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Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals in the Construction Sector in the Arab Region (JSRAS)

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Index Terms

Agenda 2030, Arab region, Localization of SDGs, Reconstruction, Sustainable development, Policies.

Abstract

Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for reconstruction means adapting and implementing these goals in a local and context-specific manner to achieve the 2030 Agenda. This process begins with defining the aims and objectives, and extends to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress.

Localization is a fundamental element in achieving the SDGs in reconstruction processes. It ensures a positive impact on affected communities suitably and sustainably. This is achieved through effective planning of integrated and sustainable human settlements, ensuring everyone has access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing, as well as basic services that enable a decent life for citizens. The Arab states face several challenges to localize the SDGs, these challenges include the increase number of slum populations, inadequate housing, uncontrolled urban sprawl, and inadequate basic services and transportation systems.

The paper adopted an inductive-analytical approach by reviewing relevant topics and studying successful experiences in localizing the SDGs in reconstruction to extract lessons learned in achieving sustainable reconstruction.

Therefore, this paper focused on identifying the concepts of sustainable development and the possibility of localizing them in the Arab region, shedding light on the key challenges they face. It also identified important sustainable housing policies and strategies for reconstruction by studying local strategies and successful examples in localizing the SDGs. The paper also reviewed the most significant sustainable strategies used in the Arab region to reach recommendations that assist decision-makers in adopting responsive and inclusive policies that meet the needs of all.

توطين أهداف التنمية المستدامة في مجال البناء بالمنطقة العربية

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الملخص

تتضمن عملية توطين أهداف التنمية المستدامة لاعادة الانشاء تكييف هذه الأهداف لضمان ملاءمتها للسياق المحلي وتنفيذها بفعالية لتحقيق خطة التنمية المستدامة لعام 2030. وتشمل هذه العملية تحديد الأهداف ووسائل التنفيذ، واستخدام مؤشرات لرصد التقدم المحرز. يُعدّ التوطين أمرًا حيويًا لإحداث تأثير إيجابي على المجتمعات المتضررة من خلال تخطيط مستوطنات بشرية مستدامة، وضمان الوصول إلى السكن اللائق والخدمات الأساسية. تواجه الدول العربية تحدياتٍ مثل تزايد أعداد سكان الأحياء الفقيرة، وعدم كفاية المساكن، والتوسع العمراني العشوائي، ونقص الخدمات الأساسية وأنظمة النقل. تستخدم هذه الورقة البحثية منهجًا استقرائيًا تحليليًا، حيث تستعرض المواضيع ذات الصلة وتستكشف تجارب التوطين الناجحة لأهداف التنمية المستدامة لاستخلاص الدروس المستفادة من أجل إعادة إعمار مستدامة. وتؤكد على أهمية مفاهيم التنمية المستدامة القابلة للتطبيق في المنطقة العربية، وتسلط الضوء على التحديات الرئيسية، وتحدد سياسات واستراتيجيات الإسكان الفعالة. علاوة على ذلك، تستعرض الورقة البحثية استراتيجيات مستدامة هامة في المنطقة العربية، وتقدم توصيات لصناع القرار لوضع سياسات شاملة تلبي احتياجات الجميع. تشمل المصطلحات الرئيسية التي تمت مناقشتها أجندة 2030، والمنطقة العربية، وتوطين أهداف التنمية المستدامة، وإعادة الإعمار، والتنمية المستدامة، والسياسات.

الكلمات المفتاحية

أجندة 2030، المنطقة العربية، توطين أهداف التنمية المستدامة، إعادة الإعمار، التنمية المستدامة، السياسات.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development requires a comprehensive understanding of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development. In the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development (SD) has been defined by Brundtland (1987: 8) as "…development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Almansuri, (2010) stated that Brundtland's definition has been accepted worldwide, despite some criticism for being vague and subject to several different clarifications. For example; the Rio Earth Summit and many others, adopted the definition of SD given by the Brundtland Report and specified the three global concerns: energy (global warming and future supplies), ecology (biodiversity and rainforest protection) and environment (water resources and land). However, Robinson (2001) defined SD in terms of 10 challenges: clean air; transportation; clean water; housing; food; jobs; energy; waste disposal; land use; and health care. this is confirmed by Almansuri et al., (2009) who pointed out that many references stated that the key element of sustainable development is the integration of its three dimensions: social, economic, and environmental. However. Evans (2007) argues that the three elements of SD are one of the its three core areas, which are: 1- Energy in the built environment, at the national and international levels; 2- The environmental impact of the built environment, caused by energy use at local, regional and global levels; and 3- The sustainability of the built environment, including its economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

