**Saudi Arabia inputs on the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment Call for Inputs: “Human Rights, Transformative Actions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals”**

**Q1- What transformative actions would be required, given the national context of your state, to achieve SDGs directly linked to environmental sustainability (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)? Transformative actions can be understood as “bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path”.**

* Vision 2030 is a sustainable vision for the future of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia with sustainability at the heart of all the measures taken by the Kingdom does, from policy development and investment to planning and infrastructure.
* Preservation of the kingdom's environment and natural resources is a strategic objectives and fall under our responsibility to future generations and essential to the quality of our daily lives.
* The kingdom is working toward safeguarding its environment by increasing the efficiency of waste management, establishing comprehensive recycling projects, reducing all types of pollution and fighting desertification.
* The Saudi vision is protecting and enhancing the Kingdom’s natural environment by taking a holistic view of precious ecosystems.
* Vision 2030 is fostering sustainable agriculture practices across the Kingdom that will help to provide citizens and residents with safe, high-quality local food, as well as maintaining water balance, conserve natural resources, protecting native flora that is used by wildlife for food and shelter, supporting the restoration of biodiversity and advancing the adoption of renewable energy strategies and projects across the kingdom.
* The Kingdom has consolidated its position as a leading country working for environmental sustainability solutions with the launch of several initiatives and giga-projects. This includes the following:

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| Year | Key initiatives & projects |
| 2017 | * Announcement of the National Renewable Energy Program * Launch of King Salman Renewable Energy Initiative * Founding of Saudi Investment Recycling Company |
| 2018 | * Royal Order to Form the Council of Royal Reserves * Launch of the National Environment Strategy * Launch of the National Water Strategy |
| 2019 | * Joining of International Solar Alliance * Establishment of National Environmental Centers (The National Center for Meteorology, the National Center for Vegetation Cover and Combating Desertification, the National Center for Environmental Compliance, and the National Center for Wildlife.) * Launch of Green Riyadh Project * Launch of Integrated Waste Management and Recycling Activities in Riyadh |
| 2020 | * CCE endorsement and commitment to Global Coral Reef Conservation and Land Preservation during Saudi G20 Presidency * Creation of the Special Forces for Environmental Security * Launch of the Environmental Fund |
| 2021 | * Launch of The Saudi Green Initiative and The Middle East Green Initiative * Golf Saudi joined the UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action * Launch of Sakaka Solar Power Plant * Launch of Dumat Al Jandal Wind Farm * Farasan Islands added to UNESCO Biosphere Reserve * Announced goal to reach Net Zero by 2060 * Joined the Global Methane Pledge |

* In addition to all of that, Saudi Arabia is committed to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and attaches the highest priority to this endeavor, as commensurate with the Kingdom’s specific context and national principles. By dint of a Royal Order, the Minister of Economy and Planning is entrusted with the mandate to follow up and coordinate with relevant entities on Sustainable Development Goals' dossier. Under this mandate, the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP) has recently, in collaboration with national stakeholders, built its national action-oriented sustainability roadmap to advance the progress made towards the realization of goals and improve the kingdom’s performance in SDGs.

**Q2 – What steps has your state taken to accelerate progress towards fulfilling the eight SDGs that have the most direct environmental linkages (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)? Q3 – what specific actions is your state taking to fulfil the commitments to “leave no one behind” and to prioritize actions “to reach the furthest behind first” in terms of achieving SDGs (2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

