

Expert Meeting of the ASPA

On Developing Scientific and Technological Cooperation on Climate Change

Damascus, 4-6 May 2010

Pursuant to Doha Declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Arab and South American Countries, in their Second Summit held in Doha (31/3/2009), aiming at promoting Arab-South American relations and benefiting from their available chances, and coordinating bi-regional efforts to build a strong community in which mutual benefits can be exchanged and common interests protected, in the framework of constructive and concrete relations; and referring to paragraph “93” of Doha Declaration, that states “...*Strengthen and develop cooperation through benefiting from modern technologies such as remote sensing and geographic information systems in areas related to climate change, such as the preparation and development of models for climate studies at the level of agricultural systems, the establishment and development of early warning systems for monitoring desertification, droughts, forecasting at the level of environmental systems, countries and sites and changes in land use*”; and in light of the Bi-regional coordination and consultation that took place between the League of Arab States “LAS” and Union of South American Nations “UNASUR”; the expert meeting of the ASPA on developing scientific and technological cooperation on climate change was held in

Damascus, 4-6 May 2010 hosted by the Syrian Arab Republic, and under the auspices of H.E. Eng Mohamed Naji Otri prime minister. The meeting was jointly organized by the Ministry of State for Environment Affairs / Syrian Arab Republic, the General Secretariat of League of Arab States, the Union of South American Nations - “UNASUR” and The Arab Center for The Studies of Arid Zones and Dry lands ” ACSAD”.

2. H.E. Dr. Kaoukab Al Sabah Daya, Minister of State for Environment Affairs in Syria, delivered the opening speech on behalf of H.E. Eng Mohamed Naji Otri the prime minister. The opening session included speeches for Eng. Fathy Biram on behalf of Dr. Rafik Ali Saleh Director General of ACSAD, H.E. Mr. Edgard Casciano the Brazilian Ambassador in Damascus on behalf of UNASUR , and Mrs. Fatma El Mallah advisor to the secretary General of LAS on Climate Change, The opening session was attended by ministers, ambassadors and high officials.

3. The meeting was attended by experts from 11 Arab countries (Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia) and 6 South American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Suriname), and also experts from Arab regional and international organization. List of participants - annex 1.

4. The meeting aimed at developing joint cooperation between ASPA countries on space-based satellites and remote sensing in the fields related to the impacts of

Climate Change on the environment and on the use of models for predicting regional climate change scenarios to reduce uncertainties. The meeting agenda - annex 2.

5. The main outcomes

- The meeting participants appreciated the offer proposed by the Brazilian delegation for sending their satellite data to the nearest receiving station while the satellite is passing over the region. Those data are in different resolutions and could serve different levels of monitoring and studies about the impacts of Climate Change on the environment and will be freely available for all Arab countries. The Egyptian delegation stated that they will activate the signed protocol with Brazil concerning receiving their satellite data. Egypt will also act as data provider for the Brazilian satellite to all Arab countries.
- The meeting participants also welcomed the offer proposed by the Brazilian delegation for providing technical cooperation and capacity building on regional and bilateral levels in the field of using models for predicting climate change scenarios to reduce uncertainties.
- The meeting participants expressed the importance of Bi-regional cooperation in introducing the space technologies in the educational curricula.
- The meeting participants took note of the draft program of cooperation proposed by the Brazilian delegation which could be a good platform for expanding the cooperation between the two regions in the field of Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability, Adaptation and risk reduction. They made some preliminary remarks on the drafts, as highlighted in annex 3. The draft should be distributed to ASPA country members for more comments so as to be able to prepare a final draft with a time frame and implementation mechanism, before the High official meeting of ASPA scheduled in Cairo, July 2010.
- The meeting participants call upon the Arab countries for wider participation at the II International Conference on Climate Sustainability and Development in Semi-arid regions to be held in Fortaleza, Brazil 16 - 20 August 2010.

6. All the participants extend their deep appreciation to H.E. Eng Mohamed Naji Otri the prime minister and to H.E. Dr. Kaoukab Al Sabah Daya, Minister of State for Environment Affairs in Syria for the warm hospitality, facilities and support provided which helped the meeting achieve its goals.
