

## **Justice in Action: Greater MENA Perspectives on Global & Regional Governance Innovation**



On Monday, December 8, 2025, the College of Public Policy at Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) Global Institute for Strategic Research and Global Governance Innovation Network, in partnership with the Doha Forum and the Stimson Center, convened the **Global Policy Dialogue on Justice in Action: Greater MENA Perspectives on Global & Regional Governance Innovation** at HBKU's campus in Doha, Qatar. Bringing together leading experts and policy-makers from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and beyond, the dialogue highlighted steps that have and can be taken by regional organizations within the MENA region, as well as by global multilateral institutions, to overcome the justice gaps found today in the region. Speaking directly to efforts from the World Social Summit's (4-6 November 2025 in Doha) action agenda to address persistent inequality gaps, reaffirm global commitments to social development, and promote social inclusion through full employment and decent work, the Global Policy Dialogue further examined the multiple dimensions of justice, including its political, judicial, socioeconomic, and environmental characteristics (as underscored in the *Future of International Cooperation Report 2025* "Justice in Action: Beyond Promises to Progress"). The MENA region is, simultaneously, witnessing a myriad of crises (from protracted violent conflicts to extreme poverty and climate change), as well as great opportunities (from new digital technologies to renewable energy). A just and sustainable future, in line with the outcomes of the World Social Summit and related UN global summits in recent years, requires humanity to rethink global and regional governance, foster inclusive societies, and leverage innovation to bridge these divides.

Held in conjunction with the 6-7 December 2025 Doha Forum, this Global Policy Dialogue continued the process of standing up a new Greater MENA research network dedicated to exploring issues and institutions at the intersection of regional and global governance. The following report summarizes the discussions across two plenary sessions and three thematic breakout groups (whose recommendations were highlighted in the closing plenary session), namely: i) Political-Judicial Justice Gaps; ii) Socioeconomic Justice Gaps; and iii) Environmental Justice Gaps.

## Overview of Plenary Discussions

The opening and closing plenary sessions explored how justice gaps across the Greater MENA region are shaped by the interaction of political, socioeconomic, and environmental pressures, and how global and regional governance frameworks and institutions can more effectively respond to these intersecting challenges. Discussions emphasized that justice is not a standalone policy domain, but a cross-cutting governance imperative that underpins legitimacy, social cohesion, and long-term stability. Participants highlighted the importance of situating global commitments — particularly those emerging from the World Social Summit and other recent high-level UN global gatherings — within the specific political, institutional, and socioeconomic contexts of the region.

A central focus of the plenary discussions was the need for stronger cooperation between regional and global actors to improve their policy and operational interface in addressing complex, cross-cutting justice gaps across the MENA region. Participants underscored that fragmented or siloed approaches risk reinforcing existing inequalities, particularly where economic reform, climate action, and governance initiatives proceed without adequate regional and global coordination. They further noted growing mismatches between global governance agendas and regional realities, emphasizing the need for regionally grounded approaches that translate global commitments into locally legitimate and politically feasible pathways for implementation.

The opening plenary, titled “Transformed by the People,” examined how governance, legitimacy, and authority evolve under conditions of prolonged crisis and systemic strain. Drawing on insights from newly published book *Transformed by the People: Hayat Tahrir al-Sham’s Road to Power in Syria* (Hurst/OUP, 2025), the discussion highlighted the limitations of static analytical categories and emphasized the importance of understanding governance transformation as a dynamic and context-specific process. Participants reflected on how justice gaps often emerge from the erosion of trust between states and societies, particularly where political exclusion, weak accountability, and socioeconomic inequality intersect.

During the concluding plenary session, participants reflected on the possible establishment of a Greater MENA Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation. There was broad agreement on the value of a platform that could connect research, policy dialogue, and communities of practice to strengthen regionally informed contributions to global governance reform, while remaining flexible and responsive to diverse national and sub-regional contexts. Participants emphasized that further deliberation would be required to define the network’s scope, structure, and priorities in a manner that supports sustained engagement and policy relevance. In the remainder of this summary report, highlights from the thematic breakout group discussions on political-judicial, socioeconomic, and environmental justice gaps are presented.



