

The SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region Arab international partnerships towards COP 27



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

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MAAT FOR PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND
HUMAN RIGHTS



Summary of the SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region

"Issue: February 2022"

Background

Arab countries are among the most vulnerable to climate change, as it had threatened the lives of millions of people and destroyed tons of crops. Notably, the phenomenon of "**Climate Change**" is an imminent threat to humanity and may make life in "several countries" difficult and dangerous, causing thousands to fall below the poverty line and die of starvation. In the context of Maat's keenness 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 releases the second issue of the "**SDG 13 Observatory in the Arab Region**", which tracks 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 Arab countries to address climate change and its effects, knowing that the observatory 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 report was divided into two axes; the first is related to 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: A Fact Sheet on the State Subject of this Issue: Leading Emirati Efforts in the File of Climate Change

UAE government has made remarkable efforts during the past years in the field of limiting climate change. In 1989, UAE acceded to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone



Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances; in 1995, UAE signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); in 2005, UAE ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Convention on Climate Change; in 2009, UAE hosted the Permanent Headquarters of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA); in 2015, UAE joined the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; in 2017, UAE launched the National Climate Change Plan of the United Arab Emirates; in 2019, UAE organized the Abu Dhabi Climate Change Conference; in 2021, UAE organized the Abu Dhabi Dialogue on Climate Change and participated in the Leaders' Dialogue on Climate Change, and by 2021, it launched a "strategic initiative" targeting carbon neutrality by 2050, and it will host COP28 in 2023.¹

In addition to previous efforts, during February, the government made several efforts that come in support of these national moves in the field of climate change mitigation, in accordance with the targets of SDG 13, as follows:

Target 13.1	Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning.
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1. The Dubai Supreme Council of Energy has approved updated plans to reduce carbon emissions by 30 percent before the end of 2030, in parallel with UAE's efforts to achieve Dubai's net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
2. UAE participated in the Munich Security Conference, within the framework of UAE's readiness to organize the work of the 28th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, "COP.28".

Target 13.2	strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
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1. UAE celebrated the National Environment Day under the slogan "Action for Climate" on February 4. This day aims to educate community members about the importance of the causes and risks arising from climate change and adapting to its consequences.
2. UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment participated in the 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC 36).

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3. UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment met with the Under-Secretary for Parliamentary Affairs at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, to discuss possible ways of cooperation to protect our environment and mitigate the impact of climate change.
4. UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment met with the Social Democratic Party spokesperson for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection.
5. UAE launched the activities of the "Sustainability Forum" under the slogan "The Role of Scouting in Facing Global Challenges of Climate Change" to discuss climate change-related topics.

Target 13.3	Improving education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
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1. In cooperation with Expo Dubai 2020, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment organized the “ UAE's Message to the World – Climate Action Now” event, to plant seedlings of local trees, with the participation of representatives from the Expo administration and a large number of countries present in the exhibition. The event aims to raise awareness.



Leading Emirati Efforts in the File of Climate Change

Emirati efforts in climate change from 1989 to 2021





Emirati national efforts in the field of climate change, in accordance with SDG 13's targets

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Target 2. Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

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UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment participated in the 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC 36).

UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment met with the Social Democratic Party spokesperson for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection

Target 3. Improving education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

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Axis 2: The Reality of Achieving the SDG 13 in the Arab region

This axis reviews the reality of the SDG13 in the Arab countries, by identifying the most prominent governmental efforts that have taken place in promoting climate action over the past month, by classifying those efforts according to the objectives pursued by the observatory as follows.

Target 13.1	Integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning.
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As to Egypt, the Minister of Environment met with the Ambassador of Finland in Cairo to discuss the current and future mechanisms of joint cooperation in a number of environment fields, such as waste management, biodiversity conservation, and support for the climate change file. The Minister of Environment also met with the resident representative of the UNICEF program in Egypt, to discuss bilateral cooperation in the climate change file at the national level, and to discuss the program's priorities for 2022 and mechanisms for integrating children in efforts to confront the effects of climate change.

In Morocco, a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation in energy was signed between the Moroccan Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development, and the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, with the aim of exchanging experiences and expertise in the field of energy between Morocco and Finland. Morocco is also preparing to run for the presidency of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, in a move that supports energy transition, at the local level for the North African country.

In Mauritania, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development has signed a partnership agreement with the Commissioner of Food Safety & Secretary. The agreement falls within the framework of achieving the goals contained in national policies and strategic visions, taking into account the interrelated challenges of food security, land degradation, climate change and poverty.



In the meantime, the **Iraqi Prime Minister** announced his determination to develop strategies to combat desertification and find solutions to the water crisis, in light of Iraq's suffering from the challenges of drought, desertification and climate change, due to the absence of modernization in modern agricultural and irrigation systems for many years, because of trivial wars, and because of corruption and mismanagement. The Government of the Sultanate of Oman, through the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources signed a two-year Project Agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for the project "Building Resilient Environment and Sustainable Agriculture and Water", with the aim of raising awareness and developing solutions to the main threats of climate change to the agriculture and water sectors.

