

*Abu Dhabi Declaration on
Environment
and Energy*

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“Abu Dhabi Declaration on Environment and Energy”

The Arab Ministers responsible for environment and for energy affairs, meeting in Abu Dhabi within the framework of the Environment and Energy Exhibition and Conference 2003:

Reaffirming the importance of Abu Dhabi Declaration on the future of the Arab Environmental Action 2001, the Arab Declaration on Sustainable Development 202, the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region 2002, and the importance of crystallising the Arab priorities included in these declarations into achievable programmes and projects under the umbrella of the Arab League, in co-ordination with the relevant regional and international bodies and organisations;

Noting the results of the 7th Arab Energy Conference 2002, the 7th Syrian Energy Conference 2002, the decisions of the Amman International Forum on Sustainable Environment and Development 2001, the Jeddah Declaration on Development from an Islamic Perspective, the Islamic Declaration on Sustainable Development issues, adopted by the 1st Islamic Conference 2002 in Jeddah, the decisions of the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992, the Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration and the decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002, which called upon governments, regional and international organisations and other interest parties to apply the recommendations and results of the Sustainable Development Committee regarding contribution of energy in achieving sustainable development;

Following with anxiety the growing atomic programmes of some countries in the region which do not allow the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, to monitor their activities in the military and peaceful fields related to hydro-power generation, these resulting in radio-active impacts harmful to the region's population, and the wildlife and marine life due to leakage of radio-active material into ground water and the other possible trans-border effects that might affect coming generations, and also the negative impacts arising out of the use of atomic energy for power generation;

Noting the recommendations in the Arab statement on environment presented to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002;

Calling upon the industrialised countries to fulfil their obligations towards developing countries to support and facilitate transfer of environmentally safe and sound technology for energy production, according to international treaties;

Taking into account the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol (KP), the results of the 8th Conference of the Parties (COP8) on the Framework Treaty on Climate Change 2002 and the New Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development which reaffirmed the importance of formulating the policies and procedures suitable for the conditions of each party of the agreement for the protection of climate system;

Recognising the fact that the Arab world has made a number of achievements in different and complex health, education, economic, social and environmental fields over recent years, and also recognising the problems resulting from urbanisation and increases in population and the associated growth in terms of demand for and use of energy for economic and social development, this making energy a fundamental element of development in order to achieve more growth and progress in Arab communities;

Aware of the existing challenges and opportunities and the contribution of the energy sector in achieving sustainable development in the Arab world, and the importance of oil and gas as a strategic wealth, as well as of the potential offered by renewable energy resources in the Arab world which could be utilised;

Noting that there is still scientific uncertainty related to the phenomenon of climate change and its results, and that there is no scientific confirmation that this phenomenon is primarily a result of emissions resulting from the consumption of hydrocarbon, and further noting that such unfounded allegations and doubts would make victims of the oil and gas sector and may result in a recession in world demand, thus harming the interests of producers;

Following, with anxiety the growing trends to enforce biased limitations on oil usage on the pretext of environmental protection, such trends having the capacity to have a negative effect upon revenues

arising from oil exports by the producing countries and, therefore, affecting adversely local and related-regional development opportunities;

Reaffirming the importance of using renewable energy resources and adopting environmentally sound technologies including the use of advanced and cleaner fossil fuel technologies, the sustainable use of conventional energy resources which would meet the increasing need of long range energy supplies to achieve sustainable development without obstructing opportunities for development at the regional level for oil-producing countries;

Reaffirming the commitment of the Arab oil-producing countries to make available energy resources to all countries, and stressing that their oil revenues still contribute to economic development and environmental protection in both industrial and developing countries worldwide, and further noting that they promote international co-operation by providing assistance in the form of loans and grants for development projects and alleviation of poverty in other countries;

Reaffirming the necessity of promoting financial and political support to achieve the required balance for development of renewable energies on one hand and conventional energy on the other hand, encouraging the adoption of cleaner fossil energy technologies to contribute in supporting sustainable development and avoiding any negative impact on the economies of the countries whose income depend on oil and gas;