# Expert Breakthrough Groups on Justice in Action in the Greater MENA Region

## Group 1: Tackling Political-Judicial Justice Gaps

*Facilitator:* Mona Ali Khalil (Director, MAK Law International)

### Overview:

The political-judicial gap to justice in the greater MENA region involves both state and non-state actors, focusing, in particular, on the main legal and political challenges to ending impunity for mass atrocity crimes. A primary challenge is the tension between peace and justice, which are mutually reinforcing in the long-term but can be competing goals in the short-term. The major pronouncements of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court on genocide and other mass atrocity crimes in the MENA region including Palestine and Sudan is raising awareness globally and regionally and starting to influence Western economic and human rights agendas too. The discussion also highlighted structural issues, including the fragmentation and erosion of the multilateral order, the lack of regional justice mechanisms like the human rights courts in the African Union (AU), European Union (EU), and Organization of American States (OAS), as well as interference by the big powers. Additionally, emerging technologies, such as AI, present a complex challenge, as they can be used for documenting war crimes while carrying the biases of their creators (as seen in its dual use in Ukraine and Palestine). The discussion also focused on the need to empower the youth while building inter-generational platforms and to promote efforts by civil society to document crimes despite obstacles by many Arab governments.

The path forward involves upholding international law, embracing transitional justice, fostering regional integration through new youth leadership and educating people, including through social media, about their human rights. Key recommendations to overcome these gaps include distinguishing the tasks for agents of peace (peacemaking) and agents for justice (courts), and calling out government passivity and complicity.

### Major Challenges and Threats:

- **Erosion of Multilateralism and Political Obstruction:** The paralysis of the UN Security Council is inspiring greater reliance on the UN General Assembly as well as greater resort to the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court to achieve accountability and to bridge the justice gaps.
- **The absence of robust regional judicial and accountability mechanisms:** The lack of a comprehensive regional human rights court and a regional mechanism similar to the UN's Universal Periodic Review contributes to the MENA region's struggles with accountability.
- **Institutional Weakness and the Need for Generational Renewal:** This challenge highlights the deficiencies in regional governance, particularly the absence of mechanisms to enforce human rights. Empowering future leaders is crucial to combat the widespread lack of hope, as well as to better manage threats and opportunities posed by new technology and AI.
- **The Weaponization of New Technologies:** The challenge of new technologies is two-fold: these technologies carry the biases of their creators, and they are being weaponized across the globe. For instance, technology is used for documenting war crimes in places like Ukraine, while, simultaneously, being used to commit war crimes in Palestine through facial recognition and targeting of civilians and journalists.

- **The Inherent Tension Between the "Logic of Peace" and the "Logic of Justice":** The logic of justice focuses on investigating the past to find who committed crimes, while the logic of peace is "looking into the future." Sustainable peace requires justice for victims and survivors of mass atrocity crimes as well as accountability for those responsible for those crimes. Success requires agents of peace (peacemaking and peacekeeping) as well as agents of justice (national and international courts, universal jurisdiction and truth and reconciliation commissions) to ensure peace together.

### Select Recommendations:

#### Empower Youth as Future Leaders and Strengthen Intergenerational Cooperation

- Establish a common vision for peace and prosperity that includes civil society, especially youth, and build inter-generational platforms.
- Empower and engage young leaders, raise awareness of human rights and promote inclusive processes.

#### Reaffirm the UN Charter and International Law, while Protecting Human Rights Defenders

- Distinguish tasks for agents of peace and agents for justice. Agents of peace should focus on peacemaking and peacekeeping, whereas agents for justice should focus on national and international courts, universal jurisdiction, and truth and reconciliation commissions.
- Ensure the independence of reporting and collection of credible data to document violations of human rights.

