

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
IN ESCWA MEMBER STATES**

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| AFESD | Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development |
| AMEEN | Arab and Mediterranean Environmental Economics Network |
| ARA | Aqaba Regional Authority |
| AOYE | Arab Office for Youth and Environment |
| CAMARE | Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment |
| CAPMAS | Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (Egypt) |
| CEDARE | Center for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe |
| CEHA | Centre for Environmental Health Activities |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CITET | Center for Environmental Technology of Tunisia |
| CNG | Compressed Natural Gas |
| CSD | Commission on Sustainable Development (United Nations) |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee (OECD) |
| DANIDA | Danish International Development Agency |
| DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| DFID | Department for International Development (United Kingdom) |
| EC | European Commission |
| EEAA | Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency |
| EEAP | Egyptian Environmental Action Plan |
| EEG | Emirate Environmental Group |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EIB | European Investment Bank |
| EMU | Environmental Management Unit (Egypt) |
| EPC | Environmental Protection Council |
| ERWDA | Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (United Arab Emirates) |
| ESCWA | Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (United Nations) |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization (United Nations) |
| FEA | Federal Environmental Agency (United Arab Emirates) |
| GCEP | General Corporation for Environmental Protection (Jordan) |
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GEAP | Governorate Environmental Action Plan (Egypt) |
| GEF | Global Environment Fund |
| GOE | Government of Egypt |
| ICARDA | International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas |
| IDB | Islamic Development Bank |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| IUCN | International Union for the Conservation of Nature |
| JCDAR | Joint Commission for Environment and Development in the Arab Region |
| JES | Jordan Environment Society |
| JCDAR | Joint Commission for Environment and Development in the Arab Region |
| JICA | Japanese International Cooperation Agency |
| KD | Kuwaiti Dinar |
| KFD | Kuwaiti Fund for Development |
| LAS | League of Arab States |
| LEF | Lebanese Environment Forum |
| M&R | Monitoring and reporting |
| MEA | Multilateral Environmental Agreement |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| METAP | Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme |
| MMRAE | Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Environment (Jordan) |
| MoE | Ministry of State for the Environment |
| MPD | Ministry of Planning and Development (Yemen) |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS *(continued)*

| | |
|-----------|--|
| NAPOE | National Association for the Protection of the Environment (Egypt) |
| NCSD | National Committee for Sustainable Development |
| NDP | Net Domestic Product |
| NEAP | National Environmental Action Programme |
| NES | National Environmental Strategy |
| NESAP | National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| NSDS | National Sustainable Development Strategy |
| NSSD | National Sustainable Strategy for Development |
| NWSA | National Water and Sanitation Authority (Yemen) |
| ODA | Overseas Development Agency |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OIC | Organization of the Islamic Conference |
| PERSGA | Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden |
| PDRY | People's Democratic Republic of Yemen |
| RAED | Arab NGO Network for Environment and Development (Egypt) |
| RAPSD | Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Development |
| RBO | Regional Branch Office of the EEAA (Egypt) |
| RSCN | Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (Jordan) |
| RSS | Royal Scientific Society (Jordan) |
| SAP | Strategic Action Plan |
| SEM | Sustainable Environmental Management (Yemen) |
| SPAAC | Social Planning, Analysis & Administration Consultants (Egypt) |
| SWM | Solid Waste Management |
| TCOE | Technical Cooperation Office for Environment (Egypt) |
| UNCED | United Nations Conference on Environment and Development |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNEP/ROWA | United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia |
| UNGASS | United National General Assembly Special Session |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| US\$ | United States Dollar |
| USAID | United State Agency for International Development |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WHO/EMRO | World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| YAR | Yemen Arab Republic |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the United National Economic and Development Conference (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, governments made a commitment to a programme of action for sustainable development worldwide called “Agenda 21”. In 1997, delegates from more than 165 countries adopted the programme for further implementation of Agenda 21, at the Special Session of the General Assembly on the five-year review of Agenda 21. A target date of 2002 was set for the introduction of sustainable development strategies in all countries. This paper reviews the progress made in the ESCWA region in achieving these goals, as well as the successes and challenges that have characterized the process.

The findings of case studies completed on Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen show that there are several common characteristics and lessons learned regarding the sustainable development planning process that can be extrapolated to other countries in the ESCWA region. These include the need to:

- (a) Encourage strategic thinking and policy analysis;
- (b) Prioritize sustainable development action plans;
- (c) Increase inter-ministerial consultation and coordination in practice;
- (d) Build capacity in formulating sustainable development plans, increasing public involvement, and enforcing environmental regulations;
- (e) Encourage compliance with environmental regulations through economic instruments;
- (f) Strengthen consultation and cooperation between the public and private sectors;
- (g) Increase funding for sustainable development planning and implementation.

National efforts to engage in sustainable development planning have included the formulation of a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), National Environmental Strategy (NES), and National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). Some countries have also engaged in national Agenda 21 formulation. Progress in policy formulation through these instruments has been wide spread in the Middle East and North Africa region. Indeed, since 1992, nine Middle East and North African countries have engaged in national sustainable development planning exercises, namely Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza have also initiated the sustainable development planning process by completing environmental baseline studies and strategies that can serve as the basis for sustainable development planning. Accordingly, as of September 2000, nine of thirteen ESCWA member countries have engaged in some level of sustainable development planning or preparation.

A. PURPOSE AND PROCESS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

In order for sustainable development planning exercises to be effective, however, both the purpose and the process of such initiatives should be understood by national stakeholders. The *purpose* of engaging in national sustainable development planning is thus to provide:

1. Information about the key national sustainable development issues and challenges.
2. Opportunity to discuss priorities, policies, and actions to address these challenges.
3. Updates regarding the ability of the country to implement and review plans of action.

The process of national sustainable development planning varies from country to country. This country-specific character is needed because of the unique political frameworks and political cultures that impact planning and development in each country. Nevertheless, there are three common aspects that are essential for effective sustainable development planning, namely:

- (a) Pursuing a participatory approach to planning;
- (b) Prioritizing environmental concerns and actions;

(c) Identifying and using indicators, targets, and triggers for identifying environmental baselines and progress in achieving sustainable development goals.

Findings regarding the sustainable development process show that ESCWA member countries share common concerns evident by similarities in their:

(a) Environmental priorities – namely water depletion, water quality degradation, and the deterioration of land resources;

(b) Ratification of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) – including the Montreal Protocol and the Climate Change Convention;

(c) Development planning techniques – such as the use of issue-based working groups, local experts, and national consultations;

(d) Requests for assistance from development organizations – in terms of technical or financial support.

Lessons learned on the purpose and process of sustainable development efforts include the:

(a) Importance of cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial dialogue in the identification and prioritization of key challenges so as to build ownership over the process;

(b) Ability of MEA ratification to galvanize government action and support for international goals;

(c) Way in which increased awareness of economic, social and environmental linkages can prompt decision-makers to focus on sustainable development objectives;

(d) Need for effective and empowered environmental institutions at the national and local levels to formulate and implement sustainable development plans and actions;

(e) Difficulty of accessing and engaging individuals in local communities in the process of formulating national sustainable development plans.

B. IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Despite common efforts and experiences, there remains a host of challenges that prevent the region from achieving sustainable development goals. One key problem is that national sustainable development planning exercises rarely include a credible implementation strategy that lists the environmental priorities that are of chief concern to national public and private sector stakeholders. This is unfortunately rarely the case since:

1. Public and inter-ministerial consultation and coordination is not effectively sought.
2. Countries often forget to establish criteria for identifying priorities or neglect the importance of the prioritization process all together.
3. Sustainable development policy planning and implementation (when it occurs) is rarely incorporated into sector plans or followed-up on with monitoring or reporting.

As such, components of a NSDS, NES, or NEAP can only be used as proxies to surmise what are a country's environmental priorities and plans might be. Given the weak state of policy coordination and integration in the region, these strategies cannot forecast which sustainable development policies will actually be implemented or when. The key recommendations for improving sustainable development planning and action thus include:

- (a) Expanding the participatory approach;
- (b) Prioritizing environmental challenges and actions;
- (c) Improving institutional coordination;
- (d) Strengthening environmental monitoring instruments.

C. THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE SUPPLIERS

While governments are often the “demanders” of sustainable development assistance, international institutions and NGOs are usually the “suppliers” of technical, organizational, and financial assistance. By providing such assistance, these organizations can strengthen government commitments and provide the impetus for government action on materializing sustainable development. They can do so at the national level by providing:

1. Technical and financial assistance for NES and NEAP preparation.
2. Financial assistance for NES and NEAP implementation.
3. Capacity building assistance for improving policy analysis and coordination.

At the regional level, international assistance organizations and NGOs can also provide:

- (a) Mechanisms and mandates for regional cooperation on sustainable development;
- (b) Regional strategies for donor institutions;
- (c) Research and studies on regional priority issues;
- (d) Regional capacity building and training activities;
- (e) Assessments of progress in achieving sustainable development goals.

The experiences and efforts of the past decade illustrate that there are several methods for organizing sustainable development efforts among demanders and suppliers of development assistance. These include:

- (a) Communication and coordination among donor institutions;
- (b) Organization and participation in conferences and workshops;
- (c) Coordination between governments.

Factors facilitating cooperation and coordination include the:

- (a) Organization of consultative meetings by national governments;
- (b) Clarity of national environmental needs and priorities;
- (c) Formation of joint programmes, consultative councils or cooperative secretariats;
- (d) Clarity and coordination of donor institution mandates and requirements;
- (e) Implementation of projects through institutions based near beneficiaries.

Challenges to cooperation and coordination include:

- (a) Differences in institutional mandates;
- (b) Differences in approval procedures and project timelines;
- (c) Potential for conflicts of interests between grant-based capacity building exercises and preparing projects for loans;
- (d) Poor communication and coordination between donor organizations.

D. UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development can improve cooperation between organizations and strengthen its role in promoting sustainable development by:

1. Improving the supply of donor assistance to countries by strengthening lines of communication, improving coordination between donor agencies, improving information dissemination, assisting governments to clarify national priorities, coordinating regional strategies, encouraging complementarity of programmes, etc.
2. Strengthening linkages with the CSD by encouraging the establishment of permanent committee of focal points to coordinate with the CSD, scheduling regular contact with national counterparts, and providing a forum for development assistance institutions to coordinate activities on sustainable development topics.

E. REGIONAL PROCESSES AND CONSULTATIONS TO SUPPORT RIO + 10 PREPARATIONS

There are several ways in which regional processes and multi-stakeholder consultations can contribute to the preparations for Rio + 10. These include:

1. Holding meetings and conferences in the ESCWA region to help governments and private stakeholders focus on sustainable development issues as a priority issue.
2. Engaging decision-makers and NGOs in conferences that require the preparation of assessment documents so as to push the assessment process forward.
3. Organizing regional forums during which papers and assessments can be reviewed by counterparts in other countries so as to encourage thoughtful thinking about the issues and public participation in the process of finalizing reports and documents.
4. Preparing multi-stakeholder consultations that engage more stakeholders in the discussion of sustainable development issues and priorities affecting the region.
5. Exchanging information and lessons learned regarding national and local sustainable development processes.
6. Informing countries and international assistance organizations of the types of technical and financial assistance that is yet needed to bring countries closer to meeting stated goals, i.e., having sustainable development plans in place by 2002, and to have them in the process of implementation by 2005.

F. PRIORITY AREAS FOR MAKING PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING AGENDA 21 UNTIL RIO + 10

Priority steps that should be taken to achieve progress in achieving Agenda 21 goals include:

1. Setting targets for completing national Rio + 10 draft preparatory reports.
2. Holding national consultations and roundtables to discuss draft reports so as to solicit public input on priorities and to raise awareness about goals and progress made.
3. Preparing and abiding by schedules for finalizing reports in advance of conferences and distributing them to media outlets in order to raise awareness of the issues before Rio + 10 meetings are held.
4. Increasing communication and inter-sectoral coordination between ministries when developing a NSDS, NES, or NEAP to ensure environmental, economic, and social aspects are considered in development planning and to broaden ownership of priorities so as to increase the likelihood of their implementation.
5. Monitoring, reviewing and updating strategies and action plans on a regular basis.
6. Using economic instruments to provide incentives for achieving environmental goals.
7. Rethinking command-and-control instruments for environmental enforcement, and making instruments more practical and enforceable.
8. Adopting and implementing environmental assessment policies and procedures.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is a process more than a goal. Sustainable development planning is the means by which this process can be structured and managed in a proactive and participatory way. The challenge facing member states of the ESCWA region in their pursuit of sustainable development involves identifying the instruments, implementing the actions, and reviewing the outcomes that comprise effective sustainable development planning. Sustainable development is a multi-faceted process that seeks to improve the management of natural and human resources for the benefit of present and future generations. This process encompasses issues as varied as natural resource management, poverty alleviation, cultural and historic preservation, environmental degradation, education, health, women and development, commerce, economic development, etc.

This paper reviews the progress made in the ESCWA region in achieving sustainable development, as well as the successes and challenges that have characterized the process. Part I of the paper begins with a review and assessment of the sustainable development process in the ESCWA region since the Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Chapter I). This is followed by an assessment of sustainable development planning initiatives in the region (Chapter II). Four country models are offered throughout the paper and used as practical examples of how sustainable development efforts have materialized in ESCWA member countries, namely in Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The countries were selected because of their geographic, social, and economic differences, as well as the distinct paths they have followed in approaching sustainable development planning. After assessing the successes and challenges facing sustainable development planning in these four countries, the following section (Chapter III) elaborates on common lessons learned in sustainable development planning and extrapolates them to the regional level; it also suggests means for improving sustainable development planning in the region.

Part II switches the orientation of the paper by focusing on the role of the suppliers of sustainable development assistance in the ESCWA region, rather than the activities of national stakeholders who solicit assistance for sustainable development planning. Chapter IV accordingly identifies the role that international donor organizations play in the development and implementation of sustainable development strategies and action plans in the four countries under examination: Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Having identified certain characteristics, Chapter V then seeks to identify emerging features in regional cooperation, as well as identify ways to improve the supply of sustainable development assistance to ESCWA member countries. Finally, Chapter VI offers general conclusions regarding the interaction between the suppliers and demanders of sustainable development planning and recommends specific priority areas for making progress in elaborating and in implementing Agenda 21 during the remain period up to Rio + 10.

PART ONE

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING INITIATIVES IN ESCWA MEMBER STATES

I. REVIEW OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS SINCE THE EARTH SUMMIT

At the United Nations Economic and Development Conference (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, governments made a commitment to a programme of action called “Agenda 21” to support sustainable development worldwide. In 1997, delegates from more than 165 countries adopted the programme for further implementation of Agenda 21 at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the five-year review of Agenda 21. A target date of 2002 was set for the introduction of sustainable development strategies in all countries.¹ Progress in achieving these goals will be presented the *World Summit for Sustainable Development* (Rio + 10) in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2002.

This chapter seeks to review and assess the progress made in pursuing sustainable development in the ESCWA region, as well as the challenges that have characterized the process. This review will accordingly provide the baselines and frameworks through which sustainable development efforts have occurred. Part I will provide a review of these issues in four ESCWA member states (Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen). Part II will list common characteristics of these frameworks and processes that can be extrapolated to other countries in the region and elaborated upon in Chapter II.

A. COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

Progress in achieving sustainable development is reviewed in four ESCWA member countries of different geographic, political, economic, and social character. These countries are Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Republic, and Yemen. In this way, the paper seeks to determine whether the environmental and economic policy frameworks of one country might facilitate or stymie progress towards sustainable development as compared to other countries in the region, or whether the challenges faced by ESCWA member countries are generally of the same nature.

The country case studies will accordingly:

1. Highlight the key environmental issues facing each country.
2. Outline the legal and institutional frameworks within which environmental decision-making and sustainable development planning is conducted.
3. Detail the policy framework in place for moving towards sustainable development, i.e., the plans, policies, and programmes aimed at materializing sustainable development.
4. Review the role of private stakeholders in achieving sustainable development.
5. List country-specific constraints that have affected the formulation and implementation of the sustainable development process.

1. *Egypt*

Egypt (pop. 63 million) is a republic, lead by a centralized government, which is politically divided into 27 governorates. The country experienced 5.3 per cent growth in GDP in 1997, which is estimated to have decreased to 4.7 per cent in 1998 and recovered to 5.1 per cent in 1999.² Egypt’s primary sources of

¹ Specifically, the commitment states that “[b]y the year 2002, the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development that reflect the contributions and responsibilities of all interested parties should be completed in all countries,” United Nations General Assembly, Nineteenth special session, Resolution A/RES/S-19/2 (English), 12 September 1997, para. 24(a).

² Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region 1998-1999*, New York: United Nations, 1999, p. 207.

revenue are from tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, and foreign remittances. The country is nearly entirely dependent on the Nile River for its freshwater, whose quality and quantity are directly correlated to growth in its agricultural and industrial sectors, as well as the welfare of its people.

(a) *Key environmental issues*

Egypt suffers from a variety of serious environmental challenges that weigh heavily on an increasingly urbanized landscape, the need to ensure food security, and a government that must cope with the economic and social concerns of an expanding population base. These environmental issues range from those related to natural resource management and scarcity to man-made environmental threats caused by the intensive pursuit of economic and industrial development. In view of these challenges, the country's main environmental concerns are:³

- (i) *Acute water scarcity* – poor service coverage, high water network losses, and the allocation of nearly 85 per cent of Nile water resources for irrigation purposes threatens the sustainability of Egypt's water resources for municipal, agricultural, and industrial purposes. Given the expanding population base (despite a declining birth rate), it is estimated that demand for water will exceed total exploitable water supplies in Egypt by 2005;
- (ii) *Declining water quality* – the discharge of untreated or inadequately treated industrial and municipal effluent into surface waters and poor network maintenance are the principal causes of declining water quality. It is estimated that 99 per cent of shallow wells along the Nile River are contaminated. This negatively impacts public health. For instance, waterborne diseases annually cause an estimated 90,000 deaths in Egypt. Fishery resources are also falling because of declining water quality, particularly in Lake Manzala, formerly one of the most productive fishing areas;
- (iii) *Land degradation* – poor irrigation drainage, soil salinization, soil erosion, inadequate crop rotation and selection, desertification, urban encroachment, and fragmented land tenure are only some of the sources of land degradation in Egypt. It is estimated the 1 million hectares of irrigated land along the Nile basin and its tributaries suffer from salinity, which is affecting the country's ability to meet rising food demand;
- (iv) *Industrial pollution and urban waste management* – hazardous air emissions and wastewater discharges from cement, coke, steel/lead, chemical, fertilizer, automotive, textile, and leather industries, as well as from power plants and the transport sector impose heavy pollution tolls in increasingly urbanized communities. This has caused respiratory ailments, allergic reactions, and declining IQ levels, especially among children in the outskirts of Cairo. The most effected areas are the Helwan-Tebbin industrial zone, Shubra El-Kheima, and Greater Cairo;
- (v) *Cultural and natural heritage preservation* – air pollution from mobile and industrial sources, unplanned industrial development, an expanding tourism base, and urban encroachment onto nature preserves threaten the country's cultural and natural heritage. This has caused the degradation of limestone monuments, losses in biodiversity and the decline in marine resources, which in turn threaten tourism revenues.

(b) *Legal and institutional framework*

(i) *Government mechanisms in decision-making*

Over fifteen national institutions are responsible for environmental management and decision-making in Egypt. The Ministry of State for the Environment (MoE), established in 1994, and the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), initially established by Presidential Decree No. 631 of 1982, are the most visible actors. However, several line ministries and authorities also have executive powers over

³ The data in the following section is based on the World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region "Middle East and North Africa: Environment Strategy Summary," Work in Progress/Draft for Discussion (9-10 October 2000) and its background documents.

environmental matters. These include the ministries of housing and local authorities, agriculture, health, irrigation, interior, local administration, industry and mineral wealth, electricity, transport and communications, petroleum, tourism, culture, and defense, as well as the Tourism Development Authority, the Egyptian Electricity Authority, and the General Organization for Physical Planning and New Communities Authority.⁴

For over a decade, the authority of the EEAA was limited to that of preserving and managing natural reserves. Subsequent to the Rio Convention, however, the Government of Egypt passed Law No. 4 of 1994, which established the Ministry of State for the Environment and strengthened the EEAA. EEAA now serves the coordinating agency for national environmental planning and management and is the technical secretariat of the MoE. The MoE is responsible for representing environment interests before the Cabinet of Ministers and its minister is endowed with limited environmental enforcement authority, e.g., temporarily closing factories that are in non-compliance with environmental regulations.

(ii) *Legal mandates and regulatory regime*

Although not the first environmental law in Egypt, Law 4 of 1994 is the most comprehensive environmental law. As such it is in accordance with Principle No. 11 of Rio Declaration, which stipulates that countries need to enact effective environmental legislation. The promulgation of Law 4 of 1994 and its subsequent regulations in 1995 can thus be viewed as a means for Egypt to illustrate its commitment at achieving sustainable development.

Law 4 of 1994 was formulated and submitted to the People's Assembly over several years by a group of Egyptian experts representing governmental and non-governmental institutions. This included the ministries of health, industry, petroleum, agriculture, tourism, and interior. NGO representatives included Association for Environmental Legislation, the National Association for the Protection of the Environment (NAPOE), the Arab Office for Youth and Environment (AOYE); as well as private consultants and research institutions.⁵ Although the law was promulgated in January 1994, the law was first submitted for approval as early as October 1989. It thus took over four years to pass the law due to intensive deliberations in the People's Assembly and within the NGO community.⁶

Law 4 of 1994 and its subsequent regulations address several sector issues. They also offer several progressive instruments for improving environmental management. These include:

(a) Reinvigorating the EEAA and changed the way of conducting environmental and sustainable development work in Egypt. The law stipulates that EEAA is empowered with the authority to enforce the law and provide mechanisms to secure the financing necessary to conduct enforcement activities;

(b) Establishing the Environmental Protection Fund to finance environmental enforcement activities;

(c) Mandating that the EEAA and the Ministry of Finance use economic incentives to encourage individuals and companies to conduct environmental-friendly activities;

(d) Detailing administrative and legal procedures for environmental management, such as the required use of environmental impact assessments, the establishment of an Environmental Police Squad, and the collection of penalties;

⁴ For a detailed listing of institutions responsible for environmental matters and their respective obligations, see Capacity 21, United Nations Development Program, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, *The Environmental Profile of Egypt in The National Environmental Action Plan: Capacity Building for Environment and Sustainable Development*, Cairo, Egypt, 2000, pp. 91-92.

⁵ Salwa Sharawi Gomaa, *Environmental Policy Making in Egypt*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1997, p. 42.

⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

(e) Requiring that companies keep environmental logbooks to monitor the quantity and quality of discharges released into the environment for review by relevant authorities.

Nevertheless, despite this legislative framework, the enforcement of environmental provisions has been limited and diffused.

(iii) *Multilateral Environmental Agreements*

Egypt has signed and ratified the following multilateral environmental agreements, which illustrate its support for environmental protection and sustainable development:

- a. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (ratified in April 1978);
- b. Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (acceded to in August 1988);
- c. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (acceded to in August 1988);
- d. Framework Convention on Climate Change (ratified May 1994);
- e. Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified June 1994);
- f. Desertification Convention (ratified July 1995).

After signing these agreements, the Government of Egypt appointed focal points or established units to be responsible for satisfying international obligations required by these environmental agreements.

(c) *Policy framework*

(i) *Sustainable development planning*

In Egypt, it is evident that there has been an evolution in the way of thinking of environmental issues within the context of sustainable development. This has been brought about by a series of environmental policy statements, strategies, and plans in support of sustainable development planning and policy-making.

The first *Egyptian Environmental Action Plan* (EEAP) was completed in 1992. The plan was a comprehensive effort that sought to identify environmental baselines, actions, and investment programmes along sector lines (natural resources, air pollution, solid waste management, cultural heritage, and environmental management). The report ranks key environmental issues in terms of priority investment programmes and identifies the strengthening of environmental institutions and actions to reduce water and air pollution from industrial sources as top priorities.⁷ In order to achieve its objectives, the plan proposes nearly US\$ 500 million in environmental investments to be conducted over two phases. The report was prepared by the EEAA with technical and financial support provided by the World Bank and several other international donor organizations.

The *National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan* (NESAP) was completed by the Technical Cooperation Office for the Environment, affiliated to the EEAA, in January 1998. The strategy sought to update the Government of Egypt's environmental strategy and formed the basis of the government's subsequent policy statement on environmental matters, which was articulated in the *Environmental Objectives and Policy Directives* of August 1998. The statement incorporates NESAP recommendations and:

⁷ Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, Government of Egypt, *Environmental Action Plan of Egypt*, (English version), Cairo, Egypt, 1992, p. 19.

- (a) Confirms the GOE's commitment to environmental improvement;⁸
- (b) Calls for the introduction and integration of environmental dimensions in all national policies, plans and programmes relevant to the protection of human health and natural resource management;
- (c) Advocates for the implementation of Law 4 of 1994 by establishing legal and institutional frameworks for environmental management at the national and local levels;
- (d) Identifies Egypt's key environmental policy challenges to be:
 - (i) Addressing the cumulative environmental impacts of the last 40 years;
 - (ii) Establishing an information infrastructure based on monitoring networks;
 - (iii) Mobilizing approximately LE 12 billion in environmental investments by 2004;
 - (iv) Rehabilitating existing industries to bring them into compliance with environmental regulations;
 - (v) Establishing a skilled human resource base for environmental management;
 - (vi) Changing public behavior and attitudes towards the environment.⁹

The current Five-Year National Plan also supports sustainable development objectives and is an instrument for forwarding sustainable development planning and action. The Plan identifies LE 26.44 billion (US\$ 7.62 billion) in investments allocated for environmental protection in various economic sectors and local government. Of this amount, LE 4.7 billion (US\$ 1.35 billion) was budgeted for environmental projects during fiscal year 1998-99.¹⁰

An updated National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) is currently being formulated in Egypt. The draft report states that "The strategic objective of environmental activities in Egypt is to introduce and integrate environmental concerns relevant to protecting human health and managing natural resources into all national policies, plans, programmes, and projects. The medium-term objective aims at preserving natural resources and bio-diversity and national heritage within the context of sustainable development, while the short term objective is to reduce current pollution levels and minimize health hazards to improve the quality of life in Egypt".¹¹ The new NEAP was submitted for public discussion and review at a national workshop in November 2000.

There have also been efforts to develop environmental action plans and strategies at the local level. For instance, Governorate Environmental Action Plans (GEAPs) were prepared in the Governorates of Sohag and Dakahleya with the assistance of the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).¹² The GEAPs were complemented by the formulation of solid waste management (SWM) strategies in the same two governorates.

(ii) *Policies, strategies, plans, programmes aimed at materializing sustainable development*

Traditionally, Egyptian environmental policy and regulatory regimes have relied on end-of-pipe emissions, rather than incentives for encouraging efficiency improvements and conservation. Command-and-control regulations are also the norm rather than economic instruments, despite requirements by Law 4

⁸ European Commission, *Compilation of environmental information on Egypt*, Framework contract for the mainstreaming of environment into EC development and economic co-operation, B7-6200/98-07/ENV/VIII, p. 27.

⁹ European Commission, p. 23.

¹⁰ Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency and United Nations Development Programme Capacity 21 Unit, "The Environmental Profile of Egypt: Capacity Building for Environment and Sustainable Development – The National Environmental Action Plan," Cairo, Egypt, 2000, p. 86.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 86.

¹² European Commission, pp. 30-31.

of 1994 to introduce the use of economic instruments into environmental management. Little analysis exists on the carrying capacity of the Egyptian environment or the linkages between environmental legislation and other regulations, i.e., land use regulations.¹³

EEAA is currently drafting several detailed environmental strategies to clarify its plans and objectives for the different environmental sectors over the coming years. While these strategies are still in the form of drafts (projects or strategies), their text will be finalized in coordination with the various concerned ministries and other interested authorities in the near future.

Below are listed some of the successful activities executed by EEAA during the last several years that have helped to materialize progress in achieving sustainable development in Egypt:

(a) A programme was implemented to support the restructuring of the EEAA in order to strengthen its capabilities for the carrying out its responsibilities, role, and future obligations. One of these steps included integrating the mostly autonomous Technical Cooperation Office for the Environment—funded primarily by the international donor community—into the EEAA’s organizational structure in May 2000. The office has now become the Planning, Follow-up, and Technical Cooperation Department of the EEAA. Experts from the former office staff the Department, which will serve as the new institutional counterpart for most international agencies. However, department staff will now also be responsible for supporting national environmental planning and the review of environmental projects;

(b) The decentralization of the environmental management in Egypt started with the EEAA decision to establish eight affiliated Regional Bureau Offices (RBOs). Five RBOs have already been built and are being supplied with personnel and equipment for environmental monitoring. These RBOs are intended to coordinate and complement environmental activities and responsibilities held by the Environmental Management Units (EMUs) already established by several governorates;

(c) Several national environmental programmes and investments have been initiated in coordination with concerned agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. These include national programmes to reduce industrial pollution, to manage hazardous materials, to handle hospital wastes, to treat sludge residues and polluted water, and to organize campaigns for increasing public environmental awareness.¹⁴

(d) *Public and private sector participation*

Egypt, through the EEAA, has forged a unique cooperative relationship with the private sector and NGOs concerned with environmental planning and decision-making. This relationship was institutionalized in the Charter of the EEAA where non-governmental representatives have been allotted space on the agency’s Board of Directors. Furthermore, accordingly to law, NGOs and private sector stakeholders have the: (1) right to monitor compliance with environmental laws; (2) ability to bring to the attention of the judiciary and public authorities instances of non-compliance; and (3) power to lobby the Government and the People’s Assembly on environmental issues.

