General Framework of Islamic Agenda for Sustainable Development

✳   ✳   ✳   ✳

Based on the specialized studies examined by the First Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers held in Jeddah, which reviewed the major challenges faced by the Islamic world in the field of sustainable development, materialized mainly in the poverty, illiteracy, accumulation of foreign debts, degradation of economic and social conditions, disquilibrium between population growth and available natural resources, the weakness of technical capabilities, the lack of expertise and skills in environment management, along with the negative impacts left by regional conflicts, foreign occupation of parts of its land and despoiling of its resources, one may chart out the general framework of an Islamic agenda liable to help overcome these obstacles and lay down sturdy foundations for cooperation among the Islamic countries to achieve sustainable development, with a view to being submitted to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

The agenda revolves around the following axes which could be translated into field projects and activities, in cooperation with regional and international organizations :

I- Economic growth :

Achieving a level of economic growth enabling the Islamic countries to bridge the gap between them and developed countries by means of mobilizing the available energies, especially through :

1- Stimulation of investment in highly profitable sectors.

2- Capacity-building in the field of research and transfer of technologies in the following fields :

a) Supporting the capabilities of academic and research centers in the Islamic countries, especially with regard to programme development and promotion of priority research facilities.

b) Facilitating access to modern information and communication technologies which open new vistas for rationalization of Islamic countries' resources.

3) Achieving food security and promoting plant and animal resources in Islamic countries.

4) Supporting new partnership for economic development of African countries.

5) Developing control mechanisms to ensure flexible management of short-term capital influx, in compliance with the objectives of sustainable development in developing countries.

II- Poverty eradication :

As part of endeavour to eradicate poverty in the Islamic world, the following programmes should be particularly supported, namely :

1- Creating employment opportunities through encouragement of the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises.

2- Initiating programmes for vocational training and technical education to step up efforts of literacy and eradication of poverty.

3- Promoting Islamic solidarity and mutual support.

4- Facilitating access to small, preferential loans to fund local development projects and raise the income of poor families, especially in the countryside and the remote areas.

5- Associating local community, and populations in general, in the identification of the needs and the drafting, implementation and evaluation of action programmes.

III- Population and urban development :

Elaborating an integrated population policy striking fair balance between population growth and population characteristics and redressing the imbalances between the towns and the countryside, by means of :

1- Drawing up and implementing strategies for countryside development focussing on the most disadvantaged areas.

2- Preparing Agenda 21 Programmes and implementing them at the local level.

3- Controlling indecent, random housing.

4- Developing the infrastructure of the periphery, promoting them and adopting suitable approaches for appropriate development of population agglomerations.

IV- Health and environment :

1- Supply of food and adequate potable water.

2- Treatment of sewage and hard wastes, and securing their safe recycling.

3- Controlling the potential risks resulting from all types of pollution.

4- Safe management of toxic, dangerous and radioactive wastes.

5- Controlling the use of chemicals.

6- Fighting propagation of epidemics and diseases and ensuring basic health care services as part of the initiative of health for all.

7- Generalizing assessment of environmental and health impacts of development projects.

V- Natural resources:

1- Water :

a) Harnessing available water resources, drawing up programmes for their rationalization and exploring new water potentials, including rainwater and non-conventional resources.

b) Developing desalination techniques and generalizing them to reduce production costs.

c) Enhancing the legal and technical aspects of water consumption rationalization.

d) Publicizing success stories in the fields of sanitation and safe processing and recycling of waste waters.

e) Setting up complementary projects among Muslim countries to help meet their needs in few years.

f) Securing fair management of natural and biological resources.

g) Adopting new measures to combat arsenic pollution of ground waters.

h) Adopting a common stand on water shares of lower river countries in international river waters.

2- Forests and biodiversity :

a) Setting up an Islamic center for exchange of information on biodiversity.

b) Taking out an inventory of all plant and animal species in the Islamic world.

c) Managing joint natural reserves shared by the Muslim countries.

d) Enforcing the laws on natural reserves and adapting them to fit the commitments of the Islamic countries under relevant international agreements.

e) Initiating local development projects benefitting to populations residing in the vicinity of forests, to encourage them to rationalize forest resources.

f) Supporting Islamic countries to prepare and implement national and sub-regional strategies and plans to preserve biodiversity and reduce desertification effects.