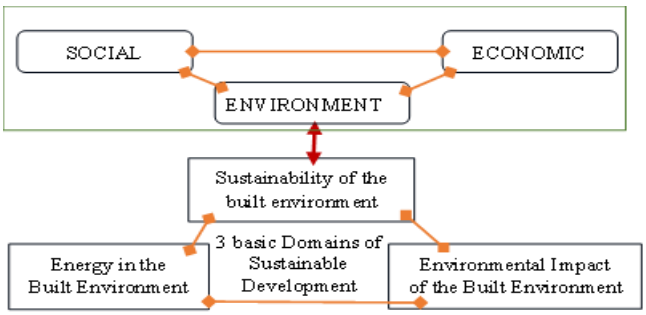


Figure 1. Basic Domains of SD Source: After Almansuri (2010)

Sustainable development represents an important challenge in this world, as countries and societies seek to achieve economic and social progress and prosperity without compromising the environment and natural resources. It is an essential strategy for comprehensive development. It aims to achieve a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social justice. Achieving sustainable development can contribute to creating a better world for current and future generations and requires cooperation and joint efforts by all actors in society.

ANES (2023) specified that global efforts to achieve sustainable development are essential to address the environmental, social and economic challenges facing humanity. They listed some important global efforts to promote sustainable development summarized as follows: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: adopted by the United Nations in 2015, and aims to direct global efforts towards achieving sustainable development by 2030.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: (UNFCCC) informally known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, is considered as one of the main efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainable development.
Global Partnerships: such as the Billions Partnership, which aims to help infrastructure investment and capacity development in developing countries.
Sustainable financing: Directing investments towards projects and initiatives that encourage sustainable development, and providing the essential financing to developing countries to achieve SDGs.
Knowledge and technology exchange: It plays an important role in promoting sustainable development, skills development and knowledge exchange regarding sustainable solutions to environmental and social challenges.

The construction and real estate sectors are crucial for achieving the 2030 Agenda. Goubran (2020) noted that these sectors play a vital role in sustainable development, particularly concerning environmental factors. While existing literature primarily explores green ratings and sustainability tools, it often overlooks a comprehensive perspective on the connection between the building sector and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Chen et. al. (2026) clarified that, holistic design, which considers factors such as energy efficiency, environmentally friendly materials, and comprehensive urban planning, plays a direct role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) and Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG 9). By transforming building construction and infrastructure into contributors to environmental resilience and social justice, modern construction strategies can help achieve the SDGs and foster healthier, more livable communities.

The concept of sustainable development requires a comprehensive understanding of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. Accordingly, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda are clarified in the next title.

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals SDGs to transform the world are a global call to eliminate poverty, conserve land, and improve lives everywhere. Through strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs, including health, education, social protection, and employment opportunities. In addition to addressing climate change and protecting the environment. These 17 goals and 169 targets were adopted by all UN member states in 2015, it officially came into effect on January 1st 2016, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which set out a 15-year plan to achieve those goals by 2030. (UNDG 2017, UN 2023).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has transformed the previously prevailing development paradigm. The 2030 Agenda includes developed countries that should strive to achieve sustainable development. Hence, the 2030 Agenda identifies the importance of each country doing its utmost to achieve its own development, to enable its citizens to live in dignity and peace, in a clean environment, and in economic prosperity (Slovenia2020).

The new agenda seeks to respect human rights, equality, and non-discrimination, and its message is “to leave no one behind” and to reach the furthest behind first (UNDG 2016).

The Sustainable Development Goals were set by the United Nations to form a global framework for working towards sustainable development in all countries, to contribute to a positive transformation in the world by the year 2030. These goals aim to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development that promotes social justice, protects the environment, and ensures the well-being of all. Arab Network for Excellence and Sustainability ANES, (2023) and others addressed the most important sustainable development goals as follows Figure2:

- Eliminating poverty: improving the standard of living of poor people.
- End hunger: Ensuring the availability of safe and sufficiently healthy food for all.
- Ensuring good health: ensuring people's access to basic health care services.
- Ensuring quality education: Ensuring quality education and learning opportunities for all.
- Achieving gender equality: eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and enhancing their participation in all areas and decision-making.
- Ensuring the availability of clean water and sanitation: managing water resources and sanitation services sustainably.
- Ensuring access to sustainable and affordable energy: promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.
- Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth: creating decent and sustainable job opportunities for all.
- Building solid infrastructure: strengthening industry, stimulating innovation, and promoting environmental sustainability.
- Reducing inequality within and between countries: reducing economic and social inequality and promoting equality within and between countries.
- Making cities and settlements sustainable, safe and accessible to all: Enhancing access to adequate housing and public transport and providing green spaces.
- Promoting sustainable consumption and production: Improving waste management and shifting to more sustainable production models.
- Combating climate change and its effects: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting economic and social systems to climate changes.
- Preserving marine life: protecting the seas, conserving marine biodiversity, and using marine resources in a sustainable way.

