



NEWSLETTER

Highlights from the spring 2022

In 2019-2021 the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa was temporarily located in Stockholm, but since the beginning of 2022 the Institute is established in Amman. During the autumn 2022 it will be fully staffed and move into its permanent office, co-located with the Embassy of Sweden in Amman. In parallel to working on its establishment, the Institute has continued to develop its programmes and activities.

This report is a summary of some of the main activities during the spring 2022, when work has continued within the Institute's three focus areas: **Peace and Security, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Participation**. A longer report about the activities that the Institute hosted, co-hosted and took part in during 2021 can be found in our [Newsletter – Highlights from 2021](#).

The Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa *Building trust, promoting pluralism and peace through dialogue*

The Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa is a governmental agency that serves as a platform for contacts and dialogue between on the one hand Sweden and the countries of Europe and, on the other hand, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa.

It was established by the Swedish government in 1998 and is an integral part of the Swedish Foreign Service. The Institute is located in Amman, Jordan (previously in Alexandria, Egypt, as the Swedish Institute Alexandria/SwedAlex).

In its activities, the Dialogue Institute addresses issues that are important for the political, economic and social development in the MENA region, or for relations between the countries, or that help increase mutual understanding in the areas of culture and religion. It also promotes the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The Dialogue Institute operates through conferences, workshops and other activities and primarily focuses on the following areas: Peace and Security, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Participation.

Key priorities for 2022

In the lead-up to the Stockholm+50 conference that took place in Stockholm in June and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) to be hosted by Egypt in November, a key priority for the Institute has this year been regional dialogues on Climate Change, in particular with a view to contribute to inclusive participation in climate action. Other key areas that the Institute has continued to work on has included dialogues on peace building, and on the agendas for Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and for Youth Peace and Security (YPS). The Institute has also continued its work on youth participation, gender equality and questions related to democratic development and freedom of expression.

Peace and Security

Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Since many years the Dialogue Institute has arranged and/or participated in many activities on the Women, Peace and Security agenda. During this spring the Dialogue Institute continued engaging with others, incl. UN Women, think tanks, NGOs and local peace builders.



The graphic features a background illustration of a diverse group of people in profile, rendered in shades of red, orange, and yellow. The text is overlaid on this background. At the top left, the title 'How Inclusive is a Sustainable Tomorrow?' is written in a dark red font, with 'Webinar' and a 'LIVE' icon below it. A dark red horizontal bar across the middle contains the text 'On the Occasion of International Women's Day' in white. In the bottom left, the words 'SAVE THE DATE' are stacked vertically in a bold, dark red font, next to a calendar icon. To the right of the calendar icon, the date and time 'MARCH 10, 2022 11:00 AM -12:30 PM (Beirut time)' are listed. In the bottom right corner, the hashtag '#IWD2022' is displayed in white.

Webinar: “How Inclusive is Inclusive Peacebuilding?”: On the occasion of International Women's Day 2022 the [Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs](#) at [American University of Beirut \(AUB\)](#) and the Dialogue Institute hosted a panel discussion/webinar titled “How Inclusive is a Sustainable Tomorrow?”, building on a similar event in 2021¹. Speakers from various sectors of society and different countries in the region explored ways to overcome gender discrimination and inequality in the context of climate change and peace building, through inclusive processes. They shared their experiences in relation to peacebuilding efforts and the roles they play in promoting inclusion in decision-making processes. The panellists focused on the importance of increasing women representation, as well as the relationship between the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda (WPS) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For more information see the Institute’s website: [Webinar on Women, Peace and Security](#), with a [Summary report](#). The event can be watched at [YouTube \(#IWD2022 Webinar\)](#)

¹ [How Inclusive is Inclusive Peacebuilding](#)



Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)

Building on a series of workshops arranged by the Dialogue Institute, the [Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation](#) and the [MENA Coalition on Youth, Peace & Security](#) in 2021², the Institute has continued its engagement on the YPS agenda.

In March the Dialogue Institute took part in a strategic retreat arranged by the MENA Coalition on Youth, Peace & Security. In connection to this, the Institute hosted a networking meeting to provide an opportunity for the MENA Coalition to meet with government representatives, UN agencies, donors, CSOs and others actively engaged in the YPS agenda, peacebuilding, human rights, and/or advocacy efforts in their communities across the MENA. This networking meeting aimed at contributing to intergenerational dialogue and to a more effective multi-stakeholder approach on how to advance the YPS agenda in the MENA region, recognizing the vital role that young people play in building peace and preventing and resolving violence and armed conflict.

