



2009 - 2010 Model Arab League

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Council of Arab Environmental Affairs Ministers

National Model Arab Leagues

(i.e., the National University or National High School MAL, Spring '10, in Washington, DC)

www.ncusar.org/modelarableague

National
Council
on US-
Arab
Relations



1. Protecting the natural environment on land and under the sea while promoting economic development and simultaneously preserving Arab cultural and historical heritage

What's the Issue?

Protecting the natural environment is a step towards preserving a future that will enable people to live healthy lives with access to the resources and beauty that nature has to offer. As societies begin to grow and develop, the environment and its protection often take a backseat and the cultural identities of societies also suffer in the race to become a more highly developed society.

Relevance to the Arab World

Fifteen countries in the Arab Region report on their efforts to reach the UN Millennium Development Goal 7, to ensure environmental sustainability. Arab States started the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) in 2007, as a means for the directing the opening of an Arab common market for products which are friendly to the environment as well as in the direction of harmonizing environmental measures. Despite these efforts, the Arab region is far behind other areas of the world in preserving the environment. Water shortages, desertification, pollution and climate change are still major areas that need improvement in order to increase the sustainability of the environment. Another factor that also adds to the situation is the distinctiveness of Arab culture. As the push for environmental protection and sustainability, Arab culture needs to be preserved as it is a key part of what gives the Arab region its identity.

Questions to Consider -- from your nation's unique perspective

- What efforts have been made to decrease pollution, climate change, and desertification and to improve the availability and accessibility of water sources?
- How is my country protecting the natural environment?
- How does economic and social development impact the environment, especially in largely populated areas?
- In what ways is Arab culture and my country's culture being preserved?
- How can other countries environmental situations impact my country's? Is there any type of accountability for environmental policies?

Resources to Review

Making Progress on Environmental Sustainability

(<http://www.undp.org/fssd/docs/mdg7english.pdf>)

Sustainable Building and Construction in the Arab Region

(<http://www.unep.org/bh/Publications/DTIE%20Final/last%20English%20%20sbc.pdf>)

The Environment, Resource Pressures, and Human Security in the Arab Countries

(<http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/contents/2009/ch2-e.pdf>)

Arab Forum for Environment and Development

(<http://www.afedonline.org/en/inner.aspx?contentID=333>)

2. Assessing waste treatment procedures and recycling efforts that are critical to sustainable development and public health in order to mitigate the effects of industrial and economic growth

What's the Issue?

The treatment of waste and recycling efforts directly affect the environmental sustainability of a country, region and the world. As a society grows through economic and industrial growth, the amount of waste that is produced grows extremely rapidly. The inability to handle the amount of waste products that are produced can often lead to health hazards and the destruction of the local environment. Recycling practices are effective in limiting some of the waste, but the processes are not perfect and can only be used on some substances.

Relevance to the Arab World

The waste produced in the Arab region, especially in large cities, is one of the highest rates in the world. Recent reports by the Arab Foundation for Environment and Development (AFED) estimates that the Arab world produces approximately 250,000 tons of solid waste every day and most of this waste is dumped untreated in makeshift landfills. Moreover, the majority of this waste is not from the civilian population but is produced from construction and development projects. While some recycling processes have been enacted in some countries, the hassle that some types of recycling cause, such as plastic bottle recycling, overwhelms the positives of the process. Overall, less than 5% of all waste is recycled in the Arab world

Questions to Consider -- from your nation's unique perspective

- What types of waste treatment and recycling processes occur in my country? How are these effective in dealing with the waste produced by my country?
- What is the specific impact of wastewater? Of e-waste? How are these types of waste treated?
- How have other regions and nations made progress towards reducing waste and treating the waste that is produced?
- How does education affect the attitudes towards waste treatment and recycling in the Arab world? How is this carried out?
- Is there legislation to regulate waste treatment and recycling processes? Should there be? Should it be left to individual countries or the Arab League as a whole?

Resources to Review

Arab Forum for Environment and Development

(<http://www.afedonline.org/en/inner.aspx?contentID=333>)

Sound & Integrated Solid Waste Management In The Arab Redion

(<http://publications.ksu.edu.sa/Conferences/Solid%20Waste%20Managment%20Conference/Article023.doc>)

Arab Environment: Future Challenges (Chapter 8)

(<http://www.afedonline.org/afedreport/Full%20English%20Report.pdf>)

3. Considering new and emerging technologies, such as desalination, advanced irrigation techniques, and rainwater capture, for increasing fresh water supplies in the region with special attention paid to their environmental impact, the transfer of technology, and the distribution of water resources

What's the Issue?

