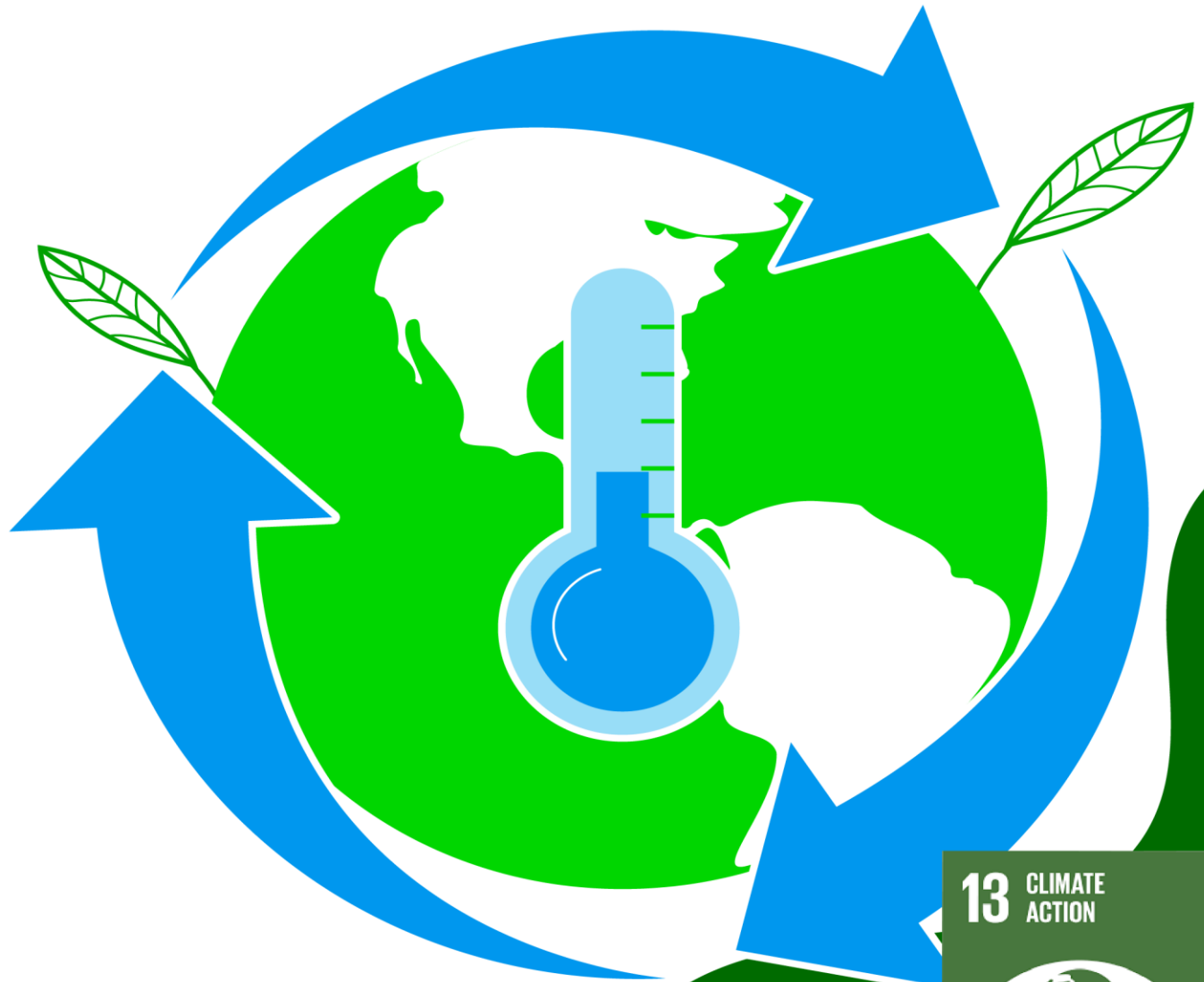


The SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region

Green transformations.. Arab countries' road to confront climate change



March. 2022
MAAT FOR PEACE, DEVELOPMENT
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

13 CLIMATE
ACTION





Report Summary

SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region -March 2022 issue

Green transformations... Arab countries' road to confront climate change

Background

Climate change has become a serious problem haunting society at the Arab level in recent decades. Increased temperatures and sudden climatic changes lead to immediate and long-term risks to the environmental and urban formation of societies and citizens alike. The root causes behind such environmental change in the Arab countries are the extensive consumption of fuels of all kinds, urban expansion, deforestation, and excessive land use. In recent decades, the effects of such harmful practices have appeared, such as severe storms, droughts, floods, and heavy rains, and many Arab countries have seen temperatures drop below zero, such as Jordan, for example.

