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PRESS RELEASE

# Middle East & North Africa Countries Agree 14-points to Tackle Climate Change

GENEVA, Switzerland – 29 May 2015: Fourteen recommendations to improve the regional response to climate change have been agreed to following a meeting of the Middle East and North Africa region, held in Geneva, Switzerland on 28-29 2015, and hosted by Lebanon. The meeting, gathering eleven countries from the Middle East and North Africa region, was the last in a series of Climate Vulnerable Forum workshops being convened during 2014-2015 in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, and involving 50 countries.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum regional event for the Middle East and North Africa was organized by the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations at Geneva and the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 11 governments participated in the event, with 14 recommendations adopted by Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen.

The fourteen recommendations aimed at stimulating national, regional and global advances stemmed from the event's review of challenges, gaps and success stories in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's experience in dealing with climate change:

1. Address climate change adaptation as a priority since MENA is a region that is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, specifically in terms of water, food production, drought and slow-onset events including sea-level rise and desertification.
2. Acknowledge that climate change exacerbates existing environmental, economic, social and security challenges and increases competition over already scarce natural resources.
3. Highlight the efforts undertaken by the countries of the region in mitigation and adaptation and stressing the need to provide appropriate means of implementation to unlock the potential of the region and complement existing national actions.

## CLIMATE VULNERABLE FORUM

AFGHANISTAN  
BANGLADESH  
BARBADOS  
BHUTAN  
COSTA RICA  
ETHIOPIA  
GHANA  
KENYA  
KIRIBATI  
MADAGASCAR  
MALDIVES  
NEPAL  
PHILIPPINES  
RWANDA  
SAINT LUCIA  
TANZANIA  
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4. Account for the special needs of the region and its population in climate change responses, in particular people living under military foreign occupation and highlight the importance of empowering full control over their natural resources, and further acknowledging other underlying factors adding to the vulnerability of populations of the region.
5. Develop needs assessments for adaptation and mitigation, in particular for the development and implementation of national adaptation plans and disaster risk reduction responses.
6. Ensure the transfer of the latest technologies on preferential and concessional terms enabling adaptation and mitigation, especially in the areas of land and water management, agricultural production, coastal and marine protection, drought management and health, in addition to energy in the industrial and transport sectors, and renewable energy.
7. Harness the region's abundant, largely untapped resources of renewable energy, in particular solar energy, to serve countries inside and adjacent to MENA.
8. Scale-up international finance targeting adaptation in particular for the implementation of the urgent concrete activities and projects of the region, taking into consideration the existing and short-term challenges and limited financial resources of the MENA region.
9. Improve access to international climate finance that is free of conditionalities such as co-financing requirements, while ensuring its adequacy, sustainability and predictability, and highlighting the principal role of public finance.
10. Encourage the engagement of the private sector in support of MENA climate action, including through public-private partnerships.
11. Highlight the expected role of multi-lateral funding entities, in particular the Green Climate Fund, in supporting MENA region countries both on adaptation and mitigation.
12. Ensure North-South transfer of technical know-how and knowledge through joint research on climate change, most specifically for prediction models to assess future climate change impacts on the region, and taking full advantage of intergovernmental information networks, among others, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).
13. Enhance institutional capacity, and legal and institutional structures to support the proper implementation of adaptation and mitigation activities.
14. Promote greater regional cooperation and collaboration including through regionally shaped responses to national climate change challenges, and the exchange of best practices in adaptation and mitigation across the region to harness existing knowledge South-South, in particular through the development and promotion of scientific networks within MENA.

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Speaking at the opening session of the regional event, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Lebanon, H.E. Mrs. Najla Riachi Assaker said: "Climate change is an important issue for MENA because of geographical vulnerabilities, growing heat and water stress, heavy reliance on import of food stuffs, and transnational concerns such as migration, displacement and security. We will make sure that our views are effectively transmitted forward to the further efforts of the Climate Vulnerable Forum to advocate at the global level on behalf of developing countries vulnerable to climate change irrespective of region or other traits."

Also speaking at the opening session of the Forum, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany, H.E. Mr. Thomas Fitschen commented that: "We see the type of South-South collaboration being pioneered by the Climate Vulnerable Forum in the climate domain as a vital complement to more traditional forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in a fast changing world. These regional workshops are gradually forming an up-to-date global picture of the key priorities for climate vulnerable countries of any region. This is especially important in 2015 in light of the Paris climate conference this December, where we will need to move from a negotiating text with lots of options reflecting the many differences of parties, to one single, final text reflecting an international consensus. Any efforts helping to identify areas of common ground for wider groups of countries will help."

Mr. Ross Mountain, Lebanon United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme Resident said that: "The work of this Forum is really vital because we simply must hear from the countries most affected by this global challenge. If their views and perspectives are not coming out in public debate, in research and policy priorities, than we are almost certainly not meeting the needs of the communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As we have also seen with so many vulnerable countries, there is a tremendous amount that is being done already to respond to the challenge. But we don't hear enough about that. By spotlighting these efforts and enabling success stories reach more countries is key. This is not an academic issue: we are living it. And we must pay this problematic more attention, because it is impossible that it is not also having some influence in the course of security crises and for the stability of states in the region that attracts so much attention and resources from the international system." The regional event is the Middle East and North Africa input to a global consultation of the CVF being held in June 2015 where the conclusions of all Climate Vulnerable Forum regional meetings will be reviewed together to inform the Forum's forward communications and activities.

Participating countries from the Middle East and North Africa included: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen and Qatar. The event also included a range of observer countries, international organizations and civil society representatives that took part in the open sessions of the event. Presentations and inputs to the Workshop were given by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent societies (IFRC), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the Norwegian Refugee Centre (NRC), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), and UNDP's Regional Centre for Arab States and Lebanon Office. ENDS

