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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية



Annex to ANND Strategy

2024-2025

● 1 - ANND STRATEGY AND REVIEW PROCESS

The four-year strategy (2020-2023) developed by the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) in 2019 is grounded in a comprehensive set of strategic directions and goals, which emanate from collective discussions, thorough analyses, and evaluations. Its primary objective is to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of ANND's organizational structure, programs, and activities, emphasizing institutional effectiveness, openness, innovation, good governance, and integration.

In 2022, ANND embarked on a rigorous assessment and consultation process for the midterm review of its four-year strategy. The outcomes underscore a **recommendation for the continuity of the existing strategic plan and its five objectives, forming the global and comprehensive directions for the network.**

During the in-person annual General Assembly (GA) members meeting held in Beirut, Lebanon, in March 2023, discussions centered around proposed changes and adaptations to ANND's four-year strategy in response to contextual shifts and the emergence of new priorities. These modifications encompass institutional and organizational changes, the incorporation of new thematic priorities, and refined directions for policy processes.

The details of these proposed **strategic changes and directions are meticulously outlined in the accompanying document, serving as an annex to ANND's four-year strategy, extending its scope until the year 2025.**

● 2 - CONTEXTUAL HIGHLIGHTS

The **global system**, characterized by elements such as international cooperation, peace and security, the rejection of power politics, international law, and institutional liberalism, **has fallen short of achieving absolute prosperity, peace, cooperation, or liberties for both individuals and states.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the self-interest-driven nature of states, resulting in the **failure of global institutions to effectively address major challenges.** Financial leaders and institutions have neglected the most vulnerable, impeding the restoration of stability, confidence, and growth in the global economy. This failure underscores the **urgent need for a "New Agenda for Peace,"** advocating for multilateral efforts based on international law to tackle interconnected challenges.

Another critical issue is the **failure to address climate change** before it evolved into a global emergency. The potential future uninhabitability of the planet due to rising temperatures and extreme weather events emphasizes the immediate need for principles transcending borders to manage climate disasters, mitigate risks of instability, and address disputes related to territorial and maritime claims.

Shifts in the world order have intensified conflicts, leading to trade wars and noticeable polarization within the Arab region. Persistent challenges in the Arab region continue to shape the socio-political landscape, marked by **economic inequality and capital concentration** exacerbated by a global system where financial interests often take precedence over population well-being.

Humanitarian crises, worsened by conflict, war, and deteriorating economic and social conditions, have reached unprecedented levels of cruelty and breadth in the Arab region contributing to the region holding a substantial portion of the world's displaced population. This is evident in the appalling situation in Gaza,

with casualties and structural destruction prompting the movement of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The war in Gaza has eroded confidence in human rights, being widely perceived in the region as a manifestation of both the failure of the global system and shortcomings in human rights instruments. As the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories persists, the power imbalance continues to obstruct political resolutions and limit prospects for a lasting solution.

Moreover, **democracy and human rights indicators in many Arab countries face challenges** due to the diminishing importance of human rights in international relations. Civic spaces in numerous Arab countries are shrinking, accompanied by violations aimed at excluding civil society, highlighting a concerning trend, including blatant assaults on human rights activists and defenders.

● 3 - INSTITUTIONAL / ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

At the organizational and institutional level, the envisaged changes are designed to **foster the active participation and inclusion of marginalized groups** within ANND's programmatic activities. The goal is to provide these groups with a platform to engage proactively in understanding and shaping policies related to key priorities that directly impact their lives. A pivotal aspect of this initiative involves **establishing a dedicated youth network and women's working group**, aiming to identify the specific needs of these groups and actively involve them in the decision-making process.

This approach ensures that the affected groups themselves are leading the efforts that concern them, **fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment**. By promoting effective participation in policy formulation and processes, the objective is not only to enhance democratic practices but also to counteract the concerning trend of diminishing civic space. The overarching aim is to create an environment where marginalized voices are not only heard but actively contribute to shaping policies that reflect their unique perspectives and needs.

3.1 The creation of the Arab Youth Network:

The inception of the Arab Youth Network (AYN) is a direct outcome of the notable success achieved through ANND's organization of regional Youth Forums in both 2022 and 2023 under the Safir project. This newly formed network is **composed of 71 dynamic young members hailing from nine Arab countries**: Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, and Algeria.

The genesis of AYN traces back to the second Youth Forum held in March 2023, where participating members collaborated to craft the internal guidelines that would govern the network. This pivotal moment marked the official launch of AYN, signifying a collective commitment to fostering youth engagement and empowerment within the ANND framework.

The overarching objective of the Arab Youth Network is multifaceted. Firstly, it seeks to ensure the active participation of youth across all ANND activities, thereby contributing to the overall vibrancy and inclusivity of the network. Moreover, **AYN aims to establish itself as a sustainable entity, capable of responding to the evolving challenges and needs of multiple generations within the Arab region.**

By cultivating a platform that encourages the exchange of ideas, experiences, and perspectives, the Arab Youth Network endeavors to become a catalyst for innovative solutions, actively shaping ANND's agenda and contributing to the broader discourse on regional development. This strategic initiative not only recognizes the inherent value of youth voices but also underscores their vital role in shaping ANND's trajectory.

3.2 The creation of the working group on women:

The evolving landscape of women's and gender rights in the region has prompted ANND to establish a dedicated working group focused on women. This initiative aims to serve as a platform for partners, members, and regional networks engaged in gender-related issues to foster communication, conduct analyses, offer critical perspectives, and **propose alternative discourses concerning the tools and strategies employed by feminist movements** in the region.

