

PRESS RELEASE: MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE IDENTIFIED COMMON NEEDS TO BOOST CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

05 April 2017, Amman, Jordan: Government delegations from 13 Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries have met to address long-term climate change challenges and to consider National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are particularly vulnerable to climate change-induced water-scarcity and extreme temperatures. Climate change is likely to intensify the effects of drought, which is currently one of the biggest environmental challenges facing the region. Urban and coastal areas are projected to be impacted by flooding and sea surges. The effects of climate change are also anticipated to further exacerbate conflicts and threats to human security in the region.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Environment brought together more than 30 policy-makers from Environment, Planning and Finance Ministries from MENA countries – supported by more than 25 representatives from UN agencies and other development partners – for a three-day workshop from 3-5 April 2017.

The process to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) aims to address these climate change-related challenges. The 13 MENA country delegations have identified key requirements they all share, and which will help to advance the NAP process. Country delegations agreed that they require climate risk assessments, developed through the application of credible climate change scenarios and science. They highlighted the value of considering climate change in macro-economic assessments for development planning. They also identified that technical capacity building for governments is beneficial, in order to develop, implement, and assess climate change adaptation interventions.

Delegates shared the ongoing efforts of their countries to combat climate change impacts, demonstrated what they have learned about country-specific adaptation opportunities, and discussed their future support needs, in the context of NAPs and overall sustainable development. The workshop featured interactive presentations and guided discussions, with the goal to support country delegations to gain a deeper understanding about how the NAP process advances climate-resilient and sustainable development.

Opening the event, H.E Ahmad Qatarneh, Secretary General of Jordan's Ministry of Environment, said, "Jordan is currently facing an extraordinary situation with the influx of Syrian refugees. Within the last three years, the population of Jordan has increased by approximately 20%. Today we must share our scarce resources with 9.5 million people. Despite these challenges, Jordan is determined to achieve the target set by our INDCs and to continue the path of climate friendly sustainable development."

In her welcoming speech, the UNDP Country Director, Sara Ferrer Olivella, said, "UNDP in Jordan has more than two decades of experience in working to address climate change, partnering with the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Planning to advance development and climate objectives. We are well placed to support ambitious climate action, as part of the drive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implement the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)."

Regional Director and Representative of the UN Environment in West Asia, Dr. Iyad Abumoghli, said, "Adaptation to a Changing Climate in the Arab Countries is a priority that should be integrated into all national policies and actions, to reduce the projected consequences of worsening natural resources scarcity, and rising food insecurity. This workshop, and the NAP process, provide opportunities to comprehensively assess adaptation priorities, and consider policy options, for the urgent task of managing current climate change effects and building resilience to climate change."

UNDP and UN Environment are together providing global support to developing countries to advance their NAP processes, through technical and institutional support, and facilitating regional exchange and learning. The joint UNDP/ UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme (NAP-GSP) now supports more than 40 developing countries globally to advance their NAPs. This training workshop is part of a global series of NAP-support training workshops, which have been held in Asia-Pacific, Central Europe and Caucasus, and Latin America, supported by the joint UNDP / UN Environment NAP-GSP.

Further information:

- The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process is led by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with the aim to develop NAPs as a means to identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs and implement appropriate adaptation strategies.
- The NAP process for developing countries to address medium- and long-term adaptation needs was launched under the Cancun Adaptation Framework (CAF) agreed at COP 16. The joint UNDP and UN Environment National Adaptation Plan Global Support Program (NAP-GSP) was launched in collaboration with other UN agencies and collaborating organisations, through the financial support of the Global Environment Facility (The GEF) Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF),
- This meeting is convened by the NAP-GSP – together with other UN partners and collaborating organisations, including FAO, GIZ, GWP, WMO, UN-Habitat, UNFCCC and UNITAR, who will be participating as technical resource people during the workshop - with support from The GEF.