resources, and the climate is an essential part of the environment; Therefore, Iraq has taken many measures aimed at reducing climate change, which will naturally affect the reduction of air pollution, water pollution, and soil pollution. In that section, the focus will be on the government's efforts to achieve Target 13 during March, as follows:

<b>Target (1)</b>	<b>Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning</b>
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The Iraqi Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, revealed the preparation of a vision for climate action until the year 2030, while calling on friendly countries and United Nations organizations to support Iraq in facing the effects of climate change. Al-Sudani said in a speech during the opening of the Iraq Climate Conference, which was held in Basra: "We will call for a regional conference to be held in Baghdad soon to enhance cooperation and joint coordination, and exchange experiences and programs among the countries of the region in facing climate impacts." He stressed that the state is continuing to sign contracts to establish power plants from renewable sources to cover a third of our electricity needs by 2030. During the conference, the Prime Minister launched a "major initiative to plant 5 million trees and palm trees in all governorates of Iraq," indicating that "the opening of the Iraq Climate Conference It will establish a new phase to counter the severe effects of climate change on Iraq<sup>4</sup>."

The Iraqi Prime Minister al-Sudani, inaugurated the "**Iraq Climate Conference**", which continues over two days in the city of Basra to discuss the effects of climate change and to find solutions to create a better environment. He stressed that Iraq was suffering from a real water crisis, and there was a need to act on solutions to that crisis, and Iraq could not do so alone. The FAO pointed out that Iraq has witnessed increasing droughts due to high temperatures and low rainfall, as has not happened in 40 years, in addition to the salinity of water and soil; this causes land desertification, loss of livelihoods, and population crises<sup>5</sup>.

<b>Target (2)</b>	<b>Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</b>
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The United Nations stressed that Iraq is suffering from a real water crisis, calling for collective action to find solutions to this crisis. This came in statements made by the United Nations representative in Iraq, Jeanine Plasschaert, according to the official Iraqi News Agency. On the sidelines of the Iraq Climate Conference in Basra Governorate, the UN representative said that "there is an urgent need to find solutions to the water crisis in Iraq and we must all move towards solutions and Iraq cannot do so alone.", and she stressed that Iraq needs the support of international organizations or international financial institutions or neighboring countries and others. She pointed out that many agencies, financing, and programs that aim to help Iraq mitigate the repercussions of climate change and adapt to it<sup>6</sup>.

The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the text of the joint declaration by the European Union and Iraq for the meetings of the third session of the Iraqi-European Cooperation Council held in Brussels on March 19 on sustainable development, green

<sup>4</sup> سكاى نيوز عربية، السوداني يكشف "خطة العراق" لمواجهة التغيرات المناخية، 12 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3zVxcQE>  
<sup>5</sup> القاهرة الإخبارية، "مؤتمر العراق للمناخ" .. مبادرات ورؤى للخروج من أزمة الجفاف، 13 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/41tH8MP>  
<sup>6</sup> سيوتنيك، الأمم المتحدة: العراق يعاني من أزمة مياه حقيقية، 12 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3KUTvw5>



transformation, governance, regional connectivity, and sustainable financing. Within the framework of implementing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed between Iraq and the European Union in 2012, the two sides are working to strengthen and deepen the frameworks of cooperation between them to advance economic reforms and sustainable green transformation. As defined in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the EU and Iraq recall and acknowledge the great importance of sustainable and social development which should go hand in hand with economic development.

The two sides emphasize the need to enhance and strengthen cooperation between them in various areas of common interest, based on the foundations of respect for sovereignty, equality, non-discrimination, the rule of law, good governance, and taking into account environmental conditions and mutual benefit. The two sides also recognize the need for Iraq to support the European Union in its efforts to carry out political reforms and economic rehabilitation. In this regard, Iraq and the European Union recognize the need to address climate change at the global level and in line with their international commitments and the Paris Climate Agreement in particular. Therefore, the two sides are determined to work to achieve the goals of sustainable development as part of those efforts and to make progress in removing carbon emissions in areas of energy and transportation. The two sides consider close cooperation to promote regional networking through digital, energy, and transport networks to promote stability and sustainable peace in the Middle East to be vital<sup>7</sup>.

<b>Target (3)</b>	<b>Improving education, awareness-raising, human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning</b>
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The Ministry of Environment held an educational symposium on the importance of facing the problems of climate change in cooperation with the Department of Relations and Media, the Municipality of Baghdad and the community police in Al-Mutanabi Street in the center of the capital, Baghdad. The Director General of the Environmental Awareness and Media Department, Amir Ali Al-Hassoun, stated in a statement that the aim of holding such seminars and workshops is to consolidate the environmental culture to enhance Iraq's efforts in facing the variations of climate changes and their repercussions, which affect not only the Iraqi environment but also the countries around the world, including the expansion and sustainability of green areas.

He added that the educational symposium, which was held at the Environmental Cultural Center, included important topics and valuable lectures by the Director of the Climate Change Department, Mustafa Mahmoud Mustafa, on the repercussions and causes of global

<sup>7</sup> وكالة تقدم الإخبارية، العراق والاتحاد الأوروبي يطلقان إعلاناً مشتركاً للتعاون في معالجة آثار التغير المناخي، <https://takadum-news.com/archives/155649>

climate changes and the loss of environmental awareness, explaining the framework agreement for climate, indicating the dangers of global warming and climate changes, and the need to preserve and protect the environment<sup>8</sup>.

## **Axis II: Reality of Achieving Target 13 in the Arab Region**

This axis reviews the reality of Target 13 in the Arab countries, by identifying the most prominent governmental efforts that were made to enhance climate action during the month, by classifying those efforts according to the goals followed by the observatory as follows.

<b>Target (1)</b>	<b>Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning</b>
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### **First: North Africa:**

#### **a. Egypt:**

Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, Ministerial Coordinator and Climate Conference Envoy, confirmed that the Egyptian state's hosting of the climate conference was not easy, stressing that it's more difficult to stay on top than to get there, noting that she started working in the Ministry of Environment through the file of international cooperation and work on designing projects. She said that since her assignment to the ministry, work has been done and efforts have been made to change the Egyptian reality, remarkably, the criteria for success are for every Egyptian to speak the language of the environment, and for society to move as a single block when environmental problems occur. This came during a ceremony honoring the World Youth Authority of Dr. Yasmine in recognition of her pioneering role in the success of the climate conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh, and the achievements made during the conference in favor of Egypt, and the internationally and locally acclaimed results<sup>9</sup>.

Dr. Yasmine Fouad, met with Dr. Moawiya Khaled Al-Radaydah, Jordanian Minister of Environment, via video conference, as this comes as a continuation of her recent visit to the State of Jordan, which came in response to the invitation of Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Hussein to lay the foundation for cooperation between the two countries in the field of nature protection. Dr. Yasmine, confirmed that the meeting reviewed the initiative launched by the State of Jordan related to the "climate and refugee interdependence" and some points through which this initiative could be developed to reach Cop28 in the United Arab Emirates, stressing the Egyptian state's keenness to provide all aspects of support to the Jordanian side in This initiative, especially those countries that suffer from the consequences

<sup>8</sup> موازين، البيئة تنظم ورشة عمل حول التغيرات المناخية وتأثيرها على العراق، <https://bit.ly/3mLhHro>  
<sup>9</sup> وزارة البيئة، هيئة الشبان العالمية تكرم وزيرة البيئة والمنسق الوزاري ومبعوث المؤتمر لجهودها في إنجاح مؤتمر المناخ27 cop، 1 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3zfX6hM>



of climate change and the large increase in the number of people due to the waves of climate or political asylum<sup>10</sup>.

Dr. Fouad confirmed that the COP27 Climate Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh was able to communicate the word and voice of the African continent to all countries of the world with its legitimate demands on the issue of climate change, which represents the most important challenges facing the whole world and particularly African States, being among the most vulnerable to climate change, Expressing its sincere thanks and pride to the participating delegations, in particular from the friendly African State, and for cooperation for the success of the Climate Summit, which was held under the presidency of Egypt as one of the countries of the African continent. It is an important global event that we are all proud of our ability to organize efficiently and competently, and she appreciates the great support of the political leadership in the Egyptian state for environmental and climate issues and the strenuous efforts made to the success of this file despite the challenges we are all witnessing.

This came during a speech delivered by Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, at the opening of the first workshop of the Union of State Councils and African Supreme Administrative Courts, entitled "Judicial Trends in Climate Issues", in the presence of His Excellency Counselor Adel Fahim, Chairman of the State Council and President of the Union of African State Councils and Supreme Courts, and the participation of members of the Egyptian State Council, and members of state councils in African countries<sup>11</sup>.

Dr. Fouad, Egyptian Minister of the Environment, Ministerial Coordinator and Envoy to the Climate Conference, and Ms. Steffi Lemke, German Minister of Environment and Nature Protection, led the consultative workshop for the Nature-Based Solutions Initiative (ENACT), via the video converse feature, which was launched at the climate conference cop27, co-chaired by Egypt and Germany and with the participation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Executive Secretary of the initiative, in the presence of a number of countries (Japan, France and Canada) and international organizations such as the United Nations Environment Program to discuss procedures for bringing the initiative into effect and drawing a road map for the initiative to bring it to the next climate conference (COP28), promoting it and expanding its base partners, which was hosted by the Ministry of Environment over two days.