#### Promote Existing Human Rights Mechanisms to Work Towards a Regional Human Rights Court

- Promote the existing Arab Convention on Human Rights, while working towards establishing a regional human rights court in the MENA (or at least Arab) region, similar to those in the AU, EU, and OAS.
- Uphold universally accepted human rights and humanitarian principles.

#### Improve Coordination and Communication of Existing Think Tanks and Regional/Global Fora

- Overcome government weakness by promoting civil society initiatives.
- Support independent reporting and collection of credible data to document mass atrocity crimes.



## **Group 2: Tackling Socioeconomic Justice Gaps**

*Facilitator:* Professor Hassan Aly (Dean of the Business School, University of the Nile)

### **Overview:**

This discussion repeatedly returned to the social contract as the core lens for understanding socioeconomic justice gaps across the MENA region. The traditional model, which involved state provision of services like education, welfare, subsidies, and public employment in exchange for limited political participation, is described as being under tremendous and sustained strain. This strain has given rise to widespread perceptions of injustice, deep mistrust of state institutions, and growing frustration, particularly among young people and marginalized groups. The discussion emphasized that justice gaps are not uniform across the MENA region, leading to different trajectories. Some Gulf states are adapting their social contracts through gradual restructuring, such as subsidy reforms and the introduction of a value-added tax (VAT), which implies a renegotiation of citizen-state expectations. In contrast, countries like Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan have strained social contracts, characterized by a chronic inability to deliver quality services, fiscal pressure without meaningful political reform, and rising social discontent. States like Syria and Libya are experiencing eroded or collapsed contracts, marked by a breakdown of state authority and large-scale displacement.

A central element of socioeconomic injustice discussed was blocked social mobility. The mechanism of *Wasta* was repeatedly cited as a key reproducer of injustice because it undermines merit-based access to jobs and opportunities and reinforces elite capture. Additionally, education systems are described as being increasingly stratified by class and no longer functioning as social equalizers. Instead, these systems are seen as actively reinforcing inequality across generations. These dynamics of blocked mobility are considered central to the problem of socioeconomic injustice, not merely side effects.

### **Major Challenges and Threats:**

- **The Social Contract as the Unifying Element:** The traditional model of state provision (including education, welfare, subsidies, and public employment) in exchange for limited political participation is under tremendous and sustained strain. This strain has led to widespread perceptions of injustice and deep mistrust of state institutions.
- **Different Trajectories Across the Region:** Justice gaps vary across the MENA region, affecting social contracts: Gulf states adapt with gradual reforms, whereas Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan face strained contracts due to service failures and discontent. Meanwhile Syria and Libya have eroded contracts with state failure and displacement.
- **Education Systems Reinforcing Inequality:** Education systems are described as increasingly stratified by class and are no longer functioning as social equalizers. Instead, they are actively reinforcing inequality across generations.
- **Fiscal Pressure Without Political Reform:** Countries like Tunisia, Morocco, and Jordan struggle to provide quality services and face fiscal pressure without political reform, leading to increased social discontent. *Wasta*, a form of patronage, perpetuates injustice by undermining merit-based opportunities and reinforcing elite capture.

## **Select Recommendations:**

### Rebuild a Justice-Centered Social Contract

- Restore trust by ensuring universal access to quality education, healthcare, and public services, paired with stronger accountability mechanisms at local and national levels.
- Treat gender inclusion and class-based inequality as core pillars of socioeconomic justice and long-term economic resilience.

### Address Blocked Social Mobility and Elite Capture

- Confront Wasta and patronage-based systems that undermine meritocratic access to employment and reinforce elite capture.
- Reorient education systems to function as engines of social mobility, reducing class-based stratification and intergenerational inequality.