- Protecting and restoring terrestrial biological ecosystems: Promoting environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation.



Figure 2. Sustainable Development Goals Source: UNDP (2022)

Sustainable development is of great importance in the world today, and its importance is represented by ANES (2023) in the following points:

Resource conservation: Using resources sustainably and efficiently helps preserve the environment and economic conditions.

Reducing pollution and climate change: Reduce the negative effects of climate change and preserve the health of the environment and current and future generations.

Poverty eradication: Achieving economic and social progress in sustainable ways to provide decent job opportunities, education, health, and housing for all, contributing to reducing poverty and improving the quality of life.

Equality and justice: achieving gender equality, promoting human rights and social justice, working to provide equal opportunities for all, and preventing discrimination and injustice in the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Long-term sustainability: The long-term sustainable development strategy aims to build a sustainable future and lasting prosperity. Ensuring the continuity of economic and social growth without negatively affecting the environment and natural resources.

The 2030 Agenda for SD is an action for people, the planet, and prosperity and aims to strengthen universal peace in greater freedom. It is an integrated strategy organized in four main parts.

Figure 4: 1- A Vision and Principles for Transforming the World; 2- A Results Framework of Global Sustainable Development Goals SDGs; 3- A Means of Implementation and Global Partnership; and 4- Follow-up and Review (UNDG, 2016).

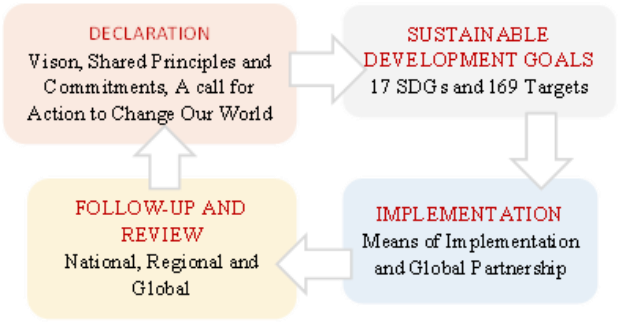


Figure 3. 2030 Agenda for SD Structure. Source: after UNDG, (2017)

2.1 Challenges Facing Sustainable Development

Sustainable development faces many challenges that delay the full achievement of its goals. The most important challenges identified by ANES (2023) as follows:

- **Environmental challenges:** include environmental pollution, degradation of biodiversity, and depletion of natural resources.
- **Economic challenges:** These include challenges related to poverty, unemployment, and economic inequality.
- **Social challenges**: These include challenges related to reducing poverty, enhancing education and health care, and social empowerment.
- **Institutional challenges**: Sustainable development requires institutional reforms, strengthening governance and combating corruption.
- **Cultural challenges and awareness:** Awareness and education must be enhanced about the importance of sustainable development and the adoption of sustainability values in society.

To achieve sustainable development, these challenges must be dealt with seriously and integrated strategies that combine the economic, environmental and social dimensions must be adopted. This requires cooperation and coordination between governments, institutions, civil society and the private sector.

3. LOCALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

UNDP (2022) clarified that, before the adoption of the SDGs, localization was defined as the process of designing and implementing local development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals MDGs. It is concerned with strengthening local ownership, understanding local needs and trends, and allocating resources to achieve targeted results at the local level. During the design of the 2030 Agenda, a call was made for more active participation of local governments in achieving the sustainable development agenda. To set a global agenda at the local level, the Global Task Force for Local and Regional Governments was established in 2013. The task force is co-led by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Localization is defined as the process of taking into account sub-national contexts in achieving the 2030 Agenda, through identifying, implementing and monitoring strategies at the local level to achieve global, national and sub-national sustainable development goals and objectives. From setting goals and objectives to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress (UCLG 2018, Croese, 2022). This is confirmed by UNDP, (2022) who describe Localizing as the process of considering sub-national contexts in achieving the 2030 Agenda, from addressing goals to defining the means of implementation and monitoring the progress by using indicators and measure. They added that localization is the process of designing and implementing local development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals MDGs. This involves promoting local ownership, understanding local needs and trends, and allocating resources to achieve targeted outcomes at the local level. The European Commission EC (2023) also described the SDGs localization as the procedure of adapting the SD 2030 Agenda within the local context and challenges, defining, implementing and monitoring local actions and approaches that contribute to the global achievement of the SDGs.