Dr. Fouad, Minister of Environment, praised the efforts made to complete work on the nature-based solutions initiative that was launched at the COP27 climate conference as a milestone towards the COP15 biological diversity conference, and the adoption of the post-2020 biodiversity framework with nature-based solutions at its heart<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> وزارة البيئة، وزيرة البيئة تلقتى نظيرها الأردني لبحث سبل التعاون حول مبادرة اللجوء المناخي العالمية، 2 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3nw7nnh>

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Environment, Minister of Environment participates in the opening of the first workshop of the Union of State Councils and African Supreme Administrative Courts, entitled "Judicial Trends in Climate Cases." March 6, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3zjNQsN>

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Environment hosts the consultative workshop for the ENACT nature-based solutions initiative to put it into effect, March 7, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3Ki2zuM>

Dr. Fouad, Minister of Environment, held a meeting to discuss the latest developments of the first Egyptian company to invest in carbon certificates (EgyCOP), which was launched within the activities of the Climate Conference (COP27), as the first direct investment company operating in voluntary carbon markets. The Minister of Environment stressed the importance of the company in helping Egypt and Africa to achieve a greater role in investing in reducing emissions, especially with Egypt owning a variety of qualified projects that can help reduce carbon emissions in the transport, energy and solid waste sectors. Dr. Fouad, Minister of the Environment, reviewed the Egyptian government's efforts to create a climate supportive of environmental work in Egypt by changing the perception of the environment and climate file and placing it among the state's priorities, and within the framework of the state's direction to support investment and involve the private sector. The Ministry of Environment established the Environmental and Climate Investment Unit with the aim of searching for investment opportunities at various levels from the perspective of the climate change file.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Fouad, Minister of Environment, participated, via video conference, in the high-level panel discussion organized by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program on the occasion of the celebration of International Women's Day, under the title "Best practices in the field of climate, gender and food security from the Middle East and North Africa." The Minister of Environment stressed the importance of creating a supportive climate to empower women to be part of the decision-making process and political and development reforms. In the climate file, the Ministry of Environment was keen to place women at the heart of the goals of the National Strategy for Climate Change 2050, especially women in rural areas and the places most affected by climate change, in addition to enhancing its environmental role in programs and initiatives supporting women, such as Takaful and Karama, and creating job opportunities for them in the field of waste recycling.<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Fouad, Minister of Environment, discussed with Lieutenant General Osama Rabie, Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, ways of joint cooperation in a number of important files related to the environmental dimension and sustainable development goals, in the presence of Dr. Ali Abu Sunna, Head of the Environmental Affairs Agency, and Dr. Atwa Hussein, Advisor to the Chairman of the Authority for Environmental Affairs, in the Guidance Building in Ismailia governorate. The meeting witnessed discussions on ways to enhance the blue economy, and to find out about the developments of the project for the development of Egyptian lakes, in addition to discussing ways to achieve integrated management of coastal areas and solid and liquid waste. For her part, Dr. Fouad, Minister of Environment, stressed the importance of cooperation with the authority in light of the current

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Environment, Minister of Environment Discusses the Latest Developments in Investment in Voluntary Carbon Certificates, March 8, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3zpKep7>

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Environment, Minister of Environment participates in the high-level virtual session on best practices in the Middle East and North Africa on climate, women and food security, March 9, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3ZrFnhN>

changes, especially climate changes, stressing the need to benefit from the support directed to the Ministry of Environment by the World Bank and to cooperate with it in preparing an integrated strategy for the blue economy, including roles and responsibilities, while raising awareness and developing capabilities of the new concept of the blue economy and other related concepts, especially the issue of climate change.<sup>15</sup>

Fouad, Minister of Environment, held a meeting with representatives of the Gold Standard organization concerned with standards for climate practices and sustainable development and the company (MGM) to discuss ways of future cooperation regarding carbon certification, where the Minister of Environment reviewed Egypt's efforts in the climate file at the international level for many years, especially after the Paris Agreement in 2015, at a time when Egypt was chairing the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change and the Conference of African Ministers of the Environment (Amsen), to become a milestone in the preparation of the climate file in Egypt, as Egypt was keen to unify the African position in the climate negotiations so that Africa speaks with one voice, and the launch of the two African initiatives for adaptation and renewable energy, and from here a political commitment fell on Egypt to continue working on the climate file nationally and regionally, and Egypt worked to form a large team of negotiators from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment, with the participation of a number of relevant ministries.

The minister added that 2019 witnessed greater political interest in Egypt in the climate change file, as the National Council for Climate Change was set up under the presidency of the Prime Minister and the membership of the relevant ministries. The National Climate Change Strategy 2050, the updated National Contributions Plan 2030, and a package of projects were prepared, so that the decision to announce the establishment of the voluntary carbon market came in parallel with the work to involve the private sector through a package of green incentives as part of the investment law in 4 areas, namely green hydrogen, renewable energy and waste management, and alternatives to single-use plastic, as each of them is characterized by the existence of a sectorial strategy and action plan, which helps create a supportive environment for the private sector to participate in adaptation and mitigation projects and paves the way for the voluntary carbon market<sup>16</sup>.

Dr. Fouad, Minister of Environment, emphasized that the Ministry of **Environment's launch today of the Environmental and Climate Investment Unit** reflects the long journey of the Ministry of Environment's work, which extends from the nineties until now, during which the Ministry sought to deal with many issues to reduce pollution, preserve natural resources, and implement sustainable development. This came during the Minister of

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<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Environment, Minister of Environment discusses with Lieutenant-General Osama Rabie ways to promote the blue economy and efforts to develop Egyptian lakes, March 16, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3zj1YB>

<sup>16</sup> <https://bit.ly/3nmkEi7>



Environment's speech at the launching ceremony of the Environmental and Climate Investment Unit, which aims to open markets for green investment, which enhances the increase in environmental and climate investments and stimulates private investments in the field of green economy and climate resilience to achieve local strategic goals.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Fouad, Minister of Environment, met with Ghada Wali, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and her accompanying delegation, to discuss the results of the 28<sup>th</sup> Climate Conference, cooperation in the road map to the next Climate Conference 28, and bilateral cooperation in the field of confronting environmental crimes.

At the beginning of the meeting, Ghada Wali, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, congratulated Dr. Fouad on the success of the Climate Conference 27 and the gains achieved from it, and her aspiration to complete cooperation in implementing the conference's initiatives and preparing a road map for the next Climate Conference 28, as well as bilateral cooperation in a number of files, including tracking Waste and its illegal circulation, especially plastic waste, the loss of biodiversity and its impact on the increase of environmental criminal activities in a number of regions such as the African continent and Latin America, and the illegal trade in animals.

Dr. Fouad, Minister of the Environment, reviewed the results of the 27<sup>th</sup> Climate Conference, and the priority topics to work on in preparation for the next Climate Conference 27, which are waste, biodiversity and deforestation, where the minister indicated the possibility of cooperation in advancing the two waste initiatives for Africa 50 by 2050, and nature-based solutions on the way from COP 27 to COP28<sup>18</sup>

### **b. Algeria**

The Minister of Energy and Mines, Mohamed Arkab, participated in the activities of the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of Energy Day, under the slogan "Climate Change, Energy Sobriety and Green Hydrogen". The Minister of Energy, during his speech, also stressed that this edition has become a tradition and a prominent event in the context of promoting exchanges between the higher education sector and various actors in various fields, which is an opportunity to enhance dialogue and debate on topical issues and the challenges facing the country in order to achieve a just and smooth energy transition by providing clean and safe sources of energy. In order to ensure the achievement of its goals aimed at protecting the environment and climate within the framework of sustainable development, while, Arkab indicated, Algeria aims to adapt to the international context and simultaneously responding to the growing demand for energy while contributing to the country's social and economic development,

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<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Environment, Minister of Environment: The unit prepares a supportive environment for environmental and climate investment, to become a basic fabric for the Egyptian market, March 21, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3LY2opI>

<sup>18</sup> The Ministry of Environment, the Minister of Environment discusses with the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ways of bilateral cooperation in a number of joint files and the road map for the COP28 Climate Conference, March 29, 2023 <https://bit.ly/3TXH8SJ>

where these endeavors are based on a voluntary policy aimed at protecting the environment by relying on clean energy technologies.<sup>19</sup>

### c. Morocco

The General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union participated in the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the African Task Force for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was jointly organized by the African Union and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction under the slogan “From Commitment to Implementation”. The meeting was devoted to reviewing the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in Algiers in early October 2022, as well as following up on the implementation of the Sendai Framework (2015-2030), the Nairobi Declaration and the African Common Position for Disaster Risk Reduction at various levels (continental, sub-regional and national).

