

Foreword

We are strongly committed to boosting cooperation between the United Nations and the academia for promoting dialogue between the academic and non-academic sectors as a means for influencing policymaking processes that support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To this end, the Academic Network for Development Dialogue (ANDD) became known in 2020 as a collaborative initiative between Qatar University and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), along with a number of prestigious universities and educational and research institutions.

As part of the network's extensive outputs and activities, I am pleased to present the first issue of the Academic Network for Development Dialogue's research paper series. The series covers issues that are rarely discussed at the regional, national and local levels. It addresses issues, challenges and structural opportunities that are specific to the Arab region and that are not confined to a specific sector.

This initiative targets those who are interested in themes relevant to development in the Arab world, including young researchers and United Nations employees who are at the beginning of their careers. It is thus a forum for young people to discuss innovative ideas and proposals that address regional problems. The initiative also aims to create an enabling environment for Arab youth to transform their proposals into concrete, applicable endeavors and solutions.

Accordingly, the first issue of the series focuses on the topic of "Building on the Similarities between Arab Countries for fostering Sustainable Development." We envision that the issue would serve as a discussion platform on the structural challenges facing the Arab region at the national and regional levels. Moreover, we are very pleased with the distinguished level of interest and participation between young male and female researchers from various countries. The participants demonstrated deep awareness of the nature of the challenges and problems facing sustainable development in our region.

Today, we present the first issue of this series and envision that the next editions will encompass propositions and recommendations in the form of policies and tools that will enable good practices and evidence-based processes towards the implementation of the SDGs.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues at Qatar University for their effort and support in making this series come to light. I also thank the referees and reviewers, and all who have contributed to shedding the light on those research papers that enhance the pioneering role of young male and female researchers in the development of their countries and societies.

Dr. Rola Dashti

Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA

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