

ASSECAA 10th Retreat
Ezulwini, Kingdom of Eswatini
11th -12th May, 2023

Summary of Day Two (May 12) Proceedings

The second work-paper titled "The Importance of Green Economy in Supporting Development in Africa and the Arab World" was presented by Mr. Excellency Hachileka from the UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa , Addis Ababa.

The paper dealt with the importance of green economy in supporting development in Africa and the Arab world in the face of these challenges. It also discussed enhancing the role of parliamentarians, senates, Shooras and equivalent councils in addressing development issues, especially with regard to the future of Afro-Arab economies in light of the successive global economic crises, political tensions, and instability.

It pointed out that the green economy leads to "improving human welfare and social justice, while significantly reducing environmental risks and scarcity" (UNEP), and that the green economy is based on four main pillars, namely:

- Resource efficiency to achieve greater well-being with reduced resource use and emissions;**
- Preserving and protecting the natural resource base;**
- Low-carbon, climate-resilient development that includes reduced emissions or climate-adaptive economic growth;**
- Social inclusion that focuses on improving the conditions in which individuals and communities participate in the development process.**

Regarding the importance of the green economy for Africa and the Arab world, the paper emphasized that the green economy provides a sustainable path for development in Africa and the Arab world amid successive crises and ongoing geopolitical tensions. By focusing on resource efficiency, social inclusion, low-emission development, and resilience, the green economy can enhance environmentally and socially sustainable growth and help countries address current global economic challenges.

Furthermore, promoting the green economy in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Sahel region enjoys significant potential to address environmental and development challenges in the region while promoting economic growth and sustainable development. This is particularly important given that these regions rely heavily on commodity markets and raw material trade.

Role of Parliamentarians in Promoting and Implementing Green Economy Strategies

The paper highlights that parliamentarians can bring about effective change towards a sustainable future in Africa and the Arab world by utilizing their legislative powers. Thus, there is an urgent need to promote the green economy approach in Africa and Arab countries to mitigate the current and potential future effects of a slow global economy, rising tensions, and instability in a world that urgently needs peace, development, prosperity, diversity, and inclusiveness. The roles that parliamentarians can play include:

Legislative support: Parliamentarians can play a crucial role in promoting green economy policies by formulating, sponsoring, and supporting legislation that supports the transition to a green economy. This can include incentivizing the adoption of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and enforcing waste management standards. The proposed legislation should also include provisions for tax exemptions and other incentives for environmentally-friendly infrastructure projects.

Support and awareness-raising: Parliamentarians (from member councils of the Association) can use their public platforms to increase awareness of the benefits of green economy strategies and sustainable development.

Budgetary allocations

As members of legislative bodies, parliamentarians have the power to influence the allocation of government funding to support green economy initiatives by advocating for increased investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, ecosystem restoration, and other priority areas.

Oversight and accountability

Parliamentarians can exercise their oversight responsibilities to ensure that governments and the private sector comply with green economy principles. This includes monitoring the implementation of legislation.

Regional and international cooperation

Member councils of the Association can enhance regional and international cooperation by participating in joint parliamentary dialogues, engaging with international organizations, and forming partnerships with development agencies to exchange knowledge, resources, and best practices in green economy initiatives.

Capacity building and training: Organizing capacity building and training programs for parliamentarians, and providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively advocate for the green economy. This includes holding workshops, seminars, and study visits to learn from successful green economy initiatives in other countries.

Policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement

Parliamentarians can facilitate policy dialogues and engage stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, academia, and international organizations, to develop a shared vision for the green economy.

Recommendations to ASSECAA Member States to enhance the implementation of the Green Economy approach

The paper provided some recommendations to ASSECAA's member states to enhance the Green Economy approach, including:

- Supporting the development and implementation of national green economy strategies that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Encouraging the establishment of regional partnerships to exchange knowledge and resources in green initiatives.
- Supporting research and innovation in clean technologies and sustainable practices.
- Encouraging private sector participation in green economy initiatives through incentives and regulatory frameworks.
- Supporting the development and use of green financing tools, including carbon trading, green bonds, and debt swaps to mobilize investments for sustainable projects.
- Enhancing capacity building and technical assistance programs for the development of green skills and entrepreneurship.

- **Strengthening cooperation with international organizations, development partners, and civil society to support green economy initiatives and projects.**

Summary of Interventions and proposals from participating delegations on "The Importance of the Green Economy in Supporting Development in Africa and the Arab World"

The participants to this meeting made many important interventions through their papers and presentations, as well as their valuable ideas and extensive experiences that enabled this important meeting to come up with significant recommendations that contribute to enhancing and encouraging the process of transition towards the green economy to achieve sustainable and equitable economic growth that serves the interests of the peoples and countries of the Arab and African regions.

