

# CONCLUSION



Since early 2011, the Arab region has been experiencing political turmoil that is expected to have far-reaching repercussions on sustainable development and on the transition to a green economy. AFED ninth annual report concludes that implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Arab countries cannot be done in isolation from the state of conflict in the region.

More than 10 of the 22 Arab countries are either under occupation or experiencing war or conflict, tens of millions of people are refugees or internally displaced, and many people lack basic needs and rights at various levels. Almost all Arab countries are experiencing or are adjacent to countries experiencing significant instability, which undermines the potential advantages of regional cooperation and the critical role it can play in enhancing the implementation of national development goals.

Even if cessation of all conflicts and wars can be realized immediately, the Arab region cannot achieve the SDGs by 2030 using traditional methods. Those Arab countries that have experienced severe damage and deep disarray in physical and social infrastructure over the past years, have largely decimated the prospects even for re-establishing the status quo prevailing in 2010, let alone achieving the SDGs by 2030.

AFED ninth annual report recommends an alternative approach, based on integrating principles of sustainable development within the anticipated rebuilding efforts. The report calls upon local, regional, and international aid organizations not to limit their efforts to providing safety and basic necessities to those affected, but to use the relief plans as launch pad for promoting new approaches to development, rooted in a transition to green economy.

The report further calls upon national and regional development funds and finance institutions to direct their support to projects which help realize the sustainable development goals and targets, both at the public and private sectors levels.

Boosting the prospects of making steady progress towards the SDGs in the Arab countries will depend, largely, on adopting national development strategies with full recognition of the inseparable links between the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, including giving due consideration to unlocking the developmental benefits of cooperation and regional integration. Arab conflict countries, however, need to exert extraordinary concentrated efforts for peace building and restoration of political stability in order to establish a post-conflict environment conducive to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs.

A change in the mindset and culture of designing strategies, policies, plans and programs, and their monitoring and assessment, is essential if Arab countries are to achieve sustainable development and address the major challenge of water scarcity and aridity, aggravated by climate change. This can be best achieved by embracing the water-food-energy nexus approach. Adopting an integrated methodology to policy making is a necessary requirement for achieving sustainable development. This should be supported by a package of regulatory and market-based measures, including fiscal and tax systems which promote mobilization of domestic resources and better consumption and production practices, in addition to revamping subsidies to put price on natural capital and boost efficiency.

AFED report recommends greening the financial system to promote investment in human capital, natural capital, and adequate infrastructure. This includes creating the suitable conditions to attract private sector investment in a direction which helps achieve the SDGs. Arab countries can attract more funding from development financing institutions by orienting their development strategies towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and setting their priorities accordingly in a sequenced manner, based on well-prepared and feasible development operations and projects. However, adopting a transparent, accountable, and participatory approach is a necessary requirement for achieving this end.