

Southern Regional Model United Nations, Atlanta 2013
Beyond 2015: Reshaping the Millennium Development Goals for an Empowered Future Sustainability

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Dear Esteemed Delegates,

It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) Atlanta 2013 conference, and specifically, the League of Arab States (LAS) committee. The committee's Assistant Director, Sebastian Sarria, and I are thrilled to be leading the dais of the LAS and look forward to meeting each of you as we begin debating the issues facing the Arab League. This will be Sebastian's first year joining SRMUN staff, although he has previous experience behind the gavel, and my third SRMUN conference on staff. The phenomena known as MUN is unique to each conference and SRMUN is an excellent venue aimed at providing delegates with a truly educational experience. Sebastian and I are available to you at any time throughout this conference as resources, mentors, and advisors.

The League of Arab States is a regionally based organization comprised of 22 Member States located in North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Southwest Asia. The LAS was established in 1945 following the adoption of the Alexandria Protocol aimed at addressing the collective concerns of the Arab region. Headquartered in Cairo, Egypt, the Arab League facilitates discussions involving social, economic, and political initiatives, as well as concerns of collective security. The Arab community has often been the target of controversy and ridicule ranging from the instability that emerged during the Arab Spring, to the age-old conflict with Israel. Considering the status of the Arab region, the League of Arab States is ever more necessary and critical to achieve peace and prosperity for all Member States.

After much consideration, Sebastian and I have developed the following topics to be debated at SRMUN Atlanta 2013. These topics are relevant conversations for the Arab League, as well as the remainder of the international community, and correlate closely with the theme of the conference: Beyond 2015: Reshaping the Millennium Development Goals for an Empowered Future.

- I. Achieving Gender Diversity: Incorporating the Role of Women in the Economic and Political Arenas; and
- II. Examining the Impacts and Opportunities of the Arab Spring on the Region's Sustainable Development Agenda

Each delegation will be required to submit a position paper outlining their Member States' policies and initiatives regarding both of the aforementioned topics. These papers are incredibly significant in developing your Member State's position and contribute to a delegate's overall success in committee. Your position paper should include past, present, and future initiatives and responses to the above topics and outline how your Member State wishes to address these issues. Position Papers should not exceed two pages, be single spaced, and fit within the parameters outlined on the SRMUN website (www.srmun.org). **All position papers MUST be submitted by November 1st, 11:59pm EST via the on-line submission system at www.srmun.org.**

Again, Sebastian and I are eager to meet each of you and we look forward to the creative ideas that you will present to address these critical topics that face the Arab Community. I wish you the best of luck throughout the research and writing process and look forward to seeing you all in November. Please do not hesitate to contact Fawn, Sebastian, or myself if you have any questions.

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History of the League of Arab States

With initial “concerns about postwar colonial divisions of territory” and “the emergence of a Jewish state in Palestine,” the League of Arab States (LAS) was established in March 1945 by Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan (Jordan), Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Yemen.¹ Culminating from the British-supported Alexandria Protocol of 1944, the League was the formulation of Arab nationalism and “integrated Arab policy based on shared culture and historical experience,” as well as from the pan-Arabism exemplified by Nasser during his Egyptian rule.² Since inception, the League has sought to improve relations between Member States, as well as address issues embedded in Article II of its own Charter, which include economics and finance, communications, culture, national boundaries, social, and health.³

Appointed by the Council, and voted on by two-thirds of LAS Member States, the League is currently led by Secretary General Nabil Elaraby of Egypt. Considered “the supreme authority within the League system,”⁴ the Council is composed of 22 Member States, among them Palestine, which is considered an independent state within the League.⁵ Meeting twice a year during the months of March and September at its headquarters in Cairo, Egypt, the Council is responsible for deciding on applications for membership and accepting withdrawals from the League, introduction of amendments to the Charter, mediation of dispute settlements, appointment of the LAS Secretary General, formulation of statutes for subsidiary and affiliate LAS bodies.⁶

With chairmanship of the League Council rotating amongst Member States in alphabetical order, adequate representation and leadership within the council is sure to occur.⁷ Moreover, each Member State holds a single vote during Council meetings, regardless of population or economic advantage.⁸ In the case of aggression or threat of aggression, as Article XI states, the Council “shall determine the necessary measures to repel the aggression” and suspend the aggressor’s voting rights if it is found to be a Member State of the League.⁹ It should be noted, “LAS resolutions are binding to all Member States which voted in favor of them.”¹⁰ According to Article IV of the Charter, LAS Member States have the ability to establish specialized organizations within the scope of the Council to address issues under Article II. The specialized organizations already in place cover areas of expertise such as agricultural development, broadcasting, atomic energy, civil aviation, etc.¹¹ The League “has also established auditing, administrative monitoring and judicial bodies to operate within the League.” The scope and reach of the League therefore demonstrates the desire of its Member States to address issues important to them, and how their impact can maintain relations with other non-Arab agencies like the United Nations.

According to Article XIII of the Charter, “The Secretary General shall prepare the draft of the budget of the League and shall submit it to the Council for approval before the beginning of each fiscal year.” In order to prepare the budget, each Member State is required to provide a small share of its national income to the annual budgets of the League. Although the Council determines the exact amount each state must provide, the regional body has had difficulties collecting monetary contributions. The League has the power to suspend the voting rights of any

¹ Masters, Jonathan. “Backgrounder: The Arab League.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. Jan. 26th, 2012. Web. 7 Mar. 2013. http://www.cfr.org/middle-east/arab-league/p25967_. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

² Ibid.

³ “Pact of the League of Arab States, March 22, 1945.” *Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library*. Web. 10 Mar. 2013. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/arableag.asp. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁴ “Internal System of the Council.” *League of Arab States, UK*. Web. 8 Mar. 2013. http://www.arableague.org.uk/league/internal_system.html. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁵ “LAS Committee History 2012.” *Southern Regional Model United Nations*.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ “Arab Specialized Committees.” *League of Arab States, UK*. Web. 8 Mar. 2013. http://www.arableague.org.uk/league/specialized_%20organizations.html. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

Member States which owes more than what has been paid in the current year, and the last two years.¹² The range of projects that the budget is used for include those dealing with education, technology, labor, crime and other relevant issues impacting Member States of the League.

In regards to the United Nations, “the founders of the Arab League understood the significance of fruitful mutual cooperation.”¹³ The Arab League Council resolution of 2 February 1951 solidifies such cooperation, as it states that the Arab League “makes it its principles underlying the United Nations its own and pledges to help eliminate war.”¹⁴ Moreover, the Secretary General of the League has been an official observer to UN General Assembly sessions since 1951.¹⁵ Struggling at first to gain formal recognition by the United Nations, the League of Arab States was finally acknowledged as a regional organization in 1958.¹⁶ From its newfound international role with UN recognition, the LAS sought to establish several initiatives aimed at improving the lives of its Member States. Among those are the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), and the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which subsequently gave Palestine official membership in 1976. Attempts at peace with Israel were seen with the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, which suspended the state of war that had existed since 1948.¹⁷ Besides the LAS Secretary General being present at the GA sessions, the Arab League also maintains a permanent observer, Ahmed Amin Fathalla, at the United Nations in New York City.¹⁸ The role of the permanent observer is to represent Arab interests within the UN.

Immediately following establishment in March of 1945, the issue of a Jewish state, and colonial rule still present in the region emerged to the forefront of the League’s agenda.¹⁹ Many, especially of the younger Arab generation saw Israel’s existence as symbolic of Arab humiliation at the hands of Western technology. The Palestinian issue became especially important for Arab unity as the League rallied against Israel and initiated the establishment of a Palestinian Liberation Order, which says “the liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national duty.”²⁰

With the suspension of Syria from the League in 2011 in light of human rights violations, and the establishment of the Arab Charter of Human Rights in 2004, the LAS is projected to have a promising future.²¹ Moreover, with the recent Arab Spring, the LAS has shown a new face of organizational legitimacy within the Arab world. The handling of the Libyan crisis and multilateral diplomacy with other actors, such as NATO, shows the promise the League has at improving conditions for its Member States.

The current members of the League of Arab States include:

ALGERIA, BAHRAIN, COMOROS, DJIBOUTI, EGYPT, IRAQ, JORDAN, KUWAIT, LEBANON, LIBYA, MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, OMAN, PALESTINE, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, SOMALIA, SUDAN, SYRIA*, TUNISIA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, YEMEN

*Syria is currently suspended from the League of Arab States per the majority vote on 12 November 2011.