**The participants were also briefed on the outcomes of the 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties on Climate Change**, as well as future cooperation programs with development partners. The meeting concluded with the adoption of a set of recommendations related to supporting economic groups (UMA + ECCAS) in creating early warning systems for multiple risks and sensitizing the inclusion of the principle of disaster risk reduction in development planning, in addition to working to take into account the mid-term evaluation of the Sendai Framework priorities.<sup>20</sup>

### d. Mauritania

The Minister of Economic Affairs and the Promotion of Productive Sectors signed with the Counselor of the Japanese Ambassador, in charge of a mission at the Japanese Embassy in Mauritania, an exchange of documents related to the Climate Change Adaptation Support Grant, within the framework of the Economic and Social Development Program for the Japanese fiscal year 2022. The grant, whose total cover is up to an amount of 600 million Japanese yen, equivalent to about 151 million new ounces, to ensure sustainable agricultural production and achieve food security, by introducing an agricultural mechanism to respond to the negative effects of climate change on food production.<sup>21</sup>

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in Nouakchott organized **a workshop to launch the preparatory track for the 5<sup>th</sup> national reporting report on climate change**, in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The one-day workshop aims to set a directive framework for action over the next three years, assess Mauritania's vulnerability to climate change, and put forward national contributions to emissions reduction and mitigation efforts that are included in the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

<sup>19</sup> An-Nahar, Minister of Energy: Algeria is making great efforts to reduce emissions, March 4, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3nLNfh1>

<sup>20</sup> Arab Maghreb Union, General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union participates in the 19th meeting of the African Task Force for Disaster Risk Reduction, Malabo, March 23, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3KjWVa9>

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Promotion of Productive Sectors, Signing a Grant Agreement between Mauritania and Japan to support adaptation to climate change, March 14, 2023, <https://www.economie.gov.mr/ar/node/192>

The person in charge of a mission in the ministry, during a speech on the occasion, explained that the problem of climate change is a reality, "as climate change is a major global problem that disrupts the balance of the ecosystem and disrupts the tranquility of plant and animal biodiversity, causing huge losses and damage to human lives and natural resources of immeasurable value. He also pointed out that climate experts recommend taking global measures to meet the challenge of significantly reducing cumulative emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, noting that Mauritania is one of the countries most vulnerable to future impacts of climate change.<sup>22</sup>

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, discussed with the President of Mauritania, Mohamed Weld Sheikh Al-Ghazwani, the course of relations and opportunities for their development. This came during the reception of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, Mauritanian President Mohamed Weld Sheikh Al-Ghazwani, who is on a working visit to the UAE. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the course of bilateral relations in various fields and opportunities for their development and expansion of their horizons, especially economic, trade, investment and development in order to achieve the common interests of the two countries and the aspirations of their peoples.

The President of the UAE and the President of Mauritania also discussed a number of regional and international issues and files of common concern, and they exchanged views on them. On the other hand, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, witnessed the signing of the Climate Neutral Governments Charter 2050 in the UAE. This comes within the framework of the UAE's efforts to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 through the integration of plans with the goals of the national path for climate neutrality, which was launched within the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This came on the sidelines of the cabinet meeting, in the presence of Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Presidential Court. The charter aims to support the UAE's efforts in mitigating the repercussions of climate change and enhancing its adaptive capabilities with the aim of reaching global and regional leadership, and continuing its commitment to achieving the climate ambition declared in the national path of climate neutrality and determining nationally determined contributions through the development of action plans, policies and strategies for climate action in transportation, construction, industry and other strategic sectors, provided that they include the axes for measuring and monitoring the

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<sup>22</sup> Mauritania Now, the launch of a workshop dedicated to the promotion of local mining content in Mauritania, March 16, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3zLUcS9>



amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the Emirate, identifying the activities and procedures that generate those emissions generated in the Emirate, and developing systems and mechanisms for follow-up monitoring the progress achieved.<sup>23</sup>

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ms. Lalia Kamra, oversaw the addition of Mauritania's voice to the Climate Response Initiative for Lasting Peace. This initiative, which was launched by the Egyptian Presidency on the sidelines of the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties on Climate, in cooperation with the African Union and the United Nations Development Program, aims to integrate climate finance into peace control financing networks and integrate adaptation into conflict prevention programs and strategies in order to take consider the overlap between climate change and conflict.<sup>24</sup>

## **Second: The Arabian Gulf:**

### **a. UAE:**

His Excellency Dr. Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, Special Envoy of the UAE for Climate Change, and President-designate of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), concluded his visit to the United States with a meeting with His Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, He also held close discussions with other key stakeholders in climate action at the United Nations.

During his meeting with Guterres, he affirmed the UAE's commitment to deepening ways of cooperation with the United Nations on climate action in light of the preparations for the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), which the UAE will host from 30 November to December 12, 2023, in Dubai.

For his part, Guterres affirmed his deep appreciation for the cooperation of the UAE presidency of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) and accepted the invitation of the designated president to attend the work of the conference in the UAE. In a related context, Al-Jaber identified the main priorities of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) in the UAE, which are: mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to the effects of climate change, loss and damage resulting from the effects of climate change, financing climate action projects, and innovation of operations. In this regard, the two sides discussed the urgent need to bridge the funding gap and keep the goal of reducing global warming to 1.5°C in place. For her part, Her Excellency Ambassador Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the UAE to the United Nations, stressed during the meeting the necessity of coordinating the agendas and the results of the work of the United Nations General

<sup>23</sup> Al-Sharq, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the President of Mauritania, talks to enhance joint cooperation and opportunities for its development, <https://bit.ly/43kXoSn>

<sup>24</sup> Al-Akhbari, Mauritania joins the climate response initiative for lasting peace, <https://bit.ly/3K1Bu8L>

Assembly and the Conference of the Parties (COP28) and each of them reinforces the work of the other<sup>25</sup>.

The UAE works to achieve a balance between development and environmental sustainability, as this balance is the main pillar of all social, economic, and environmental development plans, which makes the UAE among the largest countries in the world investing in clean and renewable energy projects, with the vision and directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the State And His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, may God protect him, the UAE has set ambitious plans that have strengthened its global position in finding effective solutions that address climate change by reducing carbon emissions, as it was the first country in the region The Middle East and North Africa launches a strategic initiative to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, Managing Director and CEO of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority said: “In Dubai, we are moving forward in the areas of sustainability, innovation, and future-making in all our projects and initiatives to achieve the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030, the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050, and the carbon neutrality strategy. 2050 the Emirate of Dubai to provide 100% of clean energy by 2050, with a focus on innovation and disruptive technologies for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digital transformation, and the circular economy, as key enablers for achieving sustainability<sup>26</sup>.

Vice President of the UAE, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, witnessed the signing of the Climate Neutral Governments Charter 2050 in the United Arab Emirates. This step, which came on the sidelines of the cabinet meeting, comes within the framework of the UAE's efforts to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 by integrating plans with the goals of the national path for climate neutrality, which was launched within the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

To achieve the ambitious goal, the government of the United Arab Emirates represented by the Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment, and the governments of the seven emirates of the country will work in effective cooperation within the axes of planning, harmonizing, and adopting an approach of excellence in implementing and following up initiatives and measures to mitigate the repercussions of climate change on biodiversity, the environment, biosecurity, and public health, to ensure prosperity economic and social.

<sup>25</sup> وزارة الخارجية والتعاون الدولي، معالي الدكتور سلطان الجابر يلتقي بالأمين العام وشركاء الأمم المتحدة الرئيسيين بشأن رفع تطلعات العمل المناخي العالمي، 11 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3ZTmOmQ>

<sup>26</sup> البيان، الإمارات تتصدى للتغير المناخي بخطط فاعلة ومبادرات مستدامة، 13 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/40JXst3>

Based on the charter, and with the aim of supporting the country's efforts to mitigate the repercussions of climate change and enhance its adaptive capabilities with the aim of reaching global and regional leadership, today the governments of the seven emirates announce their continued commitment to achieving the climate ambition declared in the national path of climate neutrality, and the determination of nationally determined contributions through Develop action plans, policies and strategies for climate action in the transportation, construction, industry, and other strategic sectors<sup>27</sup>.

Sultan Ahmed Al-Jab, UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology, President-designate of the Conference of the Parties (COP28), stressed that the world needs to expand energy production from all available emissions-free sources while reducing the emissions of all other energy sources. These words were during the opening speech of the Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology in the UAE during the Copenhagen Ministerial Conference on Climate Change, who co-chaired with the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the (COP27) Conference, Sameh Shoukry; and Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy Dan Jorgensen<sup>28</sup>.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Chairman of the Supreme National Committee to supervise preparations for the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), announced the first activities of COP28, organized by the conference presidency and led by young people at Dubai Expo City on March 15th. Abdullah said UAE adopts a people-centered future vision, focusing on climate action.

As the host country to COP28, it allocates significant resources at all levels of government and leads a transparent, innovative climate process that includes all key stakeholders and communities – particularly youth – to contribute to putting practical solutions on the Conference agenda "

This event is an important milestone towards COP28, as the "Road to COP28" with the conference's endeavor to promote and accelerate global climate action through the cooperation of all stakeholders and all segments of society to achieve the pledges the world has made for future generations.

The "Road to COP28" event sheds light on the priorities and principles of COP28 through a diverse program of interactive activities with the participation of more than 3,000 people, including youth joining the national service, youth climate activists, people of determination, senior citizens, and others. Many senior government officials and

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<sup>27</sup> سكاى نيوز عربية، محمد بن راشد يشهد توقيع ميثاق حكومات الحياد المناخي 2050، 6 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3ZUPL1M>  
<sup>28</sup> المصري اليوم، الإمارات: نعمل على التوسع في إنتاج مصادر الطاقة الخالية من الانبعاثات، 21 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3UjFmMr>



ambassadors of brotherly and friendly countries to the UAE will also attend the event, in addition to the COP28 leadership team.<sup>29</sup>

### **b. Saudi Arabia:**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has always taken the lead in many areas of concern to humanity and affects their lives, including environmental issues and climate change, combating climate change, and addressing environmental challenges. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shares the growing environmental challenges it faces due to population growth and the acceleration of the industrial, economic, urban, and agricultural pace. It has striven to reduce the causes of climate change and to fulfill its commitment to international standards and agreements within the framework of international programs emanating from specialized organizations, including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change aimed at avoiding dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

Sensing the importance of regional and international solidarity and synergy to enhance global climate action and reduce carbon emissions, thus contributing to improving the quality of life and preparing a better future for future generations; The "Saudi Green Initiative" and the "Green Middle East Initiative" were launched to draw the direction of the Kingdom and the region in protecting land and nature and put them in a road map with clear and ambitious landmarks, as they contribute to achieving global goals<sup>30</sup>.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the European Union discussed ways to enhance cooperation in renewable energy on the sidelines of a meeting that included the Saudi Minister of Energy and senior officials from the European Commission in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. In this regard, the meeting reviewed cooperation relations in energy, renewable energy, and clean hydrogen, in addition to discussions on climate change issues and historical relations between the two countries, while discussing developments in the global energy market.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia also reviewed its efforts in clean energy technologies, managing hydrocarbon emissions, and renewable energy sources to convey attempts to lead the transformation through the Saudi Green Initiative and the Green Middle East Initiative. This bilateral meeting was part of Saudi Arabia's preparation for the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP28, in Dubai<sup>31</sup>.