(i) *Role of the private sector in the sustainable development process*

By Article 6 of Law 4 of 1994, three private sector business representatives are represented in the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA). This enables them to assist and influence the formulation and implementation of sustainable development plans and objectives in Egypt.

(ii) *Role of NGOs in the sustainable development process*

By Article 6 of Law 4 of 1994, three environmental NGOs sit on the EEAA Board of Directors. This puts NGO representatives on equal footing with the business community in coordinating environmental policy planning and implementation in Egypt.

¹³ EEAA and UNDP Capacity 21 Unit, p. 87.

¹⁴ Mohamed Mahmoud El Sayed and Sabry Mohamed Taha, *Arab Republic of Egypt “Five Years After Rio” Egyptian Achievements in Carrying Out the Agenda of Century Twenty One*, <http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr/rio/national/reports/africa/egypt.htm>.

(iii) *NGO initiatives supporting sustainable development*

Under Article 103 of Law 4 of 1994, NGOs can “report any violation of the provisions of the law,” which effectively gives NGOs monitoring rights in support of environmental protection and sustainable development. For instance, the Environmental Association of Alexandria became concerned about declining environmental conditions in their community following some unpopular decisions taken by the former governor of Alexandria to increase development in the city. The NGO was subsequently able to overturn the decisions of the appointed governor by challenging his decisions in court.¹⁵

NGOs also established a steering committee to voice their collective environmental concerns by forming the Arab NGO Network for Environment and Development (RAED). This NGO is not only represented by its chair on the EEAA Board of Directors, but the organization was also involved in the drafting of Law 4 of 1994 and lobbied the People’s Assembly in support of the law. Furthermore, in the last five years, there has been a growth in the number of Egyptian NGOs actively supporting sustainable environmental through national and local public awareness campaigns and projects at the community level.

(iv) *Public participation and local government collaboration in sustainable development*

Public participation by NGOs and the private business community is evident Egyptian efforts to achieve sustainable development. Local governments, however, remain alienated from the process because of the strong centralization of power in Egypt. Local governments thus need to become empowered in three ways in order to enable them to better achieve sustainable development goals. This can be done through: (1) capacity building and increased awareness; (2) fostering administrative autonomy; and (3) increasing financial independence. With these tools, local governments would be better able to develop and implement sustainable development plans and actions.

Despite the odds, some of the more powerful governorates have been willing and able to integrate some environmental considerations into their development plans. This has been most evident in Cairo, Sharkeya, Giza, Aswan, and Ismailia.¹⁶ Local Agenda 21s are also currently being conducted in Port Said, Monifieyah, Minya, Assyut, and Tanta.¹⁷

(e) *Constraints in formulating and implementing sustainable development*

The following provides a brief list of the key issues that constrain Egyptian ability to formulate an implement sustainable development plans and objectives.

(i) *Centralization of power*

In Egypt, the Ministry of Planning approves all programmes and projects for funding, while the Ministry of Finance manages the disbursement of all funds, whether they come from domestic sources or from international loans or donations. These national mechanisms make it very difficult for governorates and municipalities to solicit grants and obtain funds for sustainable development initiatives in their local communities, such as Local Agenda 21s.¹⁸ Decentralization and localization of sustainable development planning and decision-making would increase the ability of local government to achieve progress towards sustainability.¹⁹

¹⁵ Gomaa, p. 61.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁷ Interview by the author with Ahmed El-Kholei, Capacity 21 National Unit Coordinator, National Environmental Action Plan, Cairo, Egypt, 13 June 2000.

¹⁸ Interview by the author with Hosny Khordagui, Regional Environmental Advisor, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Beirut, Lebanon, 20 July 2000.

¹⁹ Mediterranean Environmental Action Programme Capacity Building Unit, Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), United Nations Development Programme Capacity 21, and MedCities Initiative, “Localizing Sustainable Development in the Mediterranean and Arab States Regions,” Draft One for Discussion.

(ii) *Non-compliance and lack of enforcement of environmental regulations*

While Law 4 of 1994 strengthens the role of the EEAA, establishes an Environmental Protection Fund, and calls for the establishment of an Environmental Police Squad, environmental compliance and enforcement in Egypt is still limited. Headway has been made in requiring the private sector to monitor and develop environmental management plans. However, the imposition of penalties is limited because of the need to improve credible monitoring and the system of enforcing decisions through the judiciary. Nevertheless, the EEAA has been effective in using the threat of plant closure to prompt action by industry in several occasions. Furthermore, although Law 4 of 1994 mandates the use of economic incentives to support of environmental protection, command-and-control instruments are still the ones most often adopted and applied.

(iii) *Limited funding for environmental protection*

Although the EEAA and Egypt has been very effective in attracting international donor assistance and funding in support of sustainable development initiatives, the scope of the challenge requires a significant level of additional funds and the financial commitment of the Egyptian Government if environmental goals are to be achieved. This constraint is likely to continue in light of the social and economic challenges that are currently facing the country and the hesitance with which the Government has sought to integrate environmental concerns into other national priorities.

(iv) *Prioritization of development interests above environmental interests*

Conflicting development interests and environmental interests, particularly in the industrial and tourism sectors, have prevented the Government from taking a more proactive stand in addressing environmental challenges. Indeed, development needs are often still viewed as separate from environmental needs and are given higher priority and attention. This is evident particularly when considering Government support for large-scale national strategy projects, which were executed without completion of a required environmental impact assessment (i.e., Toushka, East-Tafriaa, and the El Salam Canal).²⁰

2. Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (hereafter simply referred to as “Jordan”) is a monarchy with a population of nearly 5 million. Jordan experienced a GDP growth rate of 2.2 per cent in 1997, which is estimated to have increased to 2.6 per cent in 1999 after a brief decline.²¹ The country’s primary economic activities are service-oriented, with the mining sector (phosphates) accounting for its chief export sectors. Jordan suffers from an acute water crisis with annual renewable water resources standing at only 168 m³ per capita.²² The situation is exacerbated by regional politics that affect the country’s ability to formulate and implement certain policies in support of sustainable development.

(a) *Key environmental issues*

The main environmental challenges facing Jordan fall into seven broad categories:²³

- (i) *Acute water scarcity* – over-consumption, over-pumping of aquifers, and poor water pricing policies threaten Jordan’s limited water resources and misallocate water resources towards low value-added agricultural activities while municipalities suffer water shortages. Demand for water already exceeds total renewable supplies, which is causing the drying up of water bodies, the

²⁰ Interview by the author with Hosny Khordagui, Regional Environment Advisor, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Beirut, Lebanon, 11 October 2000.

²¹ ESCWA (1999), p. 209.

²² Ibid., p. 210.

²³ The data in the following section is based on the World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region “Middle East and North Africa: Environment Strategy Summary,” Work in Progress/Draft for Discussion (9-10 October 2000) and its background documents.

- salinization of aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, and the disappearance of wetlands and unique ecosystems;
- (ii) *Declining water quality* – toxic industrial discharges, landfill leaks, agricultural runoff, and inadequate water treatment facilities that operate over-capacity are negatively effecting public health, causing the eutrophication of water sources, increasing salt build-ups in soils, and causing cross-boarder tensions with neighboring countries;
 - (iii) *Land degradation and desertification* – overgrazing of rangelands, urban encroachment, fragmented land management, deforestation, the lack of land use planning, and rangeland conversion to unsustainable agricultural purposes have reduced soil quality, increased the rate of soil erosion, and heightened concerns regarding desertification;
 - (iv) *Urban environmental management and industrial pollution* – untreated industrial and municipal discharges into surface waters pollute reservoirs and groundwater reserves, further depleting water stocks. Air emissions and particulates from thermal power plants, mines, phosphate and fertilizer industries, the chemical industry, and cement producers threaten the Gulf of Aqaba, natural habitats, and public health in increasingly urbanized communities that are expanding near industrial centers. These problems are particularly evident in Amman, the Zarqa Basin (Hashimiya, Huseifa, and Zarqa), and the Port of Aqaba;
 - (v) *Urban expansion* – uncontrolled urban development, caused by population growth and increased rural migration, has increasing the need to develop appropriate solid waste and air quality management strategies. The lack of zoning laws exacerbates the problem as urbanization and tourism development has caused the fragmentation of wildlife habitats;
 - (vi) *Cultural, natural and marine resources* – the lack of appropriate site protection regulations, as well as mining, grazing, tourism development, and shipping are destroying the cultural sites of Jordan (i.e., historic buildings and archeological sites), as well as its natural treasures (nature reserves, plant and animal life, and marine parks). Jordan has also not adequately catalogued its diverse biological resources, although preliminary plans are underway to establish a botanical garden and preserve the genetic resources of threatened species;
 - (vii) *Environmental management* – weak environmental institutions and the limited elaboration, application, and enforcement of environmental legislation stymies the ability of the government and private stakeholders to adequately respond to Jordan's environmental challenges. The technical capacity for environmental management, planning, and policy formulation is also limited in Jordan.
- (b) *Legal and institutional framework*
- (i) *Government mechanisms in decision-making*

Over a dozen national institutions have responsibility for environmental management and decision-making in Jordan. The main actors are the Environmental Protection Council (EPC), the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment (MMRAE) and its associated General Corporation for Environmental Protection (GCEP). The line ministries with executive authority for selected environmental issues include the ministries of water and irrigation, agriculture, planning, energy and mineral resources, tourism and antiquities, health, industry and trade, labor, and interior. Several of these institutions have overlapping jurisdictions, particularly regarding urban environmental management.²⁴

²⁴ For more details, see Ministry of Planning, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, *National Environmental Action Plan*, (English version), Amman, Jordan, 1996, p. 33.

The EPC is an inter-ministerial body that seeks to facilitate coordination and communication between line ministries. The Council reviews and approves sustainable development plans and strategies and authorizes environmental projects for implementation subsequent to the consent of its members. The EPC membership includes ministers and deputy ministers of the various government institutions engaged in environmental management, including the Ministry of Planning, which is responsible for approving all programmes and project for funding in Jordan.

The GCEP is a new environmental institution established in 1995. Although it was designed to facilitate environmental policy coordination and implementation across sector lines and to enjoy a degree of managerial and financial independence from the line ministries, the GCEP was not endowed with enough power, capacity, or funding to fulfill its responsibilities. As such, the institution now sees its role as one of control and monitoring, not one of implementation.²⁵ This may pave the way for the establishment of a Ministry of Environment in Jordan with stronger executive authorities. Indeed, discussions are underway to establish a separate Ministry of Environment to respond to the increased attention and growing importance paid to environmental issues to the country.²⁶

(ii) *Legal mandates and regulatory regime*

Jordan enacted Law 12 of 1995, which serves as the country's principle environmental law. The law followed several sector-based laws, such as the law on water, agriculture, quarries, and antiquities that had been the basis for environmental management in Jordan for decades. Other laws, such the regional Aqaba Region Authority Law and the Jordan Valley Authority Law, also addressed environmental concerns. Constraints preventing the full application of Law 12 of 1995, however, rest in the fact that it is partially unclear and endows the GCEP with jurisdictions that overlap with those of other line ministries. This impairs the ability of the GCEP to serve as an effective environmental coordinator for the country.

Until recently, there were only three by-laws providing rules and regulations to support the mandates of Law 12 of 1995. One established the organizational structure of the GCEP, the second addresses the marine environment (mostly oil-related pollution), and the third focuses on the management of hazardous materials. Since May 1999, the GCEP has drafted ten by-laws, which have been sent to the Environmental Protection Council for review.²⁷ These include guidelines and regulations concerning solid waste, air quality, mobile source emissions, soil protection, nature reserves, and environmental impact assessment.

(iii) *Multilateral environmental agreements*

Jordan has signed and ratified over 23 international environmental agreements,²⁸ including the most major global environmental conventions of the last 20 years. These include the:

- a. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (ratified March 1979);
- b. Protocol concerning Regional Cooperation of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden Environment (came into force 1985);
- c. Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (ratified May 1988);
- d. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (ratified August 1988);

²⁵ Interview by the author with Ghazi Odat, Acting Director, General Corporation for Environmental Protection, 21 August 2000, Amman, Jordan.

²⁶ During negotiation of the US-Jordan Free Trade Agreement there emerged increased support for establishing a separate Ministry of Environment. Although creation of such an institution has been postponed, a new ministry may be established by January 2002.

²⁷ Support for formulating the by-laws was provided through the "Environmental Law Enforcement" programmes supported by European Union LIFE Third Countries budget line. The programme began in May 1999 and is expected to close in March 2001.

²⁸ Ministry of Planning, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, *National Economic Plan for Jordan 1999-2003*, (English version), Amman, Jordan, 2000, p. 132.

- e. Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified in November 1993);
- f. Framework Convention on Climate Change (ratified in December 1993);
- g. Desertification Convention (ratified October 1996).

In most cases, these international conventions have been implemented through domestic legislation and the establishment of a national unit or focal point responsible for satisfying the commitments of the convention. The GCEP houses most of these national units or focal points that follow-up on international conventions.

(c) *Policy framework*

(i) *Sustainable development planning*

Jordan has gone through many stages of sustainable development planning over the past decade. The process had taken the country from environmental strategy formulation to policy statements to an action plan and the formulation and finalization of a national Agenda 21, whose specific purpose is to assist Jordan move towards sustainable development.

The National Environmental Strategy for Jordan: A Resource Book of Information and Guidelines for Action (NES) was approved by the Government of Jordan in May 1991. The report calls for strengthening environmental institutions, establishing a legal framework for environmental management, expanding natural reserves, and increasing public awareness and participation in environmental policy-making. While the NES did not set priorities, it offered a baseline of information and a list of over 400 suggested actions. The report was compiled by the Department of Environment of the MMRAE, with technical support provided by the International Union for Conservation and Nature - The World Conservation Union. Financial assistance was primarily provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The development of the report was highly participatory and engaged more than 180 individuals in the drafting process, most of who were Jordanian technical experts drawn from government, industry, and the academic community.²⁹

National Report on Environment and Development was prepared for the UNCED conference in 1992 and was based on many of the findings and recommendations of the NES. Jordanian commitment to sustainable development policies and objectives was manifest by the fact that Jordanian delegation to the Earth Summit in 1992 was lead by His Majesty the late King Hussein.

A National Population Strategy for Jordan was drafted in 1995 by the National Population Committee. The strategy addresses a range of topics, including issues related to mothers, infants, women and development, education, health, housing, labor, and the environment. The Committee was established in 1973 with the aim of improving the family health and indirectly to consider population growth issues.³⁰

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) was prepared in 1996 by the Ministry of Planning in cooperation with the MMRA&E. Technical support was provided by the World Bank and other international donor agencies. The Jordan NEAP is a very clear and precise document that identifies the country's key environmental problems, assesses options for responding to those problems, and offers specific recommendations and priorities for immediate action. Most of its projects proposed for funding in 1996 have been implemented, or are in the process of being implemented, as of August 2000.³¹ This begs the question whether there is a need for a revision and update of the plan.

²⁹ Environment Department, Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Environment, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and IUCN – The World Conservation Union, *National Environmental Strategy for Jordan: A Resource Book of Information and Guidelines for Action*, (English version), 1991, p. ix.

³⁰ Ministry of Planning (1996), p. 7.

³¹ Interview by the author with Nadia Juhari, Senior Environmental Planner, Ministry of Planning, Amman, Jordan, 21 August 2000.

The *National Economic Plan for Jordan 1999-2003* is based on the NEAP and dedicates an entire chapter to environmental concerns.³² The section provides a brief baseline of key environmental issues and progress made in institutionalizing environmental management systems. It subsequently provides three lists to support the policy planning and implementation process: (1) a list of problems and obstacles facing the sector; (2) a list of environmental objectives; and (3) a list of policies and procedures that all government agencies should follow with respect to the environment. The Plan is to be used by ministries in the formulation and implementation of their programmes and projects.

Jordan Agenda 21: Towards Sustainable Development is now in final draft form (August 2000) and is currently being reviewed by public and private stakeholders for comment for the purpose of being submitted to the Environmental Protection Council for review and approval. The national Agenda 21 process was lead by the GCEP with technical assistance and funding provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Agenda 21 formulation sought to be highly process-oriented and took nearly five years to complete. Although the versions are somewhat different from one another, Arabic and English reports have been prepared for the convenience of national stakeholders and the international community.

Finally, there are preliminary discussions currently underway to update the 1996 NEAP based on the progress achieved in advancing priority issues and implementing several of the programmes and projects recommended by the action plan. Whether such an initiative will take place is likely dependent on public reaction to the newly drafted national Agenda 21.

(ii) *Policies, strategies, plans, programmes aimed at materializing sustainable development*

The Government of Jordan's commitment for environmental protection dates back as early as 1980 when it declared its support for a World Conservation Strategy, first advocated by the International Union for Conservation and Nature (IUCN). The strategy recommends that countries prepare national strategies for environmental protection to provide a framework for achieving sustainable development. The process of formulating this strategy began in 1988 and resulted in the completion of the *1991 National Environmental Strategy for Jordan*.

While the GCEP is supposed to coordinate environmental activities in Jordan, the Donor Coordination Directorate and the Directorate of Water, Environment, and Tourism in the Ministry of Planning are also assigned the responsibility of coordinating donor assistance for environmental projects. The involvement of the Ministry of Planning has assisted the process of ensuring that a project submitted for approval or funding falls within the scope and objectives of a national sustainable development priority or programme.

(d) *Public and private sector participation*

(i) *Role of private sector in the sustainable development process*

His Majesty the late King was committed to fostering more open lines of communication between the government and the private sector. This is evident by the manner in which the 1996 NEAP and the Jordan Agenda 21 consulted and sought to engage the private sector in the identification and formulation of sustainable development priorities and strategies. The Office of the Prime Minister, through his economic advisor, and the GCEP have also solicited private sector involvement and input in discussions exploring the linkages between environmental and economic policy-making and investment.³³

(ii) *Role of NGOs and academic institutions in the sustainable development process*

Jordanian NGOs and universities play an active role in monitoring and managing activities in support of sustainable development. For instance, the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) monitors air quality for the GCEP in the south, as well as water quality in other regions; it also propose national standards for

³² Ministry of Planning (2000), pp. 131-137.

³³ For instance, nearly fifty percent of participants at a National Roundtable on Trade and Environment sponsored by the MedPolicies Initiative of the Mediterranean Environmental Assistance Programme in Amman (20 August 2000) were private sector representatives, namely from the phosphate, textile, and paper sectors.

environmental quality. The Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSCN), created in 1966, was given the responsibility to manage six nature reserves for Jordan and has plans to develop a complete system of twelve national nature reserves.³⁴ The University of Jordan and Al-Hashami University are respectively conducting studies on odor pollution and water resources for a private company in Masa Hamena, an arrangement that was facilitated by the GCEP.³⁵

(iii) *NGO initiatives supporting sustainable development*

NGOs also support sustainable environmental development through private initiatives. For instance, the Jordan Environment Society (JES), founded in 1988, is active in identifying local environmental problems, raising environmental awareness, and pressuring government in support of environmental protection. The University of Jordan and Yarmouk University jointly administer the Aqaba Marine Science Station, which conducts research and monitors environmental quality baselines for the Gulf of Aqaba.

(iv) *Public participation and local government collaboration in sustainable development*

Although a challenging task, the Government of Jordan has actively sought to engage the public, private industry, NGOs, the academic community, and national experts in national sustainable development planning initiatives since its first attempt in 1988. Indeed, NGOs and national experts were heavily relied upon for the collection and identification of the country's principle environmental challenges for the 1991 NES, the 1996 NEAP, and the recent National Agenda 21. Over 180 Jordanian experts contributed to the NES³⁶ and 50 national experts to the NEAP.³⁷

The government has also sought to strengthen the role of local governments and agencies in environmental management. For instance, the Aqaba Regional Authority (ARA) has planning and management responsibilities over Aqaba and its unique ecosystem. Although its environmental mandate is limited because of institutional overlap with the GCEP, the ARA has been able to attract international experts and donor funding directly to the region to support environmental projects such as the Aqaba Marine Park (a Global Environment Fund [GEF] project).³⁸ Furthermore, the ARA reports directly to the Prime Minister and relies entirely on local sources of revenue, which allows it a degree of autonomy from national line ministry politics and priorities. A new law being prepared for Aqaba that might further strengthen the role of the ARA in promoting the sustainable management of the region.

There have also been preliminary discussions to formulate a Local Agenda 21 strategy in Zarqa, the second largest city in Jordan around which most of the country's industrial activity takes place.³⁹

(e) *Constraints in formulating and implementing sustainable development*

(i) *Changes in government*

Jordan has experienced several changes in government over the last few years. This has led to high turnover rates in the positions of director and with regard to the technical experts responsible for implementing and following through on sustainable development plans and actions. This turnover stymies capacity building efforts and reduces the ability of institutions and individuals to build upon experiences and lessons learned during previous sustainable development efforts. It also makes it more difficult for

³⁴ Ministry of Planning (1996), p. 32.

³⁵ Interview with Ghazi Odat.

³⁶ Environment Department, p. vii.

³⁷ Ministry of Planning (1996), p. i.

³⁸ Communication by the author with Sharif Saifi, (former) Park Manager, Aqaba Marine Park, 4 July 2000.

³⁹ Interview with Nadia Juhari. The idea for conducting a local Agenda 21 in Zarqa is also mentioned in the unofficial final draft of *Jordan Agenda 21* (English version), p. 147.

international organizations to develop working relationships with focal points and project counterparts. This has been particularly problematic for the GCEP, which has operated under the leadership of three different director generals in the year 2000 alone.

(ii) *Weak environmental institutions*

The GCEP does not have adequate technical or financial capacity to coordinate sustainable development plans and initiatives in Jordan. Furthermore, its ability to coordinate with different stakeholders from a multi-disciplinary perspective—a cornerstone of effective sustainable development policy formulation—is limited since there are no environmental policy experts, economist, or lawyers on its full-time staff. The agency's limited executive powers and small operating budget also constrains its ability to attract the human resources needed to fulfill its responsibilities.

(iii) *Need for strategic thinking*

In practice, funded projects often take precedence over plans and priorities in Jordan. Despite numerous efforts at sustainable development planning, strategic thinking is still lacking in most government agencies. With the exception of the Ministry of Planning—whose mandate is to ensure that strategies are developed, followed, and implemented—other line ministries and government agencies often focus on compartmentalized projects and short-term goals within individual work programmes and thus ignore the greater objective of achieving sustainable development. Opportunities for fostering cross-sector synergies are thus missed or ignored. Furthermore, it is often the case that projects with a strong likelihood of funding are pushed forward by executing agencies with or without consulting a development plan or a sustainable development strategy. It should be noted, however, that the Ministry of Planning has made a special effort and has been increasingly effective in ensuring that projects supported by international donors comply with plans and priorities outlined in the NEAP or other development plans.⁴⁰

(iv) *Regional constraints*

Any sustainable development plan for Jordan must take into consideration regional political and economic constraints impacting its natural resource base, primarily water. Unfortunately, regional negotiations to discuss mutual environmental concerns are often linked to progress made with regards to the tenuous Middle East Peace Process. These diplomatic and political challenges impair Jordan's ability to propose or adopt plans that threaten progress towards peace, even though they might alleviate some of the country's most serious environmental problems.

3. *United Arab Emirates*

The United Arab Emirates (pop. 2.7 million) is a federation of seven emirates. National policy-making is forged by consensus between sheiks at the federal level; however, each emirate has autonomy regarding its economic and development policies. Two emirates are wealthy oil-producing states, while the remaining five are less endowed. As a country, the United Arab Emirates grew at a GDP growth rate of 3 per cent in 1997,⁴¹ which fell to 0.5 per cent in 1999.⁴² The country's major economic sectors are petroleum, tourism, and services. The United Arab Emirates suffers from an acute water crisis with renewable water resources representing only 137 m³ per capita.⁴³

(a) *Key environmental issues*

⁴⁰ Interview with Nadia Juhari.

⁴¹ ESCWA (1999), p. 223.

⁴² Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region 2000-2001*, New York: United Nations, 31 May 2001, p. 152.

⁴³ ESCWA (1999), p. 224.

While environmental awareness and priorities vary between emirates, the major environmental concerns of the country at the national level are listed below.

- (i) *Acute water scarcity and declining water quality* – demand for freshwater resources greatly exceeds the recharge rate, which satisfies less than 15 per cent of demand. Increased salinity, population growth, rapid economic development, and the absence of a comprehensive water policy strain scarce water resources. This threatens human health as well as the viability land resources, industrial development, agricultural productivity, tourism, and biodiversity;
 - (ii) *Land degradation and desertification* – soil erosion, scarce water resources, and the movement and encroachment of sand dunes onto roads and urban peripheries degrades land resources and threatens the urban environment. The problem continues despite the limited success of afforestation programmes near urban centers;
 - (iii) *Degradation of the marine environment and coastal resources* – oil spills, ballast water from ships, dredging and infilling for coastal development, and uncontrolled sewage and industrial wastewater discharges in some Emirates severely impact the fragile ecosystems of the coastal and marine environment. This not only threatens marine resources, such as corals and mangroves, but also the flourishing tourism industry;
 - (iv) *Industrial and hazardous waste management* – improper treatment and reuse of waste oils and industrial waste, as well as the incineration of hospital waste, adversely impact air quality and human health. Although the storage and burying of hazardous and radioactive waste is not allowed in the United Arab Emirates, the import and mismanagement of hazardous waste materials has been hard to monitor and control between Emirates making it difficult to assess the magnitude of the problem.⁴⁴
- (b) *Legal and institutional framework*
- (i) *Government mechanisms in decision-making*

Government decision-making in the United Arab Emirates operates at two levels. At the federal level, the Supreme Council of the Federation has the sole responsibility for establishing national policies. The Federal Council of Ministers has executive powers to propose and implement federal laws. Laws and policies agreed to by the Supreme Council of the Federation are applicable in all seven Emirates. At the sub-national level, each emirate has the constitutional right and full jurisdiction to establish its own economic laws and development policies. Accordingly, neither the Supreme Council nor the Federal Council has the right to impose or enforce requirements regarding economic activity in any of the Emirates. This makes government decision-making in the United Arab Emirates highly consultative and decentralized.

At the federal level, two institutions are principally responsible for sustainable development policy-making. The Higher Environmental Committee, created in 1975 and reconstituted in 1981, is responsible for coordinating international obligations resulting from the ratification of international laws and conventions among the Emirates.

The Federal Environmental Agency (FEA), established in 1993 by Federal Law No. 7, is an autonomous agency created in response to the Rio Conference. The role of the FEA is to coordinate integrated environmental resource management, address environmental problems, and assist the United Arab Emirates achieve sustainable development. The FEA is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of nine senior officials presided by the Minister of Health. As such, the FEA works at the federal level with several ministries including the ministries of agriculture and fisheries, health, electricity and water, planning,

⁴⁴ United Nations Development Programme, *Project Document for the Preparation of a National Environmental Strategy and a National Environmental Action Plan for United Arab Emirates*, Proposed project UAE/95/005/ A/01/31, 1995, p. 6.

education, information and culture, finance and industry, interior, public works and housing, and communications. The FEA also consults with private oil companies, national research centers, and the United Arab Emirates University. At the local level, the agency seeks to coordinate activities with the General Secretariat of Municipalities and municipal environmental protection units. The capacity of the FEA is limited, however, because of the size of its staff and small operating budget.

Autonomous environmental agencies also exist at the Emirate level. These institutions vary in strength according to the priority that each Emirate assigns to environmental protection. The Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA) established in 1996 in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, is the strongest, best organized, and most funded environmental agency in the United Arab Emirates.⁴⁵ The Emirate of Dubai also actively supports environmental programmes. Government support for sustainable development is more limited in the five remaining Emirates that are not as financially endowed as Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

(ii) *Legal mandates and regulatory regime*

While the United Arab Emirates has yet to enact a comprehensive national environmental law, a draft Federal Environmental Act has been under discussion for over the past three years. In the interim, several issue specific environmental laws and regulations have been passed at the national level. These include laws concerning the marine environment, agricultural pesticides, the production, export, and handling of agricultural fertilizers, the hunting of birds and wildlife, and occupational health and safety standards for workers. Some Emirates and local governments have also enacted environmental laws that complement these federal regulations.

Some United Arab Emirates environmental regulations also provide for the use of penalties and economic instruments to achieve sustainable development goals. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries issued a decree forbidding the catching of sea turtles or the taking of their eggs and levies fines on local fishermen who break the rules.

(iii) *Multilateral environmental agreements*

The United Arab Emirates has signed and ratified several multilateral environmental agreements in recent years and has sought to incorporate their principles into national and local environmental policies. These agreements include, but are not limited to, the:

- a. Montreal Protocol of the Vienna Convention (acceded to in 1989);
- b. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (entered onto force in the United Arab Emirates in 1990);
- c. Climate Change Convention (entered into force in the United Arab Emirates in 1996);
- d. Biodiversity Convention (ratified February 2000);
- e. Desertification Convention (acceded to October 1998).