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| **SDG** | **Steps / efforts and actions** |
| **2** | * National food security strategy * The Saudi Agriculture Development Fund * Sustainable Agricultural Rural Development Program (REF). * Mahsuli (My Crop) platform * Collaboration between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education in the Rashaqa program in selected schools to reduce the prevalence of obesity in school-aged children at a rate of 5% by the end of 2020 |
| **6** | * National water strategy * Implementation of +500 water dams with combined storage capacity of ~2.2 billion cubic meters * Establishment of “Agricultural Terraces Rehabilitation and Rainwater Harvesting Techniques Implementation in Southwestern Saudi Arabia” initiative as part of Vision 2030 * Investment and development in sustainable desalination and water treatment capabilities, such as solar-powered water treatment plant efforts between Taqnia Energy (i.e.,PIF subsidiary) and KACST * Establishment of the Qatrah Program, an awareness program reflecting the importance of water conservation, proposing methods for rationalizing consumption and educating individuals on the importance of modifying their own water usage |
| **7** | * Establishment of the Saudi Energy Efficiency Program for the implementation of new energy efficiency standards in power generation, water desalination, and electricity transmission and distribution * Investment of USD 5 billion for the construction of a green hydrogen plant in NEOM as part of the National Hydrogen Strategy to become a global leader in hydrogen energy * Establishment of the National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) to set-up an organized roadmap to diversify energy sources with a target to reach 9.5 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2023 |
| **10** | * Optimization of Citizen Account Program * Social Protection Strategy |
| **11** | * Development King Abdulaziz Project for Public Transport in Riyadh City for public transportation and engagement with users to promote use of city transportation * Establishment of Jeddah Public Transportation Program re-planning and enhancement of all public transportation networks in the city * Development of a smart city initiative-NEOM focusing on sustainable infrastructure and smart urban habitat * Launched the – Line project in NEOM. * Launch of Sustainability Council in Industry System to enrich technical knowledge in the field of sustainability through digital platforms |
| **12** | * Implementation of a sustainable licensing system for waste management activities and construction * Creation of the National Waste Management Centre * Development of regulations for waste management system and provision of technical guidance that help inform stakeholders to achieve compliance * Creation of the National Centre for Waste Management (MWAN) aimed at regulating and supervising waste management activities and stimulating investment in waste management and providing license and permits to service providers (e.g., recycling permits) * Establishment of The Saudi Investment Recycling Company (SIRC) to develop various activities to deal with all types of waste |
| **13** | * National Circular Carbon Economy Program: Development of a program helping restore the carbon cycle balance, return to the sustainability of hydrocarbons * The Net-Zero Producers Forum: Enrollment in the Zero Neutrality Forum: a platform through which oil and gas producing countries support work towards cleaner, economical, reliable, and sustainable energy systems * The National Environmental Strategy: Integration of climate adaptation in all national strategies and raise environmental compliance in all development sectors and reduce all types of pollution; the strategy also aims to increase the vegetation cover, which can be used as a carbon sink to absorb carbon from the atmosphere * Implementation of renewable energy projects, incl. Sakaka solar PV project preventing the dissemination of half a million tons of CO2eq annually; by the end of 2023, renewable energy projects aim to reduce carbon emissions by about six and a half million tons of CO2eq annually * Green bond and green financing framework to enable renewable and sustainable projects |
| **14** | * Joining of the Global Ocean Alliance with aim for protection of minimum 30% of ocean in Marine Protected Areas * Launch of Six-week expedition on the OceanXplore, which generates scientific research into marine ecosystems & coral reef protection * Red Sea Research Center at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology * King Faisal University Fisheries Research Center |
| **15** | * Saudi Green initiative * Establishment and sustainable management of natural reserves by 2023 * Designation of 10 biodiversity protected areas by 2025 * Plantation of 10 billion trees domestically and 40 billion trees across the Middle East * Expansion of protected areas to more than 30% of total Saudi land area, representing around 600,000 square kilometers * Youth Green initiative summit: enhancement of young Saudi leaders’ knowledge and skills necessary to ensure a more sustainable future |

**Q4 – Are there any good practices that you would like to highlight**

* The Saudi Green Initiative works on increasing Saudi Arabia’s reliance on clean energy, offsetting emissions, and protecting the environment, in line with Vision 2030. It aims to improve quality of life and protect future generations.
* As a leading global energy producer, Saudi Arabia is committed to contributing positively to the global fight against climate change. Since the launch of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has made tremendous progress in addressing its unique environmental challenges, but there is much more to be done. The Saudi Green Initiative oversees Saudi Arabia’s work to combat climate change, facilitating whole-of-society, and public and private sector collaboration to rapidly scale-up climate action.
* The Saudi Green initiative aims to plant 10 billion trees — the same as rehabilitating 200 million hectares of degraded land. The target also represents 4 per cent of the global drive to reverse land degradation and 1 per cent of the global effort to plant one trillion trees. As part of the plan, 30 per cent of the kingdom — or 600,000 square kilometers — will be protected areas and efforts will be made to protect coastal environments.