The "Green Tent" of the "A Flower Every Spring" program discussed the environmental challenges resulting from climate change and global warming in the Middle East and the Arab region in the presence of experts and those interested in environmental affairs from Qatar and many Arab countries. Environmental experts said during the

<sup>29</sup> صدی البلد، الإمارات تبدأ أولى خطوات فعاليات مؤتمر المناخ «COP 28»، 12 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3ZVD7jf>

<sup>30</sup> الهيئة الوطنية للإعلام، السعودية المملكة ترسخ ريادتها العالمية في مكافحة القضايا والتغيرات المناخية، 21 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3Kks25G>

<sup>31</sup> المتداول العربي، السعودية تتجه لتعزيز علاقاتها مع الاتحاد الأوروبي بمجال الطاقة المتجددة اقرأ المزيد عن السعودية تتجه لتعزيز علاقاتها مع الاتحاد الأوروبي بمجال الطاقة المتجددة، 6 مارس 2023، <https://t.ly/OsoLU>

symposium under the title "Climate Summits and Confronting Climate Change" that rising temperatures are the greatest danger in climate change, attributing the reason for this to human activities and the increasing pace of industrial operations, pointing out that industrial activity was reflected in the increase in emissions Of greenhouse gases, which resulted in floods, droughts, heat, and loss of biological balance.

They stressed that Qatar is one of the first countries to develop a plan to confront climate change based on a set of points, including setting plans to monitor air quality, establishing a national database for biodiversity, strengthening national, regional, and international strategic partnerships, monitoring the quality of seawater and beaches, and promoting sustainability, environmental awareness, rehabilitation of polluted sites, and technical handling of hazardous waste<sup>32</sup>.

The Minister of Environment and Climate Change in the State of Qatar, Sheikh Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed bin Ali Al Thani, received in his office Professor Ibrahim Adam Ahmed Al-Dakhiri, Director General of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development. During the meeting, they discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, the ministry's strategy, and plan. The two sides agreed to sign a protocol or agreement that includes many programs and projects that will be implemented in cooperation between the ministry and the organization in the fields of climate, wildlife, drought, and dust storms<sup>33</sup>.

Based on the Central Bank of Egypt's strategy to promote sustainability, sustainable financing and support green economy trends with achieving sustainable development goals and the state's plan towards a healthy clean climate free of carbon emissions, in light of this, (QNB) Al Ahly, one of the largest private sector banks in Egypt, announced the launch of The first green retail financing program in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and with the support of the European Union and the Green Climate Fund. The new program allows its customers to benefit from 10% cashback on retail banking facilities such as cash loans when purchasing energy-saving and environmentally friendly products based on sustainability. QNB Al Ahly is the first bank in Egypt to offer EBRD financing to individuals, in addition to existing agreements that develop green projects, energy efficiency, water efficiency, renewable energy, and resource efficiency, which will promote the use of high-performance technologies and services in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities and assist in the transition to a green economy in Egypt; the program is the first include retail and residential sector<sup>34</sup>.

### c. Bahrain:

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<sup>32</sup> الشرق، الخيمة الخضراء تناقش التغيرات المناخية بالمنطقة العربية، 29 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3KK0N5O>

<sup>33</sup> جامعة الدول العربية المنظمة العربية للتنمية الزراعية، معالي المدير العام ومعالي وزير البيئة والتغير المناخي في دولة قطر يتفقان على توقيع إتفاقية تشمل عدداً من البرامج والمشروعات، <https://bit.ly/3ZNoG0E>

<sup>34</sup> QNB ، QNB الأهلي يطلق أول برنامج للتجزئة الخضراء، 29 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3KHLmuQ>

The delegation of the Parliamentary Division affirmed the keenness of the Kingdom of Bahrain to make the issue of climate change a firm commitment by taking several administrative and legislative measures and measures to improve environmental protection nationally and to develop ways to deal with environmental challenges and climate changes, within the framework of the interest and directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the great King of the country, may God preserve and protect him, and His Majesty's constant keenness on the Kingdom's support for international efforts in confronting climate change, following up on UN resolutions and recommendations of climate conferences, supporting them and contributing to achieving their goals, during the participation of the delegation of the Parliamentary Division of the Kingdom of Bahrain in the meeting of the Permanent Committee for Sustainable Development held as part of the 146th Assembly's work in Manama from 11 to 15 March, which touched on parliamentary efforts to achieve a negative carbon balance in forests and the importance of international cooperation and parliaments to achieve negative carbon balances, forests and their direct impact on the climate change crisis, where the delegation of the Division was represented by MP Hassan Ibrahim Hassan and MP Munir Ibrahim Sorour.

The delegation of the Parliamentary Division stated that the issue of climate change and environmental sustainability enjoys continuous follow-up by the esteemed government headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister may God protect him. The national economy within the framework of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, by placing clean, green, and sustainable growth as its main pillars and adopting many programs and initiatives aimed at reaching zero neutrality by 2060, along with a set of interim and short-term goals to achieve this important goal, including Reducing carbon emissions by 30 percent by 2035 AD, to face the challenges of climate change and protect the environment, to achieve a green economy and to ensure an environment that promotes sustainable development for the benefit of future generations<sup>35</sup>.

Abdullah bin Faisal bin Jabor Al-Dossary, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Brussels, met with Mr. Anthony Agota, Diplomatic Adviser to the Vice-President of the European Commission, Commissioner for European Green Agreement Affairs and Climate Change Policies, at the headquarters of the European Commission in the Belgian capital, Brussels. During the meeting, His Excellency gave an overview of the efforts of the Kingdom of Bahrain in confronting climate change, reviewing the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain to reach zero neutrality by 2060 and reduce emissions by 30% by 2035, stressing the interest of the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, in presenting initiatives and legislation aimed at preserving the environment and combating climate

<sup>35</sup> وكالة أنباء البحرين، وفد "الشعبة البرلمانية": مملكة البحرين حريصة على اتخاذ الإجراءات والتدابير التنظيمية والتشريعية لاستدامة البيئة ومواجهة تغير المناخ، 12 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/41ehXhc>



change, and the Kingdom of Bahrain's readiness to cooperate with the European Union to achieve climate goals<sup>36</sup>.

The Ministry of Oil and Environment confirmed that the Kingdom of Bahrain has achieved many accomplishments in the fields of reducing carbon emissions and adapting to the phenomenon of climate change in the year 2022, which were reviewed on the sidelines of the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27). In its response to the parliamentary question submitted, the Ministry indicated that a plan has been developed to implement the goal of doubling afforestation by 2035. The total number of trees planted in the various governorates of the Kingdom of Bahrain has been surpassed by the interim target set for the 2022 year, as 150,000 trees have been planted in the various governorates of the Kingdom of Bahrain, after it was announced that it would plant 140,000 trees, which means an additional 10,000 trees have been cultivated with the support and participation of various entities and sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The ministry indicated that the implementation of the national plan for afforestation is being completed in coordination with the concerned authorities and with the contribution of various sectors from the Kingdom of Bahrain. The plan targets the planting of specific species for which a list has been prepared, which are trees with shade, which contribute to carbon dioxide absorption, don't consume much water, and don't adversely affect infrastructure. Afforestation is a nature-based solution that contributes to mitigating emissions as well as adapting to the effects of climate change such as rising temperatures<sup>37</sup>.

The delegation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), headed by His Excellency Mariam bint Mohammed Al Muhairi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, concluded a visit to the Sultanate of Oman to discuss opportunities for cooperation between the two countries in several areas, including fish farming, the strategic initiative of the State to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, mangrove planting and Preparing for the UAE's hosting of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28).

Her Excellency Maryam Al Muhairi confirmed that the official visit to the sisterly Sultanate of Oman came to highlight several common aspects in environmental work, especially in the field of mangrove cultivation and achieving climate neutrality, in addition to discussing the field of cooperation with the UAE's readiness to host the COP28 conference later this year<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> الوطن، سفير البحرين في بروكسل يجتمع مع المفوضية الأوروبية المعنية بشؤون الاتفاقية الأوروبية الخضراء وسياسات تغير المناخ، 28 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3UnWct2>

<sup>37</sup> البلاد، البحرين حققت إنجازات عديدة بمجال تخفيف الانبعاثات الكربونية والتكيف مع ظاهرة تغير المناخ، 21 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/43kIY4s>

<sup>38</sup> البيان، الإمارات وسلطنة عُمان توقعان مذكرة تفاهم في المجال البيئي، 5 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3nWshw9>

#### d. Oman:

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated in the “Raisina Dialogue” conference held in the Indian capital, New Delhi, as part of its participation in the meetings of the Group of Twenty (G20). The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman was represented by His Excellency Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Minister of Foreign Affairs. His Excellency spoke at a panel discussion entitled “A Zone of Opportunities: From the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea,” which addressed the challenges and opportunities for the region regarding energy dynamics, climate change, and regional and international cooperation.

