

Adaptation Committee: Boosting region-wide coherence on adaptation – Middle East and North Africa Region

**Middle East and North Africa Climate Week
8 October 2023
Boulevard Riyadh City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

Informal summary report

I. Background

The [Adaptation Committee \(AC\)](#) is the leading body under the United Nations providing coherence and guidance on adaptation, promoting synergy and strengthening engagement with national, regional and international organizations, centres and networks. At COP 27, the COP and CMA encouraged the AC to organize regional events and knowledge dialogues.

In 2023, the AC, consistent with its flexible three-year work plan and mandates is working towards launching longer-term work aimed at enhancing coherence across the intergovernmental architecture with the goal of supporting more ambitious worldwide adaptation action and collaboration. A number of specific activities are planned by the AC to this end, culminating in the 2023 Adaptation Forum. As part of this global endeavour, and responding the above mandate, the AC aims to foster synergies among multi-country and transboundary initiatives in line with global efforts by advancing modalities for regional cooperation.

The [AC meeting at the Middle East and North Africa \(MENA\) Climate Week](#) was the third in the series of the regional engagement events, which aim to foster an exchange with the key regional actors on region-wide and transboundary solutions, good practices, initiatives, priorities and needs, as well as to establish a long-term channel of information between the AC and relevant organizations and programme partners.

The meeting was complemented with a survey¹ on existing region-wide and multi-country adaptation initiatives and support opportunities, which was disseminated through relevant networks and the event participants.

The findings from this regional workshop, including those from the survey, will feed into the 2024 Adaptation Forum (tentatively March 2024, back-to-back with the 25th meeting of the AC), and key organizations that contributed to the workshops will be essential partners in the longer-term work that will be discussed at the Forum.

¹ The AC launched a survey supported by the secretariat for each region, inviting organizations to share their region-wide, transboundary, and multi-country activities and suggestions for enhanced collaboration. The surveys were widely disseminated before and during the workshops and made available on the web pages of the respective workshops.

II. Objectives

The objective of the meeting was to foster coherence and a collaborative approach towards region-wide and transboundary adaptation action and support, by bringing together and facilitating an exchange among regional organizations, development banks, and other key stakeholders for working together to step up adaptation in the region. The meeting was attended by over 90 participants representing various multilateral and regional agencies, as well as national governments.

The meeting served as a platform to deepen participants' understanding of the challenges and opportunities in advancing the coherent implementation of adaptation action towards a resilient future.

III. Agenda

8 OCTOBER 9 – 18:00

- 9:00-9:30 **Welcome, opening remarks and expected outcomes of the meeting**
Carlos Ruiz Garvia, Team Lead, Adaptation Division, UNFCCC
Setting scene: The science
Ermira Fida, Deputy Executive Secretary, IPCC Secretariat
- 9:30-10:30 **What are the adaptation priorities in the area, and which multi-country and region-wide adaptation solutions and projects exist?**
Presentations:
- **Mr. Kishan Khoday**, UNDP Regional Team Leader - Environment Practice
 - **Ms. Theresa Wong**, Natural Resources Officer (Climate Change), FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa - Team Leader, Greening Agriculture
 - **Ms. Jyotsna Puri**, IFAD Associate Vice President
- 10:30-11:00 **Coffee break**
- 11:00-12:00 **What are the existing windows of support for regional action on adaptation?**
Presentations:
- **Mr. Syed Adeel Abbas**, World Bank Climate Coordinator for the MENA region
 - **Mr. Amgad Elmahdi**, GCF Water Sector Senior Specialist
- 12:00-13:00 **Exploring the landscape of adaptation action and support: understanding and leveraging available resources and success stories. Presentation and discussion:**
Are there any regional or transboundary adaptation projects and support opportunities that were not mentioned?

What are examples of successful inter-agency or multistakeholder regional projects? What were the keys to success and how can these strategies be replicated?

What are the existing resources for collaboration, and how can they be leveraged to scale up adaptation regionally?

Presentations

- **Dr. Tarek Sadek**, UNESCWA First Economic Affairs Officer (Water and Climate) Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies - Lebanon
- **Mr. Omar Farook**, WFP Regional Policy Specialist - Anticipatory Action, Climate Services & Climate Security
- **Dr. Mahamadou Tounkara**, GGGI Regional director MENA

13:00-14:00

Lunch break

14:00-15:00

Identifying the remaining gaps and needs

What are the region-wide and/or transboundary adaptation gaps and needs that are not met by existing efforts?

What can be done to fill those gaps, and by whom?

15:00-15:30

Recognizing opportunities for strengthening coherent implementation and support

Are there any areas that could benefit from further cooperation to increase efficiency?

How can synergies be enhanced in these areas?

15:30-16:00

Coffee break

16:00-17:00

Co-designing solutions aligned with global efforts

What [additional] modalities for collaboration can be suggested?

What are good examples of joint adaptation projects in other regions or scales that could be replicated in the MENA region?

What are good examples of collaboration in other areas that could be replicated in the adaptation space?

What other solutions can be implemented?

How do regional adaptation efforts align with global processes and directives (e.g. UNFCCC process [GGA, GST, etc.], funds and development banks global strategies, other multilateral processes [e.g. CBD, UNCCD, etc.]?).

How can these links be strengthened for increased coherence and efficiency?

