

In the Name of Allah. Most Gracious, Most Merciful

## **Tunis Declaration**

### **“Solidarity for Sustainable Development”**

We, the participants of the Arab-Mediterranean NGO Meeting on the preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, held on March 28-31, 2002, under the auspices and presence of Her Royal Highness, Princess Basma bint Talal, and under the supervision of the Arab League Secretary-General, Mr. Amr Moussa, and the Tunisian Minister for the Environment and Land Use Planning, Mr. Mohamed Al-Nably,

#### Recalling

- The current international context, represented in the division of the world into two communities that are contradictory, whether in terms of their benefit from the natural resource revenues, or in the extent to which they are being inflicted by the results of environmental degradation,
- The unsteady performance in the implementation of requirements and commitments that had come out of the Rio documents, in particular agenda 21.

Convinced that the voluntary work cannot be perceived in the Arab region but in the context of a participatory democratic environment;

Fully believing that man is the end and the means to sustainable development;

Stressing that sustainable development and environmental conservation are a human right to be achieved in an integrated system of common values and principles that respect the rights of communities, individuals, as well as the present and future generations in human sustainable development;

Believing in the importance of the Arab region contribution in the human civilization;

Considering the specificity that characterizes the Arab region, in terms of its social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions;

Depending on the Malmo Declaration of May 31, 2000 in Sweden; the Manama Declaration on Arab Non-Governmental Organizations, issued on September 8, 2001 in Bahrain; the Declaration of the African Civil Societies on the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), issued in Nairobi on January 12, 2002; and the Nice Declaration of Mediterranean NGOs on January 12, 2002; in addition to the Declarations of Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Amman and Dubai;

Emphasize the priorities and issues incorporated into the WSSD agenda, namely: poverty alleviation; literacy; fighting unemployment and indebtedness; security; stability; good governance; globalization; technology transfer; capacity building; training; financial resources; unsustainable patterns of production and consumption;

deterioration of resources and ecosystems, and especially desertification and water scarcity.

Record the failure of the common Arab action to comply with the degree of developmental and environmental challenges the region is faced with;

Also record the commitment of the NGOs involved to effectuate their role, so as to participate more actively in the implementation of sustainable development projects.

**For these ends, we call upon:**

**First: Arab Governments:**

1. To foster their cooperation concerning the Barcelona process, so as to safeguard a strong Arab stand that takes into consideration the best interests of the Arab region, as regards sustainable development,
2. To further its ratification of international and regional conventions relevant to sustainable development, and to develop the suitable mechanisms that would ensure their implementation;
3. To support and effectuate an Arab institutional framework, that secures close coordination between all mechanisms appertaining to sustainable development;
4. To boost funding programs channeled towards sustainable development, hereby focusing on the social dimension, especially education and health, and to provide basic services and infrastructure;
5. To enhance the role of NGOs, provide them with adequate funding, involve them in the developmental programmes and projects, and to support relevant institutional structures;
6. To form national sustainable development committees, taking into account that NGOs and civil society institutions be represented in them;
7. To adopt a new sustainable development and integrated natural resource management approach, based on the principles of sound management, coupled with the principles of transparency, partnership and participation;
8. To adopt developmental strategies, policies and action plans that enhance the role of women, youth, NGOs, the private sector, academic institutions, and the mass media as core partners in the process of sustainable development;
9. To incorporate the right of individuals in a sound environment and in a sustainable development as a fundamental right enshrined in the national laws and constitutions, after the pattern of other states.

## **Second: Regional and international organizations:**

10. To effectuate the role of institutions, so as to safeguard effective coordination between them in the field of sustainable development;
11. To grant the international law its due stature and weight, by adhering to the United Nations resolutions, with a view to achieving security and peace in the areas of tension, and especially in the Arab world, as a sine qua non for sustainable development and the protection of natural resources;
12. To foster solidarity, cooperation and partnership as pre-requisites for sustainable development;
13. To shoulder their responsibilities and honor their commitments, so as to enable the Arab states, as a cluster that constitutes part of the developing world, to achieve sustainable development. Moreover, to adopt financial mechanisms that help them realize such goal, such as the implementation of common Arab projects, and to convert debts into financial resources that are geared towards serving the objectives of sustainable development, as follows:
  - Satisfy its commitments, as regards the allocation of 0,7% of their national income to the support of development projects in the developing countries,
  - Turn or “recycle” the interest on loans into developmental projects.
  - Give access to the developing countries to clean technology.
14. To adopt a new sustainable development approach that enhances vast participation based on the integration between the sustainable development mechanisms, and that aims to combine the local knowledge and expertise, and enhance the standing and role of NGOs in their respective countries, by means of direct contacts and dealings with those.
15. To adopt terms of reference that are founded on the principles and pivots of the Amman Declaration on the Earth Charter.
16. To enhance the role of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to seek to increase its visibility in the Arab region, and to support its financial resources.
17. To support and strengthen Small Grants Programme of UNDP
18. To support the Arab NGO Network for Environment and Development (RAED) as a non-governmental regional framework to foster cooperation between Arab NGOs, regional and international organizations, as well as donor organizations.

In conclusion, the conferees entrusted the Arab NGO Network for Environment and Development (RAED) with securing the follow-up on the implementation of the Tunis Declaration by all competent authorities.

Participants at the Arab-Mediterranean NGO Meeting  
Tunis, March 31, 2002