In his speech, His Excellency addressed the geopolitical importance of the Middle East region and what the transition from an economy that relies on fossil energy sources of oil and gas to a modern economy that relies on renewable, clean energy, and innovation. One of the promising opportunities for the region and the world through constructive cooperation between various countries, organizations and research institutions. He stressed the importance of intensifying international efforts to deal with the challenges of climate change to reduce carbon emissions, invest in renewable energy and green hydrogen, and encourage innovation in this regard to achieve growth and stability. He called on all to take advantage of the great and promising opportunities offered by the renewable energy sector Provides facilities to attract investments in it. The conference was attended by His Excellency Ambassador Issa bin Saleh Al Shaibani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman accredited to the Republic of India; His Excellency Pankaj Khimji, Advisor for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and the main coordinator of the Sultanate of Oman’s participation in the G20 meetings; His Excellency Ambassador Khalid bin Hashel Al Muslehi, Head of the Minister’s Office Department, and a number of officials<sup>39</sup>.

#### Levant states:

##### a. Jordan:

Jordan launched **86 green growth projects** to protect the environment directly or indirectly, as part of the Kingdom's efforts to confront climate change, through a package of basic laws, support, regulations, and instructions. Jordan is steadfastly confronting this change, and its effects are becoming evident on human beings daily, as well as on agriculture and biodiversity as a whole.

**A national committee for climate change** has been formed, chaired by the Minister of Environment and a number of Secretaries-General of the relevant institutions, the Greater Amman Municipality, and the Aqaba Economic Zone, which in turn developed a national climate change adaptation plan in 2021 and raised the proportion of renewables targeted in

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<sup>39</sup> عمان، سلطنة عمان تؤكد على مواجهة تحديات تغير المناخ في مؤتمر «حوار رابسينا»، 3 مارس 2023، <http://bitly.ws/CINK>

its energy mix for 2025 to 20 percent, It is higher than the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) average of 10 percent. The Council of Ministers approved the National Climate Change Policy for the years 2022-2050, which was prepared by the National Committee in line with international trends toward equivalent emissions by 2050.

The Ministry of Environment coordinates the national measures aimed at predicting climate change, inventorying for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and according to the Environmental Protection, which, under Environmental Protection Law No. 6 of 2017, is responsible for following up the implementation of the provisions of any environmental convention to which the Kingdom is a party, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Convention. Jordan has doubled its goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 31 percent by 2030 by increasing projects in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, transitioning to electric and public transportation, increasing efforts to establish an integrated waste management system, and approving Jordan's Green Growth National Action Plan for the six main sectors: water, transportation, energy, agriculture, tourism, waste, and setting 86 actions at an estimated cost of \$1.800 million<sup>40</sup>.

Jordan Kuwait Bank announced the issuance of the first green bond in Jordan in the amount of \$50 million, opening the gateway to the issuance of more green bonds in Jordan, which aims to unleash financing for Jordan's economic transformation into a green economy, develop the capital market for green financing, and promote financing for environmentally friendly sustainable projects, and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and create financing opportunities for new projects and works that will contribute to reducing the unemployment rate.

This release of Jordan's first Green Bond came in line with the vision of economic modernization and Green Growth National Action Plan (2021-2025) for Agriculture, Energy, Tourism, Transport, Waste, and Water, where these plans were developed to expand Jordan's climate ambitions and sustainable development by integrating the Green Growth and Climate Change Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals into sectoral frameworks, and the issuance is in line with the Principles of Green Bonds issued by the International Capital Markets Association (ICMA) which identifies best practices when issuing green bonds and especially about disclosures and transparency<sup>41</sup>.

#### **b. Lebanon:**

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), launched the fourth national report on climate change for Lebanon. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of climate change-causing greenhouse gases in Lebanon,

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<sup>40</sup> الغد، الأردن يواجه التغير المناخي بـ86 مشروعاً للنمو الأخضر، 30 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3KW5aLg>

<sup>41</sup> البنك الأردني الكويتي، البنك الأردني الكويتي يصدر أول سند أخضر في الأردن، 12 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3KDjDtV>

vulnerabilities, and climate forecasts, and highlights the urgent need to take appropriate action to address the challenges of climate change in Lebanon.

The report is a source of information for future decisions and actions to address the effects of climate change, providing a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing Lebanon. Climate change affects all countries, including Lebanon, as evidenced by the country's changing climate patterns, rising sea levels, and the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters. In recent years, Lebanon has faced severe droughts, forest fires, floods, and heat waves, all of which have had significant economic, social, and environmental impacts, adding further challenges to worsening crises. As a result, climate change has become a pressing issue requiring urgent attention from policymakers, experts, and citizens alike. The launch of the Fourth National Report on Climate Change marks a milestone in Lebanon's efforts to tackle the climate crisis.

The report was officially submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2022 with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the report provides an overview of Lebanon's greenhouse gas emissions, generated mostly by the energy and transport sectors, which represent 80% of Lebanon's emissions decreased by 7% between 2018 and 2019, mainly due to a reduction in fossil fuel consumption following complex crises. While further cuts to 2020-2021 are expected, these predictions are yet to be validated. The report also confirms that Lebanon's climate is constantly changing, with the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events increasing, temperatures rising by 4.9 degrees Celsius, and rainfall falling by up to 22% by 2100<sup>42</sup>.

The Minister of the Environment in the caretaker government, Nasser Yassin, confirmed that "climate change is occurring, and its effects are frightening and will compound the current crisis, and dealing with it by sectors, ministries and NGOs should be more serious". During a conference titled "The National Dialogue on Climate Change", he indicated that climate hazards and their impacts are real, but that if we do not approach them seriously, they will have serious implications for agricultural and food security, as rising temperatures, droughts, and heat waves will greatly affect crops, especially as the Bekaa Valley and other internal agricultural areas will be more vulnerable<sup>43</sup>.

Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon signed a memorandum of understanding in Syria to achieve regional agricultural economic integration, the memorandum includes the promotion and development of agricultural cooperation, both plant and animal; the exchange of experiences, information, and successful agricultural experiences; and the management of reserves and parks among the four countries; the memorandum also includes cooperation in firefighting, climate change, rural development, agricultural extension, production, animal

<sup>42</sup> UNDP، إطلاق التقرير الوطني الرابع حول تغير المناخ للبنان من قبل برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي ووزارة البيئة، 8 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3mAQzLR>  
<sup>43</sup> النشرة، ياسين: التغير المناخي يحصل وتأثيراته مخيفة وستضاعف من أزماتنا الحالية، 22 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3MIBySW>



health, and veterinary medicines. The Jordanian Minister of Agriculture, Khaled Al-Hanifat, called for wider cooperation within an Arab framework to include more Arab countries, noting that this will have a positive impact on food security and Arab citizens. Jordan has a rich experience in the agricultural sector, although it is the poorest in water, it is the most applied technology in the agricultural sector, and this experience is harnessed and prepared to serve everyone in the Arab countries, Hanifat said, Jordan could contribute to supporting the agricultural sector in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq<sup>44</sup>.

### c. Palestine:

The Environmental Quality Authority held a meeting of members of the National Climate Change Committee in Ramallah in the presence of the Head of the Environmental Quality Authority Nisreen Al-Tamimi and the participation of Stefan Imblad, Director and Resident Representative of the World Bank in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. She noted that this is the first meeting of the National Climate Change Committee this year to share with you a picture of developments and achievements in the climate change profile and the phases of the preparation of the report on climate change and development in Palestine, which is being prepared by the World Bank for presentation at the 28th Conference of the Parties to be held in the United Arab Emirates. She said climate change is a collective responsibility and we as the Environmental Quality Authority, act as facilitators and a national central point with climate funds to help implement the NDC and the various implementation plans of different sectors such as energy, agriculture, and water, which requires teamwork to implement them<sup>45</sup>.

### Fourth: East Africa:

#### a. Somalia:

His Excellency Sheikh Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed Al Thani, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, met with HE Mrs. Khadija Mohamed Al-Makhzoumi, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of the Federal Republic of Somalia, who is currently visiting the country and her accompanying delegation. The meeting reviewed ways to strengthen cooperation between the State of Qatar and the Somali Republic, particularly in the areas of the environmental sector, and to enhance the use of successful experiences in both countries to preserve the environment and achieve sustainable development. The meeting was attended from the Qatari side by a number of assistant undersecretaries and directors of departments at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.

Her Excellency Khadija Mohammed Al-Makhzoumi, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of the Federal Republic of Somalia, visited the Environmental Data Monitoring and Analysis Unit, where Eng. Hassan Al Qasimi, Director of the Environmental Monitoring and Inspection Department at the Ministry, provided a detailed explanation of

<sup>44</sup> اليوم السابع، توقيع مذكرة تفاهم أردنية عراقية سورية لبنانية لتحقيق تكامل اقتصادي، 27 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/414VuDV>  
<sup>45</sup> وطن، سلطة جودة البيئة تعقد اجتماعا لأعضاء اللجنة الوطنية لتغير المناخ بمشاركة البنك الدولي، 1 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/43tBe05>

the unit, which consists of 40 fixed and mobile stations spread in various regions. Country. The visit also included a tour of "Bin Ghannam" Island in the Al Zhakhira Reserve. During the visit, she learned about the efforts of the State of Qatar in developing the island as a natural reserve, and methods for preserving the mangroves and the biodiversity of the island. During the visit, Her Excellency released young grouper and humor fish, and planted a number of mangroves<sup>46</sup>.