¹² “Model Arab League, Background Guide.” *National Council on US Arab Relations*. 2012-2013. Web. <http://ncusar.org/modelarableague/resources/13-mal-bg-spe.pdf>

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ “New Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States Presents Appointment Letter.” *Press Release, United Nations News* Oct. 12, 2012. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/bio4425.doc.htm>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ “Arab Charter on Human Rights.” *University of Minnesota, Human Rights Library*. Web. <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/loas2005.html>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

I: Achieving Gender Diversity: Incorporating the Role of Women in the Economic and Political Arenas

Introduction

The eruption of the phenomena known as the Arab Spring sparked more than an uprising of dissatisfied youth, a demand for democracy, and overall civil and political unrest; it also further perpetuated the fight for women within modern Arab society. For decades, women have been fighting for their place among men within societal constructs, yet even in the 21st century gender equality remains a relevant problem across international borders. This is evident within every region of the world, especially within the Arab community. Driven by religious beliefs and traditions, the Arab world has made great strides to bridge the gap of gender inequality and to modernize their views of women, but there is much progress still to be made. Political activist, Nobel Peace laureate, and “Mother of the Revolution,” Tawakul Karmen spoke of this convolution during her Nobel Prize acceptance speech, “The solution to women’s issues can only be achieved in a free and democratic society in which human energy is liberated, the energy of both women and men together. Our civilization is called human civilization and is not attributed to only men or women.”²²

The human energy that Karmen speaks of is ever more prevalent in today’s changing global economy. Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, and scholars around the world agree that the competitive nature of our economy is shifting focus from dependence on tangible financial capital, to the ingenuity of human capital.^{23,24} “Capital is being superseded by creativity and the ability to innovate – and therefore by human talents – as the most important factors of production. If talent is becoming the decisive competitive factor, we can be confident in stating that capitalism is being replaced by ‘talentism.’”²⁵ As the mentality of the global economy gradually shifts from capitalism to “talentism,” humans will become a more necessary resource with no room for gender inequality. Maximizing access to female talent is crucial for businesses and their respective countries of origin to maintain competitiveness within the international economic arena. Women account for half of the world’s population thus half of the human capital needed to sustain an efficient global market.²⁶ Over a billion women worldwide are cheated of their potential economic contribution because of obstacles such as lack of access to education, labor market regulations, national policies, and financial restrictions among others.²⁷ The World Bank published that if all variances of discrimination against women in the workplace were removed, then productivity would increase up to 40 percent per worker, yet active initiative to remedy such violations of basic human rights is still lacking.²⁸

In addition to economic involvement, it is critical that women are empowered to hold political office. Although the international community has drafted and adopted numerous mechanisms to address women’s accessibility in political processes, women only account for 20 percent of the globe’s’ political positions.²⁹ In 1990, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1990/15 established a target goal of 30 percent of females in decision-making positions by 1995; a goal that 18 years after the target date, the international community has still failed to

²² "Tawakkol Karman - Nobel Lecture: In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful". *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel Media AB 2013.. <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2011/karman-lecture_en.html>

²³ “From Capitalism to Talentism: An Argument for the Democratisation of Education.” Lucian Tarnowski. *Hunffington Post*. 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lucian-tarnowski/from-capitalism-to-talentism_b_1859315.html. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

²⁴ “Mobilizing Talent: Driving Growth.” World Economic Forum. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-agenda-council-2012/councils/skills-talent-mobility/>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ “Women Leaders and Gender Parity,” World Economic Forum. <http://www.weforum.org/women-leaders-and-gender-parity>

²⁷ UN Women Annual Report 2011-2012. <http://unwomen-metrony.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/UN-Women-annual-report-2011-2012.pdf>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “Women in Politics:2012.” UNWomen. <http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Women-in-politics-2012.pdf>

achieve.³⁰ Even though this target was not met by 1995, or even today, the strides made towards this goal are historical achievements for the global community; however, it also shows that the global average growth is less than one percent per year.³² Arab states are among the lowest in the world for female political participation, and some states have yet to even properly incorporate legislative policies to reflect gender equality at the national and local levels. Only 10.7 percent of legislative bodies within the Middle East and North African (MENA) region are women, the lowest regional average in the world by five percent.³³

This is a difficult topic to address, especially as the Arab League, and will be no small feat in finding comprehensive and effective measures to improve gender parity specifically within the MENA region. However, if the Arab League wishes to be competitive within the international arena, both economically and politically, Member States must strive to implement conditions that respect their culturally sensitive norms and ideals, but allow all peoples equal opportunity.

Evolution of Women's Rights within the International Arena

The protection of women's rights is rooted in international treaties throughout history based on the fundamental principles of non-discrimination due to sex, race, language, or religion. The charter of the UN outlines the necessity for an international infrastructure designed to protect the inalienable rights of all mankind and has been reinforced by documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international Covenants named below. Since the adoption of the UN Charter (1946) and Declaration of Human Rights (1948), human rights have become a primary topic of conversation for multiple international conferences and conventions.³⁴

Such basic protections of human rights are compiled into the International Bill of Human Rights which is comprised of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights along with its two Optional Protocols.³⁵ The two Covenants that are included with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were commissioned at the request of the General Assembly at its sixth session in 1951/1952. According to the General Assembly resolution 543, the international community collectively asked a Commission "to draft two Covenants on Human Rights, ... one to contain civil and political rights and the other to contain economic, social and cultural rights."³⁶ Although these documents are extremely similar in context and language, both of the Covenants were adopted by the General Assembly resolution 2200 in December 1966.³⁷ Article 1 of both Covenants states that "All peoples have the right to self-determination" and have the right to "freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."³⁸ The Covenants further specify in Article 3 of each document the reaffirmation of equality of men and women to the full extent of all human rights with correlating articles that provide safeguards to protect said freedoms.

The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights specifically addresses political participation and representation in Article 25. "Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity... (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or

³⁰ "Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice." Human Rights Council 23rd Session. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A.HRC.23.50_EN.pdf

³¹ United Nations Targets for Proportion of Women in Leadership and Decision-Making Positions. Information Paper. <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ha/papers/ha0314cb2-1636-1e.pdf>

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid 4.

³⁴ "Progress of Arab Women 2004." UNIFEM. http://www.unifem.org/materials/item_detail4863.html

³⁵ "Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights." Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet2Rev.1en.pdf>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

³⁹ "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage... (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his/her country.”⁴⁰

These instruments were milestone accomplishments within the international community in standardizing human rights. However, the very nature of a voluntary international organ restricts the overall effectiveness of such initiatives as well as the willingness of Member States to adhere to and abide by international documents. Currently, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has 160 parties, and similarly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has 167 parties.⁴¹⁴² Unfortunately, both of these Covenants include Member States that have still yet to fully ratify or accede to the stipulations outlined and the overall outcome has failed to prevent women from discrimination.

From 1949 to 1959, women’s rights were forced to the forefront of the international agenda led by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).⁴³ As many Member States began the independence process and started developing new national policies and constitutions, the CSW promoted the idea of a single, legally binding international instrument to protect women against all forms of discrimination. With the support of the General Assembly as well as the World Conference of the International Women’s Year, the first conference focused solely on women’s rights held in Mexico City in 1975, the CSW began developing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).⁴⁴

CEDAW was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979 with resolution 34/180, and then presented by the Secretary General at the Convention to the mid-decade World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in Copenhagen in 1980.⁴⁵ This international turning point in the fight for gender equality was solidified when CEDAW entered into force only 30 days after the appropriate amount of Member States ratified the Convention, making it the fastest human rights convention to be accepted in history.⁴⁶ In addition to CEDAW and the numerous preceding conventions and treaties, there were three other conferences held at the international level that focused on the rights of women: Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995). The progression of such conferences and their resultant documents shows a maturation of the global community as the focus shifted from strictly gender equality, towards the actual empowerment and progression of women.

