



## **2009 - 2010 Model Arab League**

### **BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**Council of Arab Environmental Affairs Ministers**

**ALL Regional Model Arab Leagues**

(i.e., not the National University or National High School MAL, Spring '10, in Washington, DC)

**[www.ncusar.org/modelarableague](http://www.ncusar.org/modelarableague)**

National  
Council  
on US-  
Arab  
Relations



## **1. Addressing alternative energy development opportunities for member states in a changing energy market and a post-hydro carbon world**

### **What's the Issue?**

Developing alternative energy sources is imperative for the world at large in order to have different areas of resources upon which to depend. Over 85% of the energy used today comes from non-renewable energy sources such as oil and natural gas. Renewable energy resources, such as solar energy, wind energy and geothermal energy, are being used more and more, there is still a large reliance upon fossil fuels because the availability of these alternative energy sources is scarce.

### **Relevance to the Arab World**

Over 60% of the world's oil reserves are located in the Middle East. While this has brought prosperity to many countries in the area, the resources are being exploited at a large rate which will eventually cause the reserves to run dry. Moreover, the production, distribution and use of fossil fuels are known to cause pollution and to disrupt animal, bird and fish populations, which are becoming an ever-increasing concern in the global community. With such a reliance upon fossil fuels and the large profit that comes along, some countries are unwilling to diversify their energy sources. Yet with a climate that is ripe for the harvesting of wind and solar energy, the Arab States have a chance to become the leaders in developing many different alternative energy resources.

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

- What steps has the League of Arab States, and specifically my country, taken in developing renewable energy resources?
- What resources are available in my country that are being used for energy sources?
- How is economic development impacting the energy sources currently available and those being developed?
- What is the impact of current energy sources upon the environment and the sustainability of the environment?
- What incentives can be given to promote the development of renewable energy in the Arab World?

### **Resources to Review**

#### **Energy in the Arab Region: The Need for Sustainable Development.**

(<http://www.energyandenvironment.undp.org/undp/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1626>)

#### **Arab Environment Watch: The Middle East embracing renewable energy.**

(<http://www.arabenvironment.net/archive/2009/8/919259.html>)

#### **Energy Projects: Arab States Region**

(<http://www.undp.org/energy/projects/arab.htm>)

## **2. 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>)

### **3. 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>)