



## Arab Climate Resilience Initiative Launch Event

**Rabat, Morocco, 3-5 November, 2010**

Climate change has risen to the forefront of the international policy agenda in recent years and is today seen by many as “the defining human development issue of our generation.”<sup>1</sup> While pockets of skepticism do remain, it has been conclusively documented that there is a very real threat. Global surface temperatures have risen by 0.76 degrees Celsius since 1850,<sup>2</sup> and eleven of the last twelve years have been among the hottest twelve years on record.<sup>3</sup> These global averages are projected to rise by four more degrees by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

In the Arab region, higher temperatures and less rainfall will reduce the flow of already strained water resources and slower aquifer recharge, longer dry seasons and increasing desertification will have a series of potentially devastating effects, particularly on energy and food security. Agricultural yields, especially in rain-fed areas, are expected to fluctuate more over time, and to stabilize at lower averages over the long-term. Climate change is also expected to increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions and related disasters, leading to more severe droughts, floods, hurricanes and dust storms. Furthermore, the impacts of sea-level rise will have serious consequences for the region’s coastlines and low-lying deltas, and will be particularly crucial for the small-island states, as well as the natural and man-made islands of the Gulf. Storm surges and saltwater intrusion into fresh water supplies are likely to lead to severe land degradation and biodiversity loss, undermining rural livelihoods, accelerating migration into urban areas, and thus potentially straining the provision of adequate infrastructure and public services. Increasing sea-surface temperatures, growing acidification of surface waters, and coastline erosion would furthermore negatively impact coastal ecosystems and infrastructure.

In light of these key climate challenges, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States is currently undertaking a broad reaching Climate Resilience Initiative to support and galvanize regional governmental partners to formulate a concrete response and to identify key policy priorities. Through this initiative, UNDP-RBAS seeks to both deepen an understanding of climate change and to build resolve to address it through an integrated, cross-sectoral approach that facilitates adaptation to ongoing and future impacts, whilst furthering gains in human development and expanding economic growth.

Experience has shown that for such an initiative to be relevant and achieve maximum impact, it must be based on extensive, bottom-up consultation with regional stakeholders and deep engagement from regional governments. As delegates prepare for the COP16 negotiations in Cancun later this year, UNDP-RBAS is moving forward with this consultative process across the region in the form of three thematic meetings, which will culminate in a high-level event from 3-5, November, hosted by the government of Morocco. This event will bring together regional and global experts, media personalities and opinion leaders, representatives from bi-lateral and regional cooperation agencies, and groups of high-level policymakers and national representatives to both stimulate climate policy dialogue and identify key governmental commitments.

To foster a shared sense of cooperation and build momentum towards the launch event, the consultative meetings will be structured as a forum for knowledge-sharing among national representatives and world-class experts and specialists within the field. These meetings will deepen technical, institutional, and policy perspectives around the following climate change themes:

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP (2008). Human Development Report 2007/2008. Fighting Climate Change. Human Solidarity in a Divided World.

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007). Fourth Assessment Report.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

## UNDP-RBAS Climate Resilience Initiative

- **Water scarcity, drought and desertification** (Damascus, Syria, 15-16 September)
- **Sea level rise and coastal erosion** (Cairo, Egypt, 20-21 September)
- **Sustainable energy and energy efficient paths to growth** (Bahrain, 6-7 October)

High-level representatives from each of these consultations will subsequently present the outcomes of these meetings on the first day of the launch event, as well as facilitate the review and synthesis of specific national priorities and policy options. The second day of the event will provide a platform for ministers and key regional institutions to validate these outcomes and concretely coordinate their positions and action plans.

The process described above is the most extensive and wide-ranging consultation process on climate change issues currently taking place in the Arab region. It is designed taking into account that all stakeholders need to be involved in order to identify, develop and implement an Arab Climate Resilience initiative that would stand a chance of success.

While bringing together technical experts and advocates increases the knowledge and awareness of the challenges the Arab region faces due to climate change it will be necessary to include governments and policy makers at the highest level to translate this knowledge and awareness into policy change.

The Arab Climate Resilience Initiative Launch Event taking place in Rabat, Morocco on 3-5 November will bring together experts, advocates and policy makers in order to propose a regional vision of climate resilient development in the Arab world.

On the third day of the high-level event, a Knowledge Fair will take place for government and private sector entities in the region with exhibitions of climate change related measures in adaptation and mitigation. Countries from outside the region will also be invited to share their experience and undertakings. This Knowledge Fair will provide a key opportunity to:

- Showcase pioneering undertakings, know-how, best practices and solutions from/for the region
- Demonstrate new technology, products and services
- Provide opportunities for inter-region and inter-country collaboration
- Meet and network with potential service providers

**AGENDA (draft)**

**DAY 1: 3 November, 2010 – High-level Expert Section**

8:30-9:30	<b>REGISTRATION</b>
9:30-10:30	<p><b>Opening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary film presentation</li> <li>• Ministry of Land Management, Water &amp; Environment, Morocco</li> <li>• Context, Strategic Process and Objectives of the <i>Arab Climate Resilience Initiative</i>, UNDP</li> <li>• Launch Event Overview, Government of Morocco</li> <li>• Synthesis of regional consultations and summary of the platform for the Regional Vision of climate resilient development in the Arab world</li> </ul>
10:30-11:00	<b>BREAK</b>
11:00-12:30	<p><b>Panel 1: Water Scarcity, Drought, Population Mobility and Socioeconomic Impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson – Damascus consultative meeting:</li> <li>• Expert Discussant:</li> </ul>
12:30-2:00	<p><b>Panel 2: Sea-level Rise, Coastal Erosion and Human Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson – Cairo consultative meeting:</li> <li>• Expert Discussant:</li> </ul>
2:00-3:30	<b>LUNCH</b>
3:30-5:00	<p><b>Panel 3: Sustainable Energy: Resources, Challenges and Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson – Bahrain consultative meeting</li> <li>• Expert Discussant:</li> </ul>
5:00-5:30	<b>BREAK</b>
5:30-7:00	<p><b>Panel 4: Territorial Approach and Climate Change Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson – Morocco</li> <li>• Discussant: Expert analyst</li> </ul>
7:00-9:30	<p><b>Meeting of the Review Board on the platform for the Regional Vision of Climate Resilient Development in the Arab world</b></p>

**DAY 2: 4 November, 2010 – Continuation of High-Level Expert Section and Ministerial Section**

	<p><b>Continuation of High-Level Expert Section</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the platform for the Regional Vision</li> <li>• Discussion of Outcomes</li> </ul>
	<b>BREAK</b>
	<b>Discussion: Mechanisms of Coordination for the Arab Position at COP16</b>
	<b>LUNCH</b>
	<p><b>Ministerial Segment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening:</li> <li>• Presentation of the platform for the Regional Vision</li> <li>• Discussion and Validation of the platform by:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ministerial speeches</li> <li>○ League of Arab States</li> <li>○ UNDP</li> <li>○ Main partners for cooperation (ABfD, WB, EU, etc)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**DAY 3: 5 November, 2010 - Knowledge Fair and Site Visit**

<b>9:00-12:30</b>	<b>Knowledge Fair</b>
<b>2:00-5:00</b>	<b>Departure to Local Site Demonstration</b>