According to the 2004 Progress of Arab Women Report, 16 out of the 22 Arab Member States have signed the CEDAW. Those countries include: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.⁴⁷ However, 13 out of the 16 Arab parties entered CEDAW with a total of 46 reservations.⁴⁸ Arab Member States were adamant about the potential contradictions of Islamic law and the binding stipulations outlined within the Convention. Specifically, Libya, Mauritania and Saudi Arabia entered general reservations with the document safeguarding their legal obligation to CEDAW if any contradictory situation were to arise. The majority of the reservations submitted by Arab Member States primarily addressed gender parity within marriage and the household, as well as the passing of the mother’s

⁴⁰ “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁴¹ “Status of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.” UN Treaty Collection. http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4&lang=en. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁴² “Status of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.” UN Treaty Collection. http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁴³ “Short History of CEDAW Convention.” Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of discrimination Against Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid 10.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

nationality to her offspring. Nevertheless, six Arab Member States submitted reservations to Article 15 which encompasses the over-arching theme of the Convention that men and women are equal before the law. Furthermore, seven countries entered reservations to Article 2 which condemns all forms of discrimination and obligates parties to pursue all appropriate means to eliminate it.⁴⁹⁵⁰ It is important to note that not only Arab countries entered numerous reservations with CEDAW. European countries such as Belgium, France, Malta, Switzerland, and U.K., also submitted reservations, primarily to Article 15 and Article 16 (which refers to equality within marriage and family relations).⁵¹

The lack of initiative to bridge the gender gap is especially evident in Arab Member States that have yet to even acknowledge a woman's right to vote or stand for election of a public office. Member States such as Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates do not have national policies that allows women these opportunities.⁵²

The Arab community, notoriously known for traditional family values indoctrinated from Shari'a law, has made progress in attempting to address the polarity of gender equality within the family. The Council of Arab Ministers of Justice has made strides to develop a unified Arab Family Law as a basis for protecting such rights in a familial setting, although few states have implemented resultant policy.⁵³ In order to further codify the various conventions, resolutions, and treaties, Arab Member States met in Amman in 1994 to develop a comprehensive Arab Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2005. This Plan of Action identified 10 primary areas of concern for the Arab community to address. Topics ranged from the "inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels," to the "insufficient use of mass media to promote women's positive contributions to society."⁵⁴

This was an unprecedented collection of methods to implement national policies regarding women within modern Arab society. The Plan of Action was a milestone achievement for the Arab community in progressing towards equality without infringing upon religious beliefs or traditions; however, creating a "plan" does not always procure results. Some Arab Member States experienced sufficient and surprising results, whereas others have seen little progress since the Plan's creation 19 years ago.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was one of the first countries in the Arab world to develop a "semi-governmental" entity to specifically address the rights of women within the public and private spheres.⁵⁵ The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) was established in 1994 to actively engage in dialogue with various public and private parties to develop strategic national plans surrounding women. The JNCW is now the Jordanian authority on all issues relating women at the local, national, and international levels.⁵⁶ Numerous other countries, including Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine have also followed suit and have some variance of a commission to lead affairs regarding women.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ "Short History of CEDAW Convention." Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of discrimination Against Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁵⁰ "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women." Division for the Advancement of Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁵¹ Ibid 10 and 26

⁵² Ibid 10.

⁵³ Ibid 10.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The Impact of Islam in the Lives of Women in the Arab Community

The discourse surrounding the role of women within the Arab region has historically been focused on the influence of the Islamic faith and Shari'a law. However, before discussing such impacts, it is necessary to note that scholars agree that the Islamic practice as an all-encompassing influence is not an adequate frame of analysis. Although much influence is derived from the Islamic presence, the lives of Arab women are resultant of a complex web of economic, political, social, and religious factors.⁵⁸

The Islamic faith has been an intrinsically part of everyday life in the Arab community since its origins. "Unlike any other religion in history... Islam has penetrated and shaped the politics and cultures of the countries dominated by it."⁵⁹ The level of influence varies from country to country throughout the region ranging from dictating women's attire, to their relationships with others, primarily deriving from societal traditions and Shari'a law. Meaning "path" in Arabic, Shari'a law was originally developed several hundred years following the death of the Prophet Mohammed due to the vagueness of rules and guidelines outlined by the Quran⁶⁰. However, Shari'a law provides more than just rules or legal standards for Islamic societies; it represents a way of life.⁶¹

One of the defining factors of Shari'a law is that it encompasses personal status law, legal principles that relate to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and custody.⁶² Combined with the concept of religious rulings on criminal law, Shari'a law has often proved controversial, primarily with the West. With reports of female genital mutilation, adolescent marriages, polygamy, and other concepts foreign to the moral code of the West, discourses of modernization, secularism, and democratization have sparked heated transnational debate with particular emphasis the rights' of women.⁶³ However, many Member States no longer solely rely on Shari'a law as their only legal system, but have imposed a dual legal system. The variations of dual legal systems differ among Member States but typically involve a secular government which entertains civil and criminal cases, and Shari'a courts that address familial and financial disputes.⁶⁴ Member States such as Algeria, Comoros, Djibouti, Lebanon, Mauritania, and Tunisia are a few Member States that utilize dual legal systems.^{65 66}

Member States such as Somalia and Turkey have completely secular constitutional governments and have even gone as far as banning Shari'a inclusions. Beginning in the early 20th century, Turkey has slowly, but steadily spearheaded gender equality reformation with one of the first civil codes granting women parity in cases involving divorce and inheritance.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Turkish state has often been the site of controversy over the infamous ban of the headscarf, which is forbidden for all public sector employees and in 1984 expanded to include educational institutions.⁶⁸ Since the 1970's, the evolution of the veil argument has transformed from a political statement, to a religious statement, to the basic right of women to wear the headscarf if they so desire. However, even though

⁵⁸ "Women in the Middle East." Philip Rushworth 2012. http://www.al-bab.com/arab/articles/text/women_studies.htm, (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ "Islam: Governing under Sharia." Center for Foreign Relations. <http://www.cfr.org/religion-and-politics/islam-governing-under-sharia/p8034>, (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid 37 and 39.

⁶⁴ Ibid 39.

⁶⁵ Ibid 39.

⁶⁶ "Government Statistics: Legal Systems." Nationmaster.com. http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/gov_leg_sys-government-legal-system, (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁶⁷ Ibid 37

⁶⁸ "Turkey: Battle of the Headscarf." BBC News. July 2002.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/world/2002/islamic_world/2144316.stm, (Accessed July 3, 2013).

western ideology may blame the veil for the perceived submissiveness of women, the situation in Turkey has led to multiple citations from groups such as the Human Rights Watch.^{69 70}

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Member States that do not have secular governments recognize Islam as the official religion in their constitutions thus Shari'a law is the ultimate rule of the land in those countries. Member States such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen abide by, and enforce, Shari'a law as their legal basis.⁷¹ Saudi Arabia upholds one of the strictest understandings of the law and imposes regulations, specifically targeting women, that include the accompaniment by a male relative at all times. Thus, Saudi Arabia's interpretation of Shari'a law restricts females from traveling, conducting business, or even undergoing medical procedures without consent from a male "guardian." Women in Saudi Arabia must also cover all skin when in public, and as of 2011, it is illegal for women to drive.^{72 73}

Such competing ideals of secularism versus Islam continue to promote patriarchal societies that are engrained in all sectors of the Arab community and prohibit women from participating the economic and political arenas. If women are refused work because they prefer to wear a veil, or if they are unable to commute to and from work because it is illegal for them to drive, then gender disparity will continue within the MENA region.

Female Involvement in the Arab World

Due to the aforementioned traditional societal constructs and the prominent influences of Islam, the gender gap within the Arab community has historically been the most disheartening than any other region in the world. The Gender Gap Report 2012 examines the disparities between men and women of over 93 percent of the world's population.⁷⁴ The Report has established a complex methodology in ranking countries based on four primary areas: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health and survival. Out of these four indicators, the MENA region holds the last spot in economic participation and opportunity as well as political empowerment. "Eight of the ten lowest performing countries on the labour force participation and estimated earned income indicators are from the... (MENA) region, as are the four countries that have no women parliamentarians."⁷⁵ However, the region has made improvements in three areas. In 2012, Member States closed the total gender gap by over 59 percent, ranked second lowest in educational attainment, and ranked third place overall on health and survival.⁷⁶ Such success should easily correlate to the advancement of women within the various arenas of society. However, even though the region has bridged the gender gap by 59 percent, it has been unable to truly integrate the advancements made into tangible results, both overall and within the political and economic sectors.

Further significant improvements have been made in the past decade, specifically by wealthier MENA Member States, by investing in women's higher education. In Member States such as Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates enrollment rates for higher education institutions have experienced vast increases in female participants in which they have now exceeded men.⁷⁷ Lebanese scholar, Samir Kassir, argues that "the most decisive impetus' towards understanding and advocacy of women's rights' may have

⁶⁹ "Turkey: Battle of the Headscarf." BBC News. July 2002.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/world/2002/islamic_world/2144316.stm. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁷⁰ "Turkey: Headscarf Ruling Denies Women Education and Career." Human Rights Watch. November 16, 2005.