(c) *Policy framework*

(i) *Sustainable development planning*

The United Arab Emirates completed a *National Agenda 21* in December 1998, which served as the precursor for the country's National Environmental Strategy (NES), completed in November 1999. The *National Agenda 21* focuses on priorities for environmental action and outlines the broad environmental

⁴⁵ The ERWDA conducts several environmental services (policy and forecasting, natural resource management, waste management, land use planning, environmental impact assessments, and laboratories) and houses four research institutes (Institute of Earth Environment, Institute of Marine Environment, Institute of Veterinary and Wildlife, and the National Center for Avian Research).

baselines and issues affecting the United Arab Emirates. The NES then identifies national environmental objectives and policies that support sector-based strategies defined in terms of their respective priorities, rational, objectives, and recommended policies.

The United Arab Emirates subsequently completed a *National Environmental Action Plan* (NEAP), based on the *National Agenda 21* and the NES, in September 2000. The NEAP serves as the principle instrument for promoting sustainable development policies and consensus in the United Arab Emirates at the national level. The NEAP details specific plans and projects to implement the sector-based strategies outlined in the NES. All three national planning documents were conducted in cooperation with public and private sector stakeholders and were led by the FEA, with technical assistance provided by ESCWA and UNDP.

In addition to the national process, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is conducting a *Local Agenda 21*. This has implications for national sustainable development planning and implementation in the United Arab Emirates since Abu Dhabi is the largest of the United Arab Emirates encompassing about 80 per cent of the territory comprising the country. The project began in late 1999 and consists of an effort to identify local environmental baselines, issues and priorities. The initiative also seeks to devise a local environmental strategy and to formulate, monitor, and implement a *Local Agenda 21 Action Plan*. The Emirate of Dubai has also considered conducting a *Dubai Local Agenda 21* strategy of its own, but discussions have remained at the project preparation stage since 1997.

(ii) *Policies, strategies, plans, programmes aimed at materializing sustainable development*

The NES and NEAP provide several national and sector-based strategies and action plans for addressing various environmental issues. A national environmental strategies and a national environmental action plans for each of the six following issues of concern: (1) water resources; (2) pollution; (3) the marine environment; (4) the urban environment; (5) land resources degradation and biological diversity; and (6) environmental capacity building, information (monitoring and data management), and awareness. However, the strategies and action plans for these national issues are based on the sector environmental strategies that formed the core of NES and NEAP formulation. These strategies focus on ten sectors: (1) municipalities; (2) water resources; (3) marine environment; (4) planning and urban environment; (5) agriculture and land resources; (6) industry; (7) energy; (8) health; (9) education and environmental awareness; and (10) oil and gas.⁴⁶ The sector-strategies were developed based on close consultation between public and private sector stakeholders.

For instance, the “National Strategy on Water Resources” is specifically based on the sector-based NEAP and NES completed on water resources, agriculture and land resources, and industry.⁴⁷ The national water resource strategy calls for effective planning and management of water resources; groundwater management, rationalization of water use in agriculture, domestic and industrial demand management (including the use of economic instruments) increased R&D in desalinization, and improved wastewater treatment coverage and reuse.⁴⁸ While general in scope, the NEAP for water resources subsequently lists nine specific actions for realizing specific components of the strategy.⁴⁹ These activities focus on institutional capacity building, the development of regulatory and economic instruments to promote water conservation, a survey of existing water resources, an evaluation of potential alternative resources, and assistance to reduce agricultural water consumption. Implementation of most actions and a system for evaluating the implementation of the strategies are still pending.

⁴⁶ See Federal Environmental Agency, ESCWA, UNDP, *National Environmental Strategy: Objectives and Policies*, Volume II (English version), United Arab Emirates, November 1999 and Federal Environmental Agency, ESCWA, UNDP, *National Environmental Action Plan: Plans and Projects*, Volume III (English version), United Arab Emirates, September 2000.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.10.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁴⁹ Federal Environmental Agency, ESCWA, UNDP, *National Environmental Action Plan: Plans and Projects*, Volume III (English version), United Arab Emirates, September 2000, p. 6.

Within the context of biodiversity, the preservation and conservation of national wildlife remains a top priority in the United Arab Emirates. However, more has been done on this issue at the local level than at the national level. This is because outside of the ERWDA, the ability to advance policies and programmes for achieving sustainable development goals often rests with the ability and commitment of respected individuals to support specific activities. For instance, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan has taken a personal interest in supporting sustainable development goals in the United Arab Emirates. As Head of State, he has been instrumental in establishing the national effort to balance food security with the desirability of maintaining a stable desert environment where wildlife can continue to flourish. His policies have included establishing designated areas for conservation and falconry, an art that is part of the United Arab Emirates cultural and natural heritage. Sheikh Zayed also banned hunting in Abu Dhabi over fifteen years ago. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al Qassimi, the ruler of Sharjah, established the Arabian Leopard Trust and donated a large area in the mountains for breeding the Arabian leopard and the Caracal lynx. Efforts at biodiversity conservation were then echoed in Fujairah, where the government established the country's first marine parks in June 1995 in order to protect the country's coral reefs.

(d) *Public and private sector participation*

(i) *Role of private sector in sustainable development*

The private sector, particularly oil companies, have played an active and important role in identifying environmental priorities and policy recommendations affecting the oil and gas sector in the National Agenda 21 programme.⁵⁰ The recommendations proposed by the working group suggest reasonable and practical instruments for pursuing sustainable development goals. The Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry has also been active in the NES formulation process.

At the local level, initiatives are also underway to engage the private sector in sustainable development. For instance, a new law in Abu Dhabi requires that businesses and government bodies coordinate with one another in securing certificates of approval from the ERWDA for all projects relating to, and having an impact on, the environment and wildlife.⁵¹ Major oil companies in Abu Dhabi have also been made responsible for protecting offshore islands and surveying and protecting coastal and desert resources off the Abu Dhabi coast.

(ii) *Role of NGOs in the administration of sustainable development*

Environmental NGOs have developed in the United Arab Emirates over the past decade. As they have institutionalized, partnerships have been forged between local governments and NGOs in support of environmental policies. For instance, in 1995, the Dubai Municipality invited the Emirates Environmental Group (see below) to represent the United Arab Emirates at the International Habitat II Best Practices conference. The Group has also worked with the Dubai Municipality and the Dubai Development Board to clean-up local communities and to establish a Green Village and recycling system in Al-Qusais.

(iii) *NGO initiatives supporting sustainable development*

The Emirates Environmental Group (EEG), founded in 1991, promotes sustainable development through environmental awareness campaigns, action plans, and programmes that involve local communities. Its activities focus on four topics, recycling, environmental education in schools, publications and media campaigns, and public meetings to increase community awareness of key environmental issues. The NGO is supported by the Dubai Municipality and the Dubai Department of Economic Development. Other NGOs also conduct environmental awareness activities in United Arab Emirates including the Environment French Society and the Emirates Natural History Group in Abu Dhabi.

⁵⁰ Participants in the Oil and Gas Working Group for National Agenda 21 include representatives from ADCAP, ADNOC, ADMA OPOC, and Sharjah AMOCO.

⁵¹ "Environment and Wildlife in United Arab Emirates," <http://www.uaeforever.com/Environment/Environment.html>, downloaded 18 July 2000.

(iv) *Public participation and local government collaboration in sustainable development*

Both the National Agenda 21 programme and Local Agenda 21 processes seek to engage local communities in the identification of environmental priorities and formulation of a sustainable development vision. Some tension has existed between the national and local processes, which are happening simultaneously at the federal level (with limited human and financial resources) and in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (with significant technical and financial resources). Given the political and economic clout that Abu Dhabi represents in the country, the argument has been made that a National Agenda 21 cannot be successfully implemented without taking into consideration local needs and priorities.⁵² These are best expressed through a Local Agenda 21 process in accordance with Chapter 28 of Agenda 21. This argument has been the principle justification used by Abu Dhabi to move ahead with local environmental strategy and action plan formulation.

(e) *Constraints in formulation and implementation of sustainable development*

(i) *Federated government politics*

The national constitution allows for each Emirate to have full jurisdiction and autonomy in decision-making and implementation of all matters dealing with development policies. As such, federal sustainable development process must seek to achieve consensus between Emirates that have distinctly different environmental baselines, financial capacities, and sustainable development goals. This leads to fragmentation of the process. On the negative side, this means that the development of national strategies might be difficult to formulate and to effectively implement. However, on the positive side, this means that government, residents, and private sector stakeholders can exert greater influence and involvement in local sustainable development processes that pertain to their local communities.

(ii) *Personal politics and power*

Given the limited institutional structure for environmental management at the national level and in certain parts of the country, the ability to push forward legislation and policies often is dependent on a powerful individual's commitment to a certain sustainable development goal. While this may be less so in more wealthy emirates such as Abu Dhabi, where environmental institutions are well established and funded, the leadership of a politically strong individual still assists the process to move along. It also helps to galvanize public support and respect for the environmental issue championed by that influential individual.

4. *Yemen*

Yemen (pop. 18.4 million) is a relatively new country having been formed by the reunification of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in May 1990 after many years of civil war. Although now at peace, the country still suffers from internal political and economic divides that impede national efforts at economic and social development. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per capita of US\$ 740 estimated in 1998. It also has one of the highest population growth rates in the world, which strains public resources seeking to improve education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Yemen experienced a real growth rate in GDP of only 1.8 in 1998.⁵³ Industry, mining, and agriculture represent the country's main economic sectors.

⁵² Hosny Khordagui for the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Report on Mission to the Environmental Research and Wild Life Development Agency (ERWDA) Abu-Dhabi – United Arab Emirates: Project Document on the Development of Local Agenda-21 for Abu-Dhabi*, E/ESCWA/TCD/1998/31, 24 November 1998, pp. 4-5.

⁵³ Ibid.

(a) *Key environmental issues*

Although poverty and illiteracy are likely two of the major factors contributing to environmental degradation in Yemen, some of the key environmental issues affecting the country are listed below.⁵⁴

- a. *Population growth* – Yemen has one of the highest population growth rates in the world at 3.7 per cent per year.⁵⁵ It is estimated that 50 per cent of the population is currently under the age of 15. Low literacy rates and limited school enrollment, particularly among women and girls, threatens to exacerbate the problem in the coming years. The return of over 750,000 expatriate workers after the Gulf War has also stressed the natural, economic, and human resources of the country;
- b. *Acute water scarcity and declining water quality* – over-pumping of groundwater aquifers, insufficient water infrastructure for water supply and conservation, poor water use management, salt intrusion, increased urbanization, and the dumping of untreated municipal effluent are some of the major problems impacting Yemen's limited freshwater resources. Cultivation of irrigation-intensive crops and agricultural import bans in support of the country's food self-sufficiency policy further misallocate resources to unproductive uses. Demand exceeds annual renewable water resources, and the situation will worsen as population growth increases. Nearly 80 per cent of the population lack access to adequate sanitation infrastructure, which in turn adversely impacts water quality;
- c. *Land degradation and deforestation* – soil erosion, abandonment of terraces, poor water resource management, poor farming practices that ignore traditional methods, unsustainable forestry, loss of farmland due to urban encroachment, desertification, and increasing fuel wood consumption have adversely impacted land resources. This reduces agricultural productivity, threatens the agrarian economy, and limits energy resources. Fuel wood accounts for 90 per cent of household energy consumption; 60 per cent of the country's land area is desert. Problem areas include Anas, Bani Matter, Wadi Serbah, and Taymah;
- d. *Coastal environment degradation* – oil spills and untreated urban and industrial discharges into coastal waters and streams impact the coastal environment. This has threatened fishery resources and potential tourism development;
- e. *Urban environment and solid waste management* – inadequate solid waste collection and management facilities and solid waste mixing with municipal effluent are adversely affecting the urban environment, particularly as urbanization increases. This is causing health concerns, declines in water quality, and coastal pollution particularly in Sana'a, Taiz, and Hodeidah;
- f. *Loss of Natural habitats and biodiversity* – urban encroachment, poor land use planning, oil spills, and the over-exploitation of coastal resources are degrading natural habitats including forests, wetlands, coastal habitats, and migratory bird breeding and feeding sites.⁵⁶ These problems are threatening biodiversity and are exacerbated by ineffective regulatory and economic policies. This is of particular concern in the ecologically unique Socotra Archipelago, which harbors several endangered species listed in the IUCN Red Data Book;
- g. *Lack of environmental awareness* – there is limited public awareness of the relationship between environmental pollution, health, poverty, and economic development. The limited amount of information on environmental baselines in Yemen renders the problem more difficult.

⁵⁴ The data in the following section is based on the World Bank Middle East and North Africa Region "Middle East and North Africa: Environment Strategy Summary," Work in Progress/Draft for Discussion (9-10 October 2000) and its background documents and from the Government of the Republic of Yemen, *Sustainable Environmental Management: Programme in Support of the National Environmental Action Plan 1997-1999*, Sana'a, November 1996, Chapter 1, pp. 6-19.

⁵⁵ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Environmental Protection Council, Republic of Yemen, *National Environmental Action Plan*, Sana'a, Yemen, 1996.

(b) *Legal and institutional framework*

(i) *Government mechanisms in decision-making*

Government decision-making is generally centralized in Yemen. The Environmental Protection Committee (EPC), established by Prime Ministerial Decree No. 34 of 1992, is an autonomous advisory and policy-making body that reports directly to the Prime Minister. The EPC is headed by a Chairman and a Secretary General who are appointed by the Prime Minister. EPC members include vice or deputy ministers of planning and development, construction, housing and urban planning, oil and mineral resources, agriculture and water resources, fish wealth, transportation, and industry. The Ministry of Health and the National Water and Sanitation Authority (NWSA) (which represents the Ministry of Electricity and Water) also are on the board. The Technical Secretariat is lead by the EPC Secretary General and has about 54 employees in Sana'a. A branch office exists in Aden and a Liaison Office is located in Mukalla (Hadhramout).

The EPC has broad responsibilities for environmental management which include to:

- (a) Develop and propose policies for environmental protection;
- (b) Formulate national environmental legislation and regulations;
- (c) Establish national environmental standards;
- (d) Monitor national, regional, and international efforts in environmental protection;
- (e) Promote environmental education and public awareness of environmental issues.⁵⁷

While EPC has coordinating responsibility for environmental management, line ministries have executing authority. For instance, while EPC was responsible for drafting the NEAP and Sustainable Environmental Management programme (see below) in consultation with public and private stakeholders, the line ministries are the ones responsible for integrating and implementing these policy decisions into their activities. However, all ministries, corporations, and authorities are obliged to follow EPC directives.⁵⁸

A High Committee for the Development of Socotra Island was also formed in the mid-1990s with the EPC serving as the Technical Secretariat for the Committee. This illustrates the government commitment to addressing the unique biodiversity and development issues of the island in a more decentralized manner.

(ii) *Legal mandates and regulatory regime*

Yemen's legal system is based on Islamic law as well as a combination of French law, English common law, and local customary law. Environmental Protection Law No. 26 of 1995 seeks to build upon these legal traditions, which are at times is conflicting. The law also seeks to reconcile difference in environmental management systems between the former YAR and form PDRY, both of which had developed sector-based environmental legislation. While Environmental Protection Law No. 26 offers a baseline for sustainable environmental management in Yemen, supporting regulations and standards are still needed to be enacted to strengthen the legislation. Several guidelines at the sector level have already been drafted. Once passed, training and capacity building in environmental management and enforcement will be necessary to render the legislation effective.

Despite these legal and institutional conditions, there are no institutions or regulatory frameworks in place to require the monitoring, follow-up and assessment of environmental management activities in support of sustainable development.

(iii) *Multilateral environmental agreements*

The Government of Yemen has ratified a host of multilateral environmental agreements. Furthermore, as stipulated in the unification agreement, conventions ratified by the YAR or PDRY before unification would be recognized by the new Republic of Yemen.

⁵⁷ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 9.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

- a. Protocol concerning Regional Cooperation of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden Environment (ratified August 1985);
- b. Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) (ratified August 1985);
- c. Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (acceded to in December 1989);
- d. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (acceded to in December 1989);
- e. Framework Convention on Climate Change (ratified May 1996);
- f. Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified February 1996);
- g. Desertification Convention (acceded to January 1997);
- h. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (ratified August 1997).

(c) *Policy framework*

(i) *Sustainable development planning*

Sustainable development planning in Yemen has occurred with the assistance of public and private sector organizations. For instance, the *Biological Diversity Assessment of the Republic of Yemen* was completed by the International Council for Bird Preservation in 1992.⁵⁹ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and other UN agencies and bilateral donors subsequently worked with about 60 Yemini specialists—representing government, universities, and NGOs—to prepare background documents for the *Programme for the National Action Plan for Environment and Development (NAPED)*, which was completed by 1993. This document was the country's first step in sustainable development planning.

The primary piece of environmental legislation in Yemen is the *Environmental Protection Law No. 26 of 1995*. The law seeks to unify some of the contradictory and complementary environmental laws of the YAR and PDRY and can be considered a significant step in advancing national sustainable development planning.

The *National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP)*, completed in early 1996, details on the countries sustainable environmental policies. The NEAP was prepared under the direction of the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Council and approved by the EPC and the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD). It is used by line ministries to integrate environmental considerations into their programme activities. The report, however, makes no reference to the need for environmental reporting, monitoring, or evaluation. The NEAP was conducted with the technical and financial assistance of UNDP, the Netherlands, and the World Bank.

The *General Economic Memorandum* presented at the Round Table Conference in Geneva in 1992 and the environmental chapter in the *National Five-Year Development Plan 1996-2000* are based on the findings and recommendations of the NEAP.

Sustainable Environmental Management: Programme in Support of the National Environmental Action Plan 1997-2000 was subsequently completed in November 1996 by the Government of Yemen with the assistance of the UNDP Country Office. The programme is an effort to provide a more detailed framework for environmental planning and project preparation than provided in the Environmental Protection Law and the NEAP, a Sustainable Environmental Management (SEM) programme was prepared in late 1996. The programme of action reviews some of the main environmental concerns of the country and

⁵⁹ See Michael R.W. Rands, ed., *Biological Diversity Assessment of the Republic of Yemen* (by D.M. Varisco, J.P. Ross, A. Milroy), International Council for Bird Preservation, Cambridge, U.K., 1992.

provides detailed information and terms of reference on projects and activities prepared and proposed for funding.

The SEM also makes special note of the need to decentralize sustainable development planning and project implementation in Yemen. It makes reference to the Local Administration Law that has been drafted and which gives local administrations greater responsibility for the management and control of natural resources.⁶⁰

(ii) *Policies, strategies, plans, programmes aimed at materializing sustainable development*

It is the policy of the Government of Yemen that environmental considerations should be integrated into all sectors and phases of development planning and that responsibility for its implementation should not be restricted to one agency.⁶¹ In this way, the government has sought to integrate environmental considerations into economic development plans. Yemen has also sought to develop and formalize the NEAP and the SEM in order to identify environmental priorities and solicit international donor funding and support for achieving sustainable development goals.

Yemen did not present a paper at Rio or prepare a draft Agenda 21 strategy for Rio + 5. No national sustainable human development strategy or population strategy has yet been formulated for Yemen.

(d) *Public and private sector participation*

(i) *Role of private sector in sustainable development*

It is anticipated that private sector entrepreneurs would benefit from the sector services planned for investment by the SEM.⁶² The strategy takes a distinctly supply-oriented approach, however, to defining the role of the private sector in sustainable development planning, rather than a demand-driven approach based on consultation and facilitating lines of communication between the government and the private sector.

In terms of encouraging agricultural productivity, there have been some limited efforts at cooperation between ministries and the private sectors. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources launched a national project in November 1999 to enhance the production of cotton in cooperation with the private sector and cooperative societies in the cotton-growing provinces.⁶³ A joint committee was then set up to examine ways and means for promoting the production and exports of cotton comprised of representatives of the Central Bank, the Agricultural Cooperative Credit Bank, the Yemeni Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Agricultural and Fisheries Promotion Fund.

(ii) *Role of NGOs in the administration of sustainable development*

Understanding of the relationship between environmental degradation, public health, and sustainable economic development is limited in Yemen. However, there is growing awareness in political, scientific, and university communities of these linkages. Furthermore, after the unification of the North and South and cessation of civil hostilities, the public and the media have slowly begun to turn their attention to environmental issues. This has in turn prompted NGOs over the last decade to promote environmental awareness campaigns and principles.

⁶⁰ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 10.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 8.

⁶² Ibid., p. 14.

⁶³ "Boost for cotton production," Business and Economy section, *Yemen Observer*, 1 November 1999, <http://www.yemen-observer.com/eco/nov7.html>.

(iii) *NGO and academic institution initiatives supporting sustainable development*

The National Environmental Protection Society is conducting some projects on environmental awareness and education with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Media outlets have also conducted environmental awareness campaigns, although their impact has been somewhat limited. For instance, feature reports have included discussions of the illegal trafficking in antiquities and wildlands conservation. The University of Sana'a and the University of Aden have also developed some research and training programmes in the environmental field.

(iv) *Public participation and local government collaboration in sustainable development*

Government consultation with NGO and scientific communities is still not common practice in Yemen. Line ministry branch offices rarely consult with local communities on plans and projects to be adopted at the national or local levels. Public awareness of environmental issues needs to be strengthened in order to educate and empower the public about environmental concerns.

(e) *Constraints in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development*

(i) *Tribal politics and political instability*

Although a unified country since 1990, the government still exerts limited authority over certain regions governed by tribal chiefs and politics. Security concerns in these areas, such as kidnapping of foreigners for ransom or concessions, limits the willingness of donor agencies and technical experts to work in these areas of the country.

(ii) *Low literacy rates and school enrollment*

A national problem particularly among women and children, low literacy and schooling levels make it difficult to conduct effective environmental awareness campaigns. Media campaigns by television and radio have been used to promote understanding, but poverty and lack of access to government services limits their impact.

(iii) *High population growth rate*

Unsustainable population growth threatens the ability of Yemen, with its scarce natural resources, to adequately meet the needs of current and future generations. A water crisis is expected in the coming years with serious consequences for municipal water quantity, water quality, industrial development, and agricultural productivity.

B. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Some common characteristic and lessons that can be identified from the case studies and extrapolated to other countries in the ESCWA region. These include the:

1. Need to encourage strategic thinking and policy analysis.
2. Need for prioritization in sustainable development strategies and action plans.
3. Need to increase inter-ministerial consultation and coordination in practice.
4. Need to increase the legal and institutional capacity for formulating and pursuing sustainable development plans, increasing public involvement, and enforcing environmental regulations.
5. Need to encourage compliance with environmental regulations through economic instruments, in addition to command-and-control means.
6. Need to increase consultation and cooperation with the public and private sector stakeholders; and the need to increase sources of funding for sustainable development initiatives
7. These characteristics and commonalities will be further elaborated upon in the following chapters.

II. ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING INITIATIVES

A. BACKGROUND ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

In 1998, the World Resource Institute reported that five Middle East and North African countries had National Sustainable Development Strategies in 1992 when governments expressed a 100 per cent commitment to complete such an effort by 2005.⁶⁴ Five years later, in 1997, there were still only five countries in the region with a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS). In comparison with other parts of the world, 34 countries in East Asia and the Pacific had an NSDS by 1997, 18 countries in South Asia, 16 countries in Latin America, and 6 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, as preparations for Rio + 10 begin, more countries are taking stock of the need for sustainable development planning as well as the need to revisit, revise, and update sustainable development plans and priorities that have already been formulated. Furthermore, although a limited number of MENA countries have completed an NSDS, there has been a reasonable amount of activity in National Environmental Strategy (NES) and National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) preparation and formulation. Indeed, since 1992, nine MENA countries had engaged in national sustainable development planning exercises, namely Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza have also initiated the sustainable development planning process by completing environmental baseline studies and strategies that can serve as the basis for sustainable development planning.⁶⁶ Accordingly, as of September 2000, nine of thirteen ESCWA member countries have engaged in some level of sustainable development planning or preparation.

This section seeks to clarify the definition, purpose and process of sustainable development planning and to provide a review of sustainable development planning initiatives in four countries of the ESCWA region: Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. An extrapolation of common lessons learned that can be transferred to the region is also provided. Focus will be placed on efforts conducted at the national level, with some references made to local sustainable development planning efforts.

1. Definitions

The definition of a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), according to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is a national initiative supported by the technical and/or financial support of one or more international donor agencies to:

- (a) Describe a country's main environmental concerns;
- (b) Identify the principal causes of environmental problems;
- (c) Formulate policies;
- (d) Recommend specific actions to address the problems and implement the policies.⁶⁷

This definition allows for some flexibility in terminology since these components of a NSDS can often be found in a National Environmental Strategy (NES) and/or a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) of a country in the ESCWA region. The National Agenda 21 process has also been advanced as the proxy for NSDS formulation. These various initiatives have caused some confusion regarding the purpose and process of national sustainable development planning. This lack of clarity is not only evident in the ESCWA region, but also in other parts of the world. Accordingly, a general set of definitions is provided below to facilitate the explanation of the sustainable development planning process.

⁶⁴ OECD, *Methodological Note*, Document # DCD/DAC(98)6/ADD, 1998, p. 20.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁶⁶ Lebanon completed a *State of the Environment* report in 1995 and the West Bank and Gaza completed a *Coastal Environmental Inventory and Strategy*.

⁶⁷ OECD (1998), p. 20.

A National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) should be the first step in the sustainable development planning process. It identifies the broad issues and lines that characterize a country's environment and environmental challenges. An NSDS is also interchangeable with initiatives to compete a National Agenda 21, since the purpose of this initiative parallels that of an NSDS. A NSDS also addresses development issues that are not exclusively focused on the environment, such as women and development, health care issues, and poverty alleviation.

A National Environmental Strategy (NES) should build upon the NSDS so as to identify the key environment concerns and policy challenges facing the countries. The process of beginning to identify environmental priorities should begin at this phase of sustainable development planning. Attention should also be made to ensuring that criteria for establishing priorities are set and that priorities are identified in consultation with public and private sector stakeholders.

A National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) is a practical document that builds upon the two previous planning exercises. The NEAP identifies specific projects and actions to achieve the sustainable development according to the objectives identified and prioritized in the NES. The NEAP should also identify instrument to be used for implementing those actions, prioritize between proposed projects, and illustrate the linkages between the projects, actions, and strategies. It is also important for a NEAP to suggest estimated budgets and national agencies responsible for certain projects so as to facilitate implementation, funding, and the process of securing international donor assistance to implement the action plan.

2. Purpose and objective

The purpose of engaging in national sustainable development planning is to provide decision-makers and private, non-governmental stakeholders with:

- (a) Information about the key national sustainable development issues and challenges;
- (b) Opportunities to discuss with one another the principles, priorities, policies, and actions that should contribute to addressing these challenges;
- (c) Updates regarding the ability of the country to implement and review plans of action.

The objective of national sustainable development planning is thus to assist countries identify and navigate a dynamic path towards sustainable development according to self-determined priorities and policies.

The advantage of developing a sustainable development strategy and plan is that it offers public and private stakeholders a proactive and interactive instrument and opportunity for integrating economic, social and environmental goals that comprise sustainable development. It does so by:

- (a) Serving as both a catalyst and umbrella to reorient a country's existing policies, plans and investment programmes towards the goal of improving economic efficiency, social justice, and environmental sustainability simultaneously;
- (b) Offering opportunities to analyze a country's key problems;
- (c) Formulating strategic goals;
- (d) Identifying necessary actions towards sustainable development;
- (e) Promoting, designing, and implementing institutional reforms;
- (f) Improving policy coherence across sectors and benefit from synergies;
- (g) Offering opportunities at the regional level to identify common challenges between neighboring countries with different social, economic, and environmental circumstances and facilitating the development of regional approaches to address them;

- (h) Developing new types of participatory planning processes;
- (i) Building ownership in, not only in government and administration at all levels, but also in civil society such as the business community;
- (j) Providing opportunities to expand knowledge and awareness of sustainable development;
- (k) Promoting broad based policy learning and capacity building;
- (l) Creating transparency and awareness of strategic choices and challenges facing a country;
- (m) Initiating action to address challenges;
- (n) Formalizing government commitment to the goal of achieving sustainable development as spelled out in Agenda 21;
- (o) Seeking to identify ways to balance sound technical analysis with the participatory planning process.⁶⁸

In this way, national sustainable development planning—through instruments such as a NSDS, NES, and/or NEAP—can assist countries develop proactive, comprehensive, and cohesive strategies and actions for the purpose of achieving sustainable development.

3. *Process*

The process of national sustainable development planning varies from country to country. This country-specific character is needed because of the unique political frameworks and political cultures that affect planning and development in each country. Furthermore, the national sustainable development “processes acknowledge the dynamics of planning for sustainable development, as they are based on concerted efforts across sectors, and on negotiation, conflict management and crisis prevention”.⁶⁹ For these reason, there is no single way for conducting sustainable development planning.

Nevertheless, since the UNCED Conference of 1992, effort has been made to structure the national sustainable development planning process into five progressive stages of implementation:

- (a) Formulation, discussion, and finalization of a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) or National Agenda 21;
- (b) Formulation, prioritization, discussion and finalization of a National Environmental Strategy (NES), based on the NSDS;
- (c) Formulation, discussion, finalization, and implementation of a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) based on the NSDS and NES;
- (d) Monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of the NEAP;
- (e) Review, reformulation, and update of the NSDS, NES, and NEAP.