In the context of its endeavors to protect human rights and promote sustainable societies that preserve human life in a safe and good manner, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights released the third issue of "SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region", in which it tracks the good practices and challenges faced by Arab countries in achieving goal 13 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The observatory focuses on the actions and measures taken by the Arab countries to address climate change and manage its effects, knowing that the observatory focuses on specific targets of SDG 13, namely; (13.1) Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries; (13.2) Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; and (13.3) Improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

The report is divided into two axes; the first focuses on the country focus of this issue, which has achieved the majority of the targets of SDG 13, whereas the second axis monitors the most prominent practices and challenges faced in February by the rest of the Arab countries in achieving the targets of the aforementioned goal.

Axis 1: “The state subject of this issue; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”

The most prominent efforts made by Saudi to combat climate change:

Earlier, the Saudi government launched the strategic national plan framework entitled: the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), which aims to foster and improve electricity efficiency and consumption rationalization at end-users in Arab states, within the principle of a circular carbon economy. This program was not the only one of its kind; KSA launched many initiatives on capturing carbon and converting it into valuable raw materials such as the world’s largest facility to purify carbon dioxide established by the Saudi Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) with 500,000 tons per year, as well as Saudi Aramco's plan for improved oil recovery with 800,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year.

Among the environmentally friendly initiatives launched by Saudi over the past years are the Green Saudi Initiatives and the Green Middle East, the “NEOM” project that relies on 100% renewable energy, and The Line smart city that relies on 100% clean energy and places the protection of the ecosystem within all the programs of Saudi Vision 2030, and the launch of the Green Riyadh project.

In March, the government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made many efforts in the framework of mitigating climate change and also in the framework of its green initiatives, to achieve SDG 13 as follows:

a. With regard to Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning, the government did the following in March:

The Minister of Environment Water and Agriculture in Saudi Arabia, and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in the Republic of Niger have held a meeting, during which the minutes of the committee’s meetings were signed, and they discussed many topics in various fields, with special emphasis on the axis of climate change, and future cooperation in that field.

b. With regard to Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries:

The National Center of Meteorology (NCM) held an event on the occasion of World Meteorological Day 2022 under the title Early Warning and Early Action at the headquarters of the Center in Jeddah, the day corresponding to the date of the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization in 1950. The theme of the year is **“Early Warning and Early Action: Hydrometeorological and Climate information for Disaster Risk Reduction**. In line with the climatic changes witnessed by the world and the Kingdom, in particular, there is a great challenge that requires concerted efforts by countries and societies to reduce its dangers.

c. With regard to the target of Improving education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning:

1. The Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture launched the “Environment Hackathon” event, on the sidelines of the activities of the Saudi Environment Week 2022, to encourage and support youth and developers and motivate them to be creative and innovative in the environmental field, and to find smart digital solutions, platforms, and applications to address environmental challenges, and build innovative and sustainable technology, in addition, to support the goals of the Green Saudi Initiatives, which seek to improve the quality of life for individuals and reduce carbon emissions.
2. The Minister of Environment, Water, and Agriculture and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Center for Vegetation Development and Combating Desertification supervised the launch of the first workshops of the Green Saudi Initiative project and the implementation plan for afforestation, which is to plant 10 billion trees, or the equivalent of rehabilitating 40 million hectares over the coming decades.

Axis 2: the reality of achieving the SDG 13 in the Arab region

This axis reviews the reality of the thirteenth goal in the Arab countries, by identifying the most prominent governmental efforts that have been made to promote climate action during the last month, by classifying these efforts according to the objectives pursued by the observatory as follows.

Achievements of Saudi Arabia during March 2022 on climate change

TARGET 2: STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE AND ADAPTIVE CAPACITY TO CLIMATE-RELATED HAZARDS

- The National Center of Meteorology held an event on the occasion of World Meteorological Day with the aim of strengthening the response to climate risks
- Launching a number of vital programs, initiatives, and projects related to raising the capabilities of monitoring and forecasting work, improving meteorological infrastructure, and developing services that achieve the National Center of Meteorology's objectives.