⁷¹ Ibid 39 and 45.

⁷² Ibid 39.

⁷³ "Saudi Arabia to Women: 'Don't Speak Up, We Know What's Best for You.'" Adam Coogle, Human Rights Watch. June 2013. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/06/26/saudi-arabia-women-dont-speak-we-know-whats-best-you>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁷⁴ "The Global Gender Gap Report 2012." World Economic Forum. <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2012>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

been the opening of universities to young women.”⁷⁸ Kassir is on the right track considering that many of the previously mentioned Member States also accumulated higher scores in the overall gender ranking. Many Member States experienced improvements in educational indicators; (primary, secondary, and tertiary) however, lost points due to decreases in areas such as earned income, wage equality, political participation, and labour force. Unfortunately, a trend has evolved in which Member States are allowing better access to education, but struggle to assimilate women back into society once they have become educated.⁷⁹ The Arab community has yet to develop a method in which it may reap the benefit and prosper from the involvement of women.

Member States such as Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen continue to be of the lowest ranking countries, both within the MENA region and throughout the world. Out of 135 states included in the Gender Gap report, Saudi Arabia ranked 131 overall, Syria-132, and Yemen finished off the entire report ranking at 135.⁸⁰ Additionally, Saudi Arabia is one of only two countries that received a ranking of zero in the political empowerment indicator and Yemen scored the lowest in education attainment in the region. Contrarily, Yemen may have been ranked as the worst country in overall gender equality, but Yemen also bridged its gender gap by 50 percent in 2012 making it one of the top ten most improved countries since being included in 2006.⁸¹ It is also interesting to identify the correlation between those Member States that ranked poorly on the index and the type of legal system that Member States incorporate into their national policies. As mentioned previously, Saudi Arabia and Yemen have adopted some of the most strict interpretations of Shari’a law and women within these Member States are practically denied participation within the political and economic fields, in addition to having some of the most substantial gaps in gender equality in the world.

Conclusion

Noting the successes and failures of the MENA region highlights the need for improved infrastructure at the local, national, regional, and international levels in order to further empower women to their greatest potential. Although the MENA region is notorious for many of the disparities outlined in this guide, significant progress has been made to bridge the equalities that prohibit women from being successful in any aspect of society. However, with the global economy shifting towards “talentism,” neither the MENA region nor the international community can afford to continue denying women the same opportunities as their male counterparts. The global market has the potential to increase up to 40 percent per worker just by removing unnecessary hurdles for women, and considering the recovery process the global economy is currently facing, we cannot continue to diminish half of the world’s workforce.

Dozens of international instruments and conventions have strived to address this disparity with much progress, but little results. From the International Bill of Human Rights to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the international community has attempted to develop cohesive solutions to empowering women. However, the fact that the international community and many of its resultant documents are based on voluntary involvement prevents necessary progress. Many Member States that have ratified the numerous international instruments designed to address gender equality have done so with extensive reservations that often counteract the goals of the initiative.

Other factors that have greatly impacted the role of women range from the historical traditions of the Arab region to the influence of the Islam and Shari’a law. Shari’a law and the Islamic faith has often been the target of criticism regarding the treatment of women, particularly from the West, but cannot be solely blamed for the current status of women in the region. The compilation of social, economic, political, and religious factors collectively have created a conservative, patriarchal society in the Arab community. Whether or not Member States incorporate Shari’a law,

⁷⁸ “The Global Gender Gap Report 2012.” World Economic Forum. <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2012>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁷⁹ Ibid 53.

⁸⁰ Ibid 53.

⁸¹ Ibid 53.

dual legal systems, or secular legal systems, the need to uphold human rights is critical and Member States from each legal category or government are guilty of such. This is further codified by the Gender Gap Report which highlights the severity of the gender parity within Arab community. As the worst region for gender equality in the world, the MENA region must address the critical levers that are preventing the progress of women within the economic and political arenas.

Committee Directive

Delegates of the League of Arab States have an extremely challenging road ahead of them as they embark upon one of the most controversial topics within the Arab region. This topic is sensitive in nature as it questions the social, economic, and political constructs that have existed within the region for hundreds of years. Empowering women is not something that will occur over night and will require delegates' perseverance and creativity as they develop strategies and solutions for the issues at hand.

As delegates prepare for this topic, they should begin by identifying the past and present status of women within their designated Member States. As mentioned previously, Member States often follow similar trends; however, the variations are significant. Thus, when preparing their Member States' position paper, delegates should identify the role of women within their country and the progress that has been made to promote gender quality within their state. It is important to include which international documents that their country has ratified and whether or not they have entered any reservations. Position papers should also specifically outline how delegates intend to further incorporate women within the economic and political arenas.

Delegates need to consider the influence of Islam and Shari'a law within their national policies and how that directly affects a woman's ability to explore economic and political opportunities. Considering the significance and abundance of religious influences in the region, the League of Arab States must devise methods that protect the rights' of women while maintaining the integrity of the Islamic faith and the Arab community. Delegates should consider the role of the public and private spheres and whether or not their relationship could aid the empowerment of women in various aspects. Delegates are encouraged to be creative and think outside the box as the committee works towards a topic that has been discussed for decades with no mechanisms of accountability. As daunting as this task may seem, delegates have the opportunity to make a difference in the discourse surrounding female empowerment and equal opportunities within the MENA region.

II: Examining the Impacts and Opportunities of the Arab Spring on the Region's Sustainable Development Agenda

Introduction

In December of 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian who lived off the fruits and vegetables he sold to the public, immolated himself after local police took his produce for not having a license to sell.⁸² His decision to commit suicide was a way to protest and demonstrate the government's inaction when addressing the high unemployment affecting the country. Bouazizi's life-ending event sparked widespread discontent, as many others were also affected by the high unemployment. Since then, Member States throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region have undergone, are currently going through, or were faced with a prospect of political change within their own governments. Known as the Arab Spring, or Arab Awakening for the public uprising aiming at the democratization of government, a striking number of MENA Member States have been affected by the Arab Spring; including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.

It is interesting to note that most of the Member States in the MENA region have high levels of unemployment. According to the Arab Human Development Report of 2012, one of the causes of the Arab unrest is "low labor participation."⁸³ It further states that because of the increasing number of unemployed youth currently and possibly in the near future, addressing this issue is of utmost importance to the leaders of the region if they are to maintain a happy populace free of political discontent.

As mentioned, most of the Arab States have been affected by the event of December 2010; however, it should be noted that many face different degrees of political change by the Arab Spring, ranging from the toppling governments, to mass protests. For this topic, the LAS is particularly focused on addressing how the events of the Arab Spring have, and/or will, affect political and social progress towards the concept of sustainable development. Member States are faced with the difficult task of maintaining political stability, while at the same time providing a substantial amount of social services to its populace, such as access to clean water, food security, and employment. The LAS shall use the definition of sustainable development (SD) from Our Common Future, resolution A/42/427, which states that "Sustainable Development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."⁸⁴ As the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, it is imperative for the Member States to collectively address SD for all, while at the same time appeasing the populace during times of political instability.

The impacts of the Arab Spring have shed light on the lack of employment and political stability in the region. Its opportunities pave the way for a new kind of overall, common progress that can bring prosperity to every citizen of the Arab region, and be an important sector of SD progress at the global stage. If the Member States are to prove their worth globally, they are to reassess their approach to regional cooperation, as well as policy implementation.

Understanding the Arab Spring

Although there is not one specific reason as to why the self-immolation of Bouazizi caused such transnational movement for democracy, scholars, government officials, and others have given their own conclusions for the start of this 21st century event. Taking into consideration the common understanding that the primary driver of the Arab Spring was the establishment of a democratic government through legitimate representation, there are other possible explanations for this widespread movement. Two of the common characteristics among most states in the MENA region are its high youth population and overall unemployment. It is not a coincidence that Bouazizi was unable to find employment, and therefore resorted to being a street vendor – something that provides little to no financial solvency. Others like him have also been subject to low economic opportunities, as many have resorted to public demonstrations in demand for a better life.

⁸² Whitaker, Brian. *How a man setting fire to himself sparked an uprising in Tunisia*, (The Guardian, 28 Dec 2010), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/dec/28/tunisia-ben-ali>. (Accessed July 3, 2013).

