

# Trade and Environment Decision-Making in the Arab Region



United Nations  
Economic & Social Commission for Western Asia

## Trade & Environment Decision-Making: A Multi-Sectoral Process

Process thus requires:

1. **Access to information** – within government & for civil society
  2. **Coordination between ministries**
  3. **Dialogue** – open lines of communication
  4. **Definition of national interests**
  5. **Priority Setting**
  6. **Policy Analysis**
  7. **Consultation**
  8. **Decision-Making**
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Necessitates the creation of effective mechanisms or institutions to inform and facilitate the integrated policy-making and decision-making process

## Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development

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### Institutional Framework

“The Arab Initiative aims at supporting and enhancing the **institutional framework** in Arab countries in the field of sustainable development, including the development and implementation of the necessary policies and legislations.”

## The Arab Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

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### Governance

- “**Development of institutions** in the Arab Region and support their activities at the **national** and **regional** levels...to ensure the **proper planning and implementation** of sustainable development programmes.
- “Strengthening partnership with **civil society** and private sector to widen the base for the decision-making process related to sustainable development”

## Regional Approaches: League of Arab States (LAS)

- **CAMRE** - Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment
- **JCEDAR** – Joint Commission on Environment and Development in the Arab Region
- Established a **Joint Secretariat** consisting of:
  - Technical Secretariat of CAMRE
  - UNEP-Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA)
  - ESCWA - Coordinates Arab Regional Program on Trade & Environment Capacity Building
- **The resulting Arab Initiative:**
  - Calls upon the international community to support the efforts of Arab countries to avoid the negative effects resulting from globalization on the economic, technical, environmental and social level;
  - Seeks to strengthen the competitiveness of Arab commodities and to endeavor to abolish all forms of subsidies, assistance, and barriers imposed.



## Arab Regional Program on Trade & Environment Capacity Building

“CAMRE requests ESCWA and UNEP to coordinate and cooperate with CAMRE to develop a regional program for Arab capacity building on trade and environment issues, especially measures that limit Arab export competitiveness in international markets and that relate to trade negotiations and adjusting to the rules and regulations of the World Trade Organization related to the environment.” (Article 2, point 2)

**CAMRE Resolution 24  
October 2002**



## Priority Areas for Action

### Thematic Areas

- Competitiveness
- Market Access
- Dispute Resolution (including negotiations)

### Skills Development and Training Areas

- Governance
- Enabling institutions
- Negotiations
- Information dissemination
- Private sector development
- Policy analysis



## National Trade & Environment Committees in Arab Region

- **Tunis 2000:** Recommended Arab League Member States to establish inter-disciplinary Committee on Trade and Environment
- Committees have been established, but are still relatively new, lack continuity and effective coordination
- In many cases → not much information available

## National T&E Committees in the Arab Region

Country	<i>Ad hoc?</i>	Public Participation?	Multi-Sectoral?
Egypt	No	Yes	Yes
Jordan	No	Yes	Yes
Kuwait	No	Yes	Yes
Morocco	No	Yes	Yes
Syrian Arab Republic	No	Yes	Yes
Saudi Arabia	No	Yes	Yes
Tunisia	No	Yes	Yes

## National Approach: Kuwait

- Formed a national Trade and Environment Committee in 2002
- Composed of:
  - Kuwait Environment Protection Agency (EPA)
  - Public Authority for Industry
  - Public Customs Authority
  - Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- However, the meetings are not regular and effectively *ad hoc*, while public participation is minimal (so far)

## Input from the Floor

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- Saudi Arabia
  - Jordan
  - Egypt
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## National Approach: Canada

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- **Working Group on Trade and Environment**
    - Recommends on Canada's domestic and international T&E position
    - **Chair: Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee**
    - Partner: Environment Canada
    - **Members:**
      - Agriculture and Agri-Food
      - Canadian International Development Agency
      - Industry Canada
      - Natural Resources
      - Fisheries and Oceans
      - Canadian Food Inspection Agency
      - Health Canada
    - Meets regularly, plus one month prior to CTE meetings to coordinate approaches for discussion and negotiation
    - Public participation
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## National Approach: Finland

- **Working Group on Trade and Environment** established by Foreign Affairs Ministry
  - Working group under the Finish National Council for Sustainable Development (headed by Prime Minister)
  - Coordinates Finish position in relevant international bodies
  - Very active from 1992 to 1998 (EU structures)
- Composed of:
  - Representatives from Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Environment, Trade & Industry, Agriculture & Forestry
  - Representatives of industry and forestry
  - Environmental and other NGOs
- Regular meetings and public participation very high

## How to Support Inter-Sectoral National Policy Coordination?

- **Establish a Working Group or Committee**
  - Institutionalized, Inter-disciplinary
  - Fixed membership; fixed secretariat; technical capacity
  - Establish mechanisms to allow for consultation with non-governmental stakeholders → Public Participation
  - Agree on objectives
  - Conduct policy analysis and formulate recommendations for consideration by respective ministries/agencies
- **Identify Interests and Priorities**
- **Informed Policy Analysis**

## Main Issues for Consideration

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- **What Cooperative Mechanisms can be established?**  
Most Arab countries have not yet taken the first step of establishing national Trade & Environment committees
  - Those that do exist tend to lack an effective mandate/authority
- **Is there too much emphasis on WTO in the Arab Region?** Is the agenda demand or supply driven?
- **How can Arab countries adopt a more participatory approach to governance ?**
- **Do we need trade and environment committees or sustainable development council with a trade & environment sub-committees?**

*Thank you!*

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