Unfortunately, limited technical capacity, funding, and political constraints have generally compressed the process into one or two initial stages and neglected the last two stages. There is also limited coordination and support among the international donor community to complete each of these stages in consecutive order given the time and resources needed to satisfactorily finalize each step. It is also difficult to coordinate programming, planning, and implementation activities between international donor organizations with

⁶⁸ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Assisting Developing Countries with the Formulation and Implementation of National Strategies for Sustainable Development: The Need to Clarify DAC Targets and Strategies,” Free On-line Working Documents, OECD Web Page labeled “Implementation of Sustainable Development,” English version, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/HTM/susdev.htm> (Downloaded June 6, 2000, last updated November 16, 1999), p. 1.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

different funding priorities and requirements. This has sometimes made the implementation and management of national sustainable development planning initiatives a piecemeal activity based on available funding and technical support, instead of a comprehensive and cohesive process based on national needs and priorities.

Nevertheless, four aspects are integral to process of ensuring sustainable development planning mechanisms are effective tools of sustainable development planning. These are: (1) pursuing a participatory approach to planning; (2) prioritizing environmental concerns and actions; and (3) identify and using indicators, targets, and triggers for identifying environmental baselines and progress in achieving sustainable development goals. These three points will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, but should be considered as integral aspects of the sustainable development planning process when reviewing the case studies offered below.

B. COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

1. *Egypt*

(a) *Main objectives and priorities of sustainable development plans*

As noted in Chapter I, Egypt has gone through several stages of sustainable development planning. However, since the Rio Conference, efforts have focused on national environmental action plan formulation and revision.

(i) *The Egyptian Environmental Action Plan*

The Government of Egypt's Report to the Rio Conference in 1992 and Egypt's Five-Year National Plan for 1992/93 - 1996/97 identified the following list of national priorities for environmental programming:

- a. Increasing green space;
- b. Freshwater management;
- c. Protecting soils against environmental degradation;
- d. Marine resources management;
- e. Environmental map of Egypt's natural resources;
- f. Air protection in Egyptian cities;
- g. Management and handling of solid and hazardous residues;
- h. Improving vocational environment;
- i. Food quality improvement;
- j. Population and urban and rural development;
- k. Natural and cultural heritage;
- l. Mitigating environmental impacts of natural disasters;
- m. Developing environmental management instruments for Egypt;
- n. Supporting environmental awareness and people's participation.⁷⁰

Political momentum and funding mechanisms generated after the Rio Conference provided Egypt with the opportunity to reassess its environmental policy and propose specific projects for implementation. What resulted was the Egyptian Environmental Action Plan (EEAP) whose main objectives were to:

- (a) Provide a baseline of environmental issues and challenges effecting Egypt;
- (b) Identify projects for funding;
- (c) Propose a budget to facilitate environmental planning and financing.

⁷⁰ Gomaa, p. 38.

The 1992 EEAP was effectively Egypt's first national environmental action plan and sought to help the GoE "to focus on actions for a more efficient use of natural resources, particularly land and water, and to stop the degradation of its heritage and the urban environment."⁷¹ An international donors conference was held in Cairo after the EEAP was completed (24 May 1992) to generate funding to implement the plan.

As a first attempt at environmental planning and action formulation, the EEAP was a sector-based report. As such, the report divides itself up into environmental sectors with proposed projects listed within each sector-based chapter. These "priority" sectors, as they might be considered, are:

- (a) Natural resource pollution and degradation (water and land);
- (b) Air pollution;
- (c) Solid waste management;
- (d) Protecting national heritage;
- (e) Strengthening environmental institutions.

However, one of the critiques of the EEAP is that it did not seek to actively engage other line ministries or the public in the preparation of the report. As such, the EEAP does not provide a list of specific environmental priorities that represent the interests of different stakeholders since this would have required a great deal of consultation and consensus building with public and private sector stakeholders. This lack of participation and consultation resulted in line ministries—responsible for implementing the plan—to not feel ownership or commitment to the process. The EEAP accordingly ended up being referred to as a "shopping list" of projects for funding from which international donor agencies could pick and choose when offering aid packages to Egypt. Unfortunately, this makes the process of environmental management and action more of a supply-driven effort based on available donor funding and interest, rather than demand-driven activity based on government priorities.

These and other critiques of the 1992 EEAP thus include:

- (a) Lack of prioritization of Egyptian environmental problems;
- (b) Lack of emphasis on the impact of overpopulation on the environment;
- (c) Lack of consideration of the relationship between poverty and the environment;⁷²
- (d) Lack of public participation and input in the NEAP process;
- (e) Shopping list format that was tailored to international donor community needs.

(ii) *Preparing a new NEAP for Egypt*

Egypt is currently in the process of developing a new national environmental action plan. The new NEAP actively seeks to be a process, as much as a product whereby public consultation, raising public awareness, and capacity building in local communities is as integral to NEAP development as the identification of new environmental baselines and the formulation of new environmental priorities and projects for funding.

The new NEAP now being developed seeks to:

- (a) Link national sustainable development planning to local sustainable development needs;
- (b) Engage public and private stakeholders in the NEAP development process;
- (c) Build capacity for sustainable development policy actors.

The immediate objectives of the new NEAP are to:

- (a) To institutionalize a gender anchored, holistic, participatory environmental planning process to manage environmental resources in Egypt;

⁷¹ EEAA, p. 1.

⁷² Gomaa, p. 40.

- (b) To build the capacities of interested parties;
- (c) To mobilize resources to implement programmes and projects that working groups identified.⁷³

It follows that the development objective of the new NEAP is to “create an enabling environment conducive to sustain the development of Egypt by introducing a gender anchored, holistic, participatory environmental planning process. This process will create a partnership between stakeholders and development partners, and will enable interested parties to assume ownership and responsibility for plan formulation and implementation. At the crux of this planning process is to create a synergy for resource mobilization crucial for achieving the short- and medium-term objectives of Egypt.”⁷⁴

Priority environmental problems were not identified in the first phase of the new NEAP, which was completed with the submission of the phase I report (*The Environmental Profile of Egypt*) for public consultation in October 1999. Although the second phase report, which focuses on “Proposed Actions,” is not yet complete, the outline of the report does not envision a section for identifying prioritization criteria or suggesting priority issues or projects for action. Instead, the report focuses on sector-based issues (air, water, land, and waste), and general questions of concern to sustainable development, i.e., the sustainability of economic growth, social and cultural issues, laws and institutions, and global issues. This section and a detailed portfolio of development projects are expected to be submitted for public consultation at a national workshop to be held in Cairo in late November 2000.

(b) *Linking sustainable development plans to national development planning*

Once commented upon and completed, the new NEAP Final Report will be formally submitted to the Egyptian Cabinet of Ministers for endorsement and then to the People’s Assembly for approval. If approved, the plan would be integrated into the next Five-Year Plan for Egypt and used by line ministries in the development and implementation of projects during that period.

However, submission and approval of the NEAP does not guarantee that its recommendations and projects will be accepted, much less implemented. Furthermore, since this process will likely take time that Egypt cannot afford to lose, four alternative tracks are being also pursued to integrate the NEAP into national development plans and policies.

(i) *Consultation and coordination with line ministries during NEAP preparation*

The preparation of the Egyptian NEAP involves regular consultation with line ministries, particularly sector ministries engaged in environmental issues. For instance, apart from the EEAA, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Irrigation are actively involved in NEAP preparation through working groups and consultations. The involvement of these ministries in the formulation of recommendations and proposed projects for funding, as well as discussions of funding mechanisms through which projects might be funded, serve to promote support and ownership of the recommendations and the proposed projects within respective ministries.

(ii) *Inclusion of NEAP recommendations in ministry plans and policies*

Even before the People’s Council approves the full NEAP, ministries engaged in the NEAP working groups will likely integrate NEAP recommendations and proposed projects in their own development plans and strategies. These strategies are then submitted to the Ministry of Planning for prioritization and inclusion in the next Five-Year National Plan that would be submitted to the Ministry of Finance for funding. Unfortunately, there has been limited success in Egypt in implementing NEAP priorities and action plans, even after the Ministry of Planning approves them for inclusion in the National Plan. As noted in the previous chapter, this is because environmental issues are given a lower priority relative to development needs.

⁷³ “Immediate Objectives,” *National Environmental Action Plan*, <http://www.neap.com.eg> (downloaded 22 June 2000).

⁷⁴ “Development Objectives,” *National Environmental Action Plan*, <http://www.neap.com.eg> (downloaded 22 June 2000).

(iii) *Lobbying for NEAP Activities through the “front-door” and the “back-door”*

Ministries who are engaged in the NEAP process and feel ownership over selected recommendations and action plans proposed by the NEAP and included in their ministerial plans may lobby the Ministry of Planning for inclusion of the projects in the next Five-Year National Plan. They may subsequently lobby the Ministry of Finance through “back-door” channels, while the Ministry of Planning pushes for financing of the plan through “front-door” channels.

(iv) *National consultation with the international donor community*

The NEAP will be presented at a National Consultation (November 2000) for donors to examine and discuss. This will likely spur the preparation of project proposal that follow the guidelines and priorities of each donor agencies. This piecemeal approach, however, may not coincide with the government’s policy priorities and development strategy and should be managed in a way that donor agencies are not the driving force behind the progress in achieving sustainable development in Egypt.

(c) *National institutional framework for implementing and monitoring sustainable development strategies or action plans*

The EEAA is the key national sustainable development coordination mechanism for Egypt; however, the Director of Environment and Sustainable Development in the Ministry of State for Foreign Affairs serves as the official counterpart for the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Together with the Ministry of Environmental Affairs and the Ministry of State for Foreign Affairs, the EEAA formed the Committee for Sustainable Development for Egypt during the mid-1990s. The task of the Committee is to provide annual updates to the CSD on Egyptian progress in implementing Agenda 21 with the assistance of eminent Egyptian environmental experts, such as Mustapha Tolba. The Egyptian Committee for Sustainable Development responsibilities include periodically updating decision-makers on progress in achieving sustainable development and compiling databases on involved stakeholders.⁷⁵

The EEAA also established a Planning, Follow-up, and Technical Cooperation Department in May 2000, which will assist with the process of planning, implementing, and monitoring progress in achieving sustainable development goals. Since the department is an outgrowth of the externally funded Technical Cooperation Office for Environment, the new department should have the technical resources and human capacity necessary to support adequate planning and evaluation activities for EEAA. Apart from the *ad hoc* reporting system of the Committee for Sustainable Development and this new department established at EEAA, there is no other system in place for monitoring progress in implementing sustainable development plans or national environmental action plans.

(d) *Factors contributing to successful implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *Role of multilateral environmental agreements in mobilizing environmental action*

Egyptian ratification of multilateral environmental agreements has mobilized the government to establish institutions and authorize funding for activities in support of international commitments. Since these commitments are in line with sustainable development objectives, signing on to MEAs can be considered a factor in achieving progress towards sustainable development. Examples illustrating successes achieved following MEA acceptance are noted below.

- a. After Egypt signed the *Biodiversity Convention* in June 1992, it established a National Unit for Biodiversity. The purpose of the unit is to plan and execute a programme for the preservation of biodiversity and to plan and execute a research programme for the examination of special

⁷⁵ Based on Egypt’s submission to the 5th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, April 1997 from Government of Egypt, “Institutional Aspects of Sustainable Development in Egypt,” <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/egypt/inst.htm>, downloaded 29 September 2000, p. 8.

- materials and hereditary resources in living species.⁷⁶ It is responsible for conducting studies and completing a biodiversity inventory. The unit includes scientists from a variety of agencies and disciplines including: the Agricultural Research Center, National Institute for Seas and Fishing, National Planning Institute, National Center for Research, Wild Life Protection Agency, Academy of Scientific Research, several NGOs and universities, as well as the ministries of agriculture, interior, scientific research, public works, tourism, and aquatic resources. In January 1995, the “National study of Bio-diversity in Egypt” was issued following a workshop hosted by EEAA and UNEP;⁷⁷
- b. After Egypt ratified the *Climate Change Convention* in 1994, several activities were initiated to collect information on the implications of climate change for Egypt. For instance, Egypt was selected to be one of the six countries UNEP is studying regarding the cost of limiting gases that cause greenhouse effects. The American Programme for Country Studies and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) have also sponsored national climate change assessments.⁷⁸ Furthermore the Government of Egypt implemented several air quality improvement projects in Greater Cairo over the past four years in support of the convention’s goals. Two of the most important initiatives have been that (1) automobiles in Greater Cairo are now required to use lead-free gasoline, and (2) automobiles now have the option through a government conversion and supply programme of using Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as an alternative to gasoline. An estimated 12,000 vehicles have since switched to CNG. Plans are also underway to relocate lead smelters affecting air quality outside of Cairo and Qaluybia to less populated areas;⁷⁹
 - c. After ratifying the *Montreal Protocol*, Egypt established the Ozone Permanent Committee with Decree No. 93 for 1993. The Committee has helped Egypt to secure financing of several projects to identify ozone-releasing substitutes amounting to approximately US\$ 31.5 million granted through the Multi-Lateral Fund for Ozone by 1995.⁸⁰ Egypt is also seeking to mobilize all organizations to join the National Programme for Ozone Protection,⁸¹
 - d. The Egyptian Environment Action Plan of 1992, the outcomes of Earth Summit of June 1992, the conclusion of the International Convention for Combating Desertification in 1994, resulted in Egypt’s commitment to considering desertification as a top environmental priority. This was manifested by the signing of the Desertification Convention in 1995;⁸²
 - e. And finally, after Egypt ratified the *Desertification Convention* in 1995, the EEAA was assigned responsibility to serve as the National Coordinator on desertification issues and subsequently formed a Joint Working Committee to follow up the international and domestic efforts for combating desertification. This Committee is composed of representatives from directly concerned ministries, namely the ministries of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Public Works and Water Resources, Scientific Research, Planning and Interior in addition to experts in the field of desertification. The Committee works to boost awareness of desertification problems at the national level and seeks to coordinate and integrate ministerial efforts on the topic.⁸³

⁷⁶ EEAA, “Egypt Rio + 5 Summary Report.”

⁷⁷ El Sayed and Taha, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 6

⁷⁹ EEAA and UNDP Capacity 21 Unit, p. 89.

⁸⁰ El Sayed and Taha, p. 8.

⁸¹ EEAA, “Egypt Rio + 5 Summary Report.”

⁸² El Sayed and Taha, p. 11.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 11.

(ii) *International donor funding*

International donor funding has been a powerful instrument in achieving the implementation of certain sustainable development goals in Egypt. Indeed, “Egypt’s national priority is to mobilize both local and external resources to address environmental problems”.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the GoE sees environment as a mechanism for attracting more donor funding to Egypt.⁸⁵

For instance, while the Government of Egypt allocated LE 4,168,042,000 (US\$ 1,225,894,706)⁸⁶ for environmental projects in its Five-Year Plan for 1997-2002, international donor funding for on-going projects as of December 1996 amounted to LE 902,153,727 (US\$ 265,339,331),⁸⁷ nearly 25 percent of the total amount allocated by the government. Furthermore, in 1996 alone, Egypt has also received substantial number of sustainable development project grants and over US\$ 40 million in project loans, which have significantly contributed to the country’s ability to implement sustainable development projects and actions.⁸⁸

It should also be noted that the EEAP would have not been made possible had it not been for the financial and technical assistance of the World Bank, as well as the assistance of other bilateral donors. Also, the new NEAP under preparation is funded in full by the Capacity 21 Unit of the United Nations Development Programme, although that means that it is unfortunately managed from a unit established outside the institutional framework of the EEAA.

(e) *Factors likely resulting in failures in the implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *Difficulties making sure the process does not overshadow the product*

The process of consultation and public participation is integral to the development of a NEAP. In the case of Egypt, heavy emphasis has been placed on the role of public and private sector involvement in the five sector-based working groups drafting the new NEAP’s recommendations, action plans, and project portfolios.

However, the new NEAP process in Egypt goes beyond simple participation by seeking “to build the capacities of interested parties”.⁸⁹ Some capacity building is generally needed in NEAP formulation. For example, establishing working groups and focal points in line ministries to help government stakeholders better understand and coordinate sustainable development activities, or training in developing criteria needed for policy prioritization. The concern is that capacity building activities during the development of the new NEAP have focused on policy implementation, rather than policy identification. For example, the new NEAP has supported training sessions for police officers and court officials to improve environmental enforcement in Port Said and Assyut, and local sustainable community development initiatives such as the greening of schools in Beri Sweif. It should be noted that training has also been provided to assist local officials learn how to prepare sustainable development project proposals for funding. However, the prioritization of funding for this activity above others should be questioned given the institutional obstacles that local governments face in securing funds for sustainable development projects (see point c below).

⁸⁴ Based on Egypt’s submission to the 5th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, April 1997 from Government of Egypt, “Economic Aspects of Sustainable Development in Egypt,” <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/countr/egypt/eco.htm>, downloaded 29 September 2000, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Interview by the author with Iman Soliman, Vice-President, SPAAC, Cairo, Egypt, 14 July 2000.

⁸⁶ US\$ 1 = LE 3.4 in year 2000 dollars.

⁸⁷ Government of Egypt, “Economic Aspects of Sustainable Development in Egypt,” p. 4.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸⁹ Interview with Ahmed El-Kholei.

Training and capacity building are very important activities necessary for achieving sustainable development, particularly for the implementation of Local Agenda 21s. Training assists local officials better understand the practical aspects of project preparation and implementation. However, it should be questioned whether conducting training activities within the context of NEAP preparation is appropriate, or whether it should be left to the implementation phase. Not only do training activities diffuse energies and limited resources that could be better spent on other aspects of NEAP preparation (i.e., new data collection or increased public consultation), but it also blurs the line between NEAP programme development and NEAP project execution at the national and local levels. Indeed, capacity building programmes should first be assessed, then focused, then prioritized before being implemented. A better alternative might thus be support for training programmes and capacity building initiatives alongside, but in close coordination with, the NEAP process via different administrative and financial mechanisms. This alternative approach, for example, has been proposed for the development of the National Environmental Strategy for the Syrian Arab Republic.⁹⁰

(ii) *Lack of prioritization*

The new Egyptian NEAP does not seek to prioritize environmental challenges and actions. Instead, it provides more of a detailed “shopping list” for government ministries and international donors to pick from, which is reminiscent of the EEAP. Although not engaging in a prioritization of issues and actions is an apolitical approach to sustainable development planning that may avoid institutional conflicts and power politics, the “list” approach does not help to focalize action or facilitate implementation of the plan. Indeed, the prioritization of the issues and projects is necessary in Egypt to avoid the piecemeal approach to NEAP implementation that has plagued Egypt for the last eight years. It is also one of the best ways for the Government of Egypt to inform the international community of its commitment to certain issues. The establishment of an inter-ministerial working group to establish prioritization criteria and workshops at the National Consultation planned for November 2000 could be used as mechanisms for prioritizing key elements of the NEAP. Training is also needed to explain to environmental officials how to prioritize environmental issues and policies, i.e., how to identify and rank prioritization criteria, how to select policy options, and how to develop mixed policy alternatives.

(iii) *Financing Local Agenda 21s is more difficult than financing national plans*

Governance in Egypt is centralized at the national level. As such, local government budgets and programmes are financed by the national government. Obstacles preventing decentralized access to international sources of funding is thus one of the main stumbling blocks preventing local governments in Egypt from pursuing and implementing Local Agenda 21 initiatives. More specifically, this is because:

- a. National agencies can solicit donor funding, local governments can not;
- b. Local governments can not raise funds for local Agenda 21 activities independently without the approval of national revenue raising ministries;
- c. Local governments have limited monitoring and inspection capacities, therefore how can they collect fines to effectively raise funds for environmental protection programmes when sufficient resources are not provided by the national government to do so;
- d. Local Agenda 21 strategies cost approximately US\$ 100,000 to formulate. Local governments in Egypt might be able to raise this much money, but not enough to subsequently implement plans and activities proposed at the strategy level.⁹¹

It should be noted that at least one local government has found a creative way of raising municipal funds that can be used for environmental improvements. Alexandria started a unique self-financing

⁹⁰ World Bank, “National Environmental Strategy: Preparation of National and Basinwide Environmental Action Plans and Environmental Management Capacity Building-Terms of Reference,” 1998.

⁹¹ Interview with Hosny Khordagui (July 2000).

programme based on the personal initiative of the new mayor, however his efforts are not institutionalized or systematic since they are effectively based on “donations” to the municipal government.⁹² The Alexandria model is thus difficult to transfer to other communities.

There accordingly needs to be more capacity, coordination, and support for bringing decision-making, programme development, and project implementation down to the local level. Given the current political and institutional arrangements governing the country, achieving this task may be nearly impossible.⁹³

(iv) *Institutional structure of sustainable development planning via EEAA*

Until May 1992, international donor assistance on the environment to Egypt was coordinated through the Technical Cooperation Office for Environment (TCOE) at EEAA. This was good in that it provided international agencies with unit of skilled personnel that was responsive to the requirements of donors from project preparation to project implementation.

The problem was that the TCOE, like the current Capacity 21 Unit, was funded and advocated for by foreign donors. Like the Capacity 21 Unit, TCOE also worked alongside the EEAA, but was not part of the official EEAA institutional framework. This caused human resource problems and difficulties in pushing donor projects through EEAA channels.

Furthermore, TCOE became responsive to donor-driven projects, instead of national priorities. This supported an “incremental” approach to project development and implementation, instead one focused on a comprehensive national strategy.⁹⁴ The Capacity 21 Unit’s hesitance in prioritizing environmental problems and project might be unconsciously a way to cater to international donor needs. Although these lessons should have been learned from the experiences of the TCOE, the same problems now plague the Capacity 21 Unit and its efforts to formulate the new NEAP.

Nevertheless, it should be said that efforts have been made to remedy the problem. As of May 2000, the TCOE was restructured and integrated into the EEAA organizational structure. The department is now called the Planning, Follow-up and Technical Cooperation Department. The new department is led by the same director and maintains much of the same staff, which will help to maintain continuity for the agency and the donor community. Given the newness of the division, it is hard to assess whether the department will be successful in better integrating foreign assistance into national interests. However, the integration project planning, follow-up, and cooperation with international donors into the EEAA institutional framework is definitely a step in the right direction.

(v) *National sustainable development planning efforts may be good, but the challenge is to link it to the Five-Year Plan*

Despite the new NEAP’s efforts to better integrate its proposed actions into the plans of other line ministries and into the next Five-Year Plan, the challenge of getting environmental proposal integrated and implemented is still difficult. The EEAP was unsuccessful in implementing much of its portfolio because of the lack of national ownership of the process and lack of line ministry engagement in the process. It rests to be seen whether the new NEAP will be more successful given the effort it has placed in consulting and coordinating with different ministries and agencies at the national and local levels.

2. Jordan

(a) *Main objectives and priorities of sustainable development plans*

Jordan has engaged in a variety of sustainable development planning exercises. The most recent ones, however, have been the 1996 NEAP and the National Agenda 21 currently being finalized.

⁹² Interview with Hosny Khordagui (October 2000).

⁹³ Interview with Hosny Khordagui (July 2000).

⁹⁴ Gomaa, p. 47.

(i) *National Environmental Action Plan*

While Jordan is in the final phases of completing a National Agenda 21, the NEAP remains the principle instrument for sustainable development planning and implementation in Jordan. The objective of the 1996 Jordan's NEAP was to provide some basic analysis of environmental problems in Jordan, set priorities, and give the impetus for ensuring that concrete environmental actions take place.⁹⁵ The criteria identified in the NEAP for establishing national environmental priorities are: (1) urgency; (2) effects on human health; (3) irreversibility; (4) the number of people affected; (5) effects on economic productivity; and (6) effects on the poor.⁹⁶ Subsequent to agreement on these criteria and several consultations in working groups and workshops, the main environmental priorities of Jordan were listed in the NEAP to be:

- a. Water depletion;
- b. Water pollution;
- c. Land degradation;
- d. Land contamination;
- e. Coastal zone degradation;
- f. Waste management;
- g. Air pollution;
- h. Uncontrolled urban expansion;
- i. Cultural heritage degradation;
- j. Habitat degradation.⁹⁷

These priorities have thus governed Jordanian policy for approving environmental projects for funding for the last four years.

(ii) *National Agenda 21*

Unlike the 1996 NEAP, the *Jordan Agenda 21* seeks to be more of a strategy document, similar in spirit to the NES completed in 1991. Like the NES, Agenda 21 seeks to be more process-oriented and tries to build national capacity for environmental management by increasing environmental awareness and expertise by the involvement of Jordanians in the process of formulating the strategy. Unlike the NEAP, the final draft Agenda 21 report does not specify priorities for action. Instead it offers dozens of recommendations for action along sector lines leaving it to decision-makers, stakeholders, and donors to determine which of the recommendations and sectors takes priority over the other.

It should be noted, however, that should the National Agenda 21 initiative be considered by the Government of Jordan as a NSDS, the process of prioritizing problems and actions should occur in the near future with the development of a NES and/or an updated NEAP. Otherwise the *Jordan Agenda 21* document will serve only as a broad policy document that will be difficult to use and implement. Furthermore, given the success of the 1996 NEAP in implementing the great majority of its proposed project, the completion of a draft Agenda 21 could be considered a timely event that can help Jordan begin the process of revising its environmental priorities and developing a new environmental action plan in view of progress made to date.

(b) *Linking sustainable development plans to national development planning*

Jordan has been effective in linking sustainable development plans into national development plans and strategies. For instance, the findings and recommendations of the 1996 NEAP formed the basis of the Environmental Sector chapter in the country's *National Economic Plan 1999-2003*. The NEAP is also the primary instrument used by the Ministry of Planning to approve environmental projects for funding and implementation.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ministry of Planning (1996), p. 12.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

⁹⁸ Interview with Nadia Juhari.

The process of linking sustainable development priorities into national plans was facilitated by the fact that the 1996 Jordan NEAP clearly identifies a portfolio of environmental priority issues and actions. It also organized priority actions among themselves so as to have Phase I priority actions and then proposes medium and long-term actions.⁹⁹

The Phase I priority actions are then further organized in sector-specific matrices that identify the priority action and its respective overall goal, specific objective, expected outputs, agency responsible for implementation, and estimated cost.¹⁰⁰ This provides the Ministry of Planning and other ministries with a user-friendly checklist of priorities and actions within which programmes and projects must fall if they are to be approved for funding or implementation. Of the 18 priority actions identified for Phase I action, all have been completed or are in the process of implementation. This illustrates the utility that a NEAP can have in directing and facilitating sustainable development planning and management when it is used by the appropriate players and organized in an easy-to-use fashion.

(c) *National institutional framework for implementing and monitoring sustainable development strategies or action plans*

The official counterpart for the CSD is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EPC, and the GCEP serving as the implementing authority. However, since the GCEP is a relatively new institution with limited capacity to provide technical support for sustainable development planning, the Department of Studies and Research at the Ministry of Planning has taken the lead in making the necessary preparations for the Rio + 10 meetings. These preparations currently include compiling a Rio + 10 status report in coordination with other line ministries by soliciting their input on progress in completing sustainable development project activities and achieving sustainable development targets. This report will subsequently be submitted to the CSD as part of Jordan's reporting efforts on Agenda 21.

The Ministry of Planning in Jordan also serves as the effective lead government agency responsible for ensuring programme and project compliance with the 1996 NEAP priorities and actions. However, the monitoring and review of NEAP activities has been limited. Given the recent formulation of a draft National Agenda 21, a NEAP review should be undertaken by the Government of Jordan as soon as the National Agenda 21 is approved to prioritize the instruments and actions to be used to monitor and implement the new national sustainable development strategy. No institutions have currently been established or given the responsibility for continuously monitoring progress in achieving sustainable development goals.

(d) *Factors contributing to successful implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *Role of multilateral environmental agreements in mobilizing environmental action*

Jordan has taken a proactive stance in signing and ratifying MEAs, particularly if they fall within the bounds of its NES or NEAP objectives. These commitments are implemented in Jordan by the establishment of focal points or national units that are responsible for follow-up on the obligations required by signatory members of a convention. The establishment of such units has been very effective in mobilizing support and funding for sustainable environmental development measures.

For instance, the Ozone Unit established at the GCEP has been very successful in attracting international funding from the Montreal Fund and the GEF to assist private enterprises switch to non-CFC emitting processes and technologies. Nearly US\$ 12 million in grants have been secured by Jordan for this purpose since 1994.¹⁰¹ An additional US\$ 4 million is expected to be secured with the assistance of the GTZ for the purpose of phasing out methane bromide within the coming year.¹⁰² The Unit is also in the process of

⁹⁹ See table 24, Ministry of Planning (1996), p. 56.

¹⁰⁰ See tables 25-28, *ibid.*, pp. 57-60.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Ghazi Odat.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

developing a Refrigeration Management Plan to train approximately 1000 technicians on ways to reduce CFC emissions in accordance with the commitments made by Jordan by signing the Montreal Protocol.¹⁰³

(ii) *Economic globalization*

The ability of Jordan to solicit financial resources for environmental activities and mobilize domestic support for environmental management actions increased after it became a member of the World Trade Organization member and signed an Association Agreement with the European Union. Not only did these actions increase Jordanian access to different sources of funding for environmental activities, but it also facilitated the process of encouraging the United States to enter into negotiations with Jordan to establish a US-Jordan Free Trade Agreement. The agreement is only the fifth such initiative pursued by the United States.