The success of regional and local governments in sharing best practices is evidence of the arranging power of the SDGs and the usefulness of the framework as a tool to build and enable local discussion and planning, as well as communication between cities and brands. Documented experiences of localizing the Sustainable Development Goals also show that effective local action goes beyond local governments and includes the role and importance of active local civil society, partnerships between cities and universities, local political leadership and participation, as well as support from local communities, organizations, networks, platforms and global communities of practice for research and policy to help exchange good practices and their dissemination (Croese, 2022).

Accordingly, localizing the SDGs is not the jumping of global goals into the local contexts, it is a process of joining local opportunities, priorities and ideas to implement global agendas in cities and territories to achieve local and global goals.

3.1 Localizing the SDGs in the Arab States

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia ESCWA (2016) clarified that the Arab countries have been committed to sustainable development since the 1992 Earth Summit. They also committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals since 2000, preparing national reports on progress, the Regional Coordination Mechanism, led by ESCWA, issues four Arab reports monitoring regional development. In 2002, the League of Arab States approved the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region. They with the UN's regional coordination mechanism for Arab agencies have established two working groups to address the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. The first group focuses on policies and programs related to the 2030 Agenda, coordinating the Arab Sustainable Development Report and the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development. The second group focuses on data and sustainable development goals.

UNDP (2019) stated that to ensure no one is left behind in Arab countries, it is crucial to address the forces of exclusion in five key areas:

Discrimination: 50% of the population is at risk of being left behind due to being women.

Geographical exclusion: More than 60% of the population in Arab countries is expected to live in urban areas by 2030, but across countries, between 8% and 90% of the population is at risk of living in slums.

Unaccountable governance: With about 50% of registered voters participating in elections, the years following the Arab uprising saw declining trust in institutions and rising rates of corruption.

Socio-economic exclusion: Income poverty and high unemployment rates affect 25% of young people, revealing diverse human stories and highlighting the uneven provision of social services and protection nets.

Shocks and fragility: 84% of the population faces water scarcity, while the decline of arable land and reliance on food imports increase food insecurity risks.

3.2 Challenges of Localizing the SDGs in the Arab States

The localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Arab states faces several challenges. These challenges can vary across countries and regions within the Arab states, many references cited these challenges, such as UNDP (2022), who identified the probable challenges to SDG localization in the Arab states as follows:

1. The majority of countries lack in understanding of how the conceptual clarity on what SDG localization can be instrumentalized and adapted to do business differently.
2. Perceive localization as a luxury.
3. Countries in the region are not equal in the level and quality of programming and companies in Localizing SDGs.

They recognized that the Arab countries lack structural economic transformation, leading to high unemployment and low-value jobs. Macroeconomic policy choices are disconnected from development objectives, and low government social spending stagnates. The global economic system and globalization constrain development policy choices, and Arab countries face external constraints. Social protection systems are fragmented and low-coverage, often relying on exclusionary plans. Conflict and displacement can hinder progress on SDG 1 and increase poverty.

UCLG (2018) clarified that many challenges faced the local and regional governments (LRGs) in the cities and regions they manage. These challenges consist of the increase in slum populations and insufficient housing, uncontrolled urban sprawl, and inadequate basic services and transportation systems.

In their findings and recommendations, DERASAT et al. (2020) address common challenges in Arab cities as follows;

