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A- Introduction:

The Syrian Arab Republic lies on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean sea between Turkey and Lebanon, it is a largely arid country with a land area of about 18500 Km² of which around one third is arable land or forest and the remainder is desert and rocky mountainous area.

In 1996, the population of Syria reached 14,620 million and in 2001, it is expected to reach 17 million, representing a growth rate of about 3.3% per annum, one of the highest in the world, Natural growth and rural-urban migration has led to the increased urbanisation of the country, in 1996, 51% of the population lived in urban centres, mainly in Damascus and Aleppo.

In recent years, there has been steady economic growth across almost all sector especially after decree (10) of 1990 and arrangements which took to encourage the investment in Syria.

Human settlement in Syria has always been concentrated in the fertile plains along the river valleys, increasingly, however, competing demands for natural resources, particularly for arable land and fresh water, exceed the sustainable capacity of these area, while wastes from human settlements and industries further degrade the environment and reduce the distance of green area around the cities.

B- Environmental problems in Syria:

- 1- Soil degradation.
- 2- Contamination and depletion of water resources.
- 3- Poor air quality in center of some cities (Damascus, Aleppo, Homs).
- 4- Inappropriate solid and industrial wastes disposal in some cities such as Lattakia and Tartous.
- 5- The growth of illegal settlements and industries inside green areas.
- 6- Lack of public awareness of environmental issues.
- 7- Inadequate industrial site management and safety.
- 8- Loss of public green space in and around cities.

The problems have arisen because policies in the past time had not considered environment issues and efforts to manage the pressures on the environment have been particularly damaging:

- policy factors:
 - Environmental resources are being over used because of subsidies (water, crops, energy) pricing and exchange rate.
 - Development policy and planning has not adequately accounted for the environmental factors such as water availability, soil quality.... etc.

- Environmental economics has been used to inform towards costing of the environmental and pricing of environmental services.
- Inadequate public participation in environmental decision making has led to implementation failures and apathy.
- institutional factors:
 - Environmental planning and management institutions are inadequate and support services that they need to work effectively are lacking.
 - Environmental legislation and standards relating to pollution control are lacking.
 - Decision makers and the public lack awareness of the environmental consequence of their activities.
- Lack of investment:

Low priority accorded to the environment in the past has led to lack of investment in infrastructure and technology and shortage of the technical and managerial resources needed to operate and maintain these.

C- Legislative framework:

The Syrian Government was among the first Middle eastern countries to establish an independent environment ministry in 1991 and to incorporate environment into development planning, in addition, an inter-ministry body, the Higher Council for environmental safety has been established with responsibility for setting national policy and co-ordinating environmental management activities.

The Ministry of Environment has a regulatory and research function and is responsible for:

- Developing environmental policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of environmental legislation.
- Inter-sectoral co-ordination.
- Environment impact assessment for all activities.

The environmental framework law has taken more than 6 years of discussion to reach the current stage, whereby major stake holding ministries have accepted its contents and the prime ministry has passed it forward for presidential approval, any additional need for legislation in the near future would best be embodied in decrees and regulation under its umbrella.

But the decree No (11) of 1991 which established ministry of Environment gave authority to it to monitor and assessment all types of activities and enforcement the standards.

In addition of decree (11) of 1991 there are many of regulations and decision issued by related ministries and administrative concerning the environment protection such the following:

- 1- Item 17 from decree No (2680) of 1977, which classified the dangerous industries with negative effects on health.
- 2- Prime ministerial decree in 1996, which gave the authority to ministry of environment to implement EIA study for all new projects and environment audit for all old projects.
- 3- The National labour law No 91 of 1959 and the decree No (269) of 1977 of minister of labour which draw some of arrangements to reduce the risk of hazardous chemicals in environment work.
- 4- Civil defence regulation of 1982 oblige all activities to have emergency plan preparedness and response to accidental pollution.
- 5- Decision No (1588) in 1999 of ministry of Environment which required Material safety data sheet (M. S. D. S) in English and Arabic language for all imported chemicals and this document must be available for all person contact with this chemicals (transport, use, storage, disposal).
- 6- Decision of prime ministers No (1/13/51) of 2/1/1977 which oblige the importer of chemicals to put table on each bottle of chemicals include of risk and to incorporate environment into development planning, in addition, an inter-ministerial body, the higher conical for environmental safety has been established with responsibility for stting national policy and co-ordinating environmental management activities.
- 7- Decision of minister of agriculture No (34/T) of 1997 and (10/T) of 1991 which define the national regulation to register the pesticides and a list of prohibited and restriction of hazardous pesticides.
- 8- Decision No (269) of 1977 for minister of labour, which define the allowance concentration level for about 50 potential toxic chemical in environment work.
- 9- Decision No (1/T) of 1988 of minister of health which define the required arrangements to register the pesticides used for public health.
- 10- Decision No (477) of 1998 from minister of environment which prohibit the disposal of any type of hazardous wastes which happened without permission from ministry of environment and this decision set up a national committee to manage the hazardous wastes in environmental sound manner.
- 11- The ministry of environment in co-operation with other related administrative issued standards for ambient air, industrial water which discharge to sewage net which go after to sewage treatment plant and draft of stander for industrial

