



Future Earth – New Approaches to address Climate Change and Sustainability in the MENA Region

Manfred Lange and Rana Abu Alhaija

The Cyprus Institute, Energy, Environment and Water Research Center, Nicosia, Cyprus (m.a.lange@cyi.ac.cy)

Interactions and feedbacks between rapidly increasing multiple pressures on water, energy and food security drive social-ecological systems at multiple scales towards critical thresholds in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA Region). These pressures, including climate change, the growing demand on resources and resource degradation, urbanization and globalization, cause unprecedented challenges for countries and communities in the region. Responding to these challenges requires integrated science and a closer relationship with policy makers and stakeholders. Future Earth has been designed to respond to these urgent needs.

In order to pursue such objectives, Future Earth is becoming the host organization for some 23 programs that were previously run under four global environmental change programmes, DIVERSITAS, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), the International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) and the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). Some further projects arose out of the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP). It thus brings together a wide spectrum of expertise and knowledge that will be instrumental in tackling urgent problems in the MENA region and the wider Mediterranean Basin.

Future Earth is being administered by a globally distributed secretariat that also includes a series of Regional Centers, which will be the nuclei for the development of new regional networks. The Cyprus Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus (CyI; www.cyi.ac.cy) is hosting the Regional Center for the MENA Region.

The CyI is a non-profit research and post-graduate education institution with a strong scientific and technological orientation and a distinctive regional, Eastern Mediterranean scope. Cyprus at the crossroads of three continents and open to all nations in the region provides excellent conditions for advancing the research agenda of Future Earth in the MENA Region. Given the recent and ongoing major political and societal transformation in the region, research and development that help prepare the MENA countries for anticipated global changes and advance the development of sustainable structures are not only meaningful, but also a quite challenging undertakings.