⁸³ Mirkin, Barry, *Arab Human Development Report Research Paper Series 2013, Demographics in a Region in Transition*, (Regional Bureau for Arab States: United Nations Development Programme, 2013), <http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdrps/AHDR%20ENG%20Arab%20Spring%20Mirkinv3.pdf>

⁸⁴ *Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development*, (Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development)

In addition to unemployment, food insecurity and water scarcity have been considered by organizations such as the International Food Policy Research Institute and observers alike as major catalysts for the political protests.⁸⁵ As precipitation levels reach “a permanently drier condition,” it has become ever more difficult for farmers, both rural and urban, to grow their own produce.⁸⁶ Due to a lower food supply, as well as an increase in water shortages from higher temperatures, Member States must address these issues in preventing further political conflict, and the implications it has for the region’s sustainable development. As the *Food Security and Food Sovereignty in the Middle East Summary Report* states, “as the dramatic events of the Arab Spring have shown, the availability of food at affordable prices, or lack thereof, continues to be one of the most salient features of the economic, social, and political landscapes across the Arab world and the Middle East.”⁸⁷

Warnings of drier climate and its possible consequences were made by the World Bank in 2001, as it said that “the (Syrian) Government will need to recognize that achieving food security with respect to wheat and other cereals” is threatening available groundwater resources.⁸⁸ Twelve years later, and the world is witnessing Syria undergo a two year conflict that has already taken over 90,000 lives.⁸⁹ The Arab Spring has been caused by different factors, including food insecurity, democracy, financial stability, and unemployment. Member States of the LAS must consider public demands for employment, democratic representation, financial stability, and food security if SD is to be fully considered for the region’s overall well-being.

Political Economic Implications of the Arab Spring

Youth Unemployment

The Arab Spring has showed that the region suffers from inequalities of many sorts. Among those is its high youth population. With estimates seeing the number of children and youth increasing from its current 192 to 217 million by 2050, governments must address this challenge before it gets more difficult to resolve.⁹⁰ Despite efforts to accommodate more and more youth people with employment, government policies have clearly not been enough. In order decrease the almost 30 percent figure of youth unemployment in the region, Barry Mirkin, former Chief of the Population Policy Section of the United Nations and author of the *Arab Human Development Report, Demographics in a Region in Transition*, states that “twelve million additional jobs need to be created by 2025.”⁹¹

In financial terms, the MENA region is divided in two distinct groups, oil-importing and oil-exporting. Those that are oil-exporting oftentimes have the resources and financial capital to sustain outside shocks to their national economy. On the other hand, oil-importing Member States are dependent on outside markets for their daily needs. Oftentimes, these oil-importing Member States lack employment opportunities, leading its citizens to leave the country for a better life elsewhere. The most often location for migration is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Member States.⁹² The GCC includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and the Sultanate of Oman.⁹³ Although some of these are not as economically competitive when compared to others in the GCC, such as the comparison between Bahrain to Qatar, they employ many non-GCC individuals from the MENA region.

⁸⁵ Molly McGregor, *The Power of Food Insecurity*, (Washington University Political Review, 2013), <http://www.wupr.org/2013/05/25/the-power-of-food-insecurity/>. (Accessed June 11, 2013).

⁸⁶ Mohtadi, Shahrzad, *Climate Change and the Syrian Uprising*, (Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2012), <http://thebulletin.org/climate-change-and-syrian-uprising>. (Accessed June 11, 2013).

⁸⁷ *Food Security and Food Sovereignty in the Middle East, Working Group Summary Report*, (Doha, Georgetown University’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, 2012), <http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/qatar/cirs/FoodSecuritySummaryReport.pdf>

⁸⁸ Ibid 5.

⁸⁹ *Syria death toll at 93,000, UN Reports*, (CBC News – World, 2013), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2013/06/13/syria-death-toll.html>. (Accessed June 11, 2013).

⁹⁰ Ibid 2.

⁹¹ Ibid 2.

⁹² *Arab Migrant Communities in the GCC: Background*, (Center for International and Regional Studies, George University School of Foreign Service), <http://cirs.georgetown.edu/research/302942.html>. (Accessed June 11, 2013).

⁹³ *GCC Countries*, (His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum), <http://www.sheikhmohammed.com/vgn-ext-templating/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=b10a4c8631cb4110VgnVCM100000b0140a0aRCRD>. (Accessed June 11, 2013).

An interesting trend has emerged in recent years furthering the employment strain on many Member States in the Arab region. Instead of continuing to hire more of its own people, or from the overall MENA region, GCC Member States have had a “growing preference for South Asian workers.”⁹⁴ This sudden change in employment preferences has the potential to further exacerbate political pressures in Member States – especially oil-importing ones – as they are faced with an unhappy populace unable to find employment, whether it is at home or abroad in the region.

According to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, tackling youth unemployment “will directly contribute to the promotion of environmentally-sustainable development and poverty eradication.”⁹⁵ With possible foreign direct investment and assistance from international organization, Member States have the opportunity to create green jobs for its youth that will benefit the general public and the environment. Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for the Arab States International Labor Organization (ILO), informs that “we must tap into the region’s youthful potential,” as she says that they “are increasingly more and better educated,” but without opportunities for employment.⁹⁶ In providing a comprehensive regional approach, the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States is focusing on “strategies that reduce emissions, promote energy efficiency and improve waste management.”⁹⁷ In order to provide efficient green job training to the different Member States of the League, the ILO states that “there is a lack of reliable labor market data in the Arab States and indicators such as unemployment remain contentious.”⁹⁸ Without a reliable set of data, the ILO’s ability to provide effective labor monitoring and employment services decreases.

As people are denied, or have a difficult time accessing good employment, they are less able to send remittances back home. This has the potential of further impacting social unrest, especially in Member States who have or are undergoing a governmental change, as they are attempting to maintain or establish social order. Although recent trends show an increase in remittances to the MENA region, those are primarily driven by the Gulf Cooperation Council, and not as much by the oil-importing countries of Egypt, among others.⁹⁹ Therefore, the League of Arab States and its Member States must adequately address the unemployment issue to have a concrete SD plan for the region by “creating viable jobs for young people [as] a precondition for poverty eradication, sustainable development, and peace.”¹⁰⁰

Foreign Direct Investment

Some consequences set forth by the Arab Spring, such as political conflict and street violence for example, have created a deterrence effect for businesses in those Member States that have gone through, or are currently experiencing the Arab Spring. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is defined by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as “an investment made to acquire interest in enterprises operating outside of the economy of the investor.”¹⁰¹ Although recent projects indicate that FDI has decreased and will remain flat in 2013, scholars at the Vale Columbia Center on Sustainable International Development indicate that “if political transitions in the region are democratic and coupled with political stability, the Arab Spring could increase FDI and contribute to economic development in the region.”¹⁰²

The importance of FDI to SD is explained by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (ISSD). According to ISSD, “well planned, high quality foreign investment in developed and developing countries can help

⁹⁴ Ibid 2.

⁹⁵ *Jobs and the Issue of Youth Unemployment*, (Rio+20, United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012), <http://www.unctad2012.org/index.php?page=view&nr=755&type=230&menu=38>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

⁹⁶ *Social Justice for a New Arab Era – Regional Office for the Arab States Development Results*, (International Labor Organization, 2010-2011), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_211215.pdf

⁹⁷ Ibid 14.

⁹⁸ Ibid 14.

⁹⁹ Ibid 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid 2.

¹⁰¹ *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)*, (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), [http://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/Foreign-Direct-Investment-\(FDI\).aspx](http://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/Foreign-Direct-Investment-(FDI).aspx), (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹⁰² O’Sullivan, Anthony and Alexander Bohmer, *The Arab Awakening, act II: Time to move more boldly on investment*, (Columbia FDI Perspectives, Vale Columbia Center on Sustainable International Investment, May 2013), <http://www.vcc.columbia.edu/content/arab-awakening-act-ii-time-move-more-boldly-investment>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

make current economic practices more sustainable.”¹⁰³ A recent example of sustainable investment (SI) was done by the UAE in 2012, as during the World Economic Forum in Dubai, the oil-rich state presented plans on diversifying its energy sector from predominantly oil and gas to one being shared with green and nuclear energy.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, in order for FDI to be effective sustainably, it must be sustainably focused. The World Wildlife Forum (WWF) states that there is usually a negative correlation between FDI and sustainable development; however, if investment is focused in the SD sector, then great strides are possible for the Member States of the Arab League.¹⁰⁵

It is noted that “the decline of foreign direct investment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) [went] from USD 63 billion in 2010 to USD 39 billion by the end of 2011.”¹⁰⁶ With FDI also decreasing in 2012, there were several potential reasons for such decline. The weak financial recovery from the United States, European countries, as well as investor confidence in the Arab region due to political instability are just a few. It should also be noted that not only are investors driven away by political violence and instability, but so are international aid groups, which risk the lives of their workers in these politically and socially volatile regions. As a result, this decreases the possibility for these transition countries to have a quick and successful economic recovery. As Anthony O’Sullivan and Alexander Bohmer of the Vale Columbia Center explain, “two years after the Arab Awakening, risks for investors in the region are still high.”¹⁰⁷ To this scenario, Member States should address the issue of restoring investor confidence without compromising their own political agenda. The difficulty lies in simultaneously ensuring political stability and economic growth for employment opportunities aimed at SD for the region.