### Shift Fiscal and Development Reforms Toward Justice and Inclusion

- Move beyond short-term fiscal stabilization toward justice-centered, long-term resilience frameworks, particularly in countries with strained social contracts.
- Pair fiscal reforms with visible improvements in service delivery and social protection to prevent rising social discontent.

### Democratize Economic Governance and Expand Participation

- Expand participation of civil society, youth, and marginalized communities in economic policymaking to improve legitimacy and reduce elite capture.
- Strengthen linkages between research, policy, and practice, ensuring regionally grounded expertise informs reform efforts.

## **Group 3: Tackling Environmental Justice Gaps**

*Facilitator:* Sylvie Maloouf (Programs Manager, Policy Hub, Qatar Foundation)

### **Overview:**

Climate change was framed not as a standalone issue, but as a multiplier of existing vulnerabilities in the greater MENA region. Environmental pressures interact with factors like weak governance, economic fragility, and social inequality. This interaction deepens structural injustice. Water scarcity emerged as one of the most urgent environmental justice issues. A key concern was the lack of regional coordination on shared water resources and the absence of mechanisms to manage transboundary groundwater. For instance, a lack of joint monitoring and governance structures for shared aquifers between Morocco and Algeria was described as increasing conflict risk. Climate impacts were also shown to reinforce inequalities by deepening inland versus coastal disparities and exacerbating rural versus urban divides. Within countries, this includes unequal access to water and resources, with environmental stress disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.

The discussion also addressed external and global governance pressures. Climate pressures alone do not cause displacement, but they accelerate forced migration when combined with weak institutions and economic stress. Environmental research agendas and green development priorities are largely shaped by advanced economies and are poorly aligned with local needs and constraints. An example used in the discussion was the external push for green hydrogen projects in Egypt, which created instability due to their high water requirements in already water-scarce contexts. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) was also framed as a socioeconomic justice issue, because it functions as a de facto tax on developing economies. Concerns include its disproportionate impact on carbon-intensive MENA exports and the creation of a "carbon credit loop" that reinforces global economic asymmetries by funneling financial flows back to advanced economies.

### **Major Challenges and Threats:**

- **Climate Stressors as Threat Multipliers:** Climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities by interacting with weak governance, economic fragility, and social inequality. This complex interaction deepens structural injustice rather than creating new, isolated problems.
- **Water Scarcity and Transboundary Governance:** Water scarcity is a critical environmental justice issue, exacerbated by the lack of regional coordination on shared water resources and mechanisms for managing transboundary groundwater. Due to the lack of regional coordination, there is an increased risk of conflict due to this vacuum.
- **Reinforcing Existing Inequalities:** Climate change deepens disparities between inland and coastal areas, rural and urban divides, and wealthier and poorer states. Within countries, it leads to unequal access to resources and disproportionately affects marginalized communities.
- **Acceleration of Forced Migration:** Although climate pressures alone are not the cause of displacement, when combined with weak institutions and economic stress, they accelerate forced migration. This dynamic is noted to be especially visible in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.
- **External Economic and Environmental Pressures:** Environmental research agendas and green development priorities are often shaped by advanced economies and are poorly aligned with local needs and constraints. An example of this is the external push for green hydrogen projects in Egypt, which required significant water resources in already water-scarce regions. The subsequent scaling back of these projects led to instability and uncertainty.

### **Select Recommendations:**

#### Integrate Environmental Justice into Governance and Development Frameworks

- Treat climate and environmental pressures as justice and governance challenges, not standalone technical issues, by integrating equity and inclusion into climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- Shift from short-term, project-based interventions toward long-term, justice-centered resilience frameworks, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

#### Strengthen Sub-Regional and Transboundary Environmental Governance

- Establish sub-regional cooperation mechanisms that reflect ecological realities rather than political groupings, including in the Mediterranean, Red Sea, and Arabian Gulf.
- Develop joint monitoring systems and shared data platforms for transboundary water resources, including groundwater and shared aquifers, to reduce conflict risks and improve collective management.