3- Combating desertification and alleviating drought effects :

a) Launching pilot projects on local development to reduce the effects of desertification.

b) Setting up a comprehensive strategy for identification of sites threatened by desertification in the Islamic countries.

c) Establishing joint geographical data bases and early-warning systems to monitor desertification.

d) Supporting Islamic countries to prepare and implement national and sub-regional strategies and plans to combat desertification and alleviate drought effects.

4- Energy and Climate Change:

a) Developing strategies for the cleanest and most suitable energy production systems fit for energy consumption.

b) Conducting a comprehensive survey on Islamic countries' capabilities in terms of harnessing solar, water and wind energy.

c) Establishing renewable energy projects in the Muslim world.

d) Conducting a study on impact of green house effect on Muslim countries, especially on the health.

5- Coasts and sea water:

a- Training manpower in emergency intervention in the event of sea pollution with hydrocarbons and chemicals.

b- Conducting a study on fragile coastal areas in Islamic coastal countries and ensuring their safety.

c- Developing plans to direct population concentration and economic activities to ward off adverse effects on fragile coastal areas.

d- Preventing evacuation of untreated sewage and liquid industrial wastes into sea waters.

VI- World Trade and Globalization :

1- Training enterprises in the Muslim world to improve their competitiveness and penetration of world markets and promoting trade exchange among Muslim countries.

2- Formulating a guide for Islamic countries to environment norms and quality standards to enhance the competitiveness and quality of Islamic countries' products.

3- Sustaining international efforts to reform the world financial system and make it more transparent just and comprehensiveness to help Muslim countries take an active part in the global commercial activity and face the challenges posed by globalization.

VII- Legal and Institutional Aspects of Environment :

1- Conducting a comparative study on Islamic countries' environmental laws and conferring an Islamic character on their contents.

2- Making Islamic countries' environmental laws consistent with their commitments under related international conventions.

3- Training human resources in environmental law enforcement.

4- Strengthening and supporting the legal framework of governmental institutions in charge of environment.

5- Creating environmental associations network to coordinate their activities and programmes.

6- Supporting local and regional non-governmental associations operating in the field of environment protection.

VIII- Involvement of civil society :

1- Encouraging involvement of the civil society in the elaboration and implementation of strategies and plans destined to sustainable development and environment protection.

2- Encouraging the establishment of civil society organizations and drawing up legislations promoting their participation.

IX- Awareness-raising, education and information programmes :

1- Incorporating the component of environment from an Islamic perspective in general education curricula.

2- Establishing coordination networks between Islamic countries' universities and governmental institutions to exchange experience in environment and sustainable development-related training and scientific research.

3- Exchanging radio and television programmes on environmental awareness in Islamic countries.

4- Holding training sessions for literacy personnel to incorporate the environmental component in literacy programmes.

5- Training media specialists in environmental awareness-raising.

6- Organizing media campaings to enhance population behaviour and attitude towards environment and health, capitalizing on Islamic teachings in this connection.

X- Achieving peace and security :

1- Developing programmes and plans to promote justice-based peace culture in the Muslim world, contributing thereby to the promotion of global peace.

2- Formulating programmes to highlight the importance of terminating foreign occupation and establishing peace and security in the sustainable development process.

3- Sustaining efforts to define terrorism and highlight its difference of resistance-fighting of foreign occupation as admitted by international rules, regulations and customs.

XI- Funding :

1- Developing environmental programmes likely to induce financing provided for in environment-related international conventions.

2- Benefiting from opportunities offered by Islamic financing institutions and the Islamic Environment Fund to carry out environment-oriented programmes in the Muslim world, including institutional support programmes and capacity-building of environment protection authorities.

3- Harnessing local financial resources with utmost rationalization and gearing them to specific priority objectives.