1. lack of interlinked governance at national, regional, and local levels.
2. The region grapples with the dilemma of whether cities should promote urban equity or preserve existing differences.
3. High inequality, high-rise construction, and new development trends.
4. The lack of robust national and local data delays policymaking in infrastructure, financing, and Smart City initiatives, affecting responsiveness and long-term investments.
5. Inadequate infrastructure planning due to population growth, overlapping mandates, and lack of coordination leads to disintegration, project incompatibility, and territorial inequalities.
6. The growing commercialization of urban infrastructure, particularly housing and retail, affects affordability and inclusion, requiring a balance between income and availability.
7. Extended conflicts in Arab cities cause socio-economic damage, threatening residents' well-being and historical identity.
8. Conflict-ridden regions face challenges in reconstruction, including outdated urban plans, infrastructure shortages, and funding shortages.
9. Unsustainable land policies in Arab regions cause low-density urban sprawl, increased urbanization costs, and individual transportation dominance.
10. Under-investment in green infrastructure projects is primarily due to car-oriented urban planning and neglect of public spaces.
11. Arab countries face limited private infrastructure investment and tightened public investment due to poor governance, transparency, and political instability.
12. Local governments lack financial management capacity, affecting creditworthiness. Mobilizing financial resources for SDG implementation requires improvements in financial mechanisms, revenue collection, and partnerships with private sector and international donors.
13. Operating fixed costs impact cities' fiscal space, leading to reliance on central government transfers.
14. Financial systems deteriorate due to poor health, lack of economic diversification, and structural transformation.
15. The sharing economy offers transformative social and economic opportunities without government intervention.

Wahba (2021) stated that the Arab countries face several challenges summarized in the following points;

- lake in data availability, quality, and coverage, making it difficult to accurately measure progress towards the SDGs due to outdated or incomplete data.
- Conflicts and political instability in Arab countries delay the implementation of SDGs, and requiring the restoration of stability in affected areas.
- Arab states frequently face significant socioeconomic inequalities, requiring targeted interventions and policies to promote inclusive growth, social protection, and equitable access to services.
- The Arab region faces environmental challenges like water scarcity, desertification, climate change, and pollution, impacting sustainable development and SDG achievement, necessitating sustainable resource management practices.
- It is impossible to generalize trends toward SDGs application, as there is a wide difference in the development performance of the countries in inquiry.

Luomi et. al., (2019) clarified that, Arab countries face diverse sustainable development challenges, including food production and gender equality, with socioeconomic disparities highlighting poor performance on SDGs 2 and 5, and significant challenges in SDGs 3 and 16. They added that the Arab region is grappling with significant data gaps in sustainable development performance, particularly in income and wealth distribution, particularly in SDG 1 and SDG 10.
Arab countries, especially those in conflict, face a higher risk of falling behind in achieving the SDGs goals.
To tackle these challenges, strong political commitment, improved institutional capacity, effective governance, multi-stakeholder engagement, regional cooperation, and knowledge sharing are necessary.

3.3 Successful Examples of Localizing SDGs in the *Arab States*

ESCWA (2016) found that the Arab region has made progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with comprehensive **primary education** expanding to 92% of school-age children, **gender equality** enhancing, and **women's representation** in parliament increasing. Neonatal deaths and maternal **health** have also improved, with **HIV treatment rates increasing** by 50% and malaria decreasing. Access to **safe drinking water** has reached 81% of the population.
ESCWA (2016) reviewed development plans in six Arab countries: **Jordan, Tunisia, Iraq, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia**. Some developed their plans before approving the 2030 plan, while others were guided by the process. The reviewed plans include Jordan's 2025 National Vision and Strategy, Tunisia's 2020 development plan, Iraq's National Development Plan 2013-2017, Egypt's Vision 2030, and Saudi Arabia's Tenth Development Plan. They evaluate these plans and find that Iraq's National Development Plan aligns with sustainable development goals, while other countries' plans vary in their approach. Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, are not clearly addressed in the plans. Iraqi plans focus on women's empowerment and political participation, while Egyptian plans address inequality reduction through law review from 2016 to 2020. Goal 16, to promote peaceful

societies in which no one is ignored and provide access for all Justice, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, did not receive sufficient attention in the plans of the mentioned countries, with the exception of the development plan in Iraq and the sustainable development strategy in Egypt, where the goal of establishing a transparent, fair, and efficient government regulatory system was mentioned.

Luomi et. al., (2019) identified that, in 2019, the Arab region showed a diverse range of sustainable development outcomes, they received an average score of 58 out of 100, requiring acceleration of sustainable development efforts. Five regional leaders emerged in 2019: **Algeria, the** United **Arab Emirates, Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan** emerged as regional leaders with an index score of 65 or more, two-thirds of the way towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

According to Wahba (2021) the Arab region has only 41% of the 232 Sustainable Development Goals indicators available and updated, with 11% not updated since 2015 and 18% not calculated since 2000. However, the Arab states have many successful examples of localizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through initiatives and projects, addressing specific challenges and priorities of each country, and highlighting the alignment of national development plans with SDGs. Some examples are listed as follows;

The United Arab Emirates UAE has made significant progress in localizing the SDGs through its Vision 2021, establishing the UAE SDGs Council and developing a comprehensive National Voluntary Review report.