Reaffirming that the ultimate priority of the Arab countries will concentrate on the alleviation of poverty and the achieving of sustainable development in their countries;

Aware of the significant progress achieved in universities and academic and research institutions in the Arab countries in the field of qualified personnel and state-of-the-art equipment, in addition to the potential available in the specialised applied institutions established within the energy sector and the programmes which are linked to the requirements of Arab society which have the capacity to contribute in a significant way to the development of conventional and renewable energy technologies that can serve the sustainable interests of the Arab countries;

Realising the major development made in terms of the efficiency of the environment institutions in the Arab world, and the increase in the numbers of their trained staff, the issuance of environmental legislations, environmental standards and specifications for reducing pollution, the strategies and action plans for preservation and sustainable utilisation of natural resources, the attention paid to combat desertification and the preservation of biodiversity, marine life, and water sources and quality, as well as to air quality, the quality of air, management of chemicals, hazardous waste and drainage, and promotion of clean production methods, in addition to the increasing number of nature reserves, the signature of regional and international treaties and the growing role of civil society in protecting the environment;

Applauding the growing interaction of energy and environment institutions in creating the necessary environmental conditions and specifications to guarantee achievement of sustainable development in the Arab world;

Reaffirming the necessity of encouraging the integration of Arab available energy markets, and the intensification of investment related to development of the infrastructure for available energy sources in the Arab world;

Call for the following:

- Reaffirmation of the right of the Arab countries to undertake the sustainable development of their natural resources, particularly those countries which depend mainly on revenues from the production, processing and exporting of oil and gas, as well as in the preservation of those resources to achieve sustainable development in the Arab world;
- Reaffirmation of the necessity of a continuous and unobstructed supply of oil and gas to international markets to ensure a continuity of sustainable development;

- Urging industrialised countries to adopt policies leading to reduction of differences in energy markets, in particular policies to avoid any discriminatory treatment by consumer countries on oil and gas, through the imposition of taxation or the introduction of any unfair support for other sources and types of energy, which would lead to a reduction in demand for oil and gas and harm the revenues of producing countries and their development;
- Assistance to Arab countries to mobilise adequate resources to adapt themselves to the harmful effects of climate change and harsh weather conditions, the rise of sea level and weather fluctuations, and assisting them to formulate national strategies to deal with climate change, and programmes to reduce the harmful effects of climate change in accordance with the UNFCCC.
- Continuation and promotion of efforts to reform the non-sustainable production of energy and consumption norms, through the encouragement of technological development and a rationing of energy consumption and an increasing of the efficiency of energy use in a variety of different economic and service sectors, as well as promotion of human skills and the technical capacity of the energy sector in related fields;
- Stimulation of efforts by scientific research institutes, so as to accelerate the development of cleaner production technologies for fossil energy in the Arab region and worldwide, and the development of technologies to reduce emissions related to energy use, the cessation of gas flaring associated with the production and manufacturing of crude oil, the giving of maximum strategic priority to the development of technologies to dispose of carbon dioxide gas, and taking the initiative by the delineation of a strategy for the development of technologies appropriate for cleaner fossil energy production, including the following:
 - Supporting Arab and world scientific research centres.
 - Establishment of regional and world partnerships.
 - Guaranteeing mechanisms to provide adequate funds.
 - Co-ordination between scientific centres
- Encouragement of cleaner energy related initiatives such as those related to the use of advanced technologies in oil and natural gas production, which have been reaffirmed by international conferences such as the Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development, and the multi-party environmental treaties and the Doha meeting of World Trade Organisation, WTO.
- Encouragement of the development of universities and academic research institutes in the Arab world, as well as co-ordination, through support both from the Arab world and globally, in the undertaking by them of research on conventional, new and renewable energy, as well as related practical applications, particularly in the field of sea water desalination, together with the establishment of links between these institutions and appropriate institutions of renown throughout the world;
- Encouragement for the production and general use of lead-free fuels which contains less sulphur, thereby reducing risks to human health and the environment, and for the promotion of the use of natural gas, wherever possible, and to develop transport strategies that include increased efficiency in terms of vehicular use of energy and use of environmentally cleaner fuels, and encouragement of participation in related global initiatives;