D- EIA regulation:

According to establishment decree of ministry of environment No (11) of 1991 and the Prime Minister decision of 1995 which gave authority to ministry of environment to requised EIA study from all new projects my cause potential risk to public health and environment.

The ministry of environment to implement its obligation set up in 1992 especial committee to deal EIA requirement and in 1996 had financial assistance form METAP to prepare a national guidelines for industrial environmental auditing which include long training programme for ministry of environment staff in different levels.

These guidelines include the following:

- 1- Some of information about different types of the industrial pollutants which effects on air, water, soil quality.
- 2- Data about different national legislation and standards.

The methodologies of environmental auditing. -3

- 4- The questionnaire on information's which required for new projects and to review the old one (Table 1).
- 5- Reporting system.
- 6- Compliance and enforcement requirement.
- 7- Monitoring of industrial pollution.

There are now 11 units for EIA studies distributed in all environment directorates.

E- the problems faced the implementation of EIA in Syria:

- Absent especial comparative environmental law.
 - There are no especial industrial sites with required facilities.
 - No adequate facilities to dispose hazardous industrial wastes in environmental sound management.
 - Lack of trained personals.
 - Lack of some type of national standards.
- some arrangement adopted to be taken by related national administrations, May reduce the volume of the problems concerning industrial management:
 - 1- Environmental agreement for new projects have to be taken before any kind of other required agreements.
 - 2- Limit the temporary permission to set up new projects in sites out of extended settlements, tourism areas and oblige the industry to treat their wastes and write document oblige according it to move to industrial sites when set up.
 - 3- Avoid the potential hazardous industries and encourage using cleaner production methodologies.
 - 4- Define the type industries which suitable for each area such as coastal zone.
 - 5- Try to encourage the investment in setting up adequate industrial sites.

E- areas of NEAP and investments:

1- build capacity and educate the general population:

- Strengthen framework of environmental management.
- Build the legislative framework for environmental management.
- Strengthen land management.
- Improve public health data collection and analysis.
- Expand the role of NGOs and private sector in environmental management.
- Invest in environmental education and training.
- Raise awareness of environmental issues through education.
- Improve ability of EIA to include environmental goals in planning new development.
- Ensure compliance with international obligations and treaties.

2- prevent misuse of land and water resources:

- Develop policies to encourage development in areas with appropriate natural resources.
- Combat salinisation soil.
- Combat water and wind erosion.
- Combat desertification (loss of fertile areas to sand cover).
- Halt conversion of agricultural land to other uses.
- Stop over-exploitation of water resources; maintain sustainable use levels.

3- improve environmental quality in urban areas:

- Control illegal areas with a view improving urban environment.
- Maintain vital urban core in conservation areas.
- Improve average vehicle speed in urban areas and reduce congestion.
- Improve reliability of potable water supply.

4- reduce effects of pollution on human health:

- Reduce faecal contamination of resources.
- Ensure quality and quantity of potable water supply in rural areas.
- Reduce risk to health from contamination with sewage.
- Reduce risk to health from industrial discharges.
- Improve air quality.
- Improve solid waste management to reduce public health risks.
- Reduce human exposure to pesticides.
- Improve health and safety at work.

5- protect natural and cultural resources:

- Maintain ecological and genetic biodiversity.
- Prevent further degradation of cultural sites.
- Conserve and protect historic buildings and artifacts in urban areas
- Protect coastal resources.
- Make more efficient use of energy resources.