### Align Global Climate Policies with Regional Needs and Constraints

- Ensure that global climate and environmental initiatives are better aligned with local conditions, avoiding externally driven solutions that exacerbate resource scarcity or social instability.
- Reframe climate action as a development and opportunity agenda, rather than one driven by conditionality or externally imposed priorities.

### Address Global Economic Asymmetries in Climate Policy

- Recognize mechanisms such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as environmental justice issues, given CBAM's disproportionate impact on developing economies and carbon-intensive MENA exports.
- Promote international climate and trade frameworks that avoid reinforcing global economic asymmetries and, instead, support equitable transitions for vulnerable states and communities.

## **Discussion on the possible establishment of a Greater MENA Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation**

### **Group 1: Regional and Global Governance Policy Research**

*Facilitator:* Karim Makdisi (Associate Professor, American University of Beirut)

#### **Overview:**

Participants emphasized that a Greater MENA Research Network could address a persistent disconnect between regional realities and the global governance research agendas that shape policy debates and institutional reform. Discussions highlighted that existing research on justice, peace, and governance in the MENA region remains fragmented, externally driven, or insufficiently translated into policy-relevant formats. A dedicated network was seen as an opportunity to articulate a coherent research agenda rooted in the region's historical, political, cultural, and institutional contexts, while engaging strategically with global and regional governance processes.

There was broad agreement that the network's value would lie in producing joint, collaborative research that bridges the gap between scholarship and decision-making. Priority research streams identified included the interdependence of peace and justice, pathways to ending impunity through global, regional, and domestic actors, regional integration and fragmentation, and the impacts of new technologies on justice and governance. Participants underscored the importance of moving beyond Western-centric models of documenting rights abuses and governance reform, instead elevating Global South jurisprudence, regional best practices, and culturally grounded approaches to justice and accountability.

#### **Major Challenges and Threats:**

- **Fragmentation of Research and Knowledge Production:** Research on governance and justice in the MENA region is dispersed across institutions and countries, limiting cumulative learning and collective impact.
- **Weak Research-Policy Interface:** A persistent gap exists between social science research and policy-making, with limited translation of findings into formats usable by decision-makers.

- **Externally Driven Agendas:** Global governance research agendas are often shaped outside the region, resulting in misalignment with local needs, priorities, and political realities.
- **Political Sensitivities and Constraints:** Research on justice, accountability, and governance can face political resistance, restricting access, dissemination, and institutional engagement.
- **Underutilization of Regional Knowledge and Jurisprudence:** Existing regional legal frameworks, historical experiences, and contributions from the Global South to human rights and justice remain insufficiently documented and leveraged.
- **Limited Coordination with Other Research Networks:** Opportunities for cross-regional learning and institutional partnerships are often missed due to weak connectivity among networks.

### **Select Recommendations:**

#### Establish a Coherent, Regionally Grounded Research Agenda

- Define priority research streams that reflect shared regional challenges, including peace-justice linkages, pathways to ending impunity, regional integration, and the governance impacts of new technologies.
- Balance agenda-setting with flexibility to respond to emerging crises and policy opportunities.

#### Strengthen the Research-Policy Interface

- Produce concise, policy-oriented outputs (policy briefs, memos, and targeted reports) aligned with global and regional governance processes and decision-making timelines.
- Facilitate regular engagement between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to improve uptake and relevance.

#### Diversify Knowledge Production and Methodologies

- Move beyond Western-centric frameworks by documenting Global South jurisprudence, regional legal traditions, and locally grounded practices of justice and accountability.
- Map best practices and lessons learned across the MENA region to inform comparative and cross-country analysis.

#### Promote Collaborative and Inclusive Research Networks

- Prioritize jointly authored research involving scholars, practitioners, and institutions across the Greater MENA region, including early-career researchers.
- Strengthen linkages with existing regional and global research networks to enhance coordination and collective impact.

