

SESSION 2 : OVERVIEW ON SOLID WASTE SITUATION AND PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE MENA REGION

WORKING PAPER

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Introduction

- Solid Waste Management (SWM) is one of the most serious environmental concerns in all the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries especially in view of its adverse effects on public health, environment, and economic resource value and lately on the emerging climate change. METAP has estimated the cost of environment degradation due to poor MSW to be in the range of 0.5-0.2% per capita GDP affecting both the economy, environment health and natural resources
- The 10 MENA partner's countries host about 211 million people, of which more than 50% live in urban areas. Currently, the MENA countries produce about 49 million tonnes of municipal waste per year. The projected urbanisation and economic growth in the region during the coming years is expected to result in a waste tonnage increase in an average of 78 million tons/year. The waste composition with the exception of Mauritania, consists of 50-65 organic content compared with 20-25% in developed countries. Recycling materials in terms of plastics, glass, and paper products do not attain an average of 10 %.

Solid Waste Management Achievements made by the MENA Region

During the last decade all MENA countries made considerable efforts to address their solid waste management issues at the policy, legal, institutional operational and financial levels.

- **At the policy level:** Many countries with the exception of Lebanon and Jordan have developed their own strategies and national programs for addressing the municipal solid waste management. Common characteristic of these strategies are improvement of the coverage of the MSW collection and disposal in sanitary landfills, closure of old dumps, increasing the recycling and recovering activities and raising public awareness.
- **At the legal level:** Most of the MENA region with the exception of Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan have enacted their respective solid waste management or cleanliness laws. Common principles of the MSW laws are environment protection, polluter pays principles, cost recovery, private sector participation and proposed institutional responsibilities. Whenever the legal framework is established, it is still incomplete in terms of developing technical and engineering standards, providing incentives to the private sector, and enforcing environmental regulations.

- **At the institutional level :** All MENA countries have tried to establish their own solid waste management system based on their political characteristics. Ministries of Local Administration/ Development in collaboration with the Ministries of the Environment are responsible for policy planning and overseeing the solid waste management sector. Municipal Solid Waste collection remains the responsibilities of the municipalities/local government or of inter communality of municipalities such as in Jordan and the Palestine Authority. MSW disposal varies across the MENA region: in Mauritania, Algeria, Yemen, Syria, the responsibility is provided by specialized MSW departments /divisions at the local level. In Tunisia Solid waste Management Agency (AnGed) assumes the responsibility of MSW disposal on behalf of the municipalities so is the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) in Lebanon. Municipal solid waste disposal remains the responsibility of the municipalities in Morocco and Jordan. Collection and Disposal of Hazardous Waste is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment ‘by default’ as no other ministries or agencies would like to assume such liability at the national level.
- **At the operational level :** Technical and operational management at the national ,local and municipal levels have improved particularly for SWM collection but to a lesser extent for SWM disposal but not the level of quality determined by benchmarks and standards. Improvement of the collection rate of MSW in urban cities has reached 75-100% with Lebanon attaining 100% coverage. MSW coverage in rural areas is much less and varies between 0-70 percent with the exception of Lebanon attaining 90 % coverage. Despite efforts to establish sanitary landfills, MSW is being disposed at open dumps with an average of 50 % household waste collected. Still open dumps remains the disposal method in major MENA region and most of them are not rehabilitated yet. Involvement of the private for MSW collection and/or disposal is limited to Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria whereby in Yemen and Algeria and the Palestine Authority, the private sector did not penetrate their market yet.
- **At the financial level :** the central government remains the major financier of the MSW sector with large subsidies provided to MSW disposal. Partial cost recovery has been established in Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and the Palestine Authority, though in the remaining countries of Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon and Yemen, cost recovery was not initiated yet. The unit per cost for ton for collection to disposal as shown in the figure below varies between a lowest of US\$ 19.6 /ton in Egypt to as high as US\$ 103 In Lebanon followed by Mauritania US\$ 69.5/ton. A price charged by the public sector entity in Algiers in Algeria (US\$ 60.9/ ton) is higher that the prices charged by the private sector in Morocco (US\$ 49.5/ton) and in Tunisia (US\$ 55/ton). No attempt was made to compare the quality and efficiency of these services.

Opportunities for Cooperation:

- As a first step towards exchanging expertise and knowledge, an assessment was made on the shortcoming and opportunities that the MENA Region could offer to each others. An assessment was made by SWEEP-Net and shows how countries can collaborate together by providing their experience (positive or negative) before seeking international assistance. MENA Region have substantial experience to share in private sector participation, cost recovery, establishing institutional and legal framework as well in managing recycling activities.
- International donors and financing institutions consider now that the key to greater prosperity lies in increasing economic ties within south -south and north- south collaboration. In this regards they have adopted two strategies in the Middle East and North Africa Region : (a) Support regional programs aimed at regional integration and (b) financing bilateral projects that can have also a regional dimension. In this regards SWEP-NET opportunities would be to work with countries and international donors and financing institutions alike at the regional and bilateral levels as well as to implement specific activities that would also serve both countries and the region.

Objectives of the Session:

- Overview on the solid waste situation in MENA region
- Sharing key issues and priorities in MENA Region
- Identification of opportunities for South-South and north South cooperation between countries
- Recommendation s for a follow-up programme