17:00-17:30	Next steps
	<i>What are the next steps that participating organizations and stakeholders can take to strengthen coherent implementation and collaboration?</i>
	<i>What are the next steps for the Adaptation Committee to support this?</i>
17:30-18:00	Closing

IV. Highlights from the discussion

Setting the scene

The event was moderated by Haya Aseer from the Global Council on SDG13 and Roula Majdalani from the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). The event started with an overview of the work of the Adaptation Committee and the objectives of the meeting. This was followed by a scene-setting presentation by the IPCC on the main impacts of climate change, also for the MENA region from the Sixth Assessment Report, which include an increase of hot extremes, increase of heavy precipitation and people expose to coastal flooding. Furthermore, it was prompted to the urgency of acting to limit negative impacts of climate change on every inhabited region of the world. Progress on adaptation in slow and measures are fragmental, unequally distributed across regions. Adaptation measures opportunities are not being leveraged. Key risks from climate change in the MENA region emphasized by the presentations included displacement and conflict, water scarcity, food security, urban and critical infrastructure, networks and services.

Featured region-wide and transboundary actions/activities

Throughout the presentations and discussions, various examples of existing multi-country adaptation projects and support opportunities in the MENA region were highlighted. Some of the activities mentioned were:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — expanding cooperations and financial support of country programming in the Arab region, incl. financial grants of global funds and co-financing from public and private sector partners;
- FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North — Scaling up and documenting climate-smart agriculture (CSA) solutions, incl. providing capacity building;
- International Fund for Agricultural Development — Promoting community-based management, like for example promoting a rotational grazing and pasture infrastructure for the benefit of pasture user unions. Also supporting to improving afforestation and terracing with remote sensing in Türkiye. Looking at cross-border ecosystem services.
- Green Climate Fund, bringing successful programmes from other (subregions) like the South Africa water reuse programme, with the objective to mobilize resources to scale up water reuse in an effective, efficient, equitable, sustainable and financially viable manner.

Some more available supporting windows that were highlighted included:

- The World Bank, MENA climate roadmap with cross sectoral considerations, incl. private sector engagement and with regional integration

- FAO, strengthening policies and coordination of agriculture-food systems and climate change for example making it available through the Nationally Determined Contributions' reporting system.
- Green Climate Fund, paradigm shifting pathways water security SDG 6 meets SDG13, treating (any) water asset as a new asset class, maintaining it as a public, which is bankable and affordable.

Some initiatives or paths to leveraging available resources and success stories:

- UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) - MENA Regional Adaptation Projects through phase II of the Lima Adaptation Knowledge initiative, implementing a project to understand long-term climate data into crop simulation models to identify climate smart options as one of the main approaches to identify context-specific best climate adaptation options (CBCAO);
- World Food Programme (WFP), providing financial protection for communities, for example, through climate insurance solutions for smallholders and microcredits for adaptation investments;
- Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) Scaling-up climate-resilient Agriculture and Food-systems transformation for Economic development (SAFE) public-private partnerships initiative centered around People, Adaptation, Sustainability, Partnerships, and Prosperity in both African and Middle Eastern countries.

Adaptation priorities, gaps and needs

The discussions allowed the identification of key adaptation priorities in the region. Participants underscored the following areas:

- Agriculture
- Food security
- Water management
- Knowledge in the Arabic language/Less technical scientific language
- Limited data, which does not allow for a holistic adaptation planning

On the other hand, gaps and needs highlighted by participants for the MENA region included:

- Lack of transboundary legal frameworks
- Community-based financing and approaches
- Financial, capacity, technology and data gaps;
- Need to strengthen interagency collaboration and a common information platform;
- Need to understand the concepts of negative vs positive peace in the context of adaptation, since it entails transformation (for example, equitable support to different groups when designing climate adaptation strategies);
- Need to understand and address local differences first to be able to identify general adaptation policies for the urban context at regional level.

Opportunities for collaboration and enhanced synergies

The meeting shed light on key enablers, success factors and opportunities for enhanced synergies on adaptation, such as:

- Political will and leadership across nations for the benefit of the region;
- Multistakeholder partnerships;

- Local ownership of projects by making sure they respond to local needs and priorities and are implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner;
- Development of institutional capacities, incl. at subnational levels;
- Peer-to-peer learning mechanisms on a common topic;

Participants suggested areas for transboundary and regional adaptation activities, including:

- Creating a common platform for universally applicable greening solutions;
- Assessing vulnerabilities in urban sectors;
- Understanding the importance digital solutions for gender integration;
- Setting up data-sharing schemes, including on best practices.

Furthermore, participants shared proposals to enhance collaboration, for example:

- Harmonizing/Democratizing National Adaptation Plans, so that also local governments have a voice/vote allowing for better region-wider oriented policies;
- Expand the accessibility of existing resources and social capital;
- Adaptation solutions should be tackled from a multi-hazard approach.

V. Outcomes and suggestions for future work by the Adaptation Committee

The meeting helped participants to better understand the landscape of adaptation in the MENA region, as well as to identify opportunities to strengthen collaboration and the coherent implementation of adaptation policies and entry points for consideration when thinking cross-boundary.

The ideas shared in the meeting will feed into the longer-term work stemming from the Adaptation Forum. Furthermore, participants were encouraged to engage directly in this global effort.

As a last step, participants were consulted on how the AC could further support the building of regional synergies on adaptation. Besides continuing to provide spaces for different stakeholders to discuss ways of working together on adaptation, the AC was encouraged to:

- Further encourage all regions to share their knowledge, in particular from those with similar challenging geographical and socio-economic conditions ;
- Share best and also challenging practices from different contexts that can be scaled up and/or improved in a transboundary collaboration effort;
- Facilitate partnerships;
- Advocate for more streamlined adaptation reporting procedures and processes to access resources from multilateral funds.
- To further look into region-wide urban (mal)adaptation and how to tackle potential challenges when developing a holistic adaptation plan.

These suggestions will be duly considered by AC members going forward.