As part of the trade negotiations, the United States has expressed concern that Jordanian environmental standards are not as strong as those of the United States and may thus give duty-free Jordanian imports an unfair environmental advantage in the U.S. market should the trade agreement go forward. (The United States expressed the same fear before signing the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico in 1992). These concerns have prompted Jordan to consider creating a Ministry of Environment that is separate and distinct from the MMRA&E and from the GCEP. If established, the ministry would have executive authority equal to that of other line ministries, which could assist the process of implementing sustainable development planning objectives and projects.

(e) *Factors likely resulting in failures in the implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *The Middle East Peace Process*

Jordan's ability to achieve sustainable development ultimately depends on its ability to coordinate environmental programmes and seek environmental agreeable terms with its neighbors on a regional level. This is because Jordan depends on regional water resources shared with Israel, the West Bank, and the Syrian Arab Republic, which makes the policy planning and implementation process particularly difficult given the tenuous circumstances characteristic of the Middle East Peace process. Jordan will thus need to continue to utilize diplomatic efforts to extract favorable concessions regarding its water allotments. However, the politicization and uncertainty of the process makes it nearly impossible for Jordan to develop and implement long-term sustainable development plans associated with these shared resources in the near term.

(ii) *Limited coordination and overlapping jurisdictions*

Although the Environmental Protection Council is given the responsibility to coordinate environmental programmes at the national level, the effectiveness of the council is limited by the fact that its membership consists of ministers and deputy ministers instead of operational government officials. As such, several programmes and projects may be approved for political reasons without taking into consideration the technical and financial aspects of implementation. This problem is amplified by the fact that although several ministries are represented on the council, many have overlapping jurisdictions. Accordingly, while broad policies are discussed and approved by the EPC, the implementation and monitoring of policies is not addressed and thus remains ineffective. This is unfortunate since the EPC could serve as a forum for addressing these difficulties quickly at the ministerial level.

(iii) *Lack of targets and triggers for encouraging implementation*

A problem evident in several ESCWA member countries is the lack of targets and triggers to encourage action on policy implementation and financing. This is a specific problem for Jordan since the NEAP and the draft National Agenda 21 both make reference to the utility of targets and triggers in

¹⁰³ Ibid.

achieving sustainable development goals. This illustrates the need for increased regional understanding about the ways to adopt and apply targets and triggers.

3. United Arab Emirates

(a) *Main objectives and priorities of the sustainable development plans*

The overall objective of national sustainable development planning activities completed in the United Arab Emirates is to assist the country to implement actions articulated in the NEAP, which would serve as the key instrument for promoting sustainable development at the national level.¹⁰⁴ The development objective of the combined planning efforts are to: (1) “enhance the commitment by United Arab Emirates to build a welfare society with diversified economy and to protect the environment by adopting the principles of sustainable development by introducing environmental dimensions into national planning process of development;” and to (2) “ensure that future generations are not burdened with the environmental debts of today’s actions—a legacy of depleted resources and environmental problems”.¹⁰⁵

The immediate objectives of the sustainable development planning process are to:

- (a) Involve a broad cross-section of emirates sectors to identify and prioritize national environmental concerns and to identify gaps in the organizational capacities needed to address these challenges;
- (b) Identify indicators that can be used to measure progress in achieving objectives;
- (c) Launch and adopt a NES and to assess the NES based on indicators of success;
- (d) Formulate a NEAP based on the NES and to identify indicators that can be used to measure the achievement towards implementing the action plan.¹⁰⁶

(i) *National Environmental Strategy*

Priority identification in the United Arab Emirates began with the formulation of the NES in early 1999. As a first step, the NES sought the involvement of public and private sector stakeholders through committees that formulated recommendations on environmental issues pertaining to specific sectors, namely the:

- a. Municipalities sector;
- b. Water resources sector;
- c. Marine environment sector;
- d. Planning and urban environment sector;
- e. Agriculture and land resources sector;
- f. Industry sector;
- g. Energy sector;
- h. Health sector;
- i. Education and environmental awareness sector;
- j. Oil and gas sector.¹⁰⁷

Following the work of the sector committees, four categories of national environmental issues were identified as national priorities for environmental action in the NES:

- (a) Water resources;
- (b) Pollution (air, water, waste management);

¹⁰⁴ UNDP, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ FEA, UNDP and ESCWA, Vol. II, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ UNDP, p. 12.

¹⁰⁷ FEA, UNDP and ESCWA, Vol. II, p. 4.

- (c) Urban environment;
- (d) Degradation of land and marine resources and biodiversity.¹⁰⁸

(b) *Linking sustainable development plans to national development planning*

At the national level, the NSDS (Agenda 21), NES and NEAP were completed by September 2000. Each serves to direct national policy and action in support of sustainable development goals. In practice, however, the federalist and decentralized nature of United Arab Emirates politics will render the effectiveness of the national planning initiatives limited if local sustainable development strategies are not developed that echo and complement the national objectives. This is particularly relevant for the United Arab Emirates since each Emirate has full autonomy and responsibility for developing and managing its own economic policies and development plans. For this reason, a Local Agenda 21 initiative is currently being conducted in Abu Dhabi to complement national initiatives. The complementarity of the national and local activities will be essential for ensuring that sustainable development objectives are integrated into national and local development plans and policy frameworks.

(c) *National institutional framework for implementing and monitoring sustainable development strategies or action plans*

The United Arab Emirates has not assigned a national agency responsibility for serving as the national counterpart to the CSD. This is most likely because of the United Arab Emirates recent support for sustainable development planning and because of the decentralized nature of international economic and environmental relations in the Emirates.

Nevertheless, since it is the United Arab Emirates as a single entity that signs and ratifies MEAs and economic conventions, it can be expected that a national environmental agency, such as the Higher Environmental Committee, would be responsible for coordinating United Arab Emirates obligations *vis à vis* the commission. Its activities, however, would likely be supported by Federal Environmental Agency in coordination and consultation with the interests expressed at the Emirate level.

Responsibility for implementing and monitoring national sustainable development plans in the United Arab Emirates is also a decentralized process. Implementation of the national strategy and action plan is anticipated to occur at the federal level after securing the support of each Emirate. Monitoring and the use of indicators are also mentioned as important aspects of the sustainable development planning process at the national and local levels. However, whether monitoring will occur in practice remains to be seen. This will depend on whether a process and schedule of monitoring activities are established in the national and local environmental action plans and if those plans are actually implemented.

(d) *Factors contributing to successful implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *Increased awareness of environmental and economic linkages*

The United Arab Emirates economy and quality of life is fundamentally linked to its ability to exploit and export its oil reserves. However, studies and case of Dutch disease¹⁰⁹ in other countries and turbulence in global oil markets have shown the United Arab Emirates that natural resource rich economies cannot afford to depend on natural resource revenues as the sole instrument for achieving sustainability. Indeed, as an unrenovable natural resource, oil reserves can only facilitate the process of moving toward sustainable development. Furthermore, it might even impede progress towards sustainable development if foresight and strategies are not adopted before profit-generating natural resources are exhausted.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Dutch disease occurs when a country experiences an economic export boom and an influx of foreign exchange earnings (e.g., a windfall from natural resource exploitation), but is unable to sustain development in other economic sectors in face of rising inflation rates, declining exports in non-boom sectors and poor policy planning. What results is slower income growth and rising unemployment instead of the prosperity expected after the windfall. For more information, see M. Gillis, D Perkins, M. Roemer, and D. Snodgrass, *Economics of Development*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996, pp. 476-480.

Increased awareness of these relationships have made the two wealthy Emirates—Abu Dhabi and Dubai—begin to appreciate the need of a NSDS, NES, and NEAP. There is evidence that this realization of the linkages between environmental sustainability and economic development are necessary to sustain the high quality of life to which their residents have become accustomed.

(ii) *Oil Revenue*

Despite what was noted above, it must be acknowledged that the wealth that the United Arab Emirates has generated from its oil revenues has allowed it pursue sustainable development planning more easily. With an estimated per capita GDP income of US\$ 17,700 in 1999,¹¹⁰ the United Arab Emirates can afford to fund sustainable development planning activities and actions independently of international donor organization. There is also the theory of the Kuznets Curve¹¹¹ that indicates that since the country has reached a level of economic security, it can now afford to consider quality of life issues more closely, namely environmental protection.

Nevertheless, while the United Arab Emirates has not needed the financial assistance of international organizations such as the WB and UNDP, technical assistance has been solicited from organizations such as ESCWA to assist it to formulate sustainable development strategies at the national and local levels. These activities, however, are financed entirely by state or emirate budgets and subsequently respond directly to the political interests and constraints of those levels of government.

(e) *Factors likely resulting in failures in the implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *Federal versus Emirate politics*

The decentralized nature of economic policy-making and development planning in the United Arab Emirates makes it difficult for national strategies and action plans to be adopted and implemented without the full support of each Emirate. Furthermore, since national sustainable development activities coordinated through the Federal Environmental Agency are dependent on the financial support of richer Emirates, the ability to effectively implement policies and actions will depend on the political and financial commitments of Abu Dhabi, and to a lesser extent Dubai, to fund such activities.

This may be challenging since Abu Dhabi is in the process of completing its own local environmental action plan according to its own priorities and concerns. Seeking complementarity and coordination between the two strategies will likely be the best avenue for ensuring that national sustainable development activities are not neglected in favor of local initiatives. Otherwise, Emirates without the political, financial and technical resources available to formulate local environmental strategies and plans will continue to conduct business-as-usual, while the more well-off Emirates pursue development paths that are more sustainable. This may be possible in the short-run, but in the long-run, the lack of a comprehensive national strategy and action plan will not only harm the less wealthy Emirates, but also the richer ones who have sought to be proactive.

(ii) *Limited environmental awareness*

While awareness of environmental issues and priorities may be evident in richer Emirates, such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, support for environmental initiatives outside of those two Emirates is still greatly dependent upon the support of individuals. This is because there is limited awareness and support for promoting linkages between environmental and economic issues outside of the more wealthy Emirates or within national policy-making circles. This is evident by the low priority some Emirates have given to protecting their coastal resources and improving their urban environments.

¹¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook 2000*, "United Arab Emirates," <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tc.html#Econ>, downloaded 19 November 2000.

¹¹¹ For more information on the Kuznets Curve see Theodore Panayotou, "Demystifying the Environmental Kuznets Curve: Turning a Black Box into a Policy Tool," Harvard Institute for International Development, Development Discussion Paper No. 643, July 1998.

4. Yemen

(a) *Main objectives and priorities of sustainable development plans*

In the absence of a NSDS or a NES for Yemen, the NEAP, completed in 1996, and the SEM programme in support of the NEAP, which was approved that same year, serve as the main sustainable development instruments for the country.

(i) *National Environmental Action Plan*

The main objective of the NEAP is to promote the sustainable use of natural resources through a set of institutional, legislative, economic, and financial measures; to improve the environmental information base; and to increase community involvement and awareness.¹¹²

The priority actions of the NEAP were identified according to the following primary criteria: (1) urgency; (2) irreversibility; (3) effects on human health; and (4) effects on economic productivity. The secondary set of criteria used were: (5) number of people affected; (6) loss of amenity; and (7) effects on the poor.¹¹³ Based on these criteria, the main environmental priorities identified by the NEAP are:

- a. Desertification;
- b. Water supply;
- c. Untreated waste water;
- d. Water scarcity;
- e. Liquid and solid waste;
- f. Degradation of natural habitats;
- g. Marine pollution;
- h. Mismanagement of fisheries resources;
- i. Population growth;
- j. Dumping of ship waste;
- k. Degradation of cultural and historic heritage.

However, given the limited time and funds available to implement the NEAP, the most urgent national environmental priorities were identified to be:

- (a) Water depletion and pollution;
- (b) Land degradation;
- (c) Habitat degradation;
- (d) Waste management.¹¹⁴

The NEAP was developed with technical and financial assistance provided by the World Bank and the Government of Netherlands.

(ii) *Sustainable Environmental Management programme*

The SEM programme was developed base on the NEAP to provide a short-term action plan for projects to be initiated between 1997-1999. As such the SEM provides is own list of short-term environmental priority action. These are:

- a. *Institutional development* – including capacity building for the EPC, developing disaster preparedness plans for oil spills, and conducting local pilot projects;

¹¹² Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 13.

¹¹³ Environmental Protection Council, p. 8.

¹¹⁴ Environmental Protection Council, p. 9.

- b. *Water resources* – namely strengthening the National Water Resources Authority, developing a National Water Resources Information System, designing a comprehensive water law, improving water supply services in rural and urban areas, and using economic instruments to control wastewater discharges and water pollution;
- c. *Land resources* – including the establishment of a land use planning center for land zoning and registration, implementation of projects to control desertification (including a desertification assessment and map), and the promotion of traditional grazing reserves and modern pest management techniques;
- d. *Natural habitats and biodiversity* – through the establishment of a National Protected Area on Socotra, developing a national inventory and database for fauna and flora, preparing a Coastal Zone Management Plan, and establishing an eco-tourism department at the General Tourism Authority;
- e. *Waste management* – namely the closure or replacement of waste disposal sites; the privatization of solid waste collection and recycling services; the privatization of hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal services; and the formulation of regulations governing hospital waste treatment and disposal.¹¹⁵

While the NEAP and SEM lists of environmental priorities are complementary, they are not the same. This may be because the SEM was developed with technical and financial assistance provided by UNDP. Indeed, several sections of the SEM are dedicated to rationalizing UNDP support for the identifying environmental priorities within the context of UNDP's mission statement, country programmes, and capacities.¹¹⁶ For instance, institutional capacity building—one of the UNDP's flagship activities—is listed as one of Yemen's top priorities. By contrast, the NEAP—completed primarily with the assistance of the World Bank—institutional capacity building is not even listed among the country's top priorities. This is likely because the World Bank has traditionally focus its environmental assistance on hard investments related to physical infrastructure development.

(b) *Linking sustainable development plans to national development planning*

It is the policy of the Government of Yemen that environmental considerations should be integrated into all sectors and phases of development planning and that responsibility for its implementation should not be restricted to one agency.¹¹⁷ However, a system for ensuring that environmental objectives are integrated and implemented in the development activities of other agencies has not been established. Effort have been made, however, by integrating the findings and recommendations of the NEAP in the *General Economic Memorandum* presented in Geneva in 1992 and in the country's *Five-Year Development Plan for 1996-2000*, which dedicates an entire chapter to environmental issues.

(c) *National institutional framework for implementing and monitoring sustainable development strategies or action plans*

The EPC serves as the mechanism for sustainable development planning in Yemen, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs serves as the official counterpart of the CSD. The EPC, however, does not have executive authority. It must accordingly coordinate and develop consensus with line ministries during planning stages to encourage their support for implementing NEAP priorities. The EPC does have the legal authority to monitor national, regional and international efforts in environmental protection. One way it hopes to do this is by reviewing and updating the NEAP based on lessons learned after the three-year period of activities

¹¹⁵ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ See Government of the Republic of Yemen, chapters II and III.

¹¹⁷ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 8.

proposed by the SEM programme.¹¹⁸ However, it is uncertain whether there is sufficient political commitment and funding available to conduct such an assessment at this time.

(d) *Factors contributing to successful implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *Role of multilateral environmental agreements in mobilizing environmental action*

Yemen's ratification of international environmental conventions helped to generate government action and international financial support for environmental priorities expressed in the NEAP. For instance, after ratifying the Biodiversity Convention, increased attention was paid to the need to catalogue and protect the unique natural resources of the Socotra islands in the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea. Improving biodiversity management, a secondary NEAP priority, subsequently prompted the GEF to pledge nearly US\$ 5 million in funding for biodiversity activities in the Socotra Archipelago, as well as another US\$ 290,000 to formulate a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.¹¹⁹

In another instance, Yemen's membership as a party to the Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) allowed it to participate in the *Planning and Development of Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden*. The programme "enables the analysis of major threats to the coastal and marine environments of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region, with the richest concentration of marine biodiversity in the world, and the identification of actions needed to address them".¹²⁰ This has allowed Yemen secure funding to formulate studies and action plans on biodiversity and coastal resource management.

(e) *Factors likely resulting in failures in the implementation of strategies and plans*

(i) *Economic and political difficulties*

North and South Yemen were united again less than a decade ago. Political stability and the need for economic development still top the government's agenda. Furthermore, the weakness of the economy and low per capita income make it difficult for decision-makers to invest in environmental protection measures that will reap benefits only in the medium and long-terms.¹²¹ Short-term projects and piece-meal programmes with revenue generation components are therefore often pursued before efforts are made to fund and implement broader objectives that support sustainable development goals.

(ii) *Limited technical and institutional capacity*

There is a need to strengthen human resources in Yemen and to provide technical training on issues that fall within the responsibilities of environmental institutions. Poorly defined institutional mandates, overlapping institutional jurisdictions, and vague job descriptions impair the ability of motivated individuals from conducting their work in an effective and efficient manner. There is also a lack of accountability and inadequate monitoring systems and reporting mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development goals.

(iii) *Limited access to technologies and the use of appropriate technologies*

Although efforts are underway to remedy the situation at the operational level, limited access to information technology, computers, and advanced technical equipment and training drastically slows the

¹¹⁸ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 16.

¹¹⁹ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 27.

¹²⁰ United Nations, *Planning and Development of Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden*, <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/success/os5.htm>, downloaded 30 September 2000.

¹²¹ Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 18.

process of completing tasks in government ministries.¹²² In the private sector, there is also a need to introduce low-cost and appropriate technologies that support efforts to improve agricultural productivity, solid waste management, and water treatment. This is an important point to consider since donor programmes sometime seek to focus on large-scale and expensive solutions to environmental problems in Yemen, which might be better addressed by reverting to traditional methods. Unfortunately, these traditional practices are being lost or forgotten in favor of more capital-intensive technological options.

C. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In view of the case studies completed above, it can be observed that some characteristics common to these countries' sustainable development planning processes include the:

1. Similarity of environmental priorities identified by countries in the ESCWA region.
2. Involvement of international donor organizations to provide financial and/or technical assistance to national and local initiatives in sustainable development planning and implementation.
3. Formation of issue-oriented or sector-based working groups to identify environmental baselines and formulate sector based strategies.

Some lessons learned from the case studies include the:

(a) Importance of cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial dialogue and engagement in the identification and prioritization of key environmental challenges for building ownership of the sustainable development planning process;

(b) Ability of MEA ratification to galvanize government action and support for sustainable development institutions and activities;

(c) Way in which increased awareness of economic and environmental linkages can prompt decision-makers to focus on sustainable development objectives;

(d) Need for effective and empowered environmental institutions at the national and local levels to formulate and implement sustainable development plans and actions;

(e) Difficulty of accessing and engaging individuals in local communities who are not members of private associations or NGOs in the process of formulating national sustainable development plans.

These and other common characteristics and lessons learned will be elaborated upon in the following chapter.

¹²² Government of the Republic of Yemen, p. 18.

III. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

There are several factors and lessons learned from the country studies that can be extrapolated to the regional level. The purpose of the chapter is to facilitate the process of preparing and implementing future sustainable development plans in the ESCWA region. It serves as the basis for identifying recommendations and next steps in the following chapters that can further improve the planning and implementation process.

This section will accordingly first provide a general list of common characteristics and lessons learned from the case studies. This will be followed by recommendations on ways to improve efforts in sustainable development planning and implementation.

A. COMMON CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN ESCWA MEMBER STATES

As the case studies demonstrate, there are several aspects of sustainable development planning and implementation that are common to the countries examined that may be extrapolated to the ESCWA region as a whole. These include similarities in:

1. Environmental priorities.
2. Ratification of MEAs.
3. Development planning techniques.
4. Request for assistance organization support.

However, there are also a host of challenges that are common to the region in their effort to achieve sustainable development goals, namely difficulties in:

- (a) Expanding the participatory approach;
- (b) Prioritizing environmental challenges and actions;
- (c) Strengthening environmental monitoring instruments.

Indeed, national exercises in sustainable development planning should include an implementation strategy that lists the environmental priorities the chief concern to the public and private sector stakeholders of the country. This is unfortunately rarely the case since:

- (a) Public and inter-ministerial consultation and coordination is often not actively or effectively pursued;
- (b) Countries often forget to establish criteria for identifying priorities or neglect the importance of the prioritization process all together;
- (c) Sustainable development policy planning and implementation (when it occurs) is rarely followed-up with monitoring or reporting.

As such, components of a NDSD, NES, or NEAP must be used as proxies to surmise what a country's environmental priorities and plans might be, not as a blueprint for what sustainable development policies will be implemented.

1. *Similarity of environmental priorities*

Based on the case study findings that are organized in Table 1 below, it can be surmised that countries in the ESCWA region generally find three environmental issues of primary importance:

- (a) Water depletion;
- (b) Water degradation;
- (c) Land degradation.

The importance of these three issues to the region should prompt efforts to catalogue the plans, actions, and instruments identified for addressing these environmental challenges in the NESs and NEAPs completed in the ESCWA region. A regional initiative should subsequently be organized to identify shared indicators and norms for measuring sustainable development successes and failures and to monitor and assess actions at the regional level. This could facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in sustainable development planning and implementation.

TABLE 1. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES FOR FOUR ESCWA MEMBER STATES

| Priority issues | Egypt ^{a/} | Jordan ^{b/} | United Arab Emirates | Yemen ^{d/} |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Water depletion | X | X | X | X |
| Water pollution | X | X | X | X |
| Air pollution | X | X | X | |
| Land degradation/contamination (incl. the agriculture sector) | X | X | X | X |
| Waste management | X | X | X | X |
| Coastal zone degradation/Marine environment | | X | X | |
| Natural habitat degradation/biodiversity | | X | X | X |
| National/Cultural heritage preservation | X | X | | |
| Environmental institutions | X | | X | X |
| Urban planning/urban expansion/urban environment | | X | X | |

^{a/} Egyptian priorities based on sector-based chapters of the EEAP (1992).

^{b/} Jordanian priorities based on priorities identified in the NEAP (1996).

^{c/} United Arab Emirates priorities as defined as national environmental priorities for action in the NES (1999) and NEAP (2000).

^{d/} Yemeni priorities based on the NEAP (1996) and the SEM programme (1996)

2. Similarity of MEAs ratified by ESCWA member states

Ratification of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) is a good indicator for illustrating government commitment to global sustainable development goals. Nearly all ESCWA member states have ratified at least four of the major environmental agreements of the past fifteen years (Iraq and the West Bank and Gaza being the exceptions). As can be seen in Table 2 below, the most common MEAs signed by ESCWA member states are the Montreal Protocol and the Climate Change Convention.

TABLE 2. RATIFICATION OF MAJOR MEAs BY ESCWA MEMBER STATES (1985-2000)

| ESCWA country | Montreal Protocol (1987) | Basel Convention (1989) | Convention on Biodiversity (1992) | Climate Change Convention (1992) | Desertification Convention (1994) |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bahrain | X | X | X | X | X |
| Egypt | X | X | X | X | X |
| Iraq | | | | | |
| Jordan | X | X | X | X | X |
| Kuwait | X | X | X | X | X |
| Lebanon | X | X | X | X | X |
| Oman | X | X | X | X | |
| Qatar | X | X | X | X | |
| Saudi Arabia | X | X | | X | X |
| Syrian Arab Republic | X | X | X | X | X |
| United Arab Emirates | X | X | X | X | X |
| Yemen | X | | X | X | X |

Source: Based on Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region 1998-1999*, New York: United Nations, 1999, p. 142 and updated from various official sources listing country ratification and accession to MEAs.

3. *Use of working groups, national expertise, and national consultations*

Engaging national experts and stakeholders in the process of formulating sustainable development plans is essential for the building national ownership of the planning process and building capacity for environmental management and planning. Three mechanisms have been effectively used in the four countries examined to achieve these dual goals: sector-based working groups, the use of national expertise, and the organization of national consultations.

(a) *Issue-oriented or sector-based working groups*

Working groups structured along the lines of the main subject areas of a NES or NEAP allow public and private sector stakeholders an opportunity to more easily and closely become involved in the planning and implementation process. This is because working groups allow stakeholders to focus on and contribute to the issues that concern them the most. The formation of such groups has provided the framework for organizing sustainable development planning initiatives in Egypt (during the first and second NEAP), Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates. It has thus been found to be a good method for facilitating public participation and securing public and private sector input and ownership over the formulation of proposed recommendations, action plans, and projects for funding.

(b) *National expertise*

National understanding and capacity for addressing environmental issues has increased in the ESCWA region over the past decade. Accordingly, efforts have been made to rely increasingly on national expertise to draft background papers that support the sustainable development planning and decision-making. The process of working with national experts helps to build national ownership and acceptance of environmental baselines, as well as builds national capacity in sustainable development methods. International consultants, with perhaps a greater breadth of experience in certain subjects, can then be called upon to advise or complement the work of national experts.

This approach has been consistently used in Jordan since the formation of the NES in 1991 when 180 Jordanians were invited to participate in the preparation of the document. The spirit of using national experts continued during the preparation of the NEAP and National Agenda 21.¹²³ Egypt has also sought to use national experts to lead and participate in working groups formed for NEAP preparation. The United Arab Emirates developed its entire NES based on the recommendations of sector-based working groups comprised of four to nine stakeholders representing national ministries and agencies, local government, private business, NGOs, universities, newspapers, and international petroleum companies.¹²⁴

(c) *National consultations*

The process of securing public participation and building national capacity has also been facilitated by the organization of at least one national consultation near the end of each sustainable development planning stage. These two to four day events allow public and private sector stakeholders to learn about national environmental baselines, priorities, and the plans and actions proposed for addressing problem areas. These consultations have been most successful when there is ample opportunity for the public to review the background documents and recommendations. Successful meetings have also organized issue-specific sessions and adopted mechanisms for ensuring orderly and organized input and comment on the components of the strategy or plan. One successful tool used during national consultations in Egypt and Jordan was the use of the German method, which uses colored cards to indicate participant approval or disapproval of an issue under discussion.

¹²³ Interview with Nadia Juhari, op. cit.

¹²⁴ FEA, UNDP and ESCWA, Vol. II, pp. i-ii.

4. *Requests for assistance organization support*

Each of the countries examined solicited the technical and/or financial assistance of one or more international assistance organizations to support them with the formulation of a national sustainable development strategy or action plan. This is a common practice among developing countries given the limited resources available to commit to these activities. This also echoes the OECD view on sustainable development planning which states that NSDSs should be drawn by countries with the assistance of an international donor organization,¹²⁵ although the assistance provided could be purely technical or technical and financial in kind.

(a) *Technical assistance*

International organizations have experience developing sustainable development strategies and action plans due to their involvement and activities in several countries and regions. They also usually have in-house technical expertise that can assist the process of organizing and reviewing proposed sustainable development plans and actions, and serve as a resource for sharing the planning experiences of other countries.

Soliciting international assistance does not discount the need to identify and select methods that are most suitable for each country. However, by using international expertise, lessons learned from other countries can be more easily exchanged and the problem of “reinventing the wheel” can be avoided every time a country seeks to engage in a sustainable development planning initiative. Each country examined requested the assistance of an international organization to provide them with technical assistance during the planning process. The main international institutional supplying technical assistance for sustainable development planning of Western Asia region are ESCWA, UNDP, and the World Bank.

(b) *Financial assistance*

Use of international donor assistance to finance national and local initiatives in sustainable development planning and implementation is a common practice. Many countries in the ESCWA region have solicited this assistance, except for petroleum-rich Gulf states that have sufficient financial resources to finance their own sustainable development initiatives. Generally, however, organization such as UNDP and the World Bank, as well as bilateral donor agencies (the Netherlands, Germany, Japan) have offered financial support for planning and action programmes in the ESCWA region.

B. FACTORS AFFECTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Several factors have effected the effectiveness of sustainable development planning and implementation in the ESCWA region. These factors are based on the experiences of Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen and accordingly are organized in terms of lessons learned from country experiences.

1. *Lessons learned: factors of success*

Several lessons can contribute to the successful formulation and implementation of sustainable development goals and activities in the ESCWA region. A brief discussion of these factors evident from lessons learned is offered below.

(a) *Role of multilateral environmental agreements in galvanizing support for environmental action*

It is natural that government positions and commitments to certain policy issues are clarified and strengthened as countries prepare for international negotiations and related conferences. Commitments are subsequently reinforced when countries ratify international agreements and national mechanisms are put into

¹²⁵ See Chapter II; OECD (1998), p. 20.

place to integrate international commitments into domestic law and policy. Action is further prompted when funding mechanisms are made available to come into compliance with international agreements.

In the ESCWA region, commitment to MEAs has galvanized support for international sustainable development goals. This is most evident in the way in which Egypt and Jordan responded after ratifying MEAs such as the Desertification Convention (1995), the Biodiversity Convention (1992), the Climate Change Convention (1992), and the Vienna Convention (1985) and its related Montreal Protocol (1987). In both countries, focal points or national units were established following ratification. Yemen has also assigned focal points or units responsibility for following-up on MEAs following its passage into force.

(b) *Role of Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21 Initiatives*

The UNCED Conference Agenda 21 Declaration increased awareness of the need to consult with non-governmental stakeholders and local communities. This prompted some governments to identify ways to decentralize—or to at least support the localization of—sustainable development planning and implementation initiatives. This is important since sustainable development planning can often be more easily defined at the local level when issues are closer to stakeholders, than when they are at the national level when problems appear removed from local priorities.