The Advent of Democracy and Human Rights

The protests that followed the self-immolation of Boazizi aimed at establishing democratic governments in their respective countries. While some Member States succeeded in doing so, like Egypt after ending 31 years of rule under Hosni Mubarak, others, such as Bahrain, continue to be ruled by a monarchy. King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa of Bahrain, as a response to protests, established the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) to investigate the “government’s response to pro-democracy demonstrations in February and March 2011.”¹⁰⁸ The BICI findings showed that the government had used excessive force against protestors, as well as arresting, torturing, and denying them fair trials.¹⁰⁹

According to Human Rights Watch, in order to have an effective rights-respecting state, the establishment, or improvement of effective institutions of governance, such as independent courts and a working police force, must be present. Moreover, various freedoms, such as speech and association, have been restricted through “legislation, fines, and arrests” in the MENA region.¹¹⁰ In discussing gender equality, widespread discrimination is still present throughout the region despite advances in Tunisia and Saudi Arabia. In countries such as Libya, reports have noted that Sub-Saharan African workers have been mistreated, with “women and girls being beaten and raped.”¹¹¹ However, Morocco has made substantial progress in gender equality. Recent human rights reforms in the North African country include the “civil and social equality [of women] with men,” something notable to point out as political conflict has decreased considerably.¹¹²

In the country of Yemen, former President Ali Abdullah Saleh left office in February 2012 after a number of states brokered an accord for his departure. As part of that accord, Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi was designated as a “two-

¹⁰³ *Investment and Sustainable Development*, (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2013), <http://www.iisd.org/investment/>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ *World Energy Forum host UAE leads sustainable energy investment*, (Eco-Business, 2012), <http://www.eco-business.com/news/world-energy-forum-host-uae-leads-sustainable-energy-investment/>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹⁰⁵ Narula, Kapil, ‘Sustainable Investing’ via the FDI route for sustainable development, (International Conference on Emerging Economies – Prospects and Challenges, 2012), <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042812007501>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid 22.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid 22.

¹⁰⁸ *World Report 2013*, (Human Rights Watch: Country Chapters, Bahrain), <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/bahrain>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Bakrania, Shivit, *The Arab Spring and its Impact on Human Rights in the MENA Region*, (Governance and Social Development Resource Centre), <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HDQ748.pdf>

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

year transition president.”¹¹³ To demonstrate his accountability for human rights violations, President Hadi mandated an independent commission to investigate human rights violations during the uprisings. Despite substantive progress towards human rights recognition, reports have found that government and opposition forces “deploy[ed] children [in 2012] to patrol streets, guard checkpoints, and sometimes fight, in violation of international prohibitions against the use of children in armed conflict.”¹¹⁴ In addition, Yemen ranks 169 out of a possible 180 in the World Press Freedom Index for 2013.¹¹⁵ The call for the human rights recognition by people throughout the MENA region will improve their ability to access food, education, employment, and political participation, just to name a few. According to the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the recognition of human rights is essential for sustainable development.¹¹⁶

Role of Food and Water in the Arab Spring and the MENA region

According to the Arab Forum for Environment and Development, “the region is swiftly transitioning to a future that is increasingly water and food-constrained,” as it needs to urgently address its growing water and food crises for the benefit of its citizens.¹¹⁷ This opportunity is imperative for the League of Arab States and the Arab World to establish and/or maintain reliable and effective SD projects in the region. With appropriate technology or data sharing programs, these SD projects can provide effective farming and irrigation techniques to alleviate the growing water and food crises. Furthermore, taking advantage of this opportunity can demonstrate the willingness and potential Arab States have in tackling issues related to sustainable development and set the foundation for future generations to address development issues more readily. As most Member States in the Arab League are highly dependent on food imports, Egypt and Tunisia, for example, are once again vulnerable to external events that can potentially cause further social unrest and political instability.¹¹⁸

An example of unregulated water use is seen in the Syria of Hafez al-Assad, current leader Bashar al-Assad’s father, who began denying farming licenses to Kurdish people in the northeastern part of the country in an attempt to keep them underdeveloped. As a result, the Kurdish people illegally dug wells without any kind of regulations, and have therefore decreased groundwater reserves.¹¹⁹ Member States should therefore consider policy aimed at providing adequate regulation to decreasing resources in order to maintain a happy populace and follow the definition of SD as mentioned earlier by Our Common Future. In addition, weather events, such as droughts and dust storms throughout the world have threatened levels of food imports into the region. This is true in the case of western China, which endured droughts and dust storms in the spring of 2010 that lasted well into 2011, affecting nearly “7 million hectares of winter wheat and other crops” that were to be exported to outside markets including the Arab World.¹²⁰

By having “little arable land and scarce water supplies, the Middle East and North Africa region imports more food per capital than any other, accounting for 25-50 percent of national consumption.”¹²¹ This puts Member States at great risk, and should therefore pursue sustainable farming practices that will reduce their dependency on food imports. In addressing the opportunities of the Arab Spring, those within the LAS have the opportunity to establish or improve warning mechanisms of unusual weather patterns that have the potential of preventing further depletion of water sources for farming production. In efforts to specialize and delegate the work of agricultural issues, the Arab League established the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) in 1970. Headquartered in

¹¹³ *World Report 2012*, (Human Rights Watch: Country Chapters, Yemen), <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/yemen>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁵ *Press Freedom Index 2010, 2011-2012, and 2013*, (Reporters without Borders, for Freedom of Information), http://en.rsf.org/spip.php?page=classement&id_rubrique=1043, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹¹⁶ *Human Rights and Sustainable Development*, (International Institute for Sustainable Development), <http://www.iisd.org/youth/ysbk040.htm>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹¹⁷ *Informational Note and Programme for a Side Event on: Food Security and Safety for Development in a Changing Arab World*, (Arab Forum for Environment and Development: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012), <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/337Info%20note%20%20Agenda%20fin.pdf>

¹¹⁸ Geewax, Marilyn, *Rising Food Prices Can Topple Governments, Too*, (National Public Radio: Economy), <http://www.npr.org/2011/01/30/133331809/rising-food-prices-can-topple-governments-too>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid* 5.

¹²⁰ Johnstone, Sarah and Jeffrey Mazo, *Global Warming and the Arab Spring*, (Survival: Global Politics and Strategy, 2011), <http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2011-2760/survival--global-politics-and-strategy-april-may-2011-fbe8/53-2-03-johnstone-and-mazo-9254>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹²¹ *Ibid*.

Khartoum, Sudan, the AOAD is responsible for assisting Member States in developing their agricultural sectors, while facilitating coordination “with the aim of achieving a fully integrated Arab economy union, and food self-sufficiency.”¹²² As one of AOAD’s primary concerns is to employ agricultural capacities in the Arab countries in order to ensure that the “rights of generations to come are well-safeguarded,” the organization works to educate Member States about the importance of water conservation, and advocating for research into “developing plan varieties that require limited amounts of irrigation water,” among many other things. In its *Strategy for Sustainable Arab Agriculture Development for the Upcoming Two Decades (2005-2015)*, the AOAD informs that enhancing the rural employment sector in order to accommodate a rising number of unemployed, as well as meet food security demands is a viable course for the region to take. However, recent attempts to enhance the capacities of the rural sector have not been as promising, with preference being placed in the urban sector.¹²³

Political conflict also affects food production, as it has the potential of preventing a farmer or pastoralist from continuing to work. More importantly, the environmental impact caused by wars should be addressed when discussing possible solutions to food and water scarcity. With GCC countries highly dependent on oil for their economies, prospects for agricultural growth are reduced, while innovative and technological ideas are lost.¹²⁴ When considering examples of the kind of impact wars can have on the environment, some include “contamination from bombing of industrial sites, deliberate natural resource destruction, [as well as] military debris and demolition waste from targeted infrastructure.”¹²⁵ In relation to the food and water shortages, Member States must also consider the potentiality of resource conflicts. This has in the past, and can in the future further complicate local conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, who compete for arable land due to limited rainfall. If Member States are able to improve their policies towards addressing food insecurity and water shortages, they are likely to improve poverty levels within their own countries while at the same time providing more employment opportunities to their citizens.¹²⁶ Isotopic technologies used to find underground water have been effective. According to the *Environmental Research Letters* journal, “approximately 660 thousand cubic kilometers of groundwater [are found] throughout Africa,” with most of the reserves under Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Libya, and Sudan.¹²⁷ However, extracting these reserves is difficult, as they are 100 to 250 meters underground. Member States must have a “better understanding of individualized local groundwater conditions, and proper management practices” to prevent uncontrollable extraction and mismanagement.¹²⁸

The need for Regional Cooperation through Arab League

The Middle East and Northern Africa has unique characteristics. On one end, the oil-exporting countries of Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, among others, perform exceptionally well on international markets and provide social services to many of its citizens while maintaining a good degree of political and social stability. On the other end, the oil-importing countries of Egypt, Sudan, and Syria, just to name a few, are often in the mid to lower scale of national performance scales on issues like environmentalism, attractiveness to foreign investment, and political stability.