<b>Target (2):</b>	<b>Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries</b>
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## First: North Africa

### A. Egypt:

Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, held an expanded meeting with the World Bank mission to discuss the results of the mission's visit to follow up on the implementation of the Greater Cairo Air Pollution and Climate Change Management project, the country environmental analysis report, and the activities of the Bank's Blue Economy Fund (ProBLUE FUND). Yasmine Fouad affirmed her appreciation for the World Bank's continuous support to the environment sector in Egypt, especially in the period of preparation for the Climate Conference (COP27) and beyond. The minister heard the latest developments in the components of the Greater Cairo Air Pollution and Climate Change Management Project, the evaluation of the stages of implementation and the challenges and obstacles they face. The bank representatives thanked the Ministry of Environment and its team for the continuous support and constructive cooperation to ensure continuity of work and overcoming problems, expressing their hope for continued cooperation. The meeting dealt with discussing the current status of the implementation of the first component of the Greater Cairo Air Pollution Management Project and Climate Change, which is concerned with air pollution, the progress made in the action plan to come up with and the completion of the necessary studies, and the part of consultants for component projects, with emphasis on the use of a mixture of international and national consultants.<sup>47</sup>

Egypt and the countries of the world participated in the global initiative to turn off the lights "Earth Hour", which comes this year under the slogan "It's time for nature", where a number of citizens, authorities and tourist attractions turn off unnecessary lights and electrical appliances and light candles for an hour from 8:30 to 9:30 pm on Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with the aim of drawing everyone's attention to the seriousness of excessive energy consumption and its negative effects on the planet, causing climate change and global

<sup>46</sup> وكالة الأنباء القطرية، وزير البيئة والتغير المناخي يجتمع مع نظيرته الصومالية، 1 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3KWqe4j>

<sup>47</sup> Ministry of Environment, Minister of Environment reviews the latest developments in the Air Pollution and Climate Change Management Project in Greater Cairo, the Country Environmental Analysis Report and the activities of the Blue Economy Fund, March 14, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3KmSAEE>

warming, and encouraging them to adopt positive behaviors aimed at preserving the environment and the planet to ensure a sustainable environment and future.

Yasmine Fouad, Minister of the Environment, explained that this initiative is an annual global event organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Egypt began its participation in Earth Hour in 2009, to join the ranks of 88 countries, 4,000 cities, and 929 famous landmarks around the world that turned off their lights during Earth Hour, in solidarity with the planet to protect it from the effects of climate change and adapt to these changes. Egypt is one of the first Arab countries to participate in the initiative; the number of participants worldwide has reached more than 3.5 billion people.

The Minister of Environment added that coordination is taking place with a number of ministries, governorates, government agencies and agencies at the level of the Republic to participate in this event by turning off the lights of a number of important tourist attractions, with the aim of enhancing awareness of the importance of taking positive and serious steps to reduce consumption rates and stop the waste of resources by changing our daily practices to reduce environmental impacts, which contributes to reducing the level of carbon emissions, which is one of the biggest challenges facing the world<sup>48</sup>.

The Chief of Staff of the House of Representatives in Libya stressed that climate change has become the most important and urgent global issue that has transcended borders and has become a direct threat to humanity in the continuation of life, stressing that climate justice and equity between generations is a central issue for achieving all our national goals and aspirations, adding that environmental issues have implications on all social, economic and security policies and that the issue of climate change requires a degree of long-term planning to access the information and data that parliaments need due to its impact on the living environment, human health and food security.

During the meeting of the Assembly of Secretaries-General of National Parliaments members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the Bahraini capital, Manama, he also stressed that it is necessary to put in place appropriate measures and mechanisms and form frameworks for policies that enhance the role of parliaments to contribute to combating climate change, and that the task of parliaments lies in carrying out their legislative, oversight and representative roles, where parliaments can contribute to combating climate change by being an essential part of the process of developing strategies from the outset, following up on the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as supporting climate-related legislative processes to achieve the goals of sustainable development in all its dimensions and holding governments accountable for their national, regional and international commitments on climate change, by creating mechanisms to ensure effective oversight and accountability while strengthening the role of parliaments in

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<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Environment, Egypt participates with the world in the global initiative “Earth Hour” for the year 2023, March 25, 2023, <https://bit.ly/42QZyc4>

particular towards proposing, reviewing, amending, and monitoring the effective implementation of climate legislation and enabling parliamentary committees to contribute to the preparation of studies and reviewing legislative policies related to climate and strengthening the legislative response at the national level and harmonizing it with international agreements in this regard, with strong parliamentary cooperation to find international solutions that guarantee the ability of all countries to face challenges<sup>49</sup>.

### **b. Morocco**

The Minister of Equipment and Water, Nizar Baraka, confirmed that Morocco, which calls for governance in the management of water resources, is greatly concerned with the challenges of climate change. Mr. Baraka, during his intervention at the presentation ceremony of a guide on the integration of climate change in the management of water resources at the level of a water basin, which was carried out by the UNESCO Office in the Maghreb, highlighted the challenges related to the problem of over-exploitation and scarcity of water resources.

He recalled that King Mohammed VI, in his royal speech on the occasion of the opening of the first session of the second legislative year of the 11th legislative mandate, stressed the importance of water resources as a basic lever for the development of productive sectors, and the need to strengthen the water management framework to ensure its sustainability on the one hand, and to keep pace with the agricultural sector and labor effectively to achieve a green take-off that is able to resist climate changes on the other hand. The Minister also praised this initiative taken by UNESCO, referring to the problem related to the impact of climate change on water resources in Morocco. In this regard, he mentioned the procedures taken by the Kingdom to take into account climate change in water policy and the efforts made to adapt the water sector to these repercussions.<sup>50</sup>

Morocco has risen to seventh place in the world in the **Climate Change Performance Index** known as "CCPI" for 2023, which evaluates the performance of climate protection in 59 countries and compares them on the basis of unified criteria. According to the index data, Morocco rose to the seventh place in the world, one place ahead of the previous report, to be ranked among the top ten high-performing countries for this year, where the Kingdom, as in the past two years, recorded high rates in three main categories, which are "greenhouse gas emissions", energy use", and climate policy.<sup>51</sup>

Participants, in a **consultative workshop on climate action in Morocco**, stressed that mitigation and adaptation have become a top priority to face the various impacts of climate change in Morocco. During this workshop, which discusses the issue of climate change awareness, education and the involvement of decision-makers and officials at the local and

<sup>49</sup> Al-Hadath, Al-Fadhil: The Libyan Parliament has taken important steps to combat climate change, <https://libyaalhadath.net/?p=155672>

<sup>50</sup> MAP, Water Resources.. Morocco is highly concerned with the challenges of climate change (Mr. Baraka), March 17, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3UABQxb>

<sup>51</sup> Climate change performance... Morocco rises to 7th place globally, March 14, 2023, <https://bit.ly/41a9oUS>



national levels for a more resilient society, the participants stressed the need to develop appropriate strategies based on scientific information to confront the growing vulnerability in Morocco due to the effects of global warming. They recorded that this global warming has become a reality that must be adapted to, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to its effects, in addition to good communication on this problem to reduce its harmful effects on the most vulnerable population.

On this occasion, Fatima Driouech, Vice-Chair of the First Working Group of the Group of Governmental Experts on Climate Evolution, presented an overview of the effects of climate change in Morocco, especially on the most vulnerable sectors, referring to agriculture, water, fisheries, forests and health, calling for the adoption of approaches and the strategies that include climate change as a risk factor. Driouech stressed the importance of adopting effective methods of adaptation to reduce the risks related to climate change, integrating early warning systems, in addition to strengthening the capabilities of decision-makers in managing risks and sharing knowledge.<sup>52</sup>

### c. Tunisia

Tunisia is **experiencing climatic changes** that have caused the disappearance of many beaches due to erosion factors, which directly threaten the tourism sector. Tourists go to Tunisia for the beauty of its beaches and white sand dunes, but due to climate changes, the shape of these beaches has changed and their size has shrunk a lot. Tunisia annually loses tens of kilometers of its beaches as the sea level advances toward the land.

Beach erosion reduces its area, bringing the sea closer to nearby hotels, restaurants and homes. Tunisia has drawn up a plan to protect its coastline, which extends over 1,100 kilometers, from the effects of climate change so that the beaches do not disappear due to erosion factors. Environmental and climatological experts in Tunisia believe that climate change has also led to higher temperatures, exacerbated droughts and decreased rainfall in Tunisia, which is harmful to all sectors, including tourism.

Experts also confirm that more than 300 kilometers of the Tunisian coast are threatened with disappearance due to marine erosion. Tunisia is threatened by climatic changes in the long term and disruption of the usual climatic factors such as temperatures and winds. By 2030, Tunisia is threatened by a rise in sea level on the coastal strip, at the level of the two islands Kerkennah (belonging to the Sfax governorate) and Djerba (belonging to the Medenine governorate), which are located in the southeast.<sup>53</sup>

### d. Sudan

For the region along the southern edge of the Sahara, Sudan's climate varies between desert and semi-desert in the north, and arid savanna forests throughout the country. In recent decades, the cumulative effects of conflict, economic sanctions imposed on the country, and

<sup>52</sup> Climate change performance... Morocco rises to 7th place globally, March 14, 2023, <https://bit.ly/41a9oUS>

<sup>53</sup> Al-Ain News, Climate change.. Tunisia loses tens of kilometers of its beaches annually, March 28, 2023, <https://bit.ly/40UIRto>.

political instability, as well as increased water consumption due to population growth and agricultural development, have led aid groups to warn of an impending water crisis. Climate change, often described as a “risk multiplier”, is adding to the burden on people.