For instance, in Egypt the EEAA is establishing Regional Branch Offices (RBOs) in Greater Cairo, Alexandria, Gharbia, Dakahlia, and Suez. Plans to establish RBOs in three other communities are also underway. The purpose of the RBOs is to help support the decentralization of EEAA activities, which includes the monitoring and implementation of selected sustainable development goals. Environmental Management Units (EMUs) have also been established in several governorates and training of local personnel is underway. However, there is concern regarding what will be the relationship between RBOs and EMUs at the local level (see below).

(c) *Cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial engagement*

The importance of engaging different line ministries in sustainable development planning has not only been articulated by international donor organization, but also by countries seeking to pass and implement environmental action plans. As explained by Salah Hafez, Chairperson of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, “if the Agency would like to coordinate between different ministries, and if it would like them to abide by the Agency’s policies, the only solution is to include them in the decision-making process. Once those ministries participate in making policies they will enforce and implement the agency’s regulations.”¹²⁶

2. Lessons learned: causes for failure

There are also several common factors that have contributed to the failure of efforts to formulate and implement effective sustainable development plans and actions. A discussion of the factors identified from lessons learned from the case studies is provided below.

(a) *Institutional rigidity*

Environmental institutions in the ESCWA region tended to develop before or alongside environmental legislation. This meant that organizational structures are established and personnel recruited before environmental laws or sustainable environmental development policies and plans are formulated or adopted. This means that institutions, which tend to have human resource regulations that are even more rigid than their organizational structures, tend not to have the technical background and human capacity necessary to fulfill institutional obligations. This naturally leads to ineffective institutions that become response-oriented, rather than proactive in their planning and implementation activities. Institutions subsequently become dependent upon time consuming training and capacity building initiatives to assist staff, rather than being

¹²⁶ Interview by Salwa Sharawi Gomaa with Salah Hafez in Gomaa, p. 12.

able to recruit more technically qualified personnel to conduct tasks. This is a problem in most ESCWA member states, notably Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

(b) *Poor communication and coordination between line ministries and government agencies with environmental responsibilities (horizontal communication)*

Despite the presence of environmental protection councils or higher councils for the environment that assemble ministerial and senior decision-makers from various line ministries, coordination and consultation between line ministries remains weak. This is partially because of the different priorities and mandates of each institution. However, it is also because decision-makers and technical staff in one ministry do not always use the same terminology as their counterparts in other ministries. It is particularly difficult for environmental and economic decision-makers, which tend to have difficulties understanding one other because of the fundamental difference in perspective that these actors sometimes have with regard to environmental resource management. Indeed, environmental staff often has difficulty appreciating and assessing the economic costs and benefits of environmental protection, as much as economic officials have difficulty in appreciating the costs that economic development might impose on the environment.

(c) *Poor communication and coordination between national ministries and local governments (vertical communication)*

Despite recent efforts by national environmental authorities in some ESCWA member countries to establish regional offices to bring environmental management closer to the source, communication between regional offices responsible to national institutions and local environmental authorities responsible to local government authorities remains very weak. This difficulty is primarily due to a lack of clarity between national and local institutional mandates, as well as the challenge of going against a political culture of centralized government.

This problem of national and local communication has been a particular challenge for Egypt as RBOs are being established along EMUs. It has also been a problem in Jordan where some local environmental authorities have expressed concern that the presence of a regional office by a national environmental agency would have adverse effects on sustainable development implementation at the local level.¹²⁷ Efforts must thus be made to clarify institutional mandates and avoid the overlapping of jurisdictions to ensure that sustainable development actions can be effectively coordinated and/or implemented by national and local agencies.

(d) *Lack of mechanisms for monitoring sustainable development activities*

Although most countries have a agency or council responsible for coordinating environmental activities, no country in the ESCWA region has established a permanent, active National Committee for Sustainable Development to formulate, support, monitor, assess, and follow-up on sustainable development priorities with specific reference to Agenda 21 implementation. Although some countries have assigned environmental institutions these tasks, only the EEAA has made an effort to empower a department with monitoring and follow-up responsibilities. Although a step in the right direction, the newness of the department (established in May 2000) makes it difficult to assess its effectiveness at monitoring Agenda 21 implementation for the time being.

This institutional vacuum for monitoring is also evident in other regions of the world. A report from a Middle East and North Africa conference on sustainable development organized by the Earth Council observed that, "concerning the establishment of a National Committee for Sustainable Development (NCSD), it has been noticed that most of the countries have not yet formed such committees. Some countries have started the process of forming NCSDs. However, the participants recommended that those

¹²⁷ Communication with Sharif Saifi.

¹²⁷ Interview with Nadia Juhari.

NCSDs should involve other stakeholders in their membership and not only the government”.¹²⁸ There is a need for each country to explore whether the establishment of such a committee would facilitate or impede progress in achieving sustainable development goals.

(e) *Limited consideration during identification of instruments for implementation*

Some countries in the ESCWA region have made progress in identifying criteria for determining environmental priorities, namely Jordan and Yemen. However, with the exception of discussions conducted during the National Environmental Action Plan Workshop held in Amman in 1995,¹²⁹ little to no effort has been made in identifying the role of criteria in the selection of policies and instruments necessary to implement sustainable development action plans.

This lack of criteria formulation and consideration of appropriate instruments for implementation has caused many environmental strategies and action plans to be filled with proposed projects and actions that are either not feasible or not effective ways of achieving stated goals. There is also a lack of consideration of alternative instruments that can support sustainable development implementation, namely economic instruments and fiscal incentives.

(f) *Inadequate systems of environmental enforcement*

Countries in the ESCWA region, and in most developing countries, do not have adequate mechanisms for environmental enforcement. Furthermore, if mechanisms exist in legal form, application in practice limited. This not only impacts the ability to effectively plan sustainable development strategies within national constraints, but also stymies efforts to implement policies and projects. The problem may arise from:

- (i) Poorly written laws or laws that contradict one another;
- (ii) Overlapping enforcement jurisdictions between national agencies;
- (iii) Lack of clarity between enforcement responsibilities at the national and local levels;
- (iv) Unreasonable penalties and fines for non-compliance, which effectively lead to the laws being ignored;
- (v) Poorly trained judicial officials and police forces who do not know how to enforce the law;
- (vi) Limited precedence in enforcing environmental cases;
- (vii) Ill-equipped testing facilities and limited data reliability;
- (viii) Inadequate credible monitoring systems.

Efforts must thus be made to strengthen environmental enforcement in ESCWA member countries through regulatory means and voluntary incentives.

(g) *Lack of funding*

Although it is often said that if there is a will, there is a way, political commitment in the ESCWA region is often premised on the availability of funds to realize policies and activities, whether or not the political will exists. For instance, Egypt became more engaged and active in the environmental arena when

¹²⁸ Arab NGO Network for Environment and Development, Earth Council and NCSD Network. *Report on the Regional Consultation for Northern Africa and the Middle East*. Beirut, Lebanon. 18-23 November 1996. <http://ncsdnetwork.org/afirmidea/reports/rio5/regional/nafrmidea/notes.htm>, downloaded 23 July 2000.

¹²⁹ See Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, World Bank, *Setting Priorities for Environmental Management in Jordan - Working Paper*, presented at the *National Environmental Action Plan Workshop* (Amman, Jordan 3-6 September 1995), 24 August 1995, pp. 21-22.

it realized that there were significant international funds available to the country if projects were designed for environmental purposes or were structured in environmentally friendly ways.¹³⁰

Additionally, it is often politically difficult for governments with limited budgets and high deficits to allocated funds for environmental programmes if they are identified as projects independent of development programmes. Strict environmental projects thus compete for funds against heavy infrastructure projects that are more visible, such as highways and new buildings. However, if environmental projects are integrated into other projects, and thus become integral parts of development plans, it would be easier to allocate funds for environmental concerns. This strategy of integrating environmental issues directly into national development plans and assistance strategies has been the trend in recent years. It is also one of the tenants of the World Bank's "mainstreaming the environment" recommendations being forwarded in its updated draft environmental strategy for the MENA region.¹³¹

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The following list of recommendations for improving the sustainable development planning is based on lessons learned from country experiences in sustainable development planning in the ESCWA region. Although some countries have adopted these instruments more than others, all ESCWA member countries should consider these mechanisms as ways to facilitate their progress in formulating and implementing sustainable development plans.

1. *Expand participatory approach*

Public and private sector participation is the cornerstone of the sustainable development planning and of sustainable development itself. To be effective, this participatory approach needs to cut across various stakeholder groups when formulating and debating policies, priorities, and action plans. These groups include:

- (a) Government line ministries and agencies with economic, environmental, financial, planning, health, safety, and/or education responsibilities which can influence environmental management;
- (b) Private sector representatives, i.e., business, industry, chambers of commerce, trade associations;
- (c) Non-governmental organizations, including private, voluntary organizations, universities, scientific societies, and research institutes;
- (d) Local communities and individuals at the grassroots level who are not necessarily represented by formal institutions.

Although there is no single way to solicit the input of various stakeholders, working groups and issue-specific sub-groups established at the early stages of the planning process have been successful in facilitating input and interaction between stakeholder groups, e.g., as done in Egypt, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates during NEAP preparation. Another mechanisms is distributing draft reports and recommendations to targeted organizations representing different interests for comment (e.g., as done in Jordan to solicit comment on the National Agenda 21 draft report). Providing easy and open access to the document for the public comment during a specified length of time by making it available at public institutions (e.g., libraries or public universities) or via the Internet could be other approaches.

It should be noted, however, that securing public participation is a work-intensive process that requires adequate allocations of resources and time. Indeed, time is often the limiting factor that most adversely impacts efforts to expand public involvement and enhance the quality of public input in the sustainable development process. A trade-off should thus be determined early on by NES and NEAP organizers

¹³⁰ Interview with Iman Soliman.

¹³¹ Middle East and North Africa Region, World Bank, "Middle East and North Africa: Draft—Regional Strategy Summary," 7 August 2000; downloaded from the World Bank—Environment Strategy Consultation webpage, <http://www.worldbank.org/environment/strategy/index/shtml> on 10 September 2000.

regarding their need to complete plans quickly and their goals to secure public participation. Should time be the more pressing factor, alternative forms of “representative” public participation could be adopted such as the engagement of local experts to represent different sectors of society, rather than directly involving all the different societal groups.

As a corollary, participatory approaches to sustainable development planning fundamentally necessitate the empowerment of the public. For the public to be able to make informed and educated contributions to the planning process, they must have access to baseline information on their national and local environment and be informed on the key environmental issues affecting their country and their quality of life. This involves public awareness campaigns, environmental education, and explaining to the public of the costs and benefits of certain environmental actions. Indeed, ultimately the quality of public participation in sustainable development planning is dependent on citizen access to information about the process, the problems, and the policies that effect their lives.

2. Prioritize environmental challenges and actions

The prioritization of environmental challenges and actions is one of the most sensitive and political aspects of sustainable development planning. The prioritization process allows public and private sector stakeholders to deliberate and focus on what are the most important issues and identify the most appropriate instruments needed to move their country towards sustainable development. For these reasons, the prioritization process is inherently a country-specific effort. It can often be tied to specific local concerns, which is why the Local Agenda 21 process can be important component and contributor to national sustainable development planning.

Despite the country-specificity of environmental priorities, the process of identifying priorities should follow a systematic framework that generally entails:

- (a) Reaching consensus between public and private stakeholders regarding the country’s most critical environmental problems;
- (b) Identifying criteria for prioritizing problems;
- (c) Prioritizing problems;
- (d) Identifying instruments to address priority problems;
- (e) Identifying policy criteria for selecting the right instruments;
- (f) Prioritizing actions to address priority problems.

(a) Identifying and reaching consensus on the most critical environmental problems

The process of prioritizing a country’s key environmental challenges needs to respond to both national needs and stakeholder interests. However, the concerns of individuals are often vocalized at the grassroots in local communities and through family/tribal spokespersons, instead of through formal institutions such as NGOs or business associations. This is particularly true in the ESCWA region where national politicians and policies often gain their legitimacy from their backing by powerful individuals and families.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that national needs based on data—which can be assessed through indicators and empirical analysis—do not always correspond to what local residents may perceive to be the most pressing environmental challenges that require action (see box 1). This may be due to inadequate efforts by national agencies to inform and educate residents on the implications of certain environmental problems, or simply a difference in opinion on what local priorities are relative to national priorities. There is also a difference in language used when identifying priorities based on empirical findings (which tend to be sector-specific) as compared to these obtained through public consultation (which tends to identify cross-sectoral issues). This is why public consultation, information dissemination, and other participatory aspects of sustainable development planning are integrally linked to the effectiveness of the prioritization process. The role of government is then to find the balance between national needs and stakeholder interests.

Otherwise, actions a country seeks to achieve for the benefit of its citizens may not be appreciated or understood by local stakeholders who call for alternative plans of action.

Box 1. Identifying environmental priorities

In Sao Paulo, Brazil, local stakeholders identified the need for green spaces as a high priority in the public consultation process—an issue that was not even included in the list of national needs based on data-based problem ranking. Other differences between the two priority lists are noted below:

| Priority Rank | Public Consultation Process based Problem ^{a/} | Data-based/Criteria based Problem ^{b/} |
|-----------------|---|--|
| High Priority | Substandard housing Lack of urban infrastructure for the poor Settlement of risk-prone areas Limited green space | Surface water Environmental hazards Forest/agriculture Hazardous waste Poor sanitation |
| Medium Priority | Inadequate sewage treatment Water supply not protected Flooding | Ambient pollution Solid waste Noise pollution Coastal pollution Indoor pollution |
| Low Priority | Vehicular air pollution Poor transport management | Rural ecology Cultural property |

Source: Josef Leitmann, “Rapid Urban Environmental Assessment: Lessons from Cities in the Developing World, Volume 1: Methodology and Preliminary Findings,” Urban Management Programme Discussion Paper No. 14 (The World Bank, Washington, D.C. 1993), p. 33, in The World Resources Institute, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Programme, and World Bank, *World Resources: A Guide to the Global Environment*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, p.142.

a/ Public consultation is a public forum that reaches consensus on a priority issues. This process does not necessarily reflect public opinion, but is based on the participation of interested stakeholders.

b/ Data collected during the environmental assessment phase of strategy development ranks problems according to indicators such as health impact, economic loss, impact on urban poor, irreversibility, unsustainability of resource consumption, and degree of local support.

(b) *Identifying criteria for prioritizing environmental problems*

The prioritization process is a subjective one. Accordingly, at the beginning of the prioritization process, stakeholders should agree on a ranking of quantitative as well as qualitative criteria to facilitate the process of prioritizing environmental problems. The World Bank has identified eight criteria that can be used by Middle East and North Africa countries (as well as other regions of the world) as a starting point for organizing the prioritization process:

- (i) Urgency and immediate impact;
- (ii) Irreversibility;
- (iii) Effects on human health;
- (iv) Effects on economic productivity;
- (v) Loss of amenity;
- (vi) Number of people affected;
- (vii) Effects on the disadvantaged;
- (viii) Certainty of outcome.¹³²

As seen in Chapter II, some of these criteria were used as the basis for formulating environmental priorities identified in the Jordan and Yemen NEAPs.

¹³² Hosny Khordagui, “How to Prepare a NEAP from NES for Kuwait,” Presentation to the Environmental Protection Agency, Kuwait, February 2000.

The importance of reaching consensus on prioritization criteria can also reduce tensions regarding the ultimate priorities identified for action. This is a particularly sensitive issue when seeking inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination. Indeed, unified support for a set of criteria minimizes the subjectiveness and politicization of the prioritization process, not to mention the frustration of stakeholders when their pet priority is not selected for immediate action. Based on the experience of the former regional environmental advisor for ESCWA, it is therefore “extremely important to identify the prioritization criteria and normalize them for all sectors”.¹³³

(c) *Prioritizing environmental problems*

ESCWA member countries that have pursued sustainable development planning exercises have had moderate to significant success in discussing and prioritizing environmental problems through national workshops and consultations, particularly in Jordan and Yemen. Consultations generally have run for 2-3 days and have involved representatives from as many stakeholder groups as possible. Countries have also made special effort to involve as many national experts and stakeholders as possible in the consultation process so as to ensure national ownership of the outcomes and increase national capacity in the sustainable development process. This was often achieved through the establishment of sector-specific working groups that identified key problems in their respective sectors and formulated priorities for their sectors based on a selected set of criteria. These sectors working groups were sometimes supported by international technical experts (e.g., Egypt), or by national experts working in that field (i.e., United Arab Emirates, particularly experts in the Oil and Gas Sector working group who contributed to the NES).

Furthermore, given the newness of sustainable development planning to the ESCWA region, it has been observed that the use of international technical experts, policy advisors, and special participatory methodologies has also facilitated the consultation and prioritization process. For example, both Egypt and Jordan used an established German method using color-coded cards to organize and ensure a participatory approach during national consultations. Such approaches are particularly useful during national forums where there are a variety of stakeholders involved with different interests who need to be heard and recognized in an orderly manner.¹³⁴

(d) *Identify instruments to address priority problems*

Once the critical environmental problems affecting the country are prioritized, policy-makers and stakeholders need to identify the instruments with which to address those problems. There are many types of instruments that can be used to improve environmental conditions. However, the generally fall into four major categories listed below.

- (i) *Legislative instruments* include laws and policies, as well as the institutional mechanisms put into place for implementing them. An example is a law requiring the satisfactory completion and review of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) by a responsible authority before building permits are issued or industrial facilities are expanded. It is also important that the findings and recommendations of the EIA are adopted and implemented before approvals are issued. EIAs can be used to address a variety of priority problems, such as uncontrolled urban and industrial development, urban encroachment into nature reserves, and biodiversity preservation;
- (ii) *Regulatory instruments* form the basis of command-and-control legal cultures where standards are dictated and penalties imposed for non-compliance. These are the most common instruments used in the ESCWA region. An example is the use of water effluent standards and the related penalty based on the extent (and/or proof) of non-compliance. Regulatory instruments are not effective environmental instruments, however, unless monitoring, enforcement, and judicial recourse systems are also put into place;

¹³³ Interview with Hosny Khordagui (October 2000).

¹³⁴ Interview with Ahmed El-Kholei.

- (iii) *Economic instruments* are generally market-based tools that seek to adjust distortions in resource allocation caused by ineffective policies, weak institutions, or unclear market signals. Examples include the registration of property rights, pollution charges, user fees, and tradable emission permits.¹³⁵
- (iv) *Fiscal instruments* are economic instruments that use incentives and disincentives to balance the costs and benefits of addressing an environmental problem. Subsidies and taxes are the most common tools used and, if appropriately designed, can be very effective ways of creating voluntary systems of environmental compliance. Examples include environmental investment tax credits, taxes for environmental protection funds, or rebates for the installation of solar panels that reduce fuel consumption.

(e) *Identifying policy criteria for selecting the right instruments*

Once policy-makers and stakeholders identify the various types of instruments they would like to apply to address their environmental priorities, a set of criteria must be formulated to achieve consensus on the instruments that will be selected. These criteria could include:

- (i) Effectiveness;
- (ii) Technical feasibility;
- (iii) Institutional and legislative feasibility;
- (iv) Economic feasibility;
- (v) Cultural acceptability;
- (vi) Flexibility;
- (vii) Predictability;
- (viii) Ease of introduction and implementation;
- (ix) Ease of monitoring and enforcement.¹³⁶

Unfortunately, this step—which serves to establish the practical framework within which country-specific action plans should be formulated—is usually neglected in the sustainable development planning process. This leads to commitments to actions that are often technically or financially difficult to achieve, and which are thus often left on paper instead of put to action.

(f) *Prioritizing actions to address priority problems*

The process of prioritizing actions effectively entails the formulation a sustainable development action plan based on the decisions made during steps noted above. Actions should be organized and prioritized in terms of short-term (2-5 years), medium-term (5-15 years), and long-terms actions, with the most pressing problems slated for action in the short-term. Actions should also be organized in a way that is reinforcing so that actions planned for in the short-term form the basis for priorities to follow in the medium and long terms.

3. *Strengthen environmental monitoring instruments*

One of the most important components of the sustainable development involves monitoring and assessment. Planning is dependent on accurate information. As such, policy-makers and stakeholders need accurate information and regularly updated information on environmental, economic, and social conditions. This is particularly necessary when plans are formulated and subsequently updated over time. Monitoring

¹³⁵ For a full discussion of economic and fiscal instruments, see Theodore Panayotou, *Instruments of Change: Motivating and Financing Sustainable Development*, United Nations Development Programme and Earthscan Publications Ltd., London, 1998.

¹³⁶ This list was developed based on criteria suggested in Hosny Khordagui, “How to Prepare a NEAP from NES for Kuwait,” Presentation to the Environmental Protection Agency, Kuwait, February 2000; Middle East and North Africa Region, World Bank (August 1995), pp. 21-22; and Panayotou, op. cit., pp. 102-108.

and reporting systems are thus essential components of sustainable development planning that must be included in action plans alongside environmental projects and programmes.

Several systems can be put into place to facilitate the monitoring process. These range from strengthening environmental enforcement registries to requiring firms to report on a regular basis on their emission levels and responses to environmental threats. Governments also need to establish systems of monitoring and reporting of environmental conditions, as well as establish systems to review programme effectiveness (see box 2). Regardless of which monitoring mechanisms are adopted, two universal sets of instruments must be included in any system: the use of sustainable development indicators and the adoption of targets and triggers for environmental action. Both instruments are significantly underdeveloped in ESCWA member countries.

Box 2. Monitoring and reporting systems

Several sustainable development plans completed by ESCWA member states have referred to the need to establish monitoring and reporting systems to assess effectiveness and progress in achieving sustainable development. Lebanon, however, is the only country in the region to have developed a *Strategy for Monitoring and Reporting*. Completed with the assistance of ESCWA and UNDP, the purpose of the strategy is to ensure the effective use of monitoring and reporting (M&R) in UNDP sustainable development programming in Lebanon. Training in the tools developed for this purpose was provided to public and private sector stakeholders engaged in sustainable development activities. The instruments and methods have also been transferred to government officials to assist them in adopting an M&R strategy during NEAP preparation.

Components of an M&R strategy should include:

- (a) Effective management and organization;
- (b) Facilitating information and process flow;
- (c) Project Planning;
- (d) Information management;
- (e) Clarity of functions and responsibilities;
- (f) Use of indicators, targets, and triggers;
- (g) Capacity building and training.

While the Lebanon strategy focuses on monitoring and reporting on specific projects, similar initiatives are needed to develop strategies at the general planning and implementation level.

Source: For more information, see Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and United Nations Development Programme, *Strategy for Monitoring and Reporting*, UNDP Sustainable Development Programmes in Lebanon, Project on Monitoring & Reporting UNDP-SD Programmes (LEB/97/003/ESCWA), March 2000.

(a) Sustainable development indicators

Although referred to in NSDS and NES documents prepared in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, little has been done to institutionalize the use of indicators for monitoring progress in achieving sustainable development. Countries of the ESCWA region thus need to better understand and appreciate the role that indicators can play in strengthening sustainable development planning and reinforcing the implementation and assessment of sustainable development activities.

Indicators are instruments for monitoring and assessing progress in achieving a stated goal. Given the variety of aspects involved in sustainable development planning, there are several types of indicators that can be used by decision-makers and private sector stakeholders to advance sustainable development. Generally, however, they can be divided into two types: (a) substantive indicators, which assess environmental conditions, baselines, and country responsiveness to sustainable development issues; and (b) operational indicators, which assess the effectiveness of specific environmental projects and programmes that constitute

sustainable development activities. In either case, the sustainable development indicators selected by a country should be easy to collect, update, and explain to the general public.

(i) *Substantive indicators*

Substantive indicators for sustainable development measure environmental baselines, conditions, and efforts to achieve sustainable development goals. In this way, substantive indicators can assist the process of identifying national priorities, formulating strategies, identifying policy instruments, and updating action plans.

The CSD has developed a working list of substantive indicators for sustainable development to assist countries to formulate their own lists based on national priorities, problems and targets. This list is organized according to chapters of Agenda 21 and divides indicators into three broad categories:

(a) *Driving force indicators* – provide quantitative measures of human activities that impact sustainable development. These include monitoring patterns such as population growth rates (national, urban, rural), primary school enrollment levels, gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, domestic consumption of water per capita, and the generation of hazardous waste;

(b) *State indicators* – provide quantitative measures sustainable development baselines and conditions. Examples include poverty indices (head count index, Gini coefficient index of income inequality), ratio of women to men enrolled in school, environmentally adjusted Net Domestic Product (NDP), groundwater reserves, and ambient concentrations of pollutants in urban areas;

(c) *Response indicators* – provide quantitative and qualitative measures to support assessments of the effectiveness of policy instruments and activities in responding to sustainable development challenges (identified by changes in state indicators). These include the percentage of GDP spent on education, immunization initiatives, infrastructure expenditures per capita, environmental protection expenditures as percentage of GDP, decentralization of national resource management, expenditures on pollution abatement (air pollution, waste management, recycling), the adoption of sustainable development strategies, the requirement to conduct EIAs, and the ratification of international conventions.¹³⁷

The sustainable development planning process thus depends on information provided by *driving force indicators* and *state indicators*, in order to determine strategies and action plans. Once plans are formulated and begin to be implemented, mechanisms for assessing progress in achieving stated goals should be developed based on the use of *response indicators*.

(ii) *Operational indicators*

At the operational level, indicators are needed to assess the effectiveness of implementing sustainable development programmes and projects that fall within the context of a NES or NEAP. The process of identifying these indicators should correspond to national priorities and the goals of the projects being implemented. Generally, however, operational indicators fall into six basic types:

- a. *Input indicators* – which measure the quantity and quality of human, financial, and logistical resources provided to implement the project;
- b. *Output indicators* – which measure the quantity and quality of goods and services created by the project;
- c. *Performance indicators* – which assess the efficiency and effectiveness of programme organization and administration;

¹³⁷ Taken from United Nations, “CSD Working List of Indicators of Sustainable Development,” <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/worklist.htm>, downloaded 29 September 2000, pp. 1-6.

- d. *Risk indicators* – which measure the impact that exogenous factors have on project outcomes;
- e. *Impact indicators* – which measure the quantity and quality of results achieved through the provision of the goods and services created;
- f. *Sustainability indicators* – which measure the ability of the project to maintain positive results over time, particularly after the project ends.¹³⁸

Successful incorporation of operational indicators should begin at the project preparation stage and be implemented alongside programme activities. Operational indicators should also follow a standardized monitoring and reporting format to facilitate data collection and institutionalize the process, particularly for long-term projects. A schedule for collecting information in support of these indicators should also be included in action plans based on the components and timeframes of the programmes and projects being implemented.

(iii) *Use of sustainable development indicators in the ESCWA region*

While governments are generally cognizant of the need to collect information based on substantive issues via driving force indicators and state indicators, there has been little voluntary action in the ESCWA region regarding the monitoring and reporting of response indicators. Response indicators are thus often considered on an *ad hoc* basis and only examined in fulfillment of national obligations to prepare reports or updates to the CSD or to parties of an MEA. In order to improve the sustainable development planning process, however, governments should commit themselves to regularly monitoring response indicators alongside more traditional measures of well-being that fall within the context of driving force indicators and state indicators. Indeed, response indicators can often be the most useful means of assessing national action and commitment to achieving sustainable development goals.

Despite the laxity of national governments in collecting and examining sustainable development indicators, regional organizations and NGOs have made great strides in improving the monitoring of these indicators at the regional and national levels. Indeed, these institutions often serve as unofficial “watchdogs” for assessing regional or national progress – or the lack of progress – in achieving sustainable development goals.

For example, ESCWA has taken the lead in focusing on a specific set of response indicators for measuring environmentally sustainable development in the ESCWA region. This effort includes monitoring the:

- (a) Formulation of national strategies and action plans;
- (b) Improvement of environmental institutions and management systems;
- (c) Integration of public participation in the environmental aspects of development;
- (d) Institutionalization of environmental impact assessment policies;
- (e) Development of information systems and indicators for decision-making;
- (f) Activation of economic instruments.¹³⁹

The *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region* series, issued by ESCWA on an annual basis, collects and disseminates information on these response indicators. The survey serves the important function of providing information and analysis on regional progress towards sustainable development for national governments, private stakeholders, and other international organizations.

¹³⁸ List of indicators and definitions taken from Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and United Nations Development Program, *Strategy for Monitoring and Reporting*, UNDP Sustainable Development Programmes in Lebanon, Project on Monitoring & Reporting UNDP-SD Programmes (LEB/97/003/ESCWA), March 2000, pp. 8-9.

¹³⁹ ESCWA (1999), pp. 142-146.

(b) *Targets and triggers*

There is limited application of targets and triggers in the ESCWA region. Some reference was made to these instruments at the project preparation level for the United Arab Emirates NEAP and in the 1996 Jordan NEAP. However, the use of such instruments in practice is rare to non-existent. Reasons for this may be the hesitance by policy-makers to commit themselves to an action upon reaching a target or trigger in the uncertain future. Another reason might be the simple lack of understanding regarding the utility of the tools. Comprehensive sustainable development planning, however, needs to include targets and triggers to assist policy-makers and public stakeholders to realize sustainable development goals.

