

2012 Report of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development

ARAB ENVIRONMENT•5 SURVIVAL OPTIONS

ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF ARAB COUNTRIES

EDITED BY: **NAJIB SAAB**



المنتدى العربي للبيئة والتنمية
ARAB FORUM FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT



Incorporating
ARAB ATLAS OF FOOTPRINT AND BIOCAPACITY
by Global Footprint Network

Dedicated to
Mohamad Kassas
1921-2012

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Preface

Survival Options is the fifth in the series of annual reports produced by the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) on the state of the Arab environment. It examines sustainability choices in Arab countries, based on a survey of people's demand for natural capital and available supply.

The primary aim of the AFED annual reports is to foster the use of science in policy and decision-making in Arab countries. This is a manifestation of AFED's mission to advocate prudent environmental policies and actions based on science and awareness. Since 2008, AFED has produced four reports in the series: *Arab Environment: Future Challenges* (2008), *Impact of Climate Change on Arab Countries* (2009), *Water: Sustainable Management of a Scarce Resource* (2010) and *Green Economy: Sustainable Transition in a Changing Arab World* (2011).

The present report comes as a logical addition to the sequence, since it discusses possible paths to sustainability based on ecological constraints. As a basis for the analysis, AFED has commissioned the Global Footprint Network, the world leader in this field, to produce an Arab Ecological Footprint and Biocapacity Atlas using the most recent data available. The Atlas covers the 22 members of the League of Arab States, as a region, sub-regions and individual countries.

The findings indicate that Arab countries' demand for nature's products and services amounts to more than twice what ecosystems in these countries can supply. This imbalance between domestic supply and demand for ecological services places a limit on future growth and wellbeing.

A group of experts has analyzed the findings of the Atlas, combined with the conclusions of previous AFED reports, in an attempt to go beyond pointing to

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