1. **Jordan** has integrated the SDGs into its national development plans, including the Jordan Vision 2025 and the National Sustainable Development Strategy, and established the National Committee for Sustainable Development to coordinate efforts.
2. **Saudi Arabia** has integrated the SDGs into its Vision 2030, aiming to diversify its economy and promote sustainable development. The Saudi Vision 2030 Center monitors progress and launches specific initiatives.
3. **Morocco** has implemented the National Sustainable Development Strategy and Industrial Acceleration Plan to localize the SDGs, with the High Commission for Planning overseeing their implementation and monitoring progress and focusing on renewable energy projects and education.

3.4 Strategies Can Help in Localizing SDGs in the Arab States

Many references have presented key strategies for localizing the SDGs in Arab countries, such as UCLG (2018), which identified that the key step in planning, financing, and building partnerships toward localizing the SDGs is knowing the importance of local leadership. And to combat extreme poverty in vulnerable areas and create a strong fabric between cities, access to land rights, housing rights, and basic services is necessary. Also, LRGs should pay more attention to housing to be at the core of the urban agenda and put it at the heart of its implementation. This can be done by looking at urban housing policies in a comprehensive way and understanding them as city policies.

UNDP (2022) added that, without active localization procedures with inclusive civic engagement, top-down development strategies may conflict with local importance and fail to adapt to the precise development context at the local level. In the Arab States, SDG localization initiatives are only effective when aligned with local priorities and participatory planning. The evolving development context and crisis trajectory have impacted sustainable development outcomes, with humanitarian, conflict prevention, and political transition concerns becoming more prominent.

ANES (2023) explained that sustainable development in the Arab world faces various challenges and opportunities due to the geographical and cultural diversity that characterizes the Arab world, with different levels of development and challenges faced by each country. They reviewed some important aspects of sustainable development in the Arab world and proposed solutions to some challenges, represented in the following:

Economic development: through economic variation and development of non-oil sectors. Entrepreneurship and investments in alternative industries and ICTs should be encouraged, and fair trade and environmental sustainability should be promoted.

Preserving natural resources: Promoting the sustainable use of natural wealth and resources by applying effective water management practices, sustainable agriculture, and promoting renewable energy.

Education and Awareness: Providing quality and appropriate education opportunities for all, and enhancing awareness of environmental issues and sustainable development issues in schools, universities, and communities.

Equality and social justice: Ensuring equal access to basic services such as health, education, and housing. Addressing social challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and discrimination, and enhancing the role of women in the sustainable development process.

Regional and international cooperation: exchanging knowledge, experience, and technology and strengthening partnerships to meet common challenges and achieve sustainable development in the region.

They also provided some recommendations to avoid the main challenges facing the localization of SDGs in the Arab state in the following points:

- **Environmental challenges**, require taking strong measures to preserve the environment and achieve environmental sustainability.
- **Economic challenges**, require achieving a balance between economic growth and equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities.
- **Social challenges**, provide fair and equal opportunities for all, and enhancing community participation.
- **Institutional challenges**, ensure transparency, accountability, and strengthen cooperation between governments, the private sector, and civil society

The UNRC (2023) emphasizes five key messages for implementing the 2030 Agenda for SDGs are: 1. commit to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2. focus on sustainable financing and transformative actions, 3. ensure SDG policies are based on reliable data, 4. invest in resilience, and 5. achieve peace, stability, and resilience through enhanced collaboration and partnerships across countries and stakeholders.

PWC (2017) cited UNIDO strategies and options for national, regional, and global action that governments may consider as follows:

1. Support the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises SMEs into value chains.
2. Mobilize financing and local resources for infrastructure, industrialization, and innovation
3. Strengthen cooperation between the public and private sectors in smart cities and the circular economy.
4. Build national capacities in policies, institutions, and projects.
5. Introduce policy measures to stimulate greater implementation of voluntary sustainability systems.
6. Improving the availability and reliability of industrial statistics

Factors enabling the localization of sustainable development goals in Arab countries collected by UNDP (2022) are as follows:

1. Strengthen coordination methods between different levels of government and non-governmental actors.
2. Prioritize data generation and management for SDG localization.
3. Enhance participatory methods for localization
4. Harness social and digital innovation to support SDG localization.
5. Monitor and report SDG progress at the local level, encouraging social accountability, multi-stakeholder engagement, and disaggregated data analysis.
6. Foster innovative financing practices for SDG Localization.