These interventions came to the following conclusions

- **The green economy is capable, to a large extent, of achieving economic prosperity (combating poverty and creating new job opportunities), protecting natural resources, improving the environment, and dealing with climate change. This requires redirecting financial resources towards investments in green energy sectors and launching a sustainable developmental economic system that is environmentally friendly in Africa and the Arab world.**
- **The green economy is among the strategic pillars that will shape the future economy, as it blends economic development and environmental considerations.**
- **The green economy leads to improving human well-being, social justice, and maintaining security and peace (regionally and internationally).**
- **Economic systems that are primarily based on the market economy tend to lead to excessive exploitation of natural capital. This has led to the emergence of a new concept that promotes sustainable development based on a "green economy" that achieves a balance between sustainable management and preservation of natural resources, job creation, and wealth production.**

The success of the desired efforts requires cooperation and collaboration between all Arab and African countries through the development of joint parliamentary action that seeks to enact legislation and adopt initiatives that contribute to the development of the economic system in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This can be achieved by adopting initiatives that promote partnerships with the private sector in green economy sectors, adopting zero carbon neutrality and adopting unified carbon emission rates to protect the environment and the economy from the

dangers of climate change. Despite the challenges posed by climate change and the scarcity of natural resources, with the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, Arab and African countries can be leaders in the green economy worldwide by providing the necessary financing in partnership with the private sector to support projects that are in line with the principles of green economy, rationalizing consumption, reducing the environmental impact of our daily activities, adopting food security initiatives, and increasing green areas in our countries. This will make a significant difference in our way of life, transform challenges into innovative opportunities, and create a new reality based on sustainability and prosperity.

The key to the success of the green transition lies in integrating the environmental dimension into all economic sectors, creating new green industries, enhancing funding for the green economy, boosting competencies, and creating national centers for research and innovation in the new green professions, and opening up to the international and regional environment to exchange experiences and expertise in this regard. In addition to developing a comprehensive structured strategy for this economy, a comprehensive national program for training, research, and development should be established, as well as a tax policy that encourages the development of green professions, and the development of social behavior in this context, in addition to activating existing environmental laws through monitoring and tracking methods.

It is the responsibility of parliamentarians, as representatives of the peoples of Africa and the Arab world, to support frameworks of cooperation between our countries in order to promote a collaborative approach in tackling the challenges and obstacles that hinder the transition towards the green economy. This has become a strategic option to harness natural resources in a correct way, achieve integration with the sustainable development goals, and avoid economic and social imbalances and the destruction of nature, while reducing environmental pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. This will lead to the achievement of a green economic system that can produce wealth consistently with the requirements of human quality of life and social justice.

It is necessary to seek mechanisms that enhance the role of legislative bodies in Africa and the Arab world in the adoption and implementation of green economy programs and pathways in our countries, in order to achieve our national aspirations for economic

development and human well-being while preserving environmental balance and implementing sustainable development pathways in the Arab and African regions.

The issue of having a legislative and legal system within the (Arab-African) region that is compatible with the requirements and ingredients of the green economy is one of the most important tools necessary for crystallizing national plans and policies that depend on achieving green economy paths within sustainable development plans. Therefore, there must be a legislative and legal framework, as well as modern and advanced guiding laws that are consistent with the requirements of the green economy and sustainable development. It is the responsibility of the parliament to make significant efforts in this field by enacting several new legislation or amending existing legislation to improve the investment environment that is friendly to the environment and to transition towards the green economy.

The stakes of growth and prosperity of the economy in our Arab and African countries, in the face of these difficult challenges, are mainly linked to enhancing cooperation, solidarity and Arab-African strategic partnerships to create more investment opportunities in new economic sectors. It is necessary to enhance cooperation between various parties to remove obstacles that hinder green economy policies, trade flows, green financing, and facilitate the movement of products, technologies, services, capital, talent, and skills. In addition, it is important to adopt green innovation, digitization, and green technology, intensify community awareness of green practices and their future benefits, and thus establish a solid foundation for a more advanced, greener, and sustainable economic future.

Some of the proposals presented by participants to parliaments include:

- Enacting and developing legislation and laws that encourage green growth and enable increased investment in green initiatives and projects through a range of facilities, privileges, tax incentives, and customs exemptions, while seeking to remove all obstacles that hinder progress towards green economies, especially those related to obtaining financing, imposing green taxes, managing green supply chains, supporting skills development and capacity building, and adopting and transferring green technology.
- Parliaments should adopt a green budget, which considers environmental, governance, and social responsibility dimensions in spending. In addition, increasing financial allocations for research and

development programs that support the green economy and address climate change.

- Parliaments should strengthen oversight and monitoring of commitments to achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, in accordance with their priorities, system, and national agenda.

- Strengthening strategic cooperation and partnerships to support the green economy and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Sharing experiences, knowledge, and best practices between parliamentarians in the field of the green economy and benefiting from the best global practices in this regard.

- Establishing parliamentary committees or working groups concerned with meeting the requirements of the green economy.

- Building the capacity of parliamentarians and staff of public councils and parliaments in all areas of sustainable development goals, including the green economy, and training them on how to integrate these goals within the framework of their work.

- ASSECAA should optimally employ the role of parliamentary diplomacy in promoting green projects and pathways within the Arab and African region.

- Regarding the approval of the general budget by parliament, it is of utmost importance to ensure the implementation of the requirements of the green economy at the national level by the executive authority.

- Finally, it is necessary to encourage foreign investments in green economic sectors and provide them with attractive incentives, such as tax incentives, credit facilities, and customs exemptions.