Although these Member States are different in several economic, social, and cultural factors, they are all directly, or indirectly affected by the events unfolding from the Arab Spring. States like Iraq and Sudan, which lack economic prosperity like the UAE and Qatar for example, have received “no coordinated regional reaction” when addressing the impact of war on the environment.¹²⁹ Instead, a new focus should be placed on the potential work the Arab League can be a part of for its Member States. Engaging the less developed states of the League into the discussion

¹²² *Introduction*, (Arab Organization for Agricultural Development), http://www.aoad.org/about_en.htm, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹²³ *Strategy for Sustainable Arab Agricultural Development for Upcoming Two Decades (2005-2025)*, (League of Arab States, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, 2007), <http://www.aoad.org/strategy/straenglish.pdf>

¹²⁴ Partow, Hassan, *Environmental Impact of Wars and Conflicts*, (Arab Forum for Environment and Development), <http://www.afedonline.org/afedreport/english/book12.pdf>

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ McKenzie, Scott. *A Watery Problem – Arab Spring countries and Sustainable Development*, (Global Policy: Wiley-Blackwell, Aug 2012), <http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/02/08/2012/watery-problem-%E2%80%94-arab-spring-countries-and-sustainable-development>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid* 20.

of unemployment, food and water scarcity, and regional conflict, with those that are developed has the potential of benefiting every citizen of the League regardless of their political, social, or educational background.

Despite perceived differences amongst the Member States, the League has done formidable work in its quest for sustainable development. Considering past UN resolutions and conferences, such as the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as Rio Earth Summit), the League of Arab States adopted a comprehensive regional approach to SD through its Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), titled the “Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region” (SDIAR). Tasked with the responsibility of “addressing the key challenges faced by the Arab Countries in achieving sustainable development,” Member States have the opportunity to work on different issues, including a green economy; agriculture, rural livelihoods and food security, water security, among others.

Case Study - Egypt

With the recent ousting of former leader Mohamed Morsi, the Egyptian government has undergone a tremendous amount of political and social change in the last few years. A main public focus in this Arab Spring has been the recognition of human rights. As the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development states, “human rights are at the center of concerns for sustainable development.”¹³⁰

Therefore, it is imperative for the Egyptian government to pursue a pro-human rights agenda if it plans to implement SD for its people. This call for human rights is further seen with the first major protest that took place in January 2011, where thousands in Tahrir Square called for “bread, freedom and human dignity.”¹³¹ Currently, prospects for a positive view on human rights by the Egyptian government are not as positive as expected. As non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important part in the development of people, whether it be through food aid or health care, the government of Egypt is threatening to restrict the work of NGOs who receive foreign funds.¹³² Additionally, when it comes to providing press freedom, Egypt dropped from its rank of 127 in 2010, to 158 in 2013, according to the NGO Reporters without Borders.¹³³ Furthermore, with President Morsi having called for the investigation of police and military abuses during the 2011-2012 protests, recent leaks of such report inform of the “use of live gunfire against protesters in Alexandria and Suez.”¹³⁴

With its people pursuing a democratic government, the political conflict negatively affected FDI inflows into the country. Western investors pulled USD 5.5 billion out of the Cairo stock market in the second quarter of 2011. Also, the country saw “a reversal in foreign direct investment from a positive balance of USD 1.8bn in 2010 to a negative one of USD 200m in the six months following the January 25 Revolution.”¹³⁵

In addition to its decreased amounts of FDI, the Egyptian government is further impacted by its high dependency on food imports. In 2010, the now former Minister of Agriculture, Amin Abaza, noted that the country “imported 40 percent of its total foodstuffs and 60 percent of its wheat.”¹³⁶ It must also be noted that Egypt would benefit by improving its people’s accessibility and affordability of foods imports as another stepping stone to a fulfilling life.¹³⁷ The Egyptian people also face an increasing water scarcity problem, according to Riad Aldamk of the Cairo College of Engineering. As agriculture in Egypt uses 70 percent of all water, and with thousands of Egyptians now

¹³⁰ *Background Note: Human Rights Essential Role for Sustainable Development*, (United Nations: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/SP/BNSustainableDevelopment.pdf>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹³¹ Beck, Martin and Simone Huser, *Explanations for the Arab Spring*, (Denmark: Syddask Universitet, Center for Mellemoststudier), <http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles/8/4/7/%7B8479FC20-0E69-49F2-9B00-46E371467364%7DDB0113.pdf>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹³² Roth, Kenneth, *Egypt’s NGO Funding Crackdown*, (Human Rights Watch), <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/09/egypt-s-ngo-funding-crackdown>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹³³ *Ibid* at 23.

¹³⁴ *Egypt: Release Report on Abuse of Protesters*, (Human Rights Watch), <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/12/egypt-release-report-abuse-protesters>

¹³⁵ *Ibid* at 21.

¹³⁶ Salem, Metwali and Hesham Yassin, *Minister: Egypt imports 40 percent of its food*, (Egypt Independent), <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/minister-egypt-imports-40-its-food>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹³⁷ *Egypt*, (Food and Agricultural Organization), <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/Y4632E/y4632e0c.htm>

protesting the water shortages, experts are calling for a change to traditional irrigation methods, and better solutions to this increasing problem.¹³⁸

Moreover, when Egypt was under the leadership of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) after ousting Hosni Mubarak, it was decided that the country would forgo international aid from the International Monetary Fund at a great bargain that would have substantially benefited the country. Instead, SCAF accrued large amounts of debt in claims of nationalism and independence from outside assistance.¹³⁹ Additionally, the Egyptian people lack a competitive edge internationally, as further education and jobs training are needed to maintain and increase investor confidence in the country.¹⁴⁰ With a strong and stable economy, the Egyptian government, as is true of other governments, will lure investment for green technologies, and provide its people with employment opportunities in a needed farming and water management sector.

Conclusion

December 2010 marked an important day for the Middle East and North Africa. As the self-immolation of Bouazizi occurred, the growing economic and social disparities evident throughout the region were exposed. The movement for democratic governments is based on several factors, including employment, human rights, and food and water. With the Middle East and North Africa being home to a variety of states both in terms of political structure and economic might, among others, a common solution that is country-specific but regionally structured is a main task of this committee. Member States of the Arab League have the opportunity during this session to uphold the values of the League and institute or continue to improve a viable framework aimed at analyzing the impact of the Arab Spring in the region's sustainable development.

Committee Directive

As SD “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” how will Member States lower unemployment levels, despite lacking a strong economic sector for foreign companies?¹⁴¹ Is economic growth with sustainable development possible? Can food insecurity and water scarcity be adequately addressed despite mounting financial problems? If not, how can GCC states provide employment skills training, and the sharing of technologies for greener growth despite historical differences in religion and other factors? Is the Arab Spring over? Member States must put their historical differences aside in order to find a common comprehensive solution that will work towards maintaining adequate and equitable SD for those in the League. By using already established LAS organizations such as CAMRE, AOAD, and SDIAR, and international ones such as ILO, just to name a few, then Member States can incorporate the needs the Arab Spring exposed in their countries towards attaining a sustainable livelihood that is comprehensive and equitable to all its citizens for the present and future.