They also listed some policies to help localizing SDGs in the Arab states are:

1. Strengthen current institutional and organization methods
2. Support networks of local government associations
3. Support the generation and management of information.
4. Encourage Local and Regional Governments LRGs to develop Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).
5. Place inclusive mechanisms in all SDG localization efforts for communities and individuals.
6 Support the development of social and digital innovations.
7. Address the financing gap by raising awareness and building the capacity of partners.

DERASAT et al. (2020) found that the Arab governments should regulate and incorporate the sharing economy and frontier technologies, assessing both their potential for prosperity and challenges for sustainable positive impact. They believe that the Arab region needs to accelerate efforts to achieve SDG 11 and all SDGs by 2030 due to mixed urbanization performance, particularly in conflict areas. They also provided 22 recommendations for achieving SDGs in Arab cities divided into three levels; the regional level, the national level and the city level which are summarized as follows:

At the regional level:

- Implement a regional governance coordination scheme, a Municipal Academy for training city leaders, and an Arab Governance Observatory at the regional level.

At the national level:

- Provide immediate humanitarian relief and implement institutional, legal, and economic reforms in conflict countries at the national level.
- Enhance infrastructure project pipelines, data management, and linkages to SDG outcomes at the national level.

At the city level:

- Develop 10-year Sustainable Urban Development Plans (SUDPs)
- Integrate value and supply chains with spatial analysis to increase local revenue and tax collection
- Implement innovative financing mechanisms at the city level, such as public-private partnerships (PPPs), Islamic finance, cooperative finance, and crowdfunding.

4. Discussion and Recommendations

Through what was reviewed in the previous sections, it was clear that most previous studies agree on the importance of sustainable development, and the 2030 Agenda can only be achieved through the localization of these goals. Most references emphasized the necessity of working according to strategies that guarantee the localization of sustainable development goals, and most previous studies provided many information and statistics specific to the Arab regions, which can be built upon in developing appropriate strategies for each country. These studies also provided much strategies and recommendations that contribute to facilitating the localization of sustainable development goals in the Arab region.

The most important key points that will contribute to developing strategies and recommendations for localizing sustainable development goals in the Arab region can be summarized as follows: UNRC (2023) emphasizes five key messages for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: committing to the SDGs, focusing on sustainable financing and transformative actions, ensuring SDG policies are based on reliable data, investing in resilience, and achieving peace, stability, and resilience through collaboration and partnerships. UNDP (2022) highlights factors enabling the localization of the SDGs in Arab countries, such as strengthening coordination methods, data generation and management, participatory methods, social and digital innovation,

monitoring and reporting progress at the local level, and connecting innovative practices for financing. Also, PWC (2017) adapted UNIDO's strategies and options for action, including mobilizing local resources for infrastructure, industrialization, and innovation, strengthening cooperation between the public and private sectors in smart cities and the circular economy, building national capacities, supporting the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) into value chains, and introducing policy measures to stimulate sustainability systems.

Other studies provided more comprehensive and specialized strategies, such as DERASAT et al. (2020) who provide recommendations at different levels: at the regional level, they suggest a regional governance coordination scheme, a municipal academy and an Arab Governance Observatory. At the national level, they recommend humanitarian relief, institutional reforms, infrastructure investments, green urbanism, and capacity building. At the city level, they suggest implementing Sustainable Urban Development Plans (SUDPs), integrating value and supply chains, repurposing existing assets, and utilizing innovative financing mechanisms. They also recommend regulating and incorporating the sharing economy and frontier technologies, accelerating efforts to achieve SDG 11 and all SDGs by 2030, strengthening institutions, supporting local government associations, generating and managing information, and addressing the financing gap.

Overall, the mentioned suggestions emphasize the importance of collaboration, data management, innovation, capacity building, and inclusive approaches in localizing the SDGs in the Arab region. They also highlight the need for policy reforms, infrastructure investments, and strategic planning at different levels of governance.

Some authors had debates regarding the prioritization of SDGs in the Arab States. Some of them argue for focusing on specific goals that are most relevant to the region's challenges and priorities, such as poverty eradication, gender equality, or sustainable energy. Others may support for a balanced approach, considering all the SDGs as interconnected and equally important.