Water resources, especially freshwater resources, are slowly being used and the problem of water scarcity is getting worse as cities and populations grow, and the needs for water increase in agriculture, industry and households. As water is a basic need for life, it is essential that every human being have access to water and that extortion does not take place in their need for water. Currently, many technologies are being developed and used to create more and larger resources, in order to ensure that everyone has resources for water. Desalination, irrigation and rainwater capture are all techniques that are used, but the impact of these processes on the environment is also of concern, as is the equal distribution of the water that is obtained.

Relevance to the Arab World

Over 85% of the Arab World is considered to be arid and most of this area receives an average of rainfall of 18mm/year and 827mm/year. With a large population growth rate, one of the highest in the world, the Arab region faces a crisis of lack of water for individuals. Desalination provides one way for the Arab states, many of which have access to salt water resources, to create freshwater resources, yet key issues are the concentrate and chemical discharges to the marine environment, the emissions of air pollutants and the energy demand of the processes. Advanced irrigation techniques are also used to reroute water to agricultural areas, especially in the North African region, but some of these irrigation techniques seriously impact that natural land environment, often in a negative manner.

Questions to Consider -- from your nation's unique perspective

- What types of technology are used to increase water supplies in my country? Are they effective?
- Which organizations, committees, forums and funds are used to develop these technologies and others?
- What is the environmental impact of these new technologies in my country and the region?
- How is water access and availability allocated? Is there any legislation to regulate equal access to water?
- How is information on technological development disseminated? Is it effective?

Resources to Review

Arab Environment: Future Challenges (Chapter 5)

(<http://www.afedonline.org/afedreport/Full%20English%20Report.pdf>)

Status of Water MDGs Achievement in the Arab Region

(<http://portal.worldwaterforum5.org/wwf5/en-us/worldregions/MENA%20Arab%20region/Consultation%20Library/MDGs%20Achievement%20Status%20in%20the%20Arab%20Region.pdf>)

4. Exploring an Arab League-wide policy on the peaceful and ecologically sound uses of nuclear energy under accepted international guidelines and guarantees such as those under the International Atomic Energy Agency

What's the Issue?

There are many benefits to nuclear energy, despite the negative reputation due to the recent push for nuclear weapons by countries such as Iran and North Korea. Nuclear energy is clean as it produces no greenhouse emissions and it reduces dependence upon fossil fuels, such as oil which are slowly being depleted. International guidelines have been established to ensure that nuclear energy is used for civilian purposes and not for uranium enrichment, a precursor to nuclear weapons. The International Atomic Energy Agency and the Non-Proliferation Treaty are two of the most important regulatory efforts in nuclear energy.

Relevance to the Arab World

There has been a recent push in the Arab region to obtain nuclear energy, led by nations in the Gulf Cooperation Council. Benefits specific to the Arab states as a result of nuclear power include powering water desalination plants, diversifying their energy industry in the face of increasing energy demands, and furthering economic and scientific development. With this new push for nuclear energy raises concerns over the safety of the region as uranium enrichment facilities, which are required for nuclear power, are developed. While the region agrees that the need for nuclear power is legitimate, its approaches to ensure safety of the region and the prevention of nuclear weapons is varied. The main question is how to ensure the Arab League ensures the safety of its member states while also promoting the development of peaceful nuclear technology.

Questions to Consider -- *from your nation's unique perspective*

- What is my country's status in the development of peaceful nuclear energy?
- What is the possible environmental impact in my country and the region from nuclear energy?
- What legislation has been created to ensure the safety of nuclear energy in my country?
- What types of bodies are available for the sharing of technology, safety information and resources for nuclear energy?
- Should the Arab League pursue a regulation or policy on nuclear energy above and beyond international treaty? If so, how would it be developed?

Resources to Review

Non-Proliferation Treaty (http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Nuclear/pdf/NPTEnglish_Text.pdf)

International Atomic Energy Agency: International Conventions and Agreements
(<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Documents/Conventions/index.html>)