¹³⁸ *EGYPT: Growing protests over water shortages*, (IRIN, Humanitarian News and Analysis), <http://www.irinnews.org/report/89981/egypt-growing-protests-over-water-shortages>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹³⁹ Springborg, Robert, *The Precarious Economics of Arab Springs*, (Survival: Global Politics and Strategy, 2011), <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00396338.2011.636271>, (Accessed June 11, 2013).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid 58.

¹⁴¹ Ibid 3.

Technical Appendix Guide (TAG)

I: Achieving Gender Diversity: Incorporating the Role of Women in the Economic and Political Arenas

Arabstats: Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR). Arab Human Development Reports (AHDR) - United Nations Development Programme. <http://www.undp.org/content/ahdr/en/home/statistical-data/pogar.html>
This is a great place for delegates attain reliable statistics sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme on Governance in the Arab Region, a leading statistical indicator for human development. With the MDGs deadline rapidly approaching, this website offers a “cross-country comparison of progress not only toward the millennium goals but to structural changes in governance and other indicators that will make human development sustainable in the region.”

Solovieva, Daria. “Egyptian Women’s Revolution, Interrupted: Sexual Violence against Women Accompanies Political Upheaval in Cairo.” International Business Times. 27 July 2013. <http://www.ibtimes.com/egyptian-womens-revolution-interrupted-sexual-violence-against-women-accompanies-political-upheaval>

Are you aware of the amazing strides the women in Egypt are making in the women’s revolution? We often concentrate so much on the violence against them and the suppression of their rights, but what about all of the small victories they have accomplished so far? Take a look at this news article and hopefully it will get delegates thinking about the impact of gender equality and the political process for the region.

Arab Human Rights Index, “Weblinks: Rights of Women”.

<http://www.arabhumanrights.org/en/resources/weblinks.aspx?t=11> (Accessed August 3, 2013)

This website is a compilation of organizations and policies regarding the women’s rights from a number of Arab States. The document provides links to organizations like the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq and the National Union of Moroccan Women. This resource will be helpful to delegates by giving them a number of entities, organizations, and policies that can serve as examples for programs to be built.

UNESCO, “Arab Youth: Civic Engagement & Economic Participation”

<http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/pdf/YCE%20EN.pdf> (Accessed August 3, 2013)

This UNESCO document focuses on the empowerment of youth in order to make global change. Through a compilation of articles addressing challenges in social transformations and policy development, the document seeks to offer a number of perspectives from a number of experts across the LAS Member States on how to engage Arab youth. This document will aide delegates in understanding the larger role of youth in achieving gender diversity and equality, and how working with Arab youth in early stages will offer a direct path to achieve these goals.

Office for the High Commission for Human Rights, “Arab States Region State of Art”.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/Discussion2011/RegionalConsultationAmmanJan2013.pdf>
(Accessed August 3, 2013)

This report from UN Women is a result of a Regional Consultation on recommendations for women human rights in situations of conflict/post conflict. Through the lens of conflict/post-conflict situations, the document discusses the instances and implications of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and a number of “Arab Spring” movements that have surfaced. As it is tailored to the needs and issues of LAS Member States, this resource will present actual research conducted and recommendations made allowing delegates to measure their effectiveness and/or rehash some of the ideas made.

Division for the Advancement of Women, “Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes, with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership” <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/eql-men/FinalReport.pdf> (Accessed August 3, 2013)

This report, published by the Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), discusses the ever evident issue of women having equal participation in leadership opportunities. The report quantifies where women stand in particularly figures on women in executive positions, in parliament, and women in decision-making bodies.

Although not directly discussing the LAS, this resource will allow delegates to see the issue on the global scale and how it is something to be strived for in both developed and developing states alike.

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), “Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States: Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World” <http://www.arabicpbeyond2014.org/en/index.php> (Accessed August 3, 2013)

This is the main website for the ICPD Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States that occurred this past June in Cairo. This site offers basic information on what was to be discussed including the background, agenda, and themes for the conference. This resource will be helpful to delegates as they are able to get insight on what work was to be addressed at this conference and find key themes and players that they are able to further research on.

National Democratic Institute, “Women’s Political Participation” <http://www.ndi.org/womens-political-participation> (Accessed August 3, 2013)

This article by the National Democratic Institute highlights the importance of Women’s Political Participation in the global community. Highlighting progresses made in a number of Member States including a call to action in Bahrain and a women’s conference in Iraq, the article is divided into a Women in parliament, peacemaking and transitional governments, coalitions for women politicians, Women’s Political Party Leadership, and examples of global initiatives. This source will provide delegates with a number of stories, publications, topics, and research for further realms of research.

II: Examining the Impacts and Opportunities of the Arab Spring on the Region’s Sustainable Development Agenda

Amer Al-Roubaie. “Building Knowledge Capacity for Sustainable Development in the Arab World.” *International Journal of Innovation and Knowledge Management in Middle East & North Africa*. (Vol. 2 No. 1, 2013): 1-14.

This paper builds on previous literature on knowledge capacity towards sustainable development in the Arab world. Furthermore, it emphasizes on the need for developing countries in the Arab world to have a better understanding of development strategies in technology absorption, information dissemination and institutional building. By highlighting the need for some Arab states to incorporate better knowledge strategies, Member States will be better able to develop comprehensive and effective strategies that are either long- or short-term.

Arab Environment for Green Economy, Sustainable Transition in a Changing Arab World 2011. Arab Forum for Environment and Development (2011): 1-321.

This article focuses on the relationships between economic development, social equity, and environmental sustainability, and its possible benefits towards the future of the Arab world. Pointing to its extractive and unsustainable oil export market, this report calls for energy diversity within the Arab states in order to ensure a sustainable long-term model. Member States will be better able to understand what is needed in terms of attaining a green model for sustainable growth in its investment, agricultural, and employment needs.

Atef Hamdy. “Water Crisis and Food Security in the Arab World: The Future Challenges.” *Water Resources Management, Ciheam/IAM Bary, Italy*: 1-27.

This report focuses on the current water crisis facing the Arab region. By utilizing statistical figures and charts, Member States can better visualize and understand the current and future need facing their people. This PowerPoint-style report by Mr. Hamdy provides a better roadmap for the LAS, as by including statistics on water resource availability in the Arab world for the years 2003-2050, long-term policy can be better implemented that incorporates different facets of the sustainable development model.

Dr. Riccardo Mesiano. "Green Jobs for Youth Unemployment in the Arab Region." *United Nations: Economic and Social Commission for Western Africa (UN-ESCWA)*: 1-36.

This report by Dr. Mesiano looks at current Arab youth demographical statistics, providing the reader with a better understanding of the employment need the region currently faces. The report goes on to say that the transition towards a green economy holds much promise, and if executed, can alleviate many out of poverty.

Ibrahim Abdel Gelil. "The Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region: Third Progress Report." *League of Arab States: CAMRE (Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment)* (2011): 1-59.

This very useful report provides substantial information into League of Arab States (LAS) initiatives in the field of sustainable development. By analyzing the effectiveness of projects since the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Member States will be better able to incorporate today's challenges into yesterday's lessons for a better Arab future. A thorough background of sustainable development initiatives is given, from the Arab Environmental Outlook Report, Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region (SDIAR), to the Joint Committee for Environment and Development in the Arab Countries (JCEDAR).

Jad Chaaban. "Job Creation in the Arab Economies: Navigating Through Difficult Waters." *Arab Human Development Report* (2010): 1-43.

This article discusses the current employment challenges facing the Arab region. With over 300 million inhabitants, it is important to understand that no single market unites the Arab region, as multiple markets dominate it instead. Moreover, by focusing primarily on the role of youth in employment, Member States will be better able to tackle overall unemployment figures. This report provides better understanding into the diversity, potential, and current youth challenges facing the people of the region.

Khalid Abu-Ismaïl et al. "Development Challenges for the Arab Region: Food Security and Agriculture." *United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS)*. (Vol. 2, 2009): 1-72.

This article provides Member States with background information on the food insecurity trends found in the Arab region; by analyzing these trends, the article discusses its implications for overall Arab well-being for the present and future. As these development challenges are better understood, policymakers will be better able to manifest long-term rather than short-term solutions to the region's food insecurity problem.

World Investment Report 2012 Overview: Towards a New Generation of Investment Policies. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. New York and Geneva: United Nations. 2012. 1-48.

This article provides insight into investment policy, and its current challenge of incorporating sustainability into its development strategy worldwide. It focuses particularly into the UNCTAD Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development, and the pressing and ongoing social and environmental crises happening today. From this 2012 Overview, delegates will be better able to understand recent investment trends with particular interest in the Middle East and Northern Africa region, as well as the role sustainable development is having in investment policymaking.