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## Collective Action for a Just Transition in MENA A 2030 Roadmap

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is at a crossroads: the region's economy is **heavily dependent on fossil fuels**, but it also has incredible untapped potential to become a **hub for renewable energy** sources. A **well-planned, community-powered transition** towards renewable energy could sustainably transform the economy, while also rolling out affordable energy access and job opportunities to communities. This roadmap sets out **how we can work together** to transform this vision into a reality.

### THE CONTEXT: DECLINING GLOBAL DEMAND FOR FOSSIL FUELS

To limit climate change, many governments in the world have pledged to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that global consumption of oil would fall from present levels by 45% by 2050, pushing the oil price down to \$60 per barrel in real terms (compared to recent prices of about \$85). To achieve the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial temperatures, oil consumption would need to fall by 78% by 2050, and the price would drop to \$25 per barrel in real terms by 2050. This will have significant impacts on countries that are dependent on oil and gas revenues and use.

### CHALLENGES IN MENA

MENA is **highly dependent on oil and gas production and consumption**. In 2023, the region accounted for about 35% and 23% of global oil and gas production respectively.<sup>1</sup> Fossil fuels make up over 95% of the region's energy consumption, largely due to low production costs and significant fossil fuel subsidies. Energy

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<sup>1</sup> Oil Market Report, International Energy Agency, December 2023

consumption is projected to rise due to population growth and development projects, while several countries are still facing energy poverty.

The region is also characterised by **poverty, instability, and governance challenges**. Authoritarian regimes, limited political freedoms, lack of data, fragmentation of decision-making and weak transparency, hinder civil society participation and effective advocacy. Competing developmental priorities create trade-offs among environmental, economic, social, and energy policies.

We can divide MENA countries into three groups, facing different types of issues:

- 1) **Countries dependent on oil and gas revenues** (like Iraq and Kuwait) will be impacted by lower oil and gas prices as the global demand decreases. If governments do not gradually **diversify their sources of income**, with **support** from the international community, populations will ultimately bear the burden when fossil fuel revenues decline.
- 2) **Countries dependent on oil and gas imports** (like Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt) are vulnerable to global energy price volatility and supply disruptions. They are **actively developing plans** to shift their energy consumption from fossil fuels to renewables, but are facing important challenges in their implementation.
- 3) **Countries undergoing war and conflict** (like Libya, Yemen and Lebanon) face exacerbated energy, economic, and environmental challenges. This poses **major obstacles** to developing and implementing effective energy transition strategies.

On top of internal challenges, inadequate international climate finance and technology transfer hinder the effective implementation of energy transition measures in MENA.

An unplanned, uncoordinated energy transition in MENA would exacerbate poverty and inequality. A just energy transition, one that centres the **voices of communities**, and embeds principles of **justice and equity** could be **transformative** for the region: **for its peoples, its economies, and for the future of our planet.**

## **A REGIONAL RESPONSE**

The MENA Just Energy Transition (JET) Working Group unites civil society organisations from Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen, calling for **effective local policies that ensure good governance, transparency, inclusion, and equitable resource distribution, complemented by regional coordination, and financial and technological support from the global north.**

Protecting labor, women and Indigenous rights, as well as securing environmental and health justice, are at the core of our mission. We believe in inclusion and community empowerment as powerful tools to bring about change.

***We believe in justice for all in the fossil fuel phase-out.***

The following regional advocacy goals are amplified by Publish What You Pay (PWYP)'s global advocacy strategy seeking justice for all in the fossil-fuel phase-out to renewable energy. The MENA JET WG members will partner with allies to advocate at the national, regional and international levels.

**Objective 1. Urge oil-dependent MENA governments to prioritise inclusive stakeholder engagement in the design and implementation of time-bound energy transition strategies, fostering an equitable process.**

- **Mobilisation of Experts:** Train women, youth and community members with experts to participate meaningfully in all stages of energy transition planning.
- **Multistakeholder engagement:** Call for multi-stakeholder energy transition councils with women, youth and rural and agricultural communities to pursue equitable, affordable, and reliable energy access for all.
- **Community protection:** Demand the safeguarding of vulnerable communities in areas with significant extractive operations, including Basra and Misan (Iraq), and Tataouine (Tunisia); and reform existing energy transition strategies to include such safeguards (e.g. in Morocco).
- **Post-conflict plans:** Advocate for international aid agencies and national governments to integrate just and inclusive energy transition strategies into post-conflict reconstruction plans in Libya, Lebanon, and Yemen.

**Objective 2. Push for publicly available government plans for fossil fuel reduction, industrial decarbonisation, and renewable energy expansion.**

- **Legal framework:** Call for laws guaranteeing access to information (Iraq) and ensure the sound implementation of public disclosure laws (Lebanon, Yemen, Tunisia).
- **Renewable energy disclosures:** Advocate for mandatory, systematic disclosure of all renewable energy projects licensing rounds, their assessments, and draft contracts, including strategic partnerships in Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt to ensure fair deals.
- **Build a public narrative:** Amplify information requests through petitions, press releases, social media, including targeting specific bodies when requests are denied or ignored.

**Objective 3. Advocate for governments to adopt gender-inclusive policies across all sectors impacted by the shift to sustainable energy, addressing gender-based discrimination and ensuring equal participation in the workforce and decision-making.**

- **Research:** Conduct evidence-based research on the benefits of gender-inclusive policies and empower the PWYP MENA Gender Champions to advocate for reforms.
- **Gender audits & training:** Hold governments and companies accountable for their gender equality commitments through gender audits by CSOs, and ensure they provide effective training programs for women in the energy sector.

- **Women's voices:** Amplify women's voices within PWYP national coalitions and regional networks and ensure their active involvement in implementing this roadmap.

#### **Objective 4. Urge MENA governments to develop robust plans that minimise the economic risks of phasing out fossil fuels.**

We will advocate for:

- **Diversification:** reducing reliance on fossil fuels by diversifying local economies, meeting their renewable energy targets and supporting other productive economic sectors through sustainable use of oil and gas rents.
- **Fair deals:** renegotiation or suspension of contracts depriving countries of public revenue from fossil fuels and putting their economies at risk (Tunisia, Iraq, Egypt).
- **Support of workers:** comprehensive social safety nets, such as unemployment benefits and retraining programs, to support workers transitioning from fossil fuel industries and related industries (Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Kuwait).
- **Protection of public finances:** clear frameworks to manage stranded assets, preventing industry liabilities from burdening public finances and preserving those funds for vital services, including health and education.
- **Divestment from fossil fuels** and redirection of financial and technological resources — particularly from IFIs, and initiatives like the Global Gateway and Mineral Security Partnership — toward renewable energy and industrial development.

#### **Join us!**

Realising a just energy transition in MENA hinges on empowering civil society and communities through capacity building, rigorously evaluating socioeconomic impacts with robust data and monitoring, and securing essential financial and technical resources.

Paramount to this transformation is **cultivating stronger, collaborative partnerships** across civil society, governments, international organisations, and the private sector. Our collective strength and a shared voice are indispensable.

Connect with [Dr. Pierre Saade](#), MENA Senior Regional Coordinator to join our campaign, forge vital alliances and deepen collaborations throughout the MENA region and beyond. Together, we can amplify local voices and make this roadmap a shared pathway toward a just, inclusive, and sustainable energy future for all.