### **Group 2: Regional and Global Governance Policy Dialogues**

*Facilitator:* Professor Adeel Malik (Associate Professor and Globe Fellow, Oxford University)

#### **Overview:**

Participants emphasized that structured, sustained Track 1.5 policy dialogues are essential to addressing persistent justice gaps in the Greater MENA region, particularly given the fragmentation and limited capacity of existing regional and global governance institutions. Discussions highlighted that while numerous summits,

declarations, and reform commitments exist, there is a recurring failure to translate these into concrete outcomes. Policy dialogues were seen as a critical mechanism to bridge the gap between rhetoric and implementation by creating spaces where researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and civil society actors can engage directly on shared challenges.

The dialogue underscored that existing regional institutions, including the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), remain largely state-centric, with limited civil society participation and weak accountability mechanisms. Participants stressed that Track 1.5 dialogues could help to reframe these debates by integrating justice-centered perspectives, indigenous and regionally grounded frameworks (including Islamic sustainability principles), and cross-sectoral insights into global and regional policy processes.

### **Major Challenges and Threats:**

- **Fragmented and Reactive Governance Structures:** Existing institutions are not designed to address intersecting political, socioeconomic, and environmental justice gaps in an integrated manner.
- **State-Centric Regional Institutions:** Limited participation by civil society, youth, and marginalized groups weakens legitimacy and constrains innovation.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Repeated failures to translate summit commitments and reform agendas into action undermine trust and credibility.
- **Short-Term Policy Horizons:** Global financial and development institutions often prioritize stabilization and project-based interventions over long-term, justice-centered resilience.
- **Weak Accountability Mechanisms:** Political constraints and limited oversight reduce incentives for follow-through and reform.
- **Misalignment with Regional Realities:** Policy frameworks are frequently externally driven and insufficiently grounded in local institutional, social, and ecological contexts.

### **Select Recommendations:**

#### Institutionalize Track 1.5 Policy Dialogues Linked to Decision-Making Processes

- Convene regular, regionally anchored dialogues that connect directly to global, regional, and sub-regional governance platforms.
- Align dialogue outputs with key policy cycles and reform moments to improve uptake.

#### Broaden Participation to Enhance Legitimacy and Effectiveness

- Expand inclusion of civil society, youth, researchers, and marginalized communities in policy dialogue processes.
- Foster cross-sectoral engagement to reduce elite capture and strengthen policy relevance.

#### Reframe Governance Debates Around Justice and Long-Term Resilience

- Shift discussions beyond short-term stabilization toward justice-centered, inclusive, and preventive policy frameworks.
- Integrate indigenous and regionally grounded approaches, including Islamic sustainability principles, into dialogue agendas.

## Strengthen Accountability and Follow-Through Mechanisms

- Develop clear pathways for translating dialogue insights into actionable recommendations and institutional commitments.
- Track outcomes and implementation to reduce gaps between commitments and results.

### **Group 3: Regional and Global Governance Community of Practice**

*Facilitator:* Dr. Radhouane Ben Hamadou (Director of Research and Policy Development, Earthna)

#### **Overview:**

Participants emphasized that a Greater MENA Community of Practice could play a critical role in bridging persistent gaps between research, policy dialogue, and implementation across regional and global governance processes. Discussions highlighted that while research and policy debates on justice, climate, and development are expanding, practical coordination among practitioners, institutions, and affected communities remains limited. A community of practice was seen as a mechanism to connect knowledge production with operational experience, peer learning, and collective problem-solving across the Greater MENA region.

The discussion underscored the importance of grounding the community of practice in regionally resonant frameworks and lived realities. Participants stressed that environmental and socioeconomic justice efforts must reflect MENA's arid conditions, socioeconomic diversity, and governance constraints, rather than relying on externally imposed models. Concepts such as a flexible "MENA+" framing, sub-regional cooperation based on ecological realities, and culturally rooted approaches, particularly Islamic sustainability principles, were highlighted as ways to enhance legitimacy, uptake, and long-term impact. The community of practice was envisioned as a platform to share best practices, coordinate regional positions in global fora, and support practical collaboration on issues such as transboundary water management, resilience financing, and green industrial policy.