(i) *Targets*

Targets are goals established voluntarily by consensus or mandated through legislation that seek to mobilize activity in support of a specific commitment. For instance, a target may be a deadline for completing an activity, such as the target date of 2002 agreed to by UNGASS in 1997 to introduce of sustainable development strategies in all countries.¹⁴⁰ Targets might also represent levels of accomplishment over time, such as enrolling a specific number of girls in primary schools over a specific length of time.

Participation in international negotiations and conferences can be considered a useful target for advancing sustainable development goals. Once a country ratifies an MEA, reporting and updates are often required regarding national progress in achieving collective goals. These international targets help governments to focus on global issues and take steps domestically to achieve these goals. Despite the utility of this tool in mobilizing governments to act within the international arena, sustainable development targets are rarely used in practice at the national level. Instead, they are often used in broad, non-binding policy statements by senior decision-makers.

Despite these advantages, the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) has expressed reservations regarding the steadfast use of targets. In its recommendations to developing countries to assist them with NSDS formulation, the OECD states that “timeframe set out in the nssd [NSDS] target should be interpreted as a timeframe for achieving progress, rather than as a strict deadline. In this context, monitoring progress should be based on indicators reflecting the quality of the planning and implementation process rather than the existence of planning documents. This should be complemented by efforts to develop the necessary capacity to monitor actual progress towards sustainability objectives”.¹⁴¹

The country-specific nature of establishing targets is also important. As further explained by the OECD, effort to achieve a strategy and an implementation target date may “neglect the specific needs and circumstances of a country”.¹⁴² This is because NSDS formulation needs to take account of the differing situations with regard to the:

- (a) Practicalities of participation by civil society;
- (b) Levels of governance and democracy;
- (c) Capacities of NGOs and the media;
- (d) Availability of information and environmental baseline data;
- (e) Environmental situations confronting the country;
- (f) Large countries might need to prepare plans at decentralized or sector focused levels first, before engaging in a NSDS¹⁴³ (such as done simultaneously in the case of the United Arab Emirates).

¹⁴⁰ United Nations General Assembly, para. 24(a).

¹⁴¹ OECD (November 1999), p. 3.

¹⁴² Ibid., 2.

¹⁴³ OECD (November 1999), p. 2.

Such considerations should thus be taken into account when establishing targets at the national and regional levels.

In any instance, targets are a means to help mobilize action in support of a stated goal when appropriately conceived. Mechanisms, such as triggers, however, might also be needed to ensure that there is a planned response when a target is achieved, or not achieved, according to schedule.

(ii) *Triggers*

Triggers are a means of activating planned responses after certain conditions are met. For example, a drop in the international exchange rate of a certain currency in relation to the US dollar might trigger a planned response by the nation's monetary authority to strengthen the currency. An environmental trigger might be part of a regulatory requirement that obliges infrastructure investments beyond a certain scale to conduct an EIA before approval.

In either instance, triggers can be used by decision-makers to establish planned responses to certain conditions. They can be voluntary or mandated. However, if mandated, triggers can help decision-makers to implement unpopular responses to environmental challenges involving hazardous conditions. Furthermore, while the identification of triggers might involve consensus building during sustainable development planning, once mandated triggers facilitate apolitical and standardized responses to conditions that might adversely impact sustainability.

Some triggers used in other countries that can be used in the ESCWA region in support of environmental priorities include:

- (a) Bans on driving, except under emergency circumstances, when ambient air concentrations of SO_x and NO_x exceed a certain threshold that is hazardous to human health (USA);
- (b) Water rationing when water consumption exceeds renewable supplies, especially during the summer months (Cyprus);
- (c) Closing down schools when the temperature exceeds certain levels.

Targets and triggers can therefore be used to mobilize action and facilitate the process of implementing sustainable development plans.

PART TWO

SUPPLYING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN THE ESCWA REGION

IV. THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND SUB-REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN MATERIALIZING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In contrast to the previous section, which focused on the efforts of countries in planning and achieving sustainable development, this section reviews the role that international, regional, sub-regional, and non-governmental organizations play in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development plans. While governments are often the “demanders” of sustainable development assistance, international institutions and NGOs are usually the “suppliers” of technical, organizational, and financial assistance. By providing such assistance, they can strengthen government commitments and provide the impetus for government action on materializing sustainable development.

This chapter will accordingly review the roles of international, regional, and sub-regional institutions and NGOs in materializing sustainable development by illustrating their contributions to sustainable development planning and implementation in the ESCWA region.

A. ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND SUB-REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS

International institutions and donor agencies have played an important role in furthering the sustainable development process in ESCWA member countries supplying needed technical, organizational, and financial assistance. This assistance has been provided at the national and regional levels and has ranged from technical and financial support for NEAP preparation to conducting research and providing loans to support the implementation of sustainable development plans.

1. National initiatives

(a) Technical and financial assistance for NES and NEAP preparation

Many countries have solicited the assistance of international donor organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide them with technical, organizational, and financial assistance to support sustainable development planning initiatives. This follows the Agenda 21 statement that while Governments are “first and foremost” responsible for the implementation of national strategies, plans, policies, and processes in support of sustainable development, “international cooperation should support and supplement such national effort. In this context, the United Nations system has a key role to play. Other international, regional and sub-regional organizations are also called upon to contribute to this effort”.¹⁴⁴

International organizations, such as the IUCN, UNDP and the World Bank have thus been active in providing technical and financial assistance for NSDS, NES, and NEAP preparation. These institutions have also worked in the same country to assist with different phases of the planning process. For instance, Jordan worked closely with the IUCN and UNDP to complete its first national environmental strategy in 1992. It subsequently secured technical assistance and a grant from the World Bank to complete the 1996 NEAP. Jordan then prepared the draft Jordan Agenda 21 report in 2000 with technical, financial, and organizational assistance provided by the UNDP Country Office for Jordan.

Regional institutions have also provided assistance for NES and NEAP preparation. ESCWA, for example, provides technical assistance and project coordination assistance to members of the ESCWA region in support of sustainable development planning. This assistance is usually coordinated through the Energy, Natural Resources, and Environment Division and the Regional Advisor for Environment. While ESCWA does not provide funding for planning preparation, it does provide in-kind services and technical assistance through site visits and consultations with senior decision-makers, preparation and review of project terms of reference, and administrative support regarding the hiring and management of consultants.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992, paragraph 1.3, <http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/agenda21/ch-01.html>, downloaded 6 June 2000.

(i) *Country examples*

a. *Egypt*

- i. The World Bank served as the executing agency among financial donor for developing the 1992 NEAP for Egypt with the EEAA. Other donors included Denmark, EEC, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom, and UNEP. Informal contribution was also provided by USAID and CIDA;
- ii. UNDP Capacity 21 is now funding the development of a new NEAP for Egypt and has established an office and a coordinator to conduct the project in coordination with national stakeholders. In a cooperative initiative, the World Bank will be contributing to the preparation of the NEAP by supporting a study that will: (1) assess the economic costs of environmental degradation in Egypt; and (2) identify priorities for environmental interventions based on the ability to achieve health improvements and reduce poverty.¹⁴⁵ It is anticipated that the findings of the study will be based on data provided by the Government of Egypt, primarily through the UNDP Capacity 21 Unit;
- iii. Other national agencies and international organizations are also involved in the preparation of the new NEAP. These include the Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), General Organization of Physical Planning, the National Planning Institute, and the World Health Organization.¹⁴⁶

b. *United Arab Emirates*

The United Arab Emirates is a wealthy country with sufficient financial capital to fund the preparation and implementation of its own environmental strategies and action plans. However, despite its financial resources, the United Arab Emirates has still solicited the technical assistance and organizational expertise of international and regional organizations on a fee-for-services basis to support their sustainable development planning initiatives. For example:

- i. ESCWA is currently providing technical and organizational assistance to the United Arab Emirates at the national level and to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi at the local level to support their efforts in developing national and local Agenda 21s, sustainable development strategies, and environmental action plans. ESCWA provided a technical expert to serve as the coordinator for the national sustainable development planning effort and prepared and reviewed the terms of reference for the NSDS, NES, and NEAP. In a cooperative effort, the choice of technical expert supporting the organization of the national NEAP was made in consultation with the Government of the United Arab Emirates, while ESCWA remains responsible for managing the expert's contract and monitoring the progress of the work. Close cooperation is also part of the process of assisting the Emirate of Abu Dhabi complete their local strategies and plans;
- ii. The World Bank has provided some assistance to the United Arab Emirates and its Gulf state neighbors in terms of technical support. However, as long as the United Arab Emirates remains a non-lending member of the World Bank and other international donor organizations, its activities will remain dependent upon the government's willingness to finance and support sustainable development planning exercises themselves.

¹⁴⁵ World Bank, "Terms of Reference: Cost Assessment of Environmental Degradation in Egypt."

¹⁴⁶ EEAA and UNDP Capacity 21 Unit, p. 94.

c. *Yemen*

Yemen has limited financial and technical resources and is still at the beginning of its path towards sustainable development. As such, the World Bank provided Yemen with the technical and financial assistance in 1996 to formulate a NEAP. A subsequent short-term SEM implementation programme was quickly prepared thereafter with the assistance of UNDP. Both documents served to assist international donor agencies understand the environmental priorities of the country, which assisted the identification of sustainable development project and programmes for funding and implementation. Sustainable development documents thus not only help Governments identify and focus on national priorities, but they also help donor agencies and “suppliers” of technical assistance to focus their energies on issues of most concern to the country.

(b) *Financial assistance for NES and NEAP implementation*

Securing financial support from the international donor community is essential for most non-Gulf ESCWA member countries if they are to move ahead with materializing sustainable development. Rallying financial support is often begun at the planning stages when international donor agencies are invited to participate in national consultations on NES and NEAP development. This approach was adopted by Jordan and Egypt as part of the process of preparing their NEAPs. Egypt is planning to host another international donor consultation at the end of 2000 after the completion of the new NEAP, which is currently being finalized.

Regional institutions also provide significant financial assistance in support of the implementation of NES and NEAP programmes and projects. These institutions include:

(a) Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) is a regional financial institution that assists Arab states by financing development projects and providing technical assistance services for economic and social development. Over KD 3,940,000 (US\$ 1,193,939)¹⁴⁷ were allocated to national and regional projects in 1999 alone. Some of these projects serving the ESCWA region: improving transportation networks in Lattakia, the Syrian Arab Republic; biological pest control in Egypt; a water gathering and distribution project in Palestine in coordination with Birzeit University; efforts to improve solid waste management in some Arab Countries in coordination with the Kuwait Environment Protection Society; and endowment funds in support of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development;¹⁴⁸

(b) Kuwaiti Fund for Development (KFD) provides loans and grants to facilitate the implementation of development programmes in all parts of the world. As of August 2000, it had issued 159 grants to countries and institutions around the world, 50 of which were to Arab countries and institutions amounting to over KD 52 million¹⁴⁹ (US\$ 15.76 million). It has also provided over KD 1,627.3 million in loans to Arab countries, of which nearly KD 1,078.9 million (US\$ 326.9 million) was provided to ESCWA member states.¹⁵⁰ Yemen alone received 31 loans for development project from KFD, mostly for agricultural projects. KFD also contributed KD 169.7 million (US\$ 51.4) to the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development in support of its economic and social development activities in the Arab World;¹⁵¹

(c) Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is an international financial institution established by the Conference of Finance Ministers of Muslim Countries. The functions of the Bank include granting loans for

¹⁴⁷ US\$ 3.3 = 1 KD in year 2000 dollars.

¹⁴⁸ Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, “Technical Assistance Approved during 1999,” <http://www.arabfund.org/techasst.htm#table3>, downloaded 29 September 2000.

¹⁴⁹ Kuwaiti Fund for Development, “Geographical Distribution of Grants and Technical Assistance up to 31st August 2000,” <http://www.kuwait-fund.org/books/e-Activity/e-Act5.htm>, downloaded 29 September 2000.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Kuwaiti Fund for Development, “Fund Contributions to Development Institutions up to 31st August 2000,” <http://www.kuwait-fund.org/books/e-Activity/e-Act6.htm>, downloaded 29 September 2000.

productive projects and enterprises and providing financial assistance to member countries in other forms for economic and social development. IDB also promotes of foreign trade among member countries and provides technical assistance and training to member countries.

(i) *Country examples*

a. *Egypt*

Several donor institutions and bilateral aid agencies have supported programmes and projects in Egypt in support of implementing sustainable development strategies. A short sample of activities is provided below:

- i. The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) has sponsored the EEPA Organizational Support Programme, institutional support of the Environmental Information Center, a coastal water monitoring programme, support for environmental NGOs, the North Sinai Environmental Action Plan, the North Sinai Government Environmental Education and Public Awareness Support Programme, and the Aswan Environmental Action Plan;
- ii. The Overseas Development Agency (ODA) provided financial assistance for the local Environmental Action Plan for Dakahleya and Sohag and capacity building on environmental impact assessment and industrial auditing outside of the EEAA;
- iii. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has supported site management plans for Luxor and the city of Rachid, as well as a programme for surveying and cataloguing Egyptian monuments and constructing the offices that house the EEAA RBOs;
- iv. The *Canadian International Development Agency* (CIDA) has worked to reduce pollution from tanneries, improve rural water supply, and implement an integrated management plan in the Siwa Oasis, in addition to providing financial support to the former Technical Cooperation Office for the Environment (TCOE) at EEAA, the Environment Fund, and NGOs.¹⁵²

b. *Jordan*

Several international organization and aid agencies have also assisted Jordan in its efforts to implement sustainable development plans and actions. In an effort to coordinate this supply of international assistance, the Ministry of Planning has striven to ensure that proposed projects for international grant funding or loans conform to the priorities and objectives of the 1996 NEAP. Project must then be conducted in concert with a specific government agency specified in the NEAP document for that activity. Two examples include assistance from:

- i. UNDP and the Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme Capacity Building Unit to provide financial, technical, and organizational support to the General Corporation for Environmental Protection (GCEP) for institutional capacity building, per the 1996 NEAP, and to prepare a national Agenda 21;
- ii. The Government of France to assist the GCEP and the MMRAE identify and change the site of the solid waste management facility serving Greater Amman. This activity is in accordance with the Phase I priority stipulated in the list of Urban Environmental Sector priorities identified in the 1996 NEAP.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Goma, pp. 62-63.

¹⁵³ Ministry of Planning (1996), p. 59.

(c) *National capacity building assistance*

Several national and regional donor organizations provide capacity building assistance and training to countries in the ESCWA region. These activities range from supporting policy analysis and legislative drafting to providing training in environmental methods. Often, however, national capacity building assistance is conducted at the regional level by regional organizations so that several countries and stakeholders can benefit from national capacity building initiatives. This linkage between national and regional capacity building activities also facilitates the exchange of lessons learned and regional networking. Organizations that provide this type of assistance include:

- (i) The Mediterranean Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) – a cooperative initiative between the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, UNDP (the Bureau of Arab States and the Capacity 21 Unit), and the World Bank – has provided capacity building assistance to the Mediterranean region for nearly the past decade. Five country beneficiaries of METAP assistance are also ESCWA member countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the West Bank and Gaza). Capacity building assistance has included helping government ministries identify and formulate project preparation proposals in Egypt and Lebanon; training and legislative drafting for the practice of conducting environmental impact assessments in the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, and Lebanon; and support for environmental management of heritage sites and parks in Jordan;
- (ii) The MedPolicies Initiative – which is part of the METAP programme, but funded by the World Bank and implemented by Harvard University in coordination with ESCWA – seeks to build national capacity and regional awareness of the linkages between economic and environmental policy-making. Focus has been on three pressing regional issues, namely trade and environment, privatization and environmental liability, and the social and economic aspects of air quality. Activities include training national officials and non-governmental analysts in the empirical aspects of policy analysis, completing country case studies, organizing national roundtables, and conducting technical workshops in Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza, as well as other countries;
- (iii) The Center for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) is an independent, non-profit regional institution launched in 1992 with the financial support of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Government of Egypt, UNDP, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) the Ford Foundation, and Winrock International. The main objective of the Center is to increase the capacity of national institution to enhance environmental management and sustainable development. Its programmes primarily focus on freshwater and land resource management, urbanization and human settlements, coastal zone management, and industrial development. It also hosts several networks and training programmes to build capacity in economic and environmental analysis and policy-making in ESCWA member states, including the Arab and Mediterranean Environmental Economics Network (AMEEN).

2. *Regional initiatives*

International, regional, and sub-regional institutions and donor agencies also focus on activities at the regional level to help countries place national initiatives within the context of regional sustainable development concerns. Regional activities are conducted through official channels so as to stimulate dialogue between governments, or through non-governmental activities for the benefit of private citizens and stakeholders.

(a) *Mechanisms and mandates for regional cooperation on sustainable development*

Governments need formal channel of communication and cooperation to engage in dialogue on regional issues of sustainable development. Several regional and sub-regional institutions have thus taken a

lead in assisting governments formulate mechanisms for promoting sustainable development in the Arab region.

- (i) The League of Arab States (LAS) established the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment with the support of the region's governments to discuss and coordinate Arab issues on sustainable development and environmental management. The League has also sought to address the environmental aspects of sustainable development by establishing an office for environmental issues in the General Department for Economic Affairs. This illustrates the League's awareness of the linkages between economic and environmental issues in achieving progress towards sustainable development;
- (ii) Members of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) meet on a regular basis to discuss key issues concerning the Arab region regarding the environment. Traditionally the Council has focused on sectoral issues, such as water quality and scarcity. However, CAMRE is now moving in the direction of discussing cross-sector issues, which is more conducive to the process of moving towards sustainable development. For instance, in September 1999, CAMRE co-hosted a conference on the implications that trade and environment relationships can have on the region. This shows not only the increased awareness of the committee in addressing cross-sectoral issues, but also the priority being placed on the linkages that economic relations have on environmental management. CAMRE also sponsors an environmental prize. The subject of the prize for the year 2000 is on methods of enforcement and commitment to environmental conventions and regulations;
- (iii) With technical assistance provided by ESCWA, CAMRE adopted the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Development (RAPSD) to support Arab cooperation on the implementation and follow-up of global initiative, namely Agenda 21. The Ministerial Declaration reaffirms the commitment of all Arab countries to the promotion of sustainable development and resolves to implement national plans and actions on natural resource management and environment and sustainable development, taking into consideration national priorities.¹⁵⁴ Some of the main points of the programme include support for regional cooperation to address oil pollution, water resource management, marine resources, desertification, the development of indicators, and exchanges of information and technical expertise;
- (iv) The Joint Commission for Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCDAR) has adopted the RAPSD as a blueprint for supporting sustainable development in the Arab region. As such, JCDAR has identified concrete national actions to support progress towards sustainable development. This includes 13 regional programmes and 141 actions for implementation;¹⁵⁵
- (v) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – seeks to assure the security and stability of the Gulf region through economic and political cooperation. It does so by trying to coordinate and unify economic, financial and monetary policies and support efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs. The GCC also maintains an environmental office and adopted a 1995 framework for conducting environmental impact assessments in member states. The council places special attention on issues related to sustainable water resources management.

(b) *Preparing regional strategies for donor institutions*

In order to better manage the supply of technical and financial assistance to the developing countries, international donor organization often develop their own regional strategies for achieving sustainable development. Examples of these initiatives are provided below.

¹⁵⁴ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, "Agenda 21 Chapter 37: National Mechanisms and International Cooperation for Capacity-building in Developing Countries," <http://www.un.org/esa/earthsummit/ecwa-cp.htm#chap37>.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

(i) *The World Bank – Middle East and North Africa Region*

The World Bank is currently updating their global environmental strategy. Part of this task involves updating their environmental strategy for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region of 1995.¹⁵⁶ In preparing its 1995 strategy, the World Bank recognized the importance of preparing and implementing national environmental strategies. At the regional level, however, the World Bank also recognized that:

“Clearly there can be no blueprint for sustainable development in the Arab countries as a whole; each country will have to develop its own path based on its comparative advantage, specific problems and constraints. Thus, a regional strategy can, at best, paint a rather generalized picture of what needs to be achieved at a country level. Decisions on priorities and types of interventions will have to be made at a country level. This should be done through environmental strategy processes, such as the national environmental action plans (NEAPs), which are currently ongoing in Arab countries”.¹⁵⁷

As such, the 1995 strategy focused on key environmental issues facing the region that cut across traditional sectoral lines. This included environmental degradation, sustainable development, water quality and quantity, natural resource management, urban environment, sustainable industrial and energy development, and identifying steps towards sustainable development.

The World Bank is currently in the process of updating its 1995 strategy with the objective of integrating environmental projects more directly into development planning. The strategy formulation process seeks to be highly participatory by soliciting comments from the public at large via Internet forums.¹⁵⁸ The new strategy also seeks to fine tune the Bank’s approach to sustainable development planning by evaluating the usefulness of instruments such as national environmental action plans.

(ii) *International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)*

The IUCN is one of the leaders in sustainable development Planning. Even before the Earth Summit, IUCN advocated the need for to develop “World Conservation Strategies,” which would complement the development of national strategies. The idea of these plans formed the basis for NES and NEAP concepts that were strengthened at and after the Rio Conference. The impetus for providing IUCN technical assistance to Jordan to prepare the 1991 NES was thanks to Jordan’s early commitment and support of IUCN concepts of sustainable environmental development and efforts to develop a global conservation strategy.

(iii) *The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)*

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) 1996 strategy document, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*, sets 2005 as the target date for achieving progress in implementing national sustainable development strategies (NSDSs) in all countries. Specifically, the DAC seeks “to be in the process of implementation in every country, so as to ensure that current trends in the loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed by 2015”.¹⁵⁹ DAC member states meet on a regular basis to discuss this strategic goal, which includes assessing progress in materializing Agenda 21 in ESCWA member states.

¹⁵⁶ See Middle East and North Africa Region, World Bank, *Middle East and North Africa Environmental Strategy: Towards Sustainable Development*, Report No. 13601-MNA, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 17 February 1995.

¹⁵⁷ Middle East and North Africa Region, World Bank, “Towards Sustainable Development in the Arab Countries: An Environmental Strategy – A Working Document Prepared by the World Bank on the Occasion of the Sixth Session of the Council of the Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment,” Cairo, Egypt, 5-6 December 1994, p. vii.

¹⁵⁸ For more information, see “Middle East and North Africa Draft Regional Strategy Summary,” <http://www.worldbank.org/environment/strategy/pdfs/menastrategy.pdf> as of August 2000.

¹⁵⁹ OECD (November 1999), p. 1.

(c) *Research and studies on regional priority issues*

Several international, regional, and sub-regional institutions serve the ESCWA region by conducting research and studies in support of sustainable development. The purpose of these studies are either to increase awareness of regional priority issues or to conduct new research that can contribute to the process of implementing sustainable development goals. These studies often occur at the regional level with specific examples taken from national contexts. A sample of institutions providing these services in the ESCWA region is provided below.

- (i) International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) is based in the Syrian Arab Republic and conducts research on ways to increase agricultural productivity, especially in the low rainfall areas of West Asia and North Africa. The purpose of its activities is thereby to increase the availability of food in both rural and urban areas of the region and to improve economic and social well-being. ICARDA has been effective in identifying new plant strains and genetically creating cotton varieties that are resistant to pests and thus do not require the application of pesticides. This protects soils and prevents land degradation, which are among the main environmental priorities of the region;
- (ii) World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (WHO/EMRO) cooperates with several organizations (UNICEF, ESCWA) and experts to conduct research and disseminate studies on human health. Specific technical activities in support of human resources development, information exchange, and regional cooperation is conducted through the Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA), based in Amman, Jordan. CEHA also supports national professionals and institutions to carry out investigations relevant to national and regional environmental health priority issues, such as drinking water quality, wastewater recycling and reuse, water conservation, solid waste management, air pollution in the region;
- (iii) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), through its Sustainable Development Department and other divisions, has conducted many research activities and workshops in support of sustainable development in the ESCWA region. These include studies on women, agriculture and rural development in the Near East; water resource issues in the Arab Region; the role of universities in the national agricultural research systems of Egypt and Jordan; the decentralization of natural resource management, which includes a study of indicators; and an FAO Web site on desertification.

(d) *Regional capacity building and training*

Several international donor organizations have identified capacity building as an essential part of their assistance strategies to ESCWA member countries. This is because the emergence of new environmental institutions in the region and the limited amount of technical skills available for sustainable development planning and implementation are natural beneficiaries of this type of assistance by international institutions. Some examples of organizations providing capacity building services to the ESCWA region are noted below.

(i) *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*

ESCWA capacity building services to the region are varied and include:

- a. Assisting countries develop and draft environmental legislation such as environmental impact assessment procedures, water quality standards, and environmental enforcement mechanisms;
- b. Conducting site visits and meeting decision-makers to provide advisory assistance on issues such as environment, trade, industrial development, and social issues;
- c. Preparing reports and publications on issues pertaining to sustainable development management. The annual *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA*

Region includes sections and references to environmental issues and sustainable development policy formulation and implementation,¹⁶⁰

- d. Hosting regional conferences and expert working groups to discussing pressing regional issues. For instance, ESCWA has hosted conferences on water quality, water resource management, trade and environment, and small and medium enterprises;
- e. Organizing preparatory meetings for Rio + 5 and assessments of progress in achieving sustainable development as a preparatory meeting to Rio + 10.

(ii) *Center for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)*

CEDARE has conducted several campaigns to increase awareness and understanding on sustainable development issues. The Center manages a few research groups and identifies technical experts that can assist countries and organization conduct work on environmental and development issues. *CEDARE* also conducts short-term training programmes for regional beneficiaries on issues such as environmental economics. The linkages the *CEDARE* seeks to promote between economic and environmental issues are important in building capacity and awareness of sustainable development issues and instruments in the region.

(e) *Assessing progress in achieving sustainable development goals*

Several international institutions have engaged themselves in programme assessments and reviews to assess regional and national progress in materializing sustainable development. For example, ESCWA has conducted regional assessments of progress in achieving sustainable development, which are provided in its annual *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region*, as well as in sector-specific publications. Several assessments and recommendations made by ESCWA were included in previous sections of this paper.

The World Bank has also conducted assessments and reviews of progress in achieving sustainable development. For example, when preparing its regional strategy for the MENA region it identified the following ways in which the NEAP process could be improved, namely by:

- (i) Involving core ministries, such as ministries of finance and planning in addition to the sector line ministries;
- (ii) Setting priorities for action systematically, rather than simply listing projects for financing;
- (iii) Examining the environmental implications of policies more closely;
- (iv) Investigating mechanisms for mobilizing resources;
- (v) Intensifying the participatory nature of the process by involving all public and private stakeholders.¹⁶¹

Other international and regional assistance organizations are also involved in these types of activities.

¹⁶⁰ For instance, the 1998-1999 survey dedicated an entire chapter to environmental issues and means of better supporting sustainable development planning. See: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region 1998-1999*, Report # E/ESCWA/ED/1999/5, 2 April 1999, English version, New York: United Nations, 1999. The 2000-2001 survey examines the changing role of NGOs in the ESCWA region and the importance of decentralization for implementing sustainable development. See: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region 2000-2001*, Report #: E/ESCWA/ED/2001/7, New York: United Nations, 31 May 2001, chapter 6.

¹⁶¹ Middle East and North Africa Region, World Bank (1994), p. vii.

B. ROLE OF NGOS

International institutions and donor agencies are not the only ones that supply assistance to countries in support of sustainable development. Non-governmental organizations operating at the local and national levels also contribute to the process. This is mostly done by voicing the concerns of local communities before governments and international institutions, and empowering individuals to take action. This section accordingly reviews the role of NGOs in materializing sustainable development as well as the mechanisms they have used to cooperate between themselves and with other public and private organizations.

1. *Role and activities of NGOs*

NGOs play an essential role in raising awareness about local issues in local communities. They have also played the role of advocate in highlighting the importance of local environmental issues in national debates and international forums. Additionally, NGOs can:

- (a) Engage in meaningful dialogue with local communities;
- (b) Introduce relevant concepts from modern science and analysis and bridge the gap between new ways and traditional and indigenous knowledge;
- (c) Facilitate dialogue between government and local decision-makers;
- (d) Play the role of advocate for local communities;
- (e) Strengthen community-based institutions and empower them to express and defend their interests by providing training programmes that can help local communities understand the ways of national government, and national government the priorities of local communities.¹⁶²

Environmental NGOs in the ESCWA region have generally focused on three main issues, namely increasing environmental awareness, cleaning-up local communities, and capacity building. They have championed these issues by using different instruments at the local and national levels. These include:

- (a) Raising environmental awareness through community programmes and activities;
- (b) Using media outlets;
- (c) Organizing public consultations;
- (d) Pursuing joint activities with government agencies and private associations;
- (e) Forming networks with other NGOs.

On a regional and international basis, NGOs have also been effective at raising the concerns of national constituents in international forums. For instance, the Emirates Environmental Group represented the interests of United Arab Emirates cities at the International Habitat II Best Practices conference. NGOs participation in international forums has thus allowed them to increase awareness of local issues and raise funds from national governments and donor organizations in support of their environmental priorities.