TARGET 1: INTEGRATE CLIMATE CHANGE MEASURES INTO NATIONAL POLICIES

- The Saudi and Nigerian ministries of environment signed a memorandum of understanding in the environmental field focusing on cooperation in the field of climate change.

TARGET 3: IMPROVE EDUCATION, AWARENESS-RAISING AND HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

- Launching the "Environment Hackathon" event, on the sidelines of the Saudi Environment Week 2022, to encourage and support youth to be creative and innovative in the environmental field.
- Launching the first workshop of the Green Saudi Initiative project and the implementation plan for afforestation



INITIATIVES OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA TO REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE



SAUDI GREEN INITIATIVE

GREEN MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE



NEOM CITY

THE LINE CITY



THE RIYADH GREEN PROJECT



With regard to the target of **Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning**, the Egyptian government participated in the second part of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in Nairobi, Kenya, under the title “Strengthening the United Nations Environment Program for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” Egypt's preparations for organizing and hosting the Climate Change Conference were reviewed, and during Egypt's participation, the Minister of Environment met with her counterparts from the ministers in Finland and Sweden, to discuss preparations for a high-level meeting of the United Nations in June 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden, which comes under the slogan Stockholm +50.

In **Libya**, the Minister of Environment concluded a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Program in Libya (UNDP) regarding the provision of a framework for cooperation in several fields. The memorandum provided for providing the necessary support for the preparation of reports related to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in addition to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The memorandum also included the Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity) and the promotion of policy development and strategic advice in the field of the environment and the exploration of advisory opportunities and cooperation to develop the environment sector in Libya.

In **Morocco**, the Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, participated in an extraordinary session of the United Nations Environment Assembly dedicated to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Environment Program, and stressed the need to strengthen and accelerate climate action in order to avoid reaching irreversible thresholds. Meanwhile, the Algerian Minister of Environment, Dr. Samia Moualfi, participated today in the Western Mediterranean Dialogue 5 + 5 conference on water security and climate change in Valencia, Spain.

In **Mauritania**; in the light of promoting harmony between agricultural and environmental policies, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, represented by Maryam Bakay, signed a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, represented by Sidina Ould Ahmed Ali, in the Ministry's premises. This partnership is based on the will of the two sectors to promote agriculture that is more



respectful of the environment and ecosystems, in a context of accelerating climate change and the degradation of land and forest resources.

As for **Jordan**; a delegation headed by the Minister of Environment, Muawiya Al-Radaydah, participated in the "Middle East and North Africa Climate Change Week" meetings, which are being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to promote joint action with regard to dealing with climate change challenges in the region.

In **Bahrain**, the Supreme Council for the Environment launched the Climate Innovation Initiative, which aims to motivate Bahraini energies in the governmental and private sectors to research and innovate in the field of environmental and climate protection, create a space for experts and creative ideas working in the governmental and private sectors, exploit scientific and practical capabilities and present their creative ideas that contribute to supporting national efforts in the field of environmental preservation and confronting the effects of climate change and adapting to it.

In **Emirates**, the Middle East and North Africa Climate Week was held for the first time from 1 March to 31 March 2022 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, with the aim of opening a new era of climate cooperation in the region, and representing one of the first opportunities to advance the implementation of the Paris Agreement, as well as the Glasgow Climate Charter after its adoption in the 26th Conference of Parties (COP 26) in November 2021.

In **Iraq**, the Iraqi government presented what it described as the green paper to confront climate change after it presented the white paper in October 2020 to serve as a reform paper for the structural problems and cracks in the country's economy.

As for the Sultanate of Oman, the Yeti Sustainable City project was launched in the capital, Muscat, at a total cost of nearly \$1 billion, which is the first project in the country that meets the highest standards of sustainability and green economy.

in **Qatar**, Abdulla bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie, Minister of Municipality, and Faleh bin Nasser bin Ahmed Al Thani, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, met with Qatari farm owners, on the sidelines of the International Agricultural and Environmental Exhibition. During the meeting, views were exchanged in the field of agricultural production development in a way that is consistent with the country's



achievements in the field of food security. They discussed joint cooperation in facing environmental challenges and the effects of climate change on the agricultural sector.