**Q5 – How much budget has your state invested, since 2015, on actions to fulfil the eight SDGs that have the most direct environmental linkages (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

* Saudi Arabia has taken some fiscal initiatives to promote sustainable practices in the country, which includes optimization of subsidies in the energy sector to increase energy efficiency, and improve the country’s energy mix and re-channel the fiscal savings to more sustainable development projects.
* Saudi Arabia has taken some steps to promote sustainable financing – The National Centre for Privatization, Invest Saudi and the Islamic Development Bank are enhancing the role of the private sector in enabling sustainable financing in the country. There are multiple development funds in Saudi Arabia which typically focus on topics relevant to sustainable development:
  + **Agricultural Development Fund:** Finances agricultural activities by providing loans, grants and other financial products to farmers.
  + **Saudi Industrial Development Funds (SIDF)** promotes industrial investment opportunities, strengthen the local industry & enhance its performance. SIDF have two dedicated funds with significant sustainability practices: **Mutajadida** fund for renewable energy projects and renewable component manufacturers, and **Tanafusiya** fund to improve the energy efficiency of brownfield manufacturers.
  + **Social Development Bank:** Provides social financing products & business solutions to low-income citizens & creates awareness in financial planning & saving.
* Saudi Arabia puts high emphasis on providing development assistance to low-income countries through bilateral and multilateral systems, however, there is limited visibility on how this development assistance contributes towards SDGs. Around 30-40% of Saudi Arabia’s development cooperation takes place through multilateral systems, most of which is allocated to the UN and the World Bank Group (96% in 2019). Top three recipients included the World Food Program, United Nations Children’s Fund and the World Health Organization

**Q6 – What are the main barriers to progress towards achieving the relevant SDGs?**

* Data availability & statistical capacity

**Q7 – how can steps taken by your state to implement the human rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (recognized in A/HRC/RES/48/13) serve as a catalyst for making more rapid progress towards SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

* In this regards, the kingdom has puts great efforts in terms of providing human rights related to the environment. For example, in KSA the proportion of population with access to electricity services in different regions of the Kingdom is 99%, and population with access to clean fuels and technology for cooking is 96%. In addition to that, when it comes to access to water and sanitation, according to SDSN report, the population using at least basic drinking water services and population using at least basic sanitation services is 100%.Moreover, the percentage of population using the internet is 95.7%, the mobile broadband subscriptions (per 100 population) is (116.9) which exceed the optimum value (100).

**Q8 – How can increasing gender equality contribute to more rapid progress towards (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

* Implementation of gender equality is important to demonstrate commitment to OECD fundamental principle - rule of law and protection of human rights. Gender equality is critical and is crucially linked with overall equality in society. Women play a central role in food production, processing and distribution, the successful transition to sustainable energy as primary energy managers in household, and management and safeguarding of household water and sanitation.
* Gender equality is essential for economic prosperity as it gives women opportunity to impact GDP growth, and is critical to mitigate climate impacts. With women suffering disproportionately from resource scarcity and natural disasters resulting from climate change, unsustainable production and consumption patterns are gendered. Women’s inclusion in climate discussions leads to improved outcomes of climate-related projects and policies, to better resource governance and conservation, and to forest conservation and regeneration.
* Significant efforts have been made to improve gender equality in the Kingdom. The World Bank’s “Women, Business and the Law 2020” study, which tracks how laws affect women in 190 economies, scored Saudi Arabia’s economy 70.6 / 100, a significant increase from its previous score of 31.8. Some of these efforts include legislation aimed at protecting women from sexual harassment in the workplace, and equalization of the age (60 years) at which women and men can retire with full pension benefits, improved access to credit for women through prohibition of gender-based discrimination in financial services, and reform of quotas for Shura Council seats (20% of seats are for women).

**Q9 – How can businesses contribute to transformative actions and accelerating progress to achieve (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15)?**

* Private sectors play a critical role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), In this regards, recognizing the importance of corporate sustainability to accelerate the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development goals through private business activity, the Federation of Saudi Chambers announced its commitment to support UN Global Compact efforts through the signing of a Hosting Agreement of the Global Compact local Network Saudi Arabia.
* The Global Compact Network Saudi Arabia was formally launched with the support of the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator on Wednesday, 1 September 2021 joining the other 69 Local Networks of the UN Global Compact spanning the globe.
* The establishment of Global Compact Network Saudi Arabia has been part of UN efforts to broaden the scope of engagement with the private sector, to promote long-term sustainable partnerships aligned with the 2030 Agenda and Vision 2030.

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