

## SUMMARY OF THE INECE REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR MOROCCO AND NORTH AFRICA

DI COSMO, FRANCESCA

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In conjunction with the Moroccan Ministry of Territory Planning, Water and Environment, INECE hosted a Regional Conference for local and regional professionals on issues of particular relevance to Morocco, North Africa, and the Mediterranean region.

Over 65 participants from governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) enthusiastically engaged in strategic discussions on advancing the implementation of environmental compliance and enforcement in the region. The Conference provided a unique opportunity for government-government and government-NGO collaboration. The workshop was conducted in French with limited English translation.

Participants concluded that a regional enforcement network, affiliated with and supported by INECE, was an essential tool for promoting best practices and building capacity in the region. Participants agreed that the new network should capitalize on lessons learned from existing networks, including their goals and objectives.

The following is a summary of questions, comments, and ideas from participants about the development of a regional enforcement network:

- Shall the network be managed by the Government or an NGO? The Government can make suggestions. The NGO can introduce the debate.
- What is the definition of the Region that the Network will cover? Will it be all of North Africa or will it be sub-regional (i.e. Magreb only)?
- The new network should capitalize on the goals and objectives of other existing networks, using those objectives to develop the objectives for the INECE network.
- The new network should utilize the lessons learned from other networks.
- Each country has a clear set of enforcement goals that are set by the environment ministries. What is the value-added of this network? What will be its mission? What are the expected outcomes? Will there be separate goals or outcomes for each country? For all countries? Will it protect their values? These questions should be answered to develop an appropriate network for Northern Africa.
- Starting from the assumption that the network is supported by the governments and fits into other networks, the organizers of the new network need to analyze what is happening now (the current state of affairs) relative to enforcement within each country as a basis to understand their concerns and objectives. The new organization needs to be justified. What is the need for the network? Links to economic development would be helpful and useful to show how laws and enforcement can be linked to job opportunities. Also, a list of projects that are underway would be useful (to show that capacity building is underway and the lessons learned from them).
- An understanding of who is doing what in this field would be useful to avoid overlapping with the missions, objectives, projects, etc., of other networks.

We need to define the geographic scope of this new network under INECE. The Magreb is probably a good idea. NGOs should be included. If government is included, then it can get complicated. But, the role of government needs to be considered. What will the role of government be?

- Will this be an administrative organization or an NGO organization? NGOs can get a lot of things done and can help with implementation. How will the network operate? A combination of focal points may be useful. The network should support NGOs at the local level as well as sustainable development.
- Use the lessons learned from other organizations. Also, the platforms that other organizations use may be used for this organization (e.g., the United Nations Environment Programme's program for climate change). There are other programs for international cooperation; we should think about using existing structures and add this network to it.
- An enforcement network for North Africa is needed. But, how can we tackle the issue? Developing terms of reference for the development of this network may be a good way to organize it. The organizers should know the local circumstances to make sure it will succeed. We should think about the issue of "informal", as well as look at other networks and see those as experiences and examples, especially the successful ones. The three countries of the Magreb share similar problems. We need to highlight the objectives of the project, its benefits, and the international support, both financial and technical.
- The setting up of the network for the Magreb is not the point. We need to start from what brings us together. Lots of things are common. Sustainability of the network is very important. Should the network be multi-disciplinary or mono-disciplinary? Broad projects or more specific projects? Network among jurists or lawyers? Specialized networks may have a better chance of succeeding. The Magreb as the basis for the network is probably a good start; the network can be expanded later. The field of environmental legislation should be the cornerstone. Focus on a specific area, but determining the scope of the network is important.
- The organizers of the network should look at today's program for guidance relative to what the network can achieve and issues to be covered. It is up to everyone here to take the first steps.
- Local governments should be included in the network. For example, municipalities in many countries are responsible for the management of municipal solid waste, and they are therefore responsible for compliance in this area. Involving them in the network would be a way to help educate them about enforcement and compliance issues that relate to them.
- An example of a good network that is working in Northern Africa is the North African Network of Humid Areas. They rotate the coordination of the network among the member countries. They have quarterly meetings. It may be a model to study.
- A network for the Magreb that will focus on environmental laws is a good idea. It should also focus on shared experiences and shared information. Also, rotating the secretariat, having a bi-annual conference, making national reports, having a national coordinator, and involving relevant stakeholder groups can gain the commitment of members for the program. The network can charge fees or it can be free, depending on funding. The network should be developed with local (Magreb) resources.
- The European Union (EU) supports a regional network for Northern Africa. It may be a good idea to link this new network with ongoing processes of EU standards and their networks.
- Efficient networks should also include the private sector.