Rainfall has become less regular, while floods and droughts have become more frequent. Given the rising temperatures, this means that the less water that falls on the ground evaporates more quickly, reducing soil moisture. This makes farming more dangerous for the nearly two-thirds of Sudan's rural population who, like Ms. Nima Al-Massad, are either smallholder farmers or pastoralists dependent on rainfall. Scientists predict that temperatures in Sudan will continue to rise dangerously, and if current precipitation trends continue, the Sahara Desert will continue to creep south at a rate of 1.5 km per year, swallowing up farmland and pastures.<sup>54</sup>

## **Second: Arab Gulf States:**

### **a. Yemen:**

The Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Waed Batheb, said that his country ranks 17<sup>th</sup> among the countries least able to face the effects of climate change. The Minister was speaking during a working session on supporting sustainable development within the activities of the 5<sup>th</sup> United Nations Conference of the Least Developed Countries, which began its work in the Qatari capital, Doha. Statistics indicate that large and sudden climatic changes hindered food security efforts, due to the damage to many lands by floods and torrential rains, as well as drought as a result of desertification that a large number of agricultural lands in Yemen suffer from”, the agency quoted Bathib as saying. The Minister referred to government efforts to limit the effects of climate change, and the government's adoption of a package of measures and policies, foremost of which is the preparation of a climate emergency plan to confront natural disasters and mitigate their severity, in addition to "combating desertification, stopping sand encroachment, and mitigating the effects of drought<sup>55</sup>."

A recent international report confirmed that Yemen is one of the ten countries in the world most at risk of climate disasters, which may exacerbate the existing humanitarian crisis and create new additional crises that will have a catastrophic impact on the country and its population. There are 10 countries that are most at risk of climate disasters, namely: Yemen, Somalia, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Chad, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. These countries, despite their small contribution to carbon dioxide emissions globally, however, they are all particularly vulnerable to the effects of global warming, and at the same time they are all on the watch

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<sup>54</sup> zun, Sudanese Women in the Front Lines to Confront Water Crisis and Climate Change (Story), March 6, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3zNKGxC>

<sup>55</sup> Al-Amina, Minister: Yemen is one of the least able countries to face the effects of climate change, March 5, 2023, <http://bitly.ws/CIOc>

list of the International Rescue Committee, which includes countries likely to experience a humanitarian crisis in the current year 2023.<sup>56</sup>

The Minister of Water and Environment, Engineer Tawfiq Al-Sharjabi, said that the climate change crisis is no longer an environmental issue only, but has become an economic issue par excellence, which necessarily makes it a very important political and social issue. He added, during the inauguration of the **"Readiness and Preparedness Workshop to Confront Climate Change"** within the activities of the second day of the Water and Environment Week, in the presence of the First Undersecretary of Aden Governorate, Mohamed Shazly, that the economic effects of climate change in the world will be reflected directly on Yemen, as the impact of economic change due to climate in the countries of the developed world, will affect various aspects of development, including farmers' livelihoods, energy programs and water resources in the various governorates of the Republic.

Al-Sharjabi pointed out the need for Yemen to benefit from international funds provided to poor and developing countries to achieve response and adaptation mechanisms to the negative effects of climate change, which can be clearly observed in Yemen according to different weather conditions, rainy seasons, temperatures, and others. He explained that the aim of the workshop is to discuss the necessary readiness to benefit from international funds allocated to support the local response to confront the effects of climate change, which targets infrastructure projects and the operation of various sectors within the adaptation and mitigation programs. The workshop reviewed working papers on climate financing mechanisms and projects funded by the Green Climate Fund and climate change readiness programs in Yemen, while working groups discussed the institutional, technical, structural and material challenges and obstacles of the relevant authorities in climate change issues.<sup>57</sup>

### **Third: Levant countries:**

#### **A. Jordan:**

Despite the scarcity of water in Jordan for decades, it has vast agricultural areas by managing the water file scientifically and practically until it reached the cultivation of palm trees with 600 thousand palm trees in the Jordan Valley; its ambition is about one million palm trees that produce the two types of Medjool and Barhi. They are two of the finest types of dates in the world. It warns of the dangers of water and climatic threats, the scarcity of energy facing the date cultivation sector in the Kingdom, and the need for the concerned sectors to cooperate to discuss appropriate solutions to overcome the crisis, especially about water. There is the importance of expediting the search for possible solutions to overcome the water challenge, the most prominent of which are options for the possibility of proceeding with the

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<sup>56</sup> emen Future, Washington: A recent international report says that Yemen is among the ten countries most at risk of climate disasters, March 25, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3Uplk2W>

<sup>57</sup> Free Aden, Disclosure of a New Crisis Harmful to the Yemeni Economy, March 13, 2023, <https://bit.ly/41eZRM4>.

desalination of groundwater, the Karama Dam, the use of rain seeding, or in cooperation with the project to raise water efficiency for agricultural purposes<sup>58</sup>.

### **B. Syria:**

During President al-Assad's reception of the ministers participating in the quartet meeting of Arab agriculture ministers, which includes Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria - which ended yesterday in Damascus, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad stressed that climate change challenges in the agricultural sector require joint regional efforts to mitigate the effects on this sector, protect it as a source of income and production, and achieve people's food security. Al-Assad indicated that the economic and political crises and other problems facing people have proven that countries cannot achieve self-sufficiency in food alone and there is no solution except through agricultural solidarity, especially in agrarian societies<sup>59</sup>.

The International Rescue Committee published a report indicating that Syria is country of the ten countries most at risk of climate disasters and global warming and that a decade of war in Syria has "weak the country's ability to respond to crises." The report said climate change is "causing new humanitarian crises and accelerating existing ones in vulnerable communities around the world." It warned of "the need for drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to prevent the world from facing a rise in global temperature and the catastrophic consequences that would follow."<sup>60</sup>

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights published pictures showing a decrease in the water level in the Euphrates River due to climate change and the construction of dams in neighboring Turkey, where the river originates mainly. The Observatory said the pictures indicate "the receding and pollution of the waters of the Euphrates River in Raqqa. The pictures show a decrease in the level and the water receding, to the point where the river bed appears, in addition to the presence of plastic materials and bags that pollute the course"<sup>61</sup>.

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### **C. Palestine:**

The rain stopped in historical Palestine from February 7 to March 13; Palestine lost most of the winter months without rain. Because of the interruption of rain, in a season with only three comprehensive rainy events witnessed and some cases of weather instability, some farmers were forced to irrigate wheat and farmers watering their other winter crops, and

<sup>58</sup> وكالة الصحافة المستمرة، الأردن يزرع 600 الف نخلة ويطمح للمليون وأكثر، 20 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3GDjc1x>  
<sup>59</sup> اليوم السابع، الأسد يؤكد ضرورة بذل جهود إقليمية مشتركة لتخفيف آثار التغير المناخي على الزراعة، 29 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3UzBMxn>  
<sup>60</sup> الرئيسية، "الإنقاذ الدولية": سوريا إحدى 10 دول معرضة لخطر الكوارث المناخية، 21 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/43AvfH8>  
<sup>61</sup> النهار، المرصد السوري: انحسار وتلوث نهر الفرات بالرقعة (صور)، 10 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3GHxJth>



spring crops needed large amounts of rain. The biodiversity was distorted this year, especially with the low precipitation (67% of the annual average in Jenin until March 13). It bloomed early, and then turned yellow, looked thirsty, insects and rodents infested, winter crops were affected, and some withered or damaged flowers and fruits<sup>62</sup>.

#### **Fourth: East Africa:**

##### **a. Somalia:**

While severe drought struck Somalia and threatened it with famine, floods swept through a city in the south and killed three people; it was described as climatic "extremism"; an environmental expert predicted that this extremism would become a "character of the current century" in large parts of the planet, represented by the arrival of droughts, floods, hurricanes, and storms to unprecedented levels and at unusual times. Three people died, and three others were injured due to the heavy rains and floods that swept the city of Bartiri in the Gedo County, Jupeland state in the south, three days ago. The floods were caused by the high water level of the Juba River, as it flooded vast areas within the city, and human and material losses thousands were displaced from their villages located on the banks of the river, as announced by the Bartiri administration. Monsoon rains began in many parts of Somalia when people were facing a severe drought<sup>63</sup>.

Target (3)	improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning
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#### **First: North Africa:**

##### **A. Tunisia:**

Many climate activists in Tunisia organized a climate demonstration to demand climate justice and declare a climate emergency in Tunisia. The Youth Movement for Climate in Tunisia calls for developing a national action plan that helps adapt to the effects of climate change, stressing that is their most important demand<sup>64</sup>.

#### **Second: The Arabian Gulf:**

##### **a. UAE:**

The UAE launched a pioneering and inspiring initiative to empower the world's youth and activate their role in combating climate change, the biggest challenge humanity face. The initiative was launched by the presidency of the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change "COP28" during the "Road to COP28" event in Dubai Expo City.

The initiative is to launch the "International Youth Climate Delegates Programme," a new international program that aims to empower youth to participate effectively in achieving

<sup>62</sup> أفاق البيئة والتنمية، وقفات مهمة أمام مشاهد "الاعتلال المناخي"، 1 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/43tobM9>  
<sup>63</sup> سكاى نيوز عربية، جفاف وفيضان معاً.. دولة عربية تكوى بـ"ولايات تطرف المناخ"، 29 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/43JNj1B>  
<sup>64</sup> فيتو، تظاهرة لنشطاء المناخ في تونس للمطالبة بإعلان حالة الطوارئ المناخية، 29 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/40QkNsV>

the conference goals, in line with the vision and directives of the UAE leadership, which places youth empowerment among its priorities.