During the spring discussions have also been held with different Swedish actors, incl. the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) – the Swedish agency for peace, security and development – and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) on how Sweden can continue to support young peacebuilders in the MENA region. The Dialogue Institute also hosted a meeting with the MENA Coalition on Youth, Peace & Security and Swedish civil society organisations, working in the MENA region.



² For information see: [January workshop on Youth, Peace and Security \(YPS\)](#) and full [report](#) and [December workshop: Recommendations from Young Peacebuilders in the MENA region](#)

Other activities on Peace and Security

Regional workshop on peacebuilding

In June the Dialogue Institute partnered with the [Principles for Peace initiative](#) in organising a regional workshop on the “Peacemakers’ Covenant”, a policy proposal emerging from the global participatory process aiming at developing a new set of principles, standards and norms to reshape how peace processes are structured, sequenced and actualized. The workshop that was held in Amman, Jordan, brought together members of the [International Commission on Inclusive Peace](#) with scholars and peace practitioners from the Middle East and North Africa region. The meeting served as an opportunity to gather inputs and perspectives from the regional context.

Points that were highlighted included calls for stronger emphasis on justice and transitional justice; stress on local ownership and external powers needing to be more humble and focusing on playing supporting roles; and stress on inclusion and pluralism, moving from cosmetic inclusion to genuine engagement with broad spectra of society.

For more information see the Institute’s website: [Regional Workshop on Peacebuilding - Sweden Abroad](#) and [a highlight report](#).



Sustainable Development

Climate Change



Round Table Discussion - Creating Inclusive Processes to Address Climate Change in the MENA region

On April 7, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa hosted an interactive, online round table discussion on the theme of “Creating inclusive processes to address Climate Change and Environmental Issues in the MENA region”. The gathering brought together over 60 people from across the MENA region and beyond, representing governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, donors, and international organizations, in a mix of panel discussions and smaller breakout sessions.

Key recommendations included pushing for the inclusion of more women and youth at policy, negotiating, and decision-making levels; seeking greater inter-generational and inter-sectoral exchange; prioritizing educational efforts and adapting language and messaging to the local context; pursuing decentralized solutions and involving local government in policy and implementation; engaging the private sector; leveraging the knowledge and experience of academic institutions and think tanks; and gathering more robust and relevant data and evidence of climate change.

For more information see: [Round table - Creating inclusive processes to address climate change](#)





Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development: Promoting Inclusivity in Climate Change Discussions in the MENA Region

To contribute to regional and inclusive dialogue on environment and climate change in the MENA region, the Dialogue Institute invited a group of ten climate experts, youth activists, peacebuilders, private sector representatives, and journalists to take part in the [2022 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development](#) in late May. During the Forum the Institute hosted two round table discussions on the interlinkages between youth, gender, climate, and security.

Key take-aways included: a) There are clear and direct interlinkages between climate, security and inclusivity and the urgent convergent crises facing people and the planet require stepping out of our own silos and focusing on the various intersecting nexuses linking the human, environmental; b) Participation of women and youth is vital, as is the need to increase regional and trans-regional collaboration, develop coalitions and actions plans, and create hubs to mobilise different climate initiatives and activists in the MENA region; and c) It's important to create and maintain safe spaces, in which different actors can speak out and be heard, and where they can network and connect.

In addition to participating in the Forum, the delegation participated in several other meetings and met with relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment, Sida, FBA, SIPRI, SIWI, civil society, and the private sector.

For more information see: [Promoting Inclusivity in Climate Change Discussions](#)



Swedish Dialogue Institute
for the Middle East and North Africa

Promoting Inclusivity in Climate Change Discussions in the MENA region

STOCKHOLM FORUM
on Peace and
Development **2022**

An informal regional water network

Since spring 2021 the Dialogue Institute coordinates a regional water network, created to share information, experiences and ideas, and to develop relevant policy recommendations, and to strengthen connectivity amongst professionals and organisations across the region with like-minded agendas, contributing to effective advocacy, and ultimately supporting efforts to solve the complex and often inter-connected challenges in the fields of **gender, water, and security**.