Leveraging ANND's wealth of experience and expertise in economic and social policies, the working group aspires to contribute to an alternative gender discourse. It seeks to provide a critical lens to mainstream approaches in gender justice initiatives, addressing the root causes of gender inequality across cultural, political, social, economic, and environmental dimensions. The ultimate goal is to support the cultivation of an **alternative discourse within feminist groups in the region**.

This working group endeavors to amplify its impact by **supporting the voice of gender-focused groups in global policy processes**. By ensuring a progressive and representative voice that reflects the region's nuances, the group aims to contribute to global fora discussions on gender justice.

4 - NEW THEMATIC PRIORITIES

Amidst escalating global uncertainties fueled by conflicts, unsustainable debt levels, and widening socio-economic disparities, civil society organizations and actors must delve into the myriad dimensions of these complex crises. Their role is to **provide alternative policy orientations in alignment with sustainable development principles and a human rights-based approach**. Aligned with ANND's strategic directions, which center on lobbying and advocacy for economic and social rights in the Arab region, the renewed thematic approach to ANND's programs encompasses several key areas:

4.1 Global Governance Issues: An emphasis on global governance issues, contributing to an alternative discourse and ensuring the robust representation of the region in shaping global governance frameworks.

4.2 Climate change Issues with a Development and Human Rights Perspective: A dedicated focus on environmental issues, particularly through the lens of development and human rights, with an emphasis on climate justice.

4.3 War, Peace, and Security Priorities: A strategic focus on war, peace, and security as integral tools to attain sustainable development, facilitate democratic transitions, and foster justice and peace.

4.4 Governance and Transparency Issues: A concentration on governance and transparency issues in harmony with democracy and citizenship, with a particular emphasis on accountability models.

4.5 Workers' Protection and Rights: A commitment to advancing workers' protection and rights by developing tangible tools to directly support labor unions.

4.6 Financial and Fiscal Policies: A targeted focus on debt and tax issues, examining their impact on inequality and social protection and exploring the repercussions of the debt crisis on the most vulnerable groups in the region.

● 5 - DIRECTIONS ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

ANND's first strategic objective aims to **“build a critical mass of development actors and partners in the Arab region to become effective in development policies at national levels, through influencing alternative policy proposals and raising awareness”**. The proposed enhancements to the capacity development component aim to refine and amplify the dissemination of tools and competencies, enabling civil society actors and organizations to exert meaningful influence across various levels of policymaking. These strategic changes include:

01

National-Level Training Focus

A deliberate shift towards intensified training activities at the national level, leveraging the capacities of ANND members and partners to empower local actors in shaping and influencing development policies.

02

Expanded Partnerships for Annual Study Week

Collaboration with an expanded array of partners, including global entities, in the organization of ANND's annual study week. This event will specifically concentrate on socio-economic, macroeconomic, and development policies, fostering a diverse and inclusive exchange of insights and expertise.

03

Tailoring Training Material to National Needs

Adaptation of ANND's existing training material and tools to align with the distinctive needs and priorities at the national level, ensuring that the resources provided are directly applicable and impactful in diverse contexts.

04

Creation of a “Devctionary”

Development of a comprehensive “devctionary” to consolidate and unify all training concepts. This tool will serve as a cohesive resource, facilitating clarity and understanding across the spectrum of development-related concepts and terminology.

05

Establishment of a Regional Resource Center

Implementation of a regional resource center to centralize and disseminate all training content generated by ANND and its members. This centralized repository will enhance accessibility and ensure widespread availability of valuable knowledge throughout the Arab region.

Through these strategic adjustments, ANND aims not only to strengthen the capabilities of local actors but also to foster a collaborative and interconnected regional environment that actively contributes to the development discourse in the Arab region.

● 6 - DIRECTIONS ON ADVOCACY PROCESSES

In line with ANND's second strategic objective "**Community organizations are successfully influencing alternative national, regional and international development policies by working together and collaborating to put pressure on international, regional and national institutions,**" the proposed changes on advocacy-related processes aim to strengthen the engagement with national, regional and international institutions around pressing priorities. These adjustments are particularly pertinent in the prevailing global context where both the global system and financial architecture have fallen short in addressing core macroeconomic challenges and socio-economic disparities, hindering progress in sustainable human development. The escalating violence and conflict in the Arab region, coupled with diminishing space for civic participation, underscore the imperative for organizations to actively participate in advocacy processes, especially on the global stage. The proposed changes in this domain seek to amplify and fortify ANND's advocacy endeavors across multiple forums and priorities, encompassing the following:

6.1 Prioritizing active participation in the Summit for the Future, recognizing it as a pivotal forum offering a rare opportunity to enhance cooperation, address global governance gaps, and reaffirm commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Charter. This engagement aims to contribute to a revitalized multilateral system capable of positively impacting people's lives.

6.2 A heightened focus on and active engagement in global climate forums to facilitate meaningful discussions on climate justice issues and assess their impact on the Arab region. This strategic emphasis reflects the urgency of addressing climate-related challenges and advocating for just and equitable solutions.

6.3 Strengthening and broadening involvement in the World Trade Organization (WTO) processes and negotiations, leveraging Arab civil society's participation in global discussions to reshape existing models. This proactive engagement aims to influence trade policies and frameworks to better align with the needs and aspirations of Arab communities.