EMR-SDG Learning Platform

In Collaboration with

League of Arab States Directorate for Sustainable Development and

International Cooperation

Organizes

Webinar on Policies Needed to Support Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into consideration the many current challenges in the Arab Region

Thursday 15 October 2020, 12:00 – 13:30 Cairo time (10:00 – 11:30 UTC)

The global 2030 sustainable development agenda is facing a critical turning point. The whole scope of the negative economic and social implications of Covid-19 is not totally grasped yet. Governments all over the world are currently scrambling to contain the pandemic and to minimize the devastating impacts of rising unemployment and contracted economies. Meanwhile, the world cannot afford to neglect the potential long-term implications of this crisis, especially its impact on the 2030 agenda trajectory.

It is of special note that the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner, admitted the unique challenges posed by this new crisis, declaring that: "The world has seen many crises over the past 30 years, including the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-09. Each has hit human development hard but, overall, development gains accrued globally year-on-year. COVID-19, with its triple hit to health, education, and income, may change this trend."

For the Arab states, Covid-19 pandemic is coming at the end of a decade of widespread civil unrest, political instability, security challenges, and economic disruptions, putting several countries in the region at an especially precarious position. These previous vulnerabilities make countries unable to face the new challenges posed by Covid-19 and further curtail their potential to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Even the Arab countries that were spared the political upheavals of the 2010s and could remarkably advance in achieving the SDGs are now facing the challenges of the covid-19 crisis. This new challenge is threatening their advance along the sustainable development trajectory as it stresses resources, redirects investments, and realigns developmental priorities. Setbacks become an eminent threat as resources being depleted due to high economic dependency on international trade and strong integration within the global economy.

EMR-SDGs Learning Platform has recently issued a regional report on "The Status of Health-Related SDGs in Selected Arab Countries" ([Click Here](#)), highlighting the regional differentials, with a focus on the special challenges faced by countries in conflict and crisis situations. This report enables the documentation of the SDGs achievement status before the pandemic. It also introduces a set of policy recommendations to enhance the path to achieving the SDGs.

In face of this unique challenge, and in response to the hopes and ambitions of the people in the Arab region, this webinar aims at posing necessary questions and seeking innovative answers. The ultimate goal is to support achieving the sustainable development agenda and its promise of leaving no one behind.

Objectives

1. Identifying policy options available to the Arab states in facing the challenges posed by the covid-19 pandemic, taking into considerations concurrent challenges in the region.

2. Documenting the status of SDGs achievement in the Arab states before the covid-19 crisis, with a focus on regional differentials, especially the situation in countries facing conflict and other crises. This situation analysis helps set the context for exploring ways to avoid any potential setbacks resulting from this new challenge.

These two objectives are achieved through a keynote address by a high-level policy leader answering a number of questions that could guide future policy directions, such as:

   a. What are the efforts to assess the long-term consequences of the pandemic and to develop policies to mitigate these consequences?
   b. Is there a review of priorities? Why and how?
   c. What are the lessons learnt and how do they affect existing national sustainable development strategies?

The keynote address will be followed by a presentation of the new report on the status of achieving health-related SDGs in the Arab region.

Afterwards, a general discussion will aim at generating concrete ideas on how to develop proper policies and interventions to help restore the path to achieving the 2030 sustainable development agenda and support its promise. The discussion will start with interventions from two distinguished regional experts, including a director of a regional organization and a prominent academician in addition to questions and comments from the general audience.

Moderator

Hoda Rashad – Director, Social Research Center, American University in Cairo.

Keynote Speaker

Nada Al-Agizy – Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, League of Arab States

Author of Regional Report

Rajae El-Aouda – Member of Hassan II Academy of Science and Technology and Chairperson, Health Equity Committee, Morocco

Invited Distinguished Interventions

Ibrahim AlBadawey – Director of Economic Research Forum, Ex – Minister of Finance and Economic Planning – Sudan

Iman Nuwayhhid – Professor, Ex- Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut (AUB)

Format

The keynote speaker will start the webinar followed by the presentation of the regional report, with each speaker allowed 15 minutes. Afterwards, the floor will be given to the invited experts and for questions and comments from the general audience, followed by responses from the speakers. The event will be recorded and afterward posted on the EMR-SDG Learning Platform website (https://emrsdgslearn.net) and later on the platform of the Arab Science and Technology Network for Sustainable Development.

Post-webinar further comments and contributions will be allowed on the two platforms, benefiting from the wide audience and expertise. This continuing discussion aims at encouraging multi-stakeholder engagement and sharing.

Language

Use of either English or Arabic language is left to the speaker's choice. No translation will be provided during the webinar but the virtual page, mentioned above, will include translations of the interventions.

Participation

This is an open webinar. To participate, please register on <Click Here> after registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.