The theme for the network gathering in June 2022 was “***The Gender, Water, and Security Agenda: Stock-taking and Next Steps***”. The meeting discussed the gender outcomes and in particular gender, water, and security linkages/developments coming out of the various activities and conferences that have taken place since the last meeting in late November 2021 (Mediterranean Water Forum, World Water Forum, MENA Climate Week, Stockholm+50 (in early June), and other events).

For more information see: [Water Network Gathering, June 2022](#), and the full [report on gender and water meeting June 2022](#).

Inclusive participation



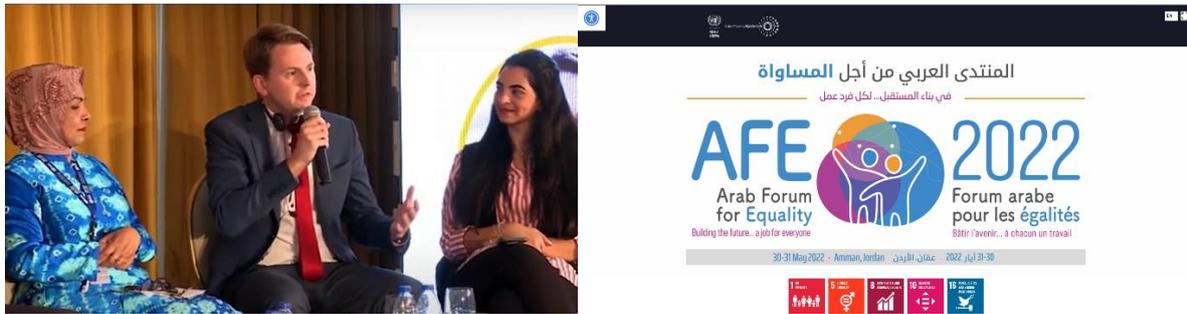
Youth participation and engagement

Following up on last year's activities³ on youth participation and youth engagement, the Dialogue Institute has continued to engage with regional and local stakeholders in the MENA region and Europe.

In the MENA countries, young people are the fastest growing segment, with some 60% of the population under 25 years old. Yet, political leadership remains remarkably older. Empowerment of the region's young population is a strategic priority that can benefit all parts of society and contribute to inclusive participation, better governance, intergenerational transfer of knowledge and peaceful transfer of power.

To further this goal, the Institute has organized several round tables aimed at contributing to creating opportunities for improving youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue in the MENA region, particularly in the sphere of political parties and the political landscape. Participants have emphasized the importance of reducing barriers to entry to political life, by, for instance, engaging youth in wide-ranging, principled, and ideological discussions, which are relevant and interesting to youth, and involving the generation that already are in positions of influence and power so as to strengthen the intergenerational exchange.

³ See [Report from a roundtable discussion on meaningful youth participation](#).



Youth economic participation

At the end of May the Dialogue Institute participated in the launch of the [#JosourInitiative](#) by [United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia \(ESCWA\)](#), at the first ever [Arab Forum for Equality](#). Mr Johan Berggren, deputy director of the Dialogue Institute, spoke in a panel on youth unemployment and talked about the key role that a successful transition from school or university to work plays in reducing income inequality amongst young people, sharing good practices from Sweden, that facilitate this transition. Among other things the importance of early access to work, including internships and apprenticeships, was highlighted.

A video recording of the panel can be watched [here](#).



EU – MENA relations

Roundtable discussion on EU-MENA relations⁴

On April 27, the Dialogue Institute, in coordination with the Swedish Foreign Ministry and the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, hosted an informal online roundtable dialogue, bringing together a group of eminent analysts and practitioners from the MENA region and Europe. The aim was to discuss challenges and opportunities in the relationship between the MENA region and Europe, one year after the adoption of [Council conclusions on a renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood - A new agenda for the Mediterranean](#) and in preparation for the Swedish Presidency of the European Union, beginning in January 2023.

In a candid and constructive exchange, the participants reflected on the state of EU-MENA relations today, viewed both from European and the MENA perspectives, the impact of the new geopolitical developments (in particular the Russian invasion of Ukraine), the economic headwinds, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration.

The full PDF report can be found [here](#).

⁴ Earlier activities included in 2021 participation in a CEPS webinar on the EU's new agenda for the Mediterranean can be watched at [YouTube: The EU's new agenda for the Mediterranean: Will it make a difference?](#) and a webinar hosted by the Dialogue Institute on [EU and the MENA region – good neighbours?](#)- report to be found [here](#).