Accordingly, the proposed recommendations to localize SDGs derived from previous studies and suggestions, can be summarized as follows:

1. Commit to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Increase awareness of the SDGs among policymakers, civil society and the public.
3. Focus on sustainable financing and transformative actions.
4. Ensure SDG policies are based on reliable data.
5. Invest in resilience.
6. Achieve peace, stability, and resilience through enhanced collaboration and partnerships across countries and stakeholders.
7. Support the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) into value chains.
8. Mobilize financing and local resources for infrastructure, industrialization, and innovation.
9. Strengthen cooperation between the public and private sectors in smart cities and the circular economy.
10. Build national capacities in policies, institutions, and projects.
11. Introduce policy measures to stimulate greater implementation of voluntary sustainability systems.
12. Improve the availability and reliability of industrial statistics.
13. Strengthen coordination methods between different levels of government and non-governmental actors.
14. Prioritize data generation and management for SDG localization.
15. Enhance participatory methods for localization.
16. Harness social and digital innovation to support SDG localization.
17. Monitor and report SDG progress at the local level, encouraging social accountability, multi-stakeholder engagement, and disaggregated data analysis.
18. Regulate and incorporate the sharing economy and frontier technologies.

In addition to previous recommendations, additional strategies for construction and urban development can be categorized based on the primary party responsible for their implementation: the government, designers (including architects, city planners, and engineers), and owners (comprising developers, clients, and investors).

A. Government recommendations

1. Integrate the commitments of Arab countries with global development agendas to promote sustainable development, especially in the field of sustainable housing.
2. Integrated SDGs into national development plans and strategies, ensuring compatibility with the specific priorities and challenges of each Arab country through comprehensive assessments and consultations with stakeholders.
3. Develop 10-year Sustainable Urban Development Plans (SUDPs) at the city level.
4. Implement a regional governance coordination scheme and a municipal academy at the regional level.
5. Strengthening institutional capacity to effectively implement and monitor the SDGs.
6. Build institutional capacity at national and local levels, including coordination mechanisms, technical expertise and inter-ministerial cooperation.
7. Provide immediate humanitarian relief and implement institutional, legal, and economic reforms in conflict countries at the national level.
8. Integrate value and supply chains with spatial analysis to increase local revenue and tax collection at the city level.
9. Improve the availability, quality and disaggregation of data to measure progress on the SDGs, invest in data collection, analysis and monitoring systems,

and enhance technology and innovation for real-time monitoring.

B. Designer recommendations

1. Localizing the SDGs in Arab countries requires adapting the goals to their unique cultural, social, and economic contexts, achieving a balance between global goals and local priorities, and ensuring cultural sensitivity.
2. Accelerate efforts to achieve SDG 11 and all SDGs by 2030, particularly in conflict-affected areas.
3. Enhance infrastructure project pipelines, data management, and linkages to SDG outcomes at the national level.
4. Promote inclusive and participatory processes in which all stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, academia and marginalized groups, participate in the design, implementation and monitoring of initiatives related to the SDGs.
5. Promoting regional cooperation and knowledge exchange among Arab countries, and enhancing understanding and ownership of the sustainable development goals through capacity building programs, training, and awareness campaigns.

C. Owner recommendations

1. Implement innovative financing mechanisms at the city level, such as public-private partnerships (PPPs), Islamic finance, cooperative finance, and crowdfunding.
2. Strengthening domestic resources, exploring innovative financing methods to implement the SDGs, strengthening public financial management, and cooperating with international financial institutions and charitable organizations.
3. Regularly evaluate progress, assess challenges, adapt strategies, monitor the impact of implementing the SDGs, identify gaps, make necessary adjustments, and promote a culture of continuous learning and improving localization.

5. Conclusion

The paper covers various studies and strategies for localizing the SDGs in general and in the Arab region in specific, covering a range of areas, including policy, financing, data management, coordination, infrastructure, urban planning and others.

The Arab world faces various challenges and opportunities, as the Arab world is geographically and culturally diverse, with differences in development levels and challenges faced by each country. Accordingly, the localization of SDGs in the Arab states should take into account the region's specific challenges, such as protracted conflicts, and displacement, and efforts should be made to integrate peacebuilding, humanitarian response, and resilience-building into the SDG frameworks.

By reviewing successful examples of localizing the SDGs in Arab countries, it is clear that efforts have been made to localize the SDGs and address the unique challenges and opportunities in the region. However, more work is required to overcome the challenges and move forward towards implementing the 2030 Agenda. Accordingly, the Arab countries can effectively localize the SDGs, address their unique development challenges, and contribute to the global sustainable development agenda by adopting the suggested recommendations.

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