The program includes the implementation of the initiative to date to expand the participation of youth from under-represented countries in climate action in countries that are most affected by the repercussions of climate change by selecting 100 young people from least developed countries and small island developing states, to participate in climate negotiations and partnership initiatives between the two sectors government and related private<sup>65</sup>.

### **B. Qatar:**

The Friends of the Environment Center affiliated with the Qatari Ministry of Sports and Youth organized the second environmental forum 2023 under the title “Our Environment is a Legacy.. Our Homeland” in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in the State of Qatar, to discuss global environmental challenges and the impact of climate change on the State of Qatar and make recommendations in this regard to specialists. The participants in the symposium unanimously agreed on the need to enhance social responsibility towards environmental issues through the expansion of associations, centers, and organizations that support efforts to confront climate change while developing training programs for the private sector and creating partnerships to benefit from the efforts of government institutions in this field. In addition to providing all parties related to climate change that occurs in the world first-hand, use this information in various climate research and educate young people about the seriousness of environmental pollution and waste in using energy and resources.

They pointed out that the State of Qatar was affected by global climatic changes during the past ten years as the temperature inside cities rose due to many buildings, their heights, and the materials used in their construction, while outside it as natural limits, that effect appears in the shrinking of the difference between the maximum and minimum temperatures in most cases, and between night and day, especially during the summer. Qatar is part of this world and is affected by what is affected by it. The State of Qatar is a peninsula located in a desert environment, which makes global climatic changes severely affect it. Therefore, the country has taken steps in the framework of limiting climate change, including the development of policies to reduce gas emissions by 25 percent by 2030<sup>66</sup>.

### **Third: Levant countries:**

#### **A. Jordan:**

The Ministry of Environment inaugurated a workshop to prepare a long-term, low-carbon, climate-resilient strategy project in Jordan in the presence of the World Bank's resident representative to the Kingdom, Holly Welburn. The Ministry of Environment is

<sup>65</sup> العين الإخبارية، شباب العالم والعمل المناخي.. مكاسب بالجملة لمبادرة إماراتية ملهمة، 16 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/40UbNDf>

<sup>66</sup> أخبار البيئة، قطر: الملتقى البيئي يناقش تحديات التغير المناخي، 29 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3nZnCzZ>

implementing the workshop and the project in cooperation with the Economic Reforms Implementation Unit at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the World Bank, and funded by the Trust Fund, to advance national efforts to respond to the phenomenon of climate change, and emphasizing the government's commitment, through various relevant authorities, to achieving indicators and international commitments that The Kingdom pledged it in seven main sectors: (construction, transportation, industry, agriculture, waste, water, in addition to the electrical supply).

### **B. Palestine:**

Filastiniyat Organization organized today, at its headquarters in Gaza City, an educational session on "climate change and its impact on women" as part of the activities of the Women Media Club, one of the Foundation's programs. It was talked about the rise in the Earth's temperature, the consequent extinction of many living creatures and the drowning of the shores of countries, and the direct impact on temperatures in countries. One of the most important results of climate change is the difference in sea levels, temperatures, and the change in rainfall, which affected agriculture, as many agricultural products disappeared, the absence of which caused an increase in the price of the available ones, and the inability of the poor to buy them, which caused the phenomenon of malnutrition. The groups most affected by climate change consequences are women, who have to deal with its health, agricultural and economic repercussions, and they are constantly required to provide alternatives while they are the most affected and least able to cope, being the most vulnerable and poorest<sup>67</sup>.

### **Axis III: Efforts of the League of Arab States in Combating Climate Change during March**

During an event organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in cooperation with the League of Arab States on the sidelines of the United Nations Water Conference in New York, it was emphasized that about 50 million people in the Arab region lack drinking water and 390 million people live in the region, nearly 90 percent of the total population, are in water-scarce countries. It was emphasized that the Arab region is not on the right track to achieving the sixth goal of sustainable development related to providing clean water and sanitation services for all by 2030.

In the Arab region, water is a source of prosperity but also a potential cause of instability and conflict. Water scarcity in the Arab region is an issue related to water security, food security, prosperity, and decent life, which indicated the importance of cooperation in water across borders and between sectors and stakeholders, and water diplomacy between countries is pivotal.

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<sup>67</sup> دنيا الوطن، فلسطينيات تنظم جلسة حول التغير المناخي وانعكاسه على النساء، 6 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/3KDX2h6>

The League confirmed that the Arab region is the scarcest water in the world, as 19 out of 22 Arab countries fall within the scope of water scarcity. 21 of the 22 Arab countries obtain their water resources from transboundary waters. The report of the International Panel on Climate Change described the Arab region as the most affected in the world by climate change and that climate change is accelerating. It called for a focus on enhancing opportunities for projects that support Arab regional cooperation in water, enhancing their ability to address climate change, and helping Arab countries to mobilize additional financial resources<sup>68</sup>.

## Analytical Vision & Recommendations

### A. Analysis of the reality of climate action in the Arab region. What do the data indicate?

During March, many Arab countries highlighted the water crisis as one of the main consequences of climate change and its effects on various sectors, especially on the sidelines of the United Nations Water Conference. Regarding the conditions of the Arab countries regarding the outcome of climate change effects on water, the Iraqi Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources imposed some regulations to reduce the available land that farmers can use to grow wheat and barley by 50% due to the severe water shortage in 2021. In addition, during the same this year, Iraq witnessed its second driest season in 40 years due to record-low precipitation. Over the past 40 years, water flows from the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which supply up to 98% of Iraq's surface water, have decreased by 30-40%. The historical marshes of the south, one of the wonders of natural heritage, also dry up. On the sidelines of the Iraq Climate Conference in March, the representative of the United Nations stressed that there is an urgent need to find solutions to the water crisis in Iraq due to its dire consequences on all sectors.

In Yemen, the countries most affected by climate change and its effects, it was confirmed during the "Readiness and Preparedness Workshop to Confront Climate Change" during the second day of Water and Environment Week activities. The economic effects of climate change in the world will be reflected directly in Yemen, as the impact of economic change due to climate In the developed world will affect various aspects of development, including farmers' livelihoods, energy programs, and water resources in the governorates of Yemen.

Jordan suffers from an ongoing water crisis as well due to water scarcity, and in addition to that, there are risks of water and climatic threats facing the agricultural sector in the Kingdom, which highlighted the need to expedite the importance of expediting the search for possible solutions to overcome the water challenge, most notably, options for the possibility of proceeding with water desalination, whether groundwater, or the Karama Dam,

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<sup>68</sup> عمون، ورشة حول إعداد استراتيجية منخفضة الكربون في الأردن، 7 مارس 2023، <https://bit.ly/43vNbT2>



or the use of rain seeding, or in cooperation with the project to raise water efficiency for agricultural purposes.

In Syria, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights published pictures showing a decrease in the water level in the Euphrates River as a result of climate change and the construction of dams in neighboring Turkey, where the river mainly originates, which reflects the imminent danger that will afflict Syria in the coming period as a result of these climate changes.

In March, an event organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in cooperation with the League of Arab States was held on the sidelines of the United Nations Water Conference in New York. It was emphasized that about 50 million people in the Arab region lack basic drinking water, and 390 million people live in the region nearly 90% of the total population is in water-scarce countries. It was emphasized that the Arab region is not on the right track to achieving the sixth goal of the sustainable development goals of providing clean water and sanitation services for all by 2030.

In sum, the Arab region is the most water-scarce among all regions of the world, with 19 out of 22 Arab countries falling within the scope of water scarcity. 21 out of 22 Arab countries obtain their water resources from transboundary waters and the International Panel on Climate Change report described the Arab region as the most affected in the world by climate change and that climate change is accelerating.

#### **B. Recommendations:**

**First:** In light of the importance that early warning systems attach to predicting climate changes and thus preparing for them, limiting them, and adapting to them, Maat recommends that the governments of Arab countries with achieving the goal of Goal 13 related to enhancing flexibility and resilience in the face of climate-related risks, establish more warning devices early.

**Second:** In light of the water crisis afflicting the Arab region, Maat recommends that the League of Arab States develop a regional plan to mitigate the impact of climate change on the water sector in the Arab region, especially in the areas most affected by conflict.

**Third:** The 2023 High-Level Political Forum reviews the sixth goal of access to safe and healthy water for all. On the sidelines of this, Maat invites civil society organizations and parties concerned with water crises in the Arab region to participate in commenting on the voluntary national reports related to the Arab countries and its questions about the Arab countries' response to the impact of Climate change on achieving Goal 6, and what policies have you followed to mitigate this impact.

**Fourth:** On the sidelines of the 2023 High-level Political Forum review the sixth goal of access to safe and healthy water for all. Maat recommends that international donors fund Arab countries, especially those affected by conflict, about government plans to respond to

the impact of climate change on the water sector and fund national initiatives aimed at reducing the climate change effects on water in the Arab region.

**Fifth:** Confirming what was stated in the ESCWA meeting with the League of Arab States in March, Maat recommends that Arab countries enhance opportunities for projects that support Arab regional cooperation in the field of water, enhance their ability to address climate change, and help Arab countries mobilize additional financial resources for each other.

**Sixth:** Arab days and weeks are of great importance to Arab governments, and in light of that importance, Maat reaffirms its recommendation to the League of Arab States to launch an Arab week to address climate change to encourage Arab countries and their governments to launch and develop their policies related to climate action and follow up on the implementation of international agreements on climate change.