



West Asia – North Africa Social Charter

“Diverse humanity, united in dignity”

We, as individuals from the WANA region, in affirming our respect for human dignity and embracing social cohesion for the collective good, aspire to;

Achieve equal opportunity as a means to help people realise their basic human needs;

People should be able to realise their most basic human needs, live free from hunger, poverty and conflict and be granted equal opportunity to fulfil their aspirations. A more equal and just society is more likely to bring peace and prosperity.

Foster citizenship and good governance;

Promoting citizenship and participation at all levels requires developing the rule of law through transparency, monitoring, accountability and anticorruption mechanisms with the prerequisites of good governance and supported by relevant legislation. Similarly, the establishment of standards for governance in the work of governments, security agencies, parliaments, the judiciary and local government bodies, civil society organisations and private sector entities amongst others is necessary.

Create prosperity through opportunity and sustainable development;

The vast resources in the region must be invested in a production-oriented sustainable economy that enhances market diversity and creates job opportunities. Furthermore, nations must work together to help promote enterprise and entrepreneurship so that the region can utilise its resources and lead in innovation and technology. Finally, post-conflict economies should look to building back better, investing in greener, longer-term solutions.

Commit to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in the education of future generations and investment in the region’s human capital;

The West Asia-North Africa region was for the longest time at the forefront of scientific discovery and creativity. Today, while certain areas witness high literacy rates, many qualified people are not afforded the opportunity to develop or implement their skills. This in turn leads to the brain drain, whereby many of the region’s most talented individuals leave their countries to fulfil their aspirations abroad. Thus, it is essential that we strive to harness the region’s human capital with the aim of offering the best services and developing economic and social welfare.

Promote processes of inclusion that harness our diversity more effectively;

West Asia–North Africa embodies a rich cultural, ethnic and religious history. Such diversity enriches the social fabric of the region, and can be a source of security, stability and prosperity rather than a cause for conflict. Thus, we must endeavour to create an enabling environment that promotes respect for differences, celebrates diversity and pluralism and ensures freedom of expression. By upholding our responsibility to protect the rights of all communities who make up our region, we can more successfully safeguard against civil unrest and foreign intervention.

Secure peace and build community resilience;

Regional strategies and mechanisms are needed to resolve conflicts and rebuild societies beyond physical infrastructure development and with the vision to restore the hopes and broaden the horizons of the peoples in the region. Only then can we collectively work across disciplines and ideological divides to avoid the break-out of future conflicts and to secure peace and resilience in the face of adversity.

Provide refuge and relief to the uprooted, strive to safeguard their rights and undertake measures to resolve the root causes of displacement;

As a result of conflict, poverty, natural disaster, marginalisation and forced migration, uprooted populations require refuge and assistance, their rights restored and their livelihoods secured. We must shoulder the responsibility of developing regional mechanisms for reconstruction and recovery that address the long-term needs of the uprooted. Furthermore, mechanisms for conflict prevention must address the causes and contributors to forced migration, including environmental factors such as energy insecurity and water scarcity.

Respect our human and natural environments as stewards of the earth;

In order for us and for future generations to live once again in harmony with nature and in a safe, balanced and stable environment, we must draw on our ancestors' wisdom, experience and knowledge in promoting appropriate governance, norms, ethics and means to collaboratively co-manage and common-pool resources to secure livelihoods. Toward this aim, we should work toward the development, implementation and management of *himas* in the region, in accordance with national laws and international treaties.

And to this end,

We will endeavour to overcome common challenges through cooperation and mutual interdependence, working toward regional solutions that transcend ethnic, political, social and cultural boundaries;

Recognising the suffering of others as our own, we subscribe to this charter as a vision for cooperation based on human dignity and with the aim of securing a decent living and a peaceful and prosperous future for us and for generations to come;

In consequence whereof, we commit to upholding and respecting the aforementioned principles of the West Asia-North Africa Charter.