With regard to the **target of Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries**, in Egypt, the Minister of Environment, Yasmine Fouad, launched the first national dialogue on climate change from the city of El-Salam, the city of Sharm El-Sheikh, in the South Sinai Governorate, in continuation of Egypt's preparations to host the Climate Conference Cop 27 next November, in the presence of Major General Khaled Fouda, Governor of South Sinai, representatives of members of the House of Representatives, Senate, media, civil and local society, youth and representatives of Al-Azhar, the Church, a number of YouTubers and social networking sites and a number of public figures, and leaders of the Ministry of Environment.

In **Emirates**; a methodology was adopted based on partnerships and focuses on financing projects in countries that are more vulnerable to the repercussions of climate change, based on its conviction that enhancing the resilience of local economies contributes to enhancing the resilience of the global economy, as the UAE has provided more than one billion dollars in aid to support climate action in more than 40 countries, with a special focus on island and least developed countries.

On the positive side; The International Monetary Fund has ranked the Sultanate of Oman among the Arab countries most resilient in dealing with climate change. They are among the countries with stronger institutions and infrastructure that can withstand climate change, such as heat-resistant buildings or efficient irrigation systems, whose human losses have generally been lower during climate change events, and this applies to countries that have reached higher levels of socio-economic and human development, such as Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

With regard to the **target of Improving education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning**, in Egypt; The Minister of Environment, in cooperation with Sanofi Egypt, launched a monthly competition for the public on the ministry's website under the title "Our health is the health of our planet," within the framework of the memorandum of understanding signed between the Ministry and Sanofi Egypt, which specializes in the pharmaceutical industry, with the aim of contributing to the awareness



programs and initiatives launched by The Ministry of Environment and participation in the presidential initiative "Go Green", which aims to raise environmental awareness among all segments of society and implement awareness-raising activities to protect and preserve the environment.

In **Morocco**; the city of El-Ayoun hosted a symposium organized by the Ecological Observatory for Climate Change and Environmental Protection on activating the role of educational institutions in educating young people about the hazards of climate change. The aim of this scientific meeting is to raise awareness and sensitize the dangers of climate change, deepen scientific research, and expand public debate on issues of climate change and environmental protection. The role of women leaders in raising awareness of environmental changes and actively engaging in reducing their hazards, so that successful solutions to climate change cannot be envisaged without the involvement of women.

In **Palestine**; during a workshop organized by the women's sector in the NGO's Network in Gaza City entitled "Climate Change and its Impact on Gender," representatives of civil and women's organizations and experts demanded the necessity of taking practical steps toward addressing climate change in Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip.

Suggestions & Recommendations

Within the framework of what was included in this observatory of good practices carried out by the governments of Arab countries, and the challenges they faced to improve and develop the environment, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights can formulate recommendations as follows in the hope of completing Arab development efforts in the field of climate action and facing most of the challenges that obstruct its path.

First: In light of the vital role played by Arab women in promoting the fight against climate change in their countries, Maat recommends the establishment of an Environmental Council for Arab Women, w to give them a broader opportunity to express their suffering and allow them to propose solutions, given that women and children are the most affected groups by climate change.



Second: Within the framework of the opportunities enjoyed by the countries of the Arab solar radiation region, Maat for Peace recommends that Arab countries should unite to exchange in the field of exploiting the sun's resource - one of the renewable resources – to shift to clean, environmentally friendly energy.

Third: In light of the importance of the role of civil society in limiting climate change, Maat for Peace recommends Arab governments that allow civil society organizations to exercise their role effectively.

Fourth: In light of the effectiveness of media awareness campaigns aimed at limiting the phenomenon of climate change by modifying human behavior, Maat recommends media institutions and civil society organizations concerned with the climate crisis to work jointly in order to awareness campaigns, and to cut workshops and training, Maat also indicates the necessity of activating the role of these awareness campaigns in the Arab conflict areas in particular, where most of the peoples of those regions believe that awareness campaigns to limit climate change are a luxury compared to other crises such as war.

Fifth: In the wake of the green and low-carbon cities that Arab cities are planning to build recently, Maat appreciates these plans and encourages and recommends other Arab countries to take these models as examples to start launching such cities in all Arab countries.