- Recognition of the importance of working with and co-ordinating with other developing countries so as not to accept the imposition of commitments involving quantitative commitments and commitments with relation to time on countries for the reduction of their emissions of global warming gases within the framework of UN Treaty for Climate Change.
- Urging of industrial countries to restructure their tax systems to reflect the carbon content of the fossil energy sources, and the damages resulting from atomic energy, and abolishing all aspects of subsidies provided to coal and atomic energy.
- Recognition of the importance of implementing paragraph (8) of the fourth article of the UNFCCC, which stipulates that the parties shall give full consideration to the actions necessary under the convention, including actions related to funding, insurance, and transfer of technology to countries whose economies are wholly dependent on fossil fuel production, manufacturing and export and other heavy energy related products, as well as of paragraph (3) of the second article of the Kyoto Protocol, which calls upon parties included in Annex (1): “ to implement policies and measures under this Article in such a way as to minimise adverse effects, including the adverse effects of climate change, effects on international trade, and social, environmental and economic impacts on other parties, especially parties that are developing countries, and, in particular, those identified in Article (4), paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Convention;”
- Reaffirmation of the right of the region’s countries affected by nuclear programmes of some countries within the region to protect their people and environment from any potential dangers to which they may be subjected, and the right to take the necessary measures to achieve this, by adopting a policy of revealing the true facts at international meetings and presenting them to world public opinion regarding operations for the disposal of toxic waste in their territories and territorial waters.
- Recognition of the importance of establishing environmental strategies for the preservation of living and other natural resources and their sustainable usage, these strategies including for determining patterns of consumption and of non-sustainable production in different sectors;
- Calling upon the industrialised countries to fulfil their commitments under the terms of international environmental treaties to devote more efforts to the development and transfer of highly sophisticated modern technologies related to the use of cleaner fossil fuels to the Arab world, by activating the financial mechanisms of the said international treaties so as to provide financial assistance for building capabilities and for the development and transfer of energy technologies, such as the Global Environment Facility, GEF, the Climate Change Fund, and the Clean Development Mechanism, CDM, and to work to integrate and apply environmental impact assessment systems wherever and whenever possible and where they are useful; in economic terms in the process of production processing of oil and gas and other sources for energy production;
- Calling upon the industrialised countries to provide compensation with regard to the economic and social damage to and losses of the Arab countries whose economies depend primarily on oil and gas production and export revenues, such damage and losses arising as a result of the measures taken by these countries within the framework of the commitments of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol;
- Paying attention to environmental awareness in the field of preserving natural resources and increasing efficiency of energy usage and consumption, through special programmes broadcast by the mass media and the introduction of the appropriate education into the school curricula;

- Reaffirmation of the importance of participation by Arab civil society in achieving goals aiming at achieving sustainability of the energy and natural resources sector, so as to ensure popular participation in the execution of policies and decisions according to each Arab country circumstances;
- Promotion of the supply of energy to rural and remote areas in the Arab world and diversification of the sources of such energy;
- Reaffirmation of the importance of executing Arab League decisions on the linking of Arab countries by electricity networks and also to work in the future so as to connect them through an oil and gas transport network wherever and whenever it is seen as being of economic value.
- Continuation of the developing and application of comprehensive environment monitoring programmes in the energy sector and the encouragement of integrated management of the energy sector.
- Establishment of an environmental database at the level of the Arab world as a whole, encouragement of exchanging information and benefiting from the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative, AGEDI, and other existing global initiatives and co-ordination of Arab policies in regional and international conferences and meetings related to environment and energy affairs, so as to secure Arab countries' interests in this field.
- Paying more attention to professional safety activities and monitoring work environment, and promotion of monitoring activities through co-ordination with the Ministries of Health, Labour and Social Security in Arab countries.
- Following-up the implementation of the contents of this Declaration in the regularly held meetings, and through structures for joint Arab action mechanisms and other regional structures.