2. *Mechanisms for NGO cooperation*

NGOs often work as individual organizations on specific task. However, many NGOs have also recognized the advantages of networking and cooperating with other NGOs and institutions to further their goals. This has been particularly true among environmental NGOs, which initially focused on local issues and then expanded their activities to include national issues to strengthen their involvement in international forums, e.g., multi-lateral conferences and negotiations. Some examples of successful instances of cooperation between NGOs and NGOs and with other organizations are provided below.

¹⁶² Based on M. Taghi Farvar, "Decentralization and Natural Resources Management: Issues in Rural Development," presented at *Technical Consultation on Decentralization*, 16-18 December 1997, Rome, Italy, <http://www.fao.org/sd/rodirect/rofo0040.htm>, downloaded 28 September 2000.

(a) *Arab NGO Network for Environment and Development*

Arab NGO Network for Environment and Development (RAED) has been effective in raising public awareness and capacity for addressing environmental issues in Egypt, particularly by working with their member organizations. However, it is often said that RAED is better known outside of Egypt than inside the country because of its active involvement in so many international forums of discussions. For instance, RAED co-hosted the “Regional Consultation for the Northern Africa and the Middle East” that was held in Beirut, Lebanon from 18-23 November 1996. This conference was coordinated with The Lebanese Environment Forum (LEF) under the auspices of the Lebanese Minister of Environment, in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung association and in coordination with the Earth Council. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss progress in achieving sustainable development in the region. This illustrates the ways in which NGOs can work together to exchange regional experiences, provide updates on progress made in achieving environmental goals, and influence national and international policy agendas. It also shows the ways in which NGOs from different parts of the work network with one another to raise consciousness about priority environmental issues.

(b) *Mediterranean Economic Forum*

The Mediterranean Economic Forum, commonly referred to as MedForum, is an organization of think tanks and research institutions in the Mediterranean region that seeks to foster cooperation and exchange on pressing regional issues affecting economic development. Sustainable development topics have been a key component of their meeting and conference agendas, where environmental management, sustainable economic development, and means of building regional capacity have been the subject of many discussions. Governments, business associations and industrialists, as well as other non-governmental representatives participate in their activities and conferences, which provide fresh assessments and empirical analysis of pressing regional issues. The MedForum network again shows the influence that NGOs can have when they work together, foster dialogue, and disseminate new research.

V. EMERGING FEATURES IN REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A consultative meeting of regional institutions in New York in February 1998 identified the need to strengthen cooperation between regional United Nations agencies and other regional organizations, and to analyze good practices in regional and sub-regional cooperation. The meeting, convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) also revisited the mandate of the 1997 UNGASS to review regional priorities in relation to the CSD work programme. This second accordingly identifies emerging features in regional and sub-regional cooperation and good practices within the context of Agenda 21 implementation. It subsequently offers a series of recommendations to assist suppliers of international development assistance to better target their services to the needs of Governments and private stakeholders.

A. EMERGING FEATURES IN REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

Regional cooperation schemes have emerged in recent years and have been promoted because of the decline in international donor funding over the past decade. By pooling resources, institutions can better effectuate their plans and strategies and better assist beneficiaries. The usefulness of coordination and communication in encouraging complementarity between programmes and projects, and thus avoiding duplication of efforts and the waste of resources, is another reason why and how to promote coordination and cooperation between regional and sub-regional organizations.

1. *Methods of cooperation*

(a) *Communication and coordination among donor institutions*

Improved consultation and coordination between international, regional, and sub-regional development organization can: (a) facilitate complementarity of programming; (b) increase resource efficiency; and (c) prevent programme and project duplication. Increased realization of these benefits is evident by the emergence of cooperative programmes and councils among suppliers of international technical and development assistance. Several global and regional international donor organizations have joined forces to provide coherent programmes and services to Arab countries. Examples of these initiatives are noted below.

(i) *Fostering coordinating through joint programmes – METAP*

METAP is a cooperative initiative that has taken a lead in providing capacity building support to Mediterranean countries, five of which are ESCWA member states. METAP is jointly supported by the United Nations Development Programme Regional Bureau for Arab States, the United Nations Development Programme Capacity 21 Unit, the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the World Bank, and bilateral agencies such as the Swiss Development Agency, and Japanese and French governments. Joint programmes and capacity building initiatives coordinated and implemented under the METAP umbrella include the:

- a. *METAP Capacity Building Unit* (Cairo, Egypt) which was established to assist beneficiary countries strengthen environmental institutions, legislation, and capacity in environmental management and planning. Programme examples include institutional assistance to the GCEP in Jordan and NEAP preparation in Syria and Egypt, both conducted under the METAP umbrella with financial assistance provided by UNDP and the World Bank respectively;
- b. *METAP Project Preparation Unit* (Cairo, Egypt) which was supported by the two international financial institution METAP partners (EIB and World Bank), to assist countries prepare project proposals for funding or financing by METAP and other international donor organizations;

- c. *Small Grants Facility* which provides support to NGOs and academic institutions to conduct public awareness campaigns, community-based environmental education programmes, conflict resolution training, and facilitating information and data exchange between governments and private stakeholders.¹⁶³ A recent project supported by the Facility is an initiative in Lebanon called CARLA, which aims to reduce automobile usage in the country so as to improve air quality and traffic congestion.

(ii) *Fostering coordination through the formation of cooperative councils - AFESD*

In an effort to encourage complementarity of programming and streamline funding procedures for beneficiary governments and institutions, several international and sub-regional development institutions formed the *Coordination Secretariat of Arab National and Regional Development Institutions*. The Secretariat is administered by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD). Its members meet periodically “to discuss ongoing and planned development projects with the intention of streamlining operational procedures among the member institutions”.¹⁶⁴ Coordination group members include the: Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Islamic Development Bank, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, OPEC Fund for International Development, Saudi Fund for Development, and AFESD itself. In an effort to increase communication and information sharing among its members and with other international institutions, the Coordination Secretariat publishes a *Summary of Loans and Technical Assistance Extended to Developing Countries by Arab National and Regional Development Institutions* twice a year.

(b) *Organization and participation in conferences and workshops*

International, regional, and sub-regional organizations and NGOs also cooperate in the organization of joint conference and participation in each other’s meetings and working groups. For example:

- (i) ESCWA joined financial, technical, and organizational forces with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Regional Office for Western Asia (UNEP/ROWA), and the MedPolicies Initiative of METAP to conduct an *Expert Group Meeting on Trade and Environment for the ESCWA Region* in Beirut in November 1999. The seminar was attended by over 50 participants from ESCWA member countries, including representatives from government, business associations, and NGOs;
- (ii) ESCWA has also cooperated with other United Nations organizations by participating in conferences such as the eighth *Asian Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77* (organized by UNCTAD; Amman, 1996); the *Workshop on the Implications of the Uruguay Round for Jordan* (organized by UNCTAD, UNDP, WTO, Government of Jordan; Amman, 1996); the *Workshop on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between Jordan and the European Union* (organized by UNCTAD and the Government of Jordan; Amman, 1996); the *Regional Workshop on Water Conservation and Reuse: Practical Approach and Strategies* (organized by the WHO, Amman 1996); and the *Workshop on the Role of Industry in the Development and Rational Use of Water Resources in the Arab Region* (organized by the United National Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); Amman, 1996).

(c) *Coordination between Governments*

Institutions and NGOs are not the only ones pursuing cooperative initiatives. Governments in the Arab region are also active in cooperating in support of materializing sustainable development. For example:

¹⁶³ Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Program, *Draft Working Papers, Portfolio Papers, and Activity Briefs for the Third Phase of METAP (1996-2000)*, July 1996, p. SGF.2.

¹⁶⁴ Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, “Background,” <http://www.arabfund.org/about.htm#function>, downloaded 28 September 2000.

- (i) Arab environmental ministers through CAMRE, part of the LAS, adopted the *Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Development (RAPSD)* by Ministerial Declaration;
- (ii) The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) established a Committee for Cancer Registration in the Arab Gulf States to monitor the increasing instance of cancer in the Gulf sub-region. The committee gathers accurate data and has established a data bank through this joint GCC programme in an effort to better respond to environmental health and human health challenges facing the Gulf;
- (iii) The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) groups 56 state governments, including member of the ESCWA region, to pool resources, join efforts, and issue joint politics for the purpose of safeguarding the interests and securing progress and well-being for their constituencies.

2. Topics of cooperation

Topics generating cooperative initiatives in the ESCWA region have generally paralleled the environmental priorities facing the region or needs expressed in sustainable development planning documents. For example:

- (a) *Water resource management* (water quality and scarcity) – has been the subject of cooperation between ESCWA, WHO, UNEP, etc.;
- (b) *Formulation of environmental indicators* – has had the support of ESCWA, UNDP, and the World Bank;
- (c) *Training in environmental impact assessments* – has been organized under the METAP umbrella with funding provided by the World Bank; ESCWA has also conducted work on EIAs in coordination with national and local organizations in the Gulf region;

Cooperation has also been fostered by the emergence of new and pressing issues in sustainable development not yet formalized in NES and NEAP documents, namely:

- (a) *Trade and environment* – which has been the focus of the MedPolicies Initiative, a joint METAP project funded by the World Bank and implemented in coordination with Harvard University and ESCWA; the subject has also prompted efforts to encourage cooperation and institutional dialogue on trade and environment activities between ESCWA, WTO, UNCTAD, UNEP, LAS, and the METAP MedPolicies Initiative;
- (b) *Industrial development* – which has been the subject of several meetings conducted by ESCWA in coordination with UNIDO, German bilateral aid agencies, and national business associations;
- (c) *Harmonization and approximation of environmental regulations and standards* – which has become a regular part of ESCWA programmes to promote regional integration, and which has become increasingly a topic of concern for subsidiary bodies and advisory agencies to the Arab League.

3. Areas of cooperation

Global, regional, and sub-regional cooperation have also focused on similar types of cooperation, namely the:

- (a) *Formulation and implementation of regional strategies and programmes* – which has focused on project identification, project preparation, and project financing;

(b) *Organization of regional conferences and workshops* – which has included organizing joint meetings, preparing conference documents and papers, commenting on paper drafted by partner organizations, and disseminating information;

(c) *Capacity building exercises* – which have focused on identifying capacity building needs, organizing training programmes, and sponsoring stakeholder participation in training activities and conference.

B. FACTORS IMPACTING REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL COOPERATION

Institutionalized partnerships and coordination mechanisms already benefit ESCWA member states. However, other factors can facilitate cooperation at the regional level. Challenges also exist that can stymie cooperative efforts if not taken into due consideration.

1. *Factors facilitating cooperation*

There are several instruments that can be used to facilitate cooperation between organizations, NGOs, governments, and sustainable development beneficiaries in the ESCWA region. Some of the tools are listed below:

(a) *Organization of consultative meetings by national governments*

After NES and NEAP preparation, most countries of the ESCWA region requiring financial assistance to materialize their sustainable development plans have organized national consultations to foster national and international awareness and support of identifying environmental priority issues and programmes. These national consultations are attended by national stakeholders and donor organizations, or can be arranged as two separate meetings to target the specific interests of each group.

(b) *Formation of joint programmes, consultative councils or cooperative secretariats*

As can be seen from the examples provided by Coordination Secretariat of Arab National and Regional Development Institutions organized by AFESD and the METAP Secretariat hosted by the World Bank, joint programmes and consultative councils institutionalize lines of communication between international financial institutions and development organizations. This is an effective means of fostering cooperation and communication between institutions.

(c) *Clarity of national environmental needs and priorities*

Cooperation is best fostered when development assistance “suppliers” understand the needs and priorities of development assistance “demanders”. Clarity of project proposals with detailed budgets identifying required funding levels allows donor organizations and technical assistance agencies to more easily identify avenues and topics for cooperation at the national and regional level. This can assist in the pooling of resources for sustainable development and help to focus limited resources on the priorities of most concern to Governments.

(d) *Clarity and coordination of donor institution mandates and requirements*

Clarity of information on donor mandates and easy access to procedural requirements and timelines facilitates the process of identifying cooperative initiatives. Such initiatives can be identified by country beneficiaries, such as ministries of planning or finance that approve foreign funding for sustainable development, or by organizations themselves as they seek ways to pool resources with institutional counterparts. Another instrument that supports cooperative efforts is the streamlining of development institution project approval requirements and coordination of requirements and timelines between institutions. This is one of the primary functions of the Coordination Secretariat of Arab National and Regional Development Institutions.

(e) *Identification of institutions based closest to programme beneficiaries to implement programmes and projects*

While several organizations can support the organization and funding of regional programmes, it is still more effective to have leadership in the implementation of assistance programmes. The identification of which institution should be assigned this leadership role should be related to the organization's geographic and cultural proximity to the project beneficiaries. This not only fosters regional and/or national ownership of development initiatives, but also facilitates the day-to-day management of these projects. A successful example of this is United Nations "Planning and Development of Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden," which is administered by the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (see box 3). METAP Partners have also sought to bring its services closer to beneficiaries by establishing a regional coordination center in Cairo, Egypt and by identifying counterpart institutions in the region to implement assistance programmes, e.g., ESCWA for the MedPolicies Initiative and the Center for Environmental Technology of Tunisia (CITET) for its regional environmental impact assessment initiative, which also benefits ESCWA member states.

2. *Challenges limiting opportunities for cooperation*

Despite the application of effective instruments, several challenges to global, regional, and sub-regional cooperation still exist. These challenges include the following.

(a) *Differences in geographic coverage*

Differences in geographic coverage by regional institutions impedes cooperation between suppliers of sustainable development assistance. For instance, the 13 countries that comprise Western Asia, as defined by the United Nations, are entirely covered by ESCWA, partially served by UNEP/ROWA (since they do not cover Egypt), fully represented in the League of Arab States and its subsidiary bodies, and have only five countries benefiting from METAP, which channels regional capacity building programmes and grants from the World Bank, EIB, EC, and UNDP to Mediterranean countries. Differences in membership and ratification of various MEAs and international trade agreements (e.g., WTO) among ESCWA member states also increase the difficulty of coordinating technical assistance and conferences in the region between different countries and institutions.

(b) *Differences institutional mandates*

Different institutions have different mandates. Some are required to conduct regional programmes (e.g., UNCTAD), others have the flexibility of working at the national or regional levels (e.g., ESCWA, UNEP/ROWA, WHO/EMRO). Some institutions are obliged to only work through governments (e.g., LAS, CAMRE), while others have the flexibility to work with governments, international development institutions, or NGOs (e.g., KFD, METAP). Furthermore, some institutions are required to focus assistance to capacity building initiatives (UNDP), while other must try to link their programmes to activities that might eventually lead to loans (e.g., EIB and the World Bank). These differences in mandates and institutional requirements often impede efforts to organize cooperative initiatives.

(c) *Differences in approval procedures and project timelines*

Given the limited technical and technological capacity of many member states of the ESCWA region, complex project preparation requirements can often impede beneficiary country efforts foster complementarity between the foreign development assistance they receive. Furthermore, differences in procedural requirements and proposal submission and approval timelines can prevent institutions from being able to overcome the logistical aspects of cooperation.

Box 3. Sustainable development success story by a regional organization

Planning and Development of Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea & the Gulf of Aden

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Location | The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Arab States). |
| Responsible organization | UNDP, Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA). |
| Description | <p>The enclosed Red Sea is facing increasing problems due to the destabilization of dunes, shipping, coastal development, grazing, harvesting for fuel, and building material in mangrove areas. Additional problems include the rapid increase of tourism, poor fishery resources management, depletion of certain fish stocks (e.g. sharks), and the lack of agreements, law enforcement and surveillance of shared resources.</p> <p>This project analyzes major threats to the coastal and marine environments of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region, which are home to the richest concentration of marine biodiversity in the world, and the identifies actions needed to address them. <i>To guarantee a fair and uniform coordination as well as sustainability of the programme, the project was implemented by the regional organization PERSGA.</i></p> <p>Problems related to environment and natural resources management were identified in each country through desk studies and country field surveys where there were gaps in information. To facilitate the implementation of public awareness projects, <i>NGOs are involved in planning and implementation. Several of the projects initiated are community-based, i.e., planned together with, and implemented by, local organizations and agencies at the community level.</i></p> |
| Results achieved | Coastal/marine surveys were fielded in 4 countries. Draft Country Reports were produced for 7 countries. Two Task Force meetings & a draft session were held. Self-financing solutions/projects were identified to facilitate the implementation of the <i>Strategic Action Plan (SAP)</i> . The potential for tourism development in the Region, particularly eco-tourism is expected to generate part of the financial resources needed for the management of marine protected areas. Fishing will also be easier to manage once surveillance and enforcement is in place. |
| Lessons learned | The development of the SAP was a regional activity, although there are many country-based activities. This is due to differences in social, political and economic systems among countries in the region. However, it was observed that <i>a regional organization such as PERSGA is met with greater respect than most international agencies and organizations in the region. This is an important aspect when it comes to implementing the programme.</i> |

Source: United Nations, "Planning and Development of Strategic Action Programme for the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden," <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/success/os5.htm>, downloaded 30 September 2000.

(d) *Potential for conflict of interests between grant-based capacity building exercises and preparing projects for loans*

The potential for conflict exists between efforts to increase capacity for project preparation and efforts to prepare projects for funding. For example, part of the activities in formulating the new NEAP for Egypt has been assisting local governments learn how to prepare projects for funding. While this is a capacity building activity, it is also a resource intensive activity that might be better conducted to supplement, rather than replace, other capacity building initiatives. In another instance, coordination between the Capacity Building Unit and the Project Preparation Unit at the METAP Regional Facility in Cairo was often difficult because of the differences in objectives and beneficiaries governing the activities of both units.

(e) *Poor communication and coordination between donor organizations*

Although efforts have been made to overcome this problem, there remains a deficiency in communication and programme coordination in the ESCWA region. This has caused the duplication of programmes and projects, and has forced institutions to reinventing methods, processes, and practices instead of sharing past experiences and lessons learned. This has not only wasted financial resources, but also precious time and technical resources available to conduct sustainable development activities in the region. For example, the LAS has made special effort to catalogue programmes of regional organizations with standing before the League on a regular basis, including programmes specifically addressing environmental topics. However, more should be done to expand the list to include the activities of international assistance organizations and to distribute the information gathered to potential partner organizations—particularly donor institutions.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE COOPERATION BETWEEN REGIONAL
AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE CSD

Given the lessons learned from the country case studies and regional experiences of development institutions and NGOs, below is a list of proposed recommendations for improving global, regional, and sub-regional cooperation, as well as coordination with the United Nations Committee for Sustainable Development (CSD).

1. *Improve the supply of donor assistance to countries*

Improving the quality of donor assistance to countries is as important as increasing the quantity of assistance provided. A proposed list for discussion of ways to improve the supply and coordination of donor assistance to ESCWA member countries is provided below.

(a) *Open and strengthen lines of communication*

Communication needs to be strengthened and facilitated between donor agencies and between donor agencies and Governments.

(b) *Improve coordination between donor organizations*

Increased effort should be made at establishing joint programmes and/or committees to coordinate assistance activities. Such committees should represent not only international and or regional institutions, but could also involve the occasional involvement of government stakeholders to provide updates on national requests for assistance on a demand-driven basis.

(c) *Improve information dissemination*

Provide clear and updated reporting on institutional grant and lending activities provided divided by country and by region. The Internet should be used to provide updated and easy access to information on regional and national sustainable development initiatives being proposed, in progress, or being planned for implementation.

(d) *Clarity of national priorities identified by governments for assistance*

Governments need to ensure that providers of technical and financial assistance understand the national priorities and fund projects focused on national needs, and not based on the institutional mandates of the suppliers of assistance. It follows that governments and private stakeholders must take leadership in materializing sustainable development in their countries.

(e) *Clarify institutional priorities and mandates*

Institutional suppliers of development assistance need to ensure that Governments and non-governmental beneficiaries understand the mandates of donor agencies so as to be able to effectively target them for assistance and identify means of encouraging coordination and complementarity between foreign assistance sources.

(f) *Coordinate regional strategies*

Another mechanism for improving programme coordination and complementarity is encouraging donor institution communication and coordination at the level of regional strategy formulation, not only when programmes and projects are proposed for funding. This may facilitate the process of identifying at least similar activities for implementation for a limited period of time. The CSD might be a mechanism for encouraging this type of coordination (see below).

(g) *Complementarity of programming goals*

If cooperation on specific projects is not feasible, the complementarity of programmes and projects should be encouraged. This is particularly helpful when considering funding for the implementation of short-term versus medium-term NES and NEAP priorities.

In addition to these proposed recommendations for discussion, the OECD offers the following recommendations to assist donor organizations better formulate their assistance strategies to countries in support of sustainable development:

- (i) “NSDSs developed with the assistance of international donor organizations should be used as a step in a long-term commitment by donor organizations in formulating and implementing sustainable development goals, not as the (short-term) goal in and of itself;
- (ii) “Avoidance of the proliferation of plans that divert capacities and resources is necessary. NSDS should be an UMBRELLA that builds on existing plans, seeks synergies, improves policy coherence across sectors, and strengthens coordination, particularly between donors;
- (iii) “To avoid overburdening countries, focus should be first place on selected priority initiatives likely to have a big impact on sustainable development prospects where rapid and visible progress is achievable;
- (iv) “Donors should, in partnership with developing countries, work towards elaborating best practices in assisting developing countries formulate and implement NSDSs”,¹⁶⁵
- (v) “Donors should encourage recipient partners to formulate their own development strategies—setting out the local priorities, plans and instruments for implementing such strategies. This process should systematically involve civil society, as well as consultation with external partners. Where such locally-owned strategies are compatible with internationally agreed goals, donors should work to implement their aid programmes in a coordinated manner on the basis of such locally owned strategies and accept their discipline;
- (vi) “Donors should stimulate and help strengthen recipient partner-led co-ordination of development co-operation. The capacity for local co-ordination (which can and should also strengthen the international process) may be improved by donors’ own delegation of decision-making authority from headquarters to field missions. At the international level, the possible advantages and disadvantages of organizing Consultative Group (and Round Table) meetings in the capitals of the recipient partners concerned, should be further tested in practice;

¹⁶⁵ Recommendations 7-10 from OECD (November 1999), p. 3.

- (vii) “Transparency of donor and recipient partner interests and mutual trust should be increased through continuous dialogue, both informal and through systematic work on themes and sectors through standing sub-groups, preferably led by the host government;
- (viii) “External partners should agree in principle to adjust more to local procedures, where necessary helping recipient countries to bring their procedures and management capacities up to international standards. There may be useful DAC roles in identifying best practices and helping organize pilot exercises to move toward the simplification and harmonization of procedures”.¹⁶⁶

2. Strengthen linkages with the CSD

The United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development was established to provide a coordinating mechanism for materializing sustainable development via Agenda 21. The Commission has implemented several actions thus far in support of this mandate. Additional ways that can strengthen the role of the CSD in order to materialize regional strategies for sustainable development in the ESCWA region include the need to:

(a) Encourage the establishment of permanent committees or focal points to coordinate with the CSD

While most ESCWA member countries have counterpart agencies for coordinating with the CSD, most activities are not of a permanent basis and are thus reinvigorated only in response to requests for updates or information by the CSD. This impedes the institutionalization of sustainable development efforts, e.g., information gathering and the identification and implementation of indicators of sustainable development. Furthermore, some ESCWA member states have not yet identified counterpart agencies for the CSD, e.g., the United Arab Emirates.

(b) Schedule regular contact with national focal points or counterparts

Interaction with CSD counterparts should at least occur on an annual basis and require reporting on efforts to materialize sustainable development. Although regular reporting is requested by the CSD, more effort has to be made at encouraging governments to respond in a timely manner to reporting requests. The regular contact between counterparts and the strengthening of personal ties can facilitate this process.

(c) Provide a forum for development assistance institutions to focus and coordinate activities on specific topics and areas of sustainable development

The CSD already identifies key topics to focus upon on an annual basis. This allows national stakeholders to focus on priority issues, as defined by the CSD, on a global basis. However, more can be done to coordinate donor assistance in response to these priorities. This will require better planning of priority topics since donor institutions require a timeline of more than one year to identify, prepare, and fund projects for implementation.

Other recommendations proposed for strengthening linkages between the CSD and national councils for sustainable development (NCSDs) and regional initiatives in sustainable development were identified during a side event to UNGASS in June 1997 at a meeting organized by the Earth Council and the World Resources Institute. These recommendations suggested that:

- (i) “The regional and sub-regional Agenda 21 processes should be integrated into the work of the CSD and the CSD itself should play a larger role in catalyzing much needed cooperation.

¹⁶⁶ Recommendations 11-14 from OECD, “Strengthening Development Partnerships: A Working Checklist,” OECD Free Online Documents “DAC: Strengthening Development Partnerships,” <http://www.oecd.org/dac/HTM/strength.htm>, downloaded June 6, 2000; last updated October 1, 1999.

Regional and national processes could catalyze strategic discussion on issues to be addressed by the CSD;

- (ii) “The CSD should respond to national priorities and address those issues in its programme of work;
- (iii) “The CSD should involve NCSDs in the development of sustainable development indicators and assist NCSDs in qualitative evaluations of governance processes;
- (iv) “National reporting can build better linkages with the CSD. In many cases, NCSDs are underutilized in this task. NCSDs could be useful in documenting good practices, and implementation problems, which the CSD could in turn disseminate widely. They should play a formal role in the national reporting process;
- (v) “The CSD should work together with NCSDs to translate its decisions into concrete national and local policy options. Its work must be better integrated with action at all levels of governance, especially in terms of local Agenda 21 processes;
- (vi) “Having the CSD send stronger messages to governments regarding the need to strengthen NCSDs, especially civil society participation;
- (vii) “Securing the participation of key sectoral and economic government ministries in NCSDs is critical to promoting the cause of sustainable development as an overarching policy framework;
- (viii) “NCSDs should be given decision-making authority, with action-oriented mandates so that they can play a greater role in monitoring National Agenda 21 implementation and government compliance;
- (ix) “NCSDs and their regional and local counterparts must be assured of reliable funding sources. In many cases international organizations should play a greater role in funding. Capital funds should be established to ensure that the work of Local Agendas 21 becomes self-sustaining;
- (x) “The CSD should provide greater technical and other support services to the NCSDs;
- (xi) “Securing greater NCSD participation in official government delegations to CSD meetings to ensure that the multi-stakeholder integrated approach that characterizes many NCSDs is highlighted at the CSD;
- (xii) “Establishing a sub-commission of the CSD to provide an official forum for NCSDs where they can work together to promote a more integrated approach of the CSD and to further the sustainable development agenda”.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Earth Council/World Resources Institute Side Event Report, “Forging Stronger Links Between National Councils for Sustainable Development and the CSD,” UNGASS, 26 June 1997. Earth Council webpage: http://ncsdnetwork.org/un/reports/side_events/jun97/side_event.htm.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Better coordination, communication, and information dissemination about NSDS, NES, and NEAP formulation and implementation can only benefit the sustainable development process. However, despite the evident benefits, there is limited awareness of the status of sustainable development in the region and the lack of easy access to the strategies and action plans of different countries. There is also a need to improve coordination of policies and programmes on a regional basis. The process of materializing sustainable development should not be a lonely one. Indeed, progress is best achieved through cooperative initiatives and interactive dialogues between the demanders and suppliers of sustainable development technical and financial assistance.

A. WAYS THAT REGIONAL PROCESSES AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS IN THE ESCWA REGION CAN CONTRIBUTE TO PREPARATIONS FOR RIO + 10

1. Meetings and conferences organized in the ESCWA region in preparation for Rio + 10 help governments and private stakeholders focus on the sustainable development issues as a priority.
2. Engagement in conferences also mobilizes decision-makers and NGOs to prepare assessments and reports for presentation during meetings.
3. Regional forums are the means by which these papers and assessments can be reviewed by counterparts in other countries and by national stakeholders in preparation for the Earth Summit itself. This encourages thoughtful thinking about the issues and public participation in the process of finalizing reports and documents.
4. The multi-stakeholder consultation preparatory conference is a way to engage more stakeholders in the discussion of key sustainable development issues affecting the region.
5. The conference is also a way to exchange information and lessons learned in the process of conducting national and local sustainable development initiatives in the region.
6. The meeting can also help countries and international donor organizations identify what types of technical assistance and levels of funding are yet needed to bring countries closer to meeting the objective of having sustainable development plans in place by 2002, and to have them in the process of being implemented by 2005.

B. SPECIFIC PRIORITY AREAS FOR MAKING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN ELABORATING AND IMPLEMENTING AGENDA 21 UNTIL RIO + 10

1. Set target for completing Rio +10 draft preparatory report.
2. Hold national consultations to discuss the draft report so as to solicit public input.
3. Set target for finalizing reports for presentation in advance of conferences and distribute them to media outlets to raise awareness of the issues before the Rio + 10 conference.
4. Hold national roundtables to raise awareness about Agenda 21/NSDS components and objectives and to discuss progress in achieving those goals.
5. Increase communication and inter-sectoral coordination between ministries when developing the NSDS/NES/NEAP to ensure environmental, economic, and social aspects are considered in development planning and to broad ownership of the priorities and recommendations forwarded to increase the likelihood of implementation.
6. Monitor, review and update national environmental strategies and action plans on a regular basis.

7. Make better use of economic instruments as an instrument for providing incentives for achieving environmental goals.
8. Rethink command-and-control instruments for environmental enforcement, consider appropriate methods for using economic instruments, and make instruments practical and enforceable.
9. Adopt and implement environmental assessment policies and procedures.

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