**Call to Action for a Just Green Transition in the Arab States Region**

***Background***

The Arab States region is fast emerging as a global hotspot for climate risk, with skyrocketing temperatures, increasing food and energy insecurity, and with 14 countries that face the highest levels of water scarcity in the world. Unmitigated climate impacts are not only threatening the natural world, but are also disrupting human development and livelihoods. This is already manifesting in the form of greater political instability, displacement and turmoil and ultimately threatening peace and security in the region. An urgent transition towards a greener development pathway, informed by decisive climate action, scaled up access and use of sustainable energy and conservation of natural resources is the need of the hour.

On the sidelines of COP27 in Sharm-el-Shaikh, Egypt, the first of two back-to-back COPs in the region, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its Green Arab States Facility for Transition (GAFT) along with development partners, international financial institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank, policymakers and the private sector call for greater solidarity, cooperation and co-creation of solutions needed for an immediate and just green transition.

***Vision***

As a global coalition of development thinkers and decision-makers, we recognize the immense potential that the region holds. Renewable energy capacities have grown ten-fold in the past decade. Several countries in the region have increased their ambitions and targets in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in the run-up to COP26 and COP27. However, implementing these NDCs requires strong leadership and sufficient investments. The time is now to seize the opportunity and invest in climate action, through policy, finance and innovation across levels, as a ready answer for socioeconomic recovery from ongoing conflicts, cascading crises and lingering COVID-19 impacts. Indeed, this is not just critical for recovery but plays a pivotal role in securing long-term sustainable socio-economic growth.

Citizens and decision-makers alike have high hopes for COP27, seeking greater ambition, action and accountability. COP27 offers a platform to reaffirm this common agenda for countries in the region and galvanize support and action from all sectors of society- governments, financial institutions, private sector, technology, enterprises, civil society and citizens and showcase the region as leaders in transformation.

***What is needed***

Against this background, UNDP and the Islamic Development Bank, along with partners who have participated the High-Level Roundtable “A Climate Promise into Action: The Green Arab States Facility for Transition” at COP27 in Shar El Sheikh on 9th November 2022 call for governments and partners in the region to:

(i) **Accelerate implementation of NDCs locally** and in support of poor, vulnerable and crisis-affected communities. Policies, plans and programmes across sectors- including crisis recovery, health systems, disaster preparedness, job creation and youth employment need to integrate climate change considerations. Governments and development partners must aim to build community ownership for local solutions, engaging youth and women as key agents of change, sharing knowledge and skills to scale up innovation.

(ii) **Scale up financing for climate action across the region**. Estimates show that nearly US$600 billion by 2030 is needed to implement NDCs across the region. Leveraging both public and private financing will be critical. International financial institutions, private sector, institutional investors and governments need to come together to establish new financing instruments that can de-risk climate investments, leverage fossil fuel revenues towards community development and remove barriers and incentivize further investments in renewable energy. Integrating these new financing models into national budgeting processes and incorporating green investments in the long-term fiscal outlook for the region is crucial. Strategic, well-planned and sustainable green investments can shape long-term economic outlooks, bringing numerous co-benefits to health, gender equality, rural development and more.

**(iii) Prioritize an urgent and just transition towards renewable energy sources.** The region has a cumulative target of achieving 190GW of renewable energy capacity by 2035. Achieving this vision will require a strong enabling environment at the country level, including enhanced policies, appropriate financial products and effective targeted support from governments and partners. Even as the region with some of the largest oil reserves, leaders and partners cannot continue to ignore the environmental, social and economic benefits that renewable energy can bring. The transition should also consider the socio-economic context and challenges of countries in the region and should promote pro-poor gender-sensitive transitions.

**(iv) Advance nature-based solutions and widen the ecological safety net that can support pandemic recovery.** 17 out of 20 NDCs submitted in the region include nature-based solutions to help achieve climate change mitigation and/or adaptation goals. Restoration of ecosystems and building community resilience go hand-in-hand with socioeconomic growth and in tackling water scarcity and curbing zoonotic outbreaks. Private sector enterprises, financial institutions and local governments can play a key role in expanding markets for eco-tourism. This can not only create livelihood opportunities as communities recover from conflict and crisis, but also act as mechanisms to build community cohesion that will contribute to long-term peacebuilding and as launchpads to scale up sustainable energy and invest in climate-resilient infrastructure.

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