



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**

SUMMARY

To contribute to regional inclusive dialogue on environment and climate change in the MENA region, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa 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.

In addition to participating in the Forum - speaking at two round tables on the interlinkages between youth, gender, climate, and security - 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 private sector.

Key take-aways included:

- The 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.
- 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.
- 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.

REPORT

The [2022 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development](#), co-hosted by SIPRI and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, focused this year on the theme “From a human security crisis towards an environment of peace”, with a view towards the Stockholm+50 summit that took place on June 2-3.

As part of the Forum, [the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa](#) hosted two round table discussions, one on youth and transition, and the other on gender, climate, and security. To contribute to the discussions the Institute had invited a group of climate experts, youth activists, peacebuilders, private sector representatives, and journalists from the region to Stockholm in late May (see attachment for list of bios). The delegation, which was diverse in terms of gender, age, background, field of work, religion, and nationality, consisted of:

- Luna Abuswaireh, Director-General, Centre for Arab Unity Studies (Palestine)
- Farah Atyyat, environmental journalist (Jordan)
- Eman Duwaik, Coordinator, Palestinian Women Water Practitioners Network (Palestine)
- Manar Elkebir, environmental activist and founder of Ecowave (Tunisia)
- Marisa Ensor, gender and youth specialist, Georgetown University (US)
- Nadim Farajalla, Programme Director, Climate Change and Environmental Programme, Issam Fares Institute (Lebanon)
- Nicolas Farhat, Deputy Regional Manager Hub Manager, Berytech (Lebanon)
- Sarine Karajerjian, Programme Director, Arab Reform Initiative (Lebanon)
- Sarra Messaoudi, Strategic and Communications Officer, MENA Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security (Tunisia)
- Abdelazim Sultan, Columbia Global Centers Amman (Jordan)

In addition to participating in the Stockholm Forum, the delegation took part in a round table discussion hosted by the Swedish Institute for International Affairs and held meetings with a number of other relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment, the Swedish development cooperation agency Sida, the Swedish agency for peace, security and development FBA, as well as from SIPRI, SIWI, civil society, and the private sector.

The delegation's programme aimed at:

- Promoting regional and intergenerational dialogue on climate change and environmental issues in the MENA region and between the region and Europe, by providing a safe and constructive space for sharing information, experiences and ideas regarding the challenges and opportunities in these fields;
- Strengthening connectivity amongst professionals and organisations across the region, by bringing together a diverse group of climate actors (most of whom were not previously connected);
- Contributing to raising awareness of and interest in the “building of a green and fair future for all of us”, as outlined by Stockholm+50 ([Stockholm+50](#));
- Contributing to the development of relevant policy recommendations and input from MENA region to upcoming meetings, such as Stockholm+50 and the COP-process.

SESSIONS

Youth and peaceful transition to sustainability in the MENA region

The session entitled “**Youth and peaceful transition to sustainability in the MENA region**” explored the risks in the MENA region associated with transition towards decarbonized and greener economies; the role of youth and youth movements regionally (as well as nationally and globally) in transitioning in a just and peaceful way, given existing challenges and opportunities; and the policy interventions that would enhance youth engagement.

In this round table a diverse set of speakers from across the Middle East and Europe helped setting the scene. These speakers were two young climate activists, Manar Elkebir, Founder of EcoWave, a youth network dedicated to tackling the plastic crisis in her local community in Tunisia, and Shady Khalil, the founder and director of Greenish, an Egyptian climate education-focused social enterprise [GREENISH | Home \(green-ish.org\)](#), and two analysts, Nadim Farajalla, Programme Director of the Climate Change and Environmental Programme at the Issam Fares Institute in Lebanon, and Sarine Karajerjian, Director of the Environmental Politics Programme at the Arab Reform Initiative in Lebanon. It was moderated by Johan Berggren, Deputy Director of the Dialogue Institute.



Abdelazim Sultan, who runs a climate initiative in Jordan, speaking about how men and women are impacted differently by climate change.

Gender, Climate and Security in the Middle East and North Africa Region: Stocktaking and Way Forward

The session **“Gender, Climate and Security in the Middle East and North Africa Region: Stocktaking and Way Forward”**, cohosted by the Dialogue Institute and the *Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation*, focused on how women across the MENA region play important roles in managing climate-related security risks. It took stock of the current challenges, and identified opportunities for further progress on women’s participation in the intersection of Gender, Climate and Security.

This round table also featured a varied set of speakers, who helped setting the scene for the discussion. These were Eman Duwaik, coordinator of the Palestinian Women Water Practitioners’ Network, Dr. Marisa O. Ensor, gender and youth specialist at Georgetown University, and Abdelazim Sultan, a Ph.D. student in climate and gender who also has founded a climate change initiative in Jordan. The session was moderated by Ambassador Charlotta Sparre, Director of the Dialogue Institute.

Round table on the nexus of climate change, environmental security, and political conflict in the MENA region

As part of the visit, the delegation also participated in a **round table exploring the nexus of climate change, environmental security, and political conflict in the MENA region, co-hosted by the [Swedish Institute of International Affairs \(UI\)](#)** and the Dialogue Institute. The panel introducing the session consisted of Pinar Dinç, Researcher at the Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University and Associate Research Fellow at UI; Ana Kumarasamy, Ph.D. candidate in Politics at Lancaster University and Associate Research Fellow at UI; and Manal Elkebir and Abdelazim Sultan from the MENA delegation visiting Stockholm. The discussion centred around the prevailing knowledge gap in the region, stemming from still widespread illiteracy and poor educational systems, and the difficulties of disseminating scientific data and objective reports.

The delegation also met with different relevant stakeholders in Stockholm, including during a networking event with representatives from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment, Sida, FBA, SIPRI, SIWI, UI, civil society, and private sector.



The delegation with stakeholders in Stockholm – here in front of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Key take-aways from the programme in Stockholm included:

- There are clear and direct interlinkages between peace, conflict, water, energy, and food, and thus a broader nexus exists.
- 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, and political dimensions of these multiple crises. Networking between stakeholders from diverse backgrounds is therefore essential.
- Ensuring a just and peaceful transition requires immediate and effective actions, which should be guided by principles of climate justice.
- The participation of women and youth is vital to raising awareness, building capacities, influencing policy makers and decision makers, as well as to spearheading the required adaptations and shifts. However, their voices are not heard enough, and further action is needed to make them more impactful.
- Key stakeholders are aware of direct threats associated with climate change, yet the political will to take effective measures is insufficient.
- There is a 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.
- The importance of creating and maintaining safe spaces, in which to speak out and to be heard, and to network and connect with researchers and practitioners on so many levels must not be underestimated.