Target 13.2	Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.
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The Egyptian Minister of Environment participated in the scientific forum on climate change organized by the International Association for Development, Environment and Culture (Alexandria Lovers), which was organized in partnership with the Governor of Alexandria. This prompted Egypt to take serious steps to confront and adapt to the negative effects of climate change. Adaptation to climate change in the Nile Delta is a key project undertaken by the Egyptian government through the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation to limit and adapt to the negative effects of climate change.

However, **Morocco** was at the top of countries facing challenges during the month. Unlike the rest of the Moroccans, the residents of Kenitra city inhaled black dust, and some residents blamed factories located in the outskirts of the city in the "Quartier d'Ouled Oujih", which releases polluted gases and black smoke. In Mauritania, a new project, entitled "Adaptation to Climate Change Project and Improving Livelihoods for the Population Residing in Dry Areas" was officially launched.

In Sudan, Al Salam Rotana Hotel hosted the meetings of the boards of directors of the project to build resilience to climate changes in the agricultural and pastoral sector, which is being implemented in nine states of Sudan, the project to strengthen protected areas, which



targets the Jebel Dair reserves in North Kordofan, the Dinder and the Dungunab Marine Reserve, and the project to strengthen national capacities to implement global environmental commitments.

In **Saudi Arabia**, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, Minister of Energy of Saudi Arabia, participated in the activities of the lib 22 conference, a discussion session entitled: “Flexibility and speed of adaptation and its role in stimulating the industry,” and stressed that energy security is a key element to reach a smooth transition to deal with the climate change crisis. The management of Saudi Aramco stated that it is working on developing technologies related to reducing carbon emissions, as well as nano-membranes that work to have a low cost through this direct direction to get rid of carbon dioxide. As part of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which aims to stop the country's economy from relying on oil, the prospective city is covered.

In **Bahrain**, the National Environment Day was celebrated under the theme “We Preserve the Climate to Protect Future Generations”. The National Initiative for the Development of the Agricultural Sector, in cooperation with the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, also announced receiving support from the Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait “BBK” to plant Sheikh Salman Street in the Northern Governorate with more than 2,575 trees and shrubs.

Target 13.3	Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
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In **Jordan**, Al-Balqa Applied University hosted a symposium entitled "Climate Change and Water Challenges", which was organized by the Japanese Embassy in Jordan and is considered an important opportunity to discuss the impact of climate change on water in Jordan.

In **Yemen**, the Minister of Water and Environment inaugurated the activities of the National Environmental Protection Day, which is celebrated annually on February 20, under the theme "Together to get rid of plastic pollution", which is organized by the Public Authority for Environmental Protection.



In Syria, a workshop was launched on the project to strengthen the capacity of local communities in Eastern Ghouta to face climate change, which included a number of activities that achieve sustainable development and integrated management of natural resources in the towns of Al-Maliha, Zaidin, Deir Al-Asafir, and Marj Al-Sultan.

In Qatar, the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie, launched the Zero Waste Campaign under the slogan "Less Waste...More Beautiful City". This national campaign comes within the great interest that the State of Qatar attaches to the issue of waste recycling, keeping pace with the shift towards clean and renewable energy and working to recycle waste, which comes within the framework of the implementation of the Ministry of Municipality's many programs, initiatives and events to deal with all types of waste and reuse it in electrical energy generation.

At the level of challenges, due to the negative effects of climate change in Tunisia, 20 thousand jobs could be lost in agriculture by 2050. Fishermen are also threatened with losing half of their income and profits by 2050 due to climate change.

In Palestine, more than 100,000 families depend on olives and its oil as a main or secondary source of income. This sector also provides job opportunities for a large number of unskilled workers. However, the olive farms witnessed a significant drop in production in 2021 due to climate changes, as the weather in Palestine last year has witnessed sudden fluctuations.

Suggestions & Recommendations

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

- a) In light of the positive impact that tree planting has on the climate, and this experiment has proven successful in many Arab countries, Maat for Peace recommends the governments of Arab countries, through the Ministries of Environment, to launch campaigns to plant more trees in order to address the climate crisis.

- b) In light of the effectiveness of awareness-raising media campaigns aimed at limiting the phenomenon of climate change by modifying human behavior, Maat recommends that media institutions and civil society organizations concerned with the climate crisis need to work jointly in order to intensify awareness campaigns, and conduct workshops and training. Maat also points out the need to activate the role of these awareness campaigns in the Arab conflict areas in particular, where most of the peoples of those regions see that awareness campaigns to limit climate change are a luxury in relation to other crises such as war.
- c) Maat recommends that Arab Parliamentarians take more legislative action on climate change by reviewing existing laws and proposing amendments where possible.
- d) In light of the importance of grants and financial aid needed to launch initiatives and campaigns aimed at limiting the effects of climate change, Maat recommends donors to intensify their financial assistance to Arab countries, especially those suffering from conflict and unable to establish initiatives to solve the climate crisis effectively.
- e) In light of the green and low-carbon cities that Arab cities are planning to build recently, Maat appreciates these plans, encourages and recommends other Arab countries to take these models as examples to start launching such cities in all Arab countries.