#### **Major Challenges and Threats:**

- **Weak Coordination Between Research, Policy, and Practice:** Persistent disconnects limit the translation of analysis and dialogue into concrete action and implementation.
- **Fragmented Regional Governance:** Environmental and socioeconomic governance remains divided along political lines rather than ecological or functional realities, reducing effectiveness.
- **Dependence on External Frameworks:** Reliance on externally defined standards and taxonomies (e.g., EU-led frameworks) risks misalignment with regional conditions and priorities.
- **Transboundary Governance Gaps:** Lack of cooperative mechanisms for shared resources, particularly groundwater and water systems, heightens conflict risk.
- **Limited Inclusive Participation:** Civil society, youth, women, and marginalized communities remain underrepresented in governance processes and implementation spaces.
- **Short-Term and Post-Crisis Financing Biases:** Development and climate finance often prioritize reactive responses over preventive, justice-centered resilience.

## **Select Recommendations:**

### Establish a Regionally Anchored Community of Practice

- Create a platform linking practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and civil society actors to share best practices, coordinate action, and support peer learning.
- Maintain a flexible “MENA+” approach that adapts participation and focus based on thematic and sub-regional needs.

### Bridge Research, Dialogue, and Implementation

- Use the community of practice to translate research findings and policy dialogue outcomes into operational guidance, toolkits, and implementation lessons.
- Facilitate peer learning across countries and sectors to support adaptation of good practices to different national contexts.

### Democratize Participation and Operational Engagement

- Expand meaningful participation of youth, women, civil society, and marginalized communities in implementation-focused governance spaces.
- Leverage digital platforms and practitioner networks to enable sustained engagement beyond formal meetings.



## Annex 1: Participants List

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**Adriana Abdenur**, Global Fund for a New Economy

**Zeynep Alemdar**, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies

**Muez Ali**, Earthna

**Aisha Al-Ammari**, Qatar University School of Law

**Hafed Al-Ghwel**, Stimson Center

**Mona Al-Kuwari**, Earthna

**Hassan Aly**, University of the Nile

**Kuniko Ashizawa**, American University

**Lama Ba'albaki**, Global Institute for Strategic Research

**Mudassar Baig**, Global Institute for Strategic Research

**Sultan Barakat**, Hamad Bin Khalifa University

**Radhouan Ben-Hamadou**, Earthna

**Tom Brookes**, The Elders

**Nouzha Chekrouni**, Policy Center for the New South

**Mohamed Chihi**, Global Institute for Strategic Research

**Brahima Coulibaly**, Brookings Institution

**Jerome Drevon**, International Crisis Group

**Karim Elgendy**, Carbound Institute

**Patrick Haenni**, International Crisis Group

**Themba Kalua**, Executive Office of the Secretary-General

**Mona Ali Khalil**, MAK Law

**Anisa Khan**, University of Johannesburg

**Said Abou Kharroub**, civAPI

**Jane Kinninmont**, United Nations Association U.K.

**Mikatekiso Kubayi**, Institute for Global Dialogue

**Joshua Lincoln**, The Fletcher School at Tufts University

**Michael Liu**, China Center on Globalization

**Mohammed Loulichki**, Policy Center for the New South

**Sylvie Maalouf**, Qatar Foundation

**Karim Makdisi**, American University of Beirut

**Adeel Malik**, University of Oxford

**Wafic Naccash**, Microsoft

**Nancy Okail**, Center for International Policy

**Fathallah Oualalou**, Policy Center for the New South

**Richard Ponzio**, Stimson Center-Global Governance Innovation Network

**Vesselin Popovski**, O.P. Jindal Global University

**Alhafiz I. Salih**, Global Institute for Strategic Research

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## **Annex 2: Guiding Questions**

