

Environmental Challenges in the MENA Region: The Long Road from Conflict to Cooperation

London Middle East Institute,
A Centenary Conference
SOAS, University of London
12-13 