### **Expert Breakthrough Group Guiding Questions**

#### **Group 1: Tackling Political-Judicial Justice Gaps**

1. Mass atrocity crimes have been and are being committed in several countries in the MENA region, including genocide in Sudan and in Palestine. What are the main legal and political challenges to ending impunity for these crimes?
2. What can the UN and the regional organizations — in particular, the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council — do to overcome these challenges with the goal of ensuring justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators of these crimes?
3. Which innovations at the global and regional level can improve collective action to promote justice and accountability in the MENA region?

#### **Group 2: Tackling Socioeconomic Justice Gaps**

1. How do intersecting political, judicial, socioeconomic, and environmental injustice dynamics manifest in the Greater MENA region today, and how do they reinforce structural drivers such as exclusion, inequality, underdevelopment, and protracted conflict?
2. To what extent have global and regional multilateral institutions effectively responded to socioeconomic justice gaps in the Greater MENA region, and where do their mandates, instruments, and financing architectures fall short?
3. What concrete innovations in global and regional governance could most credibly strengthen collective action to promote and safeguard socioeconomic justice in the Greater MENA region over the coming decade?

#### **Group 3: Tackling Environmental Justice Gaps**

1. How do climate-driven stresses like water scarcity, desertification, extreme heat, and sea-level rise interact with socioeconomic inequalities and governance weaknesses across the MENA region?
2. To what extent are existing global and regional multilateral institutions — including human-rights bodies, environmental treaties, regional and multilateral development banks — equipped to address environmental justice gaps in MENA?
3. What kinds of global or regional governance innovations (legal, institutional, and financial) would most effectively promote environmental justice in MENA, and how can these innovations ensure inclusivity, accountability, and long-term sustainability?

## **Discussion on the possible establishment of a Greater MENA Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation**

### **Group 1: Regional and Global Governance Policy Research**

1. How can a Greater MENA research network best engage (through policy-relevant research) multilateral institutions and strategically influence global, regional, and sub-regional governance platforms to shape evidence-based policy addressing shared transnational challenges?
2. What specific kinds of research products (e.g., edited volume, special issue of a journal such as *Global Governance*, reports, policy briefs, policy memos, commentaries, etc.) might prove most valuable for policy-makers, journalists, civil society and business leaders, and other potential target audiences?
3. What are specific examples of kinds of JOINT research products that could be undertaken in 2026 (with an eye to growing ambition in 2027 and beyond)?
4. What should we call the proposed new research network?

### **Group 2: Regional and Global Governance Policy Dialogues**

1. What shape could Track 1.5 policy dialogues take (e.g., on the policy and operational interface of global and regional/sub-regional institutions in the Greater MENA Region)? Please share core characteristics.
2. What strategies/outcomes can enhance the translation of insights from Greater MENA policy dialogues into actionable policies across global, regional, and sub-regional governance platforms?
3. How can Greater MENA policy dialogues balance inclusivity and efficiency, while fostering cross-sectoral, intergovernmental, and multistakeholder collaboration?
4. What general approaches can ensure that Greater MENA Track 1.5 policy dialogues maintain long-term relevance, attract high-level participation, and generate tangible policy and governance innovations?
5. What should we call the proposed new research network?

### **Group 3: Regional and Global Governance Community of Practice**

1. Which global, regional, and sub-regional governance/intergovernmental processes in the Greater MENA region can a Community of Practice strategically engage to shape evidence-based, multi-level policy outcomes?
2. What specific advocacy/communications/social media strategies and tools should be employed to advance the work (including research and policy dialogues) of the new research network?
3. What approach should be adopted for the network's web presence, a monthly newsletter/bulletin, WhatsApp group facilitation, and other social media outreach? How about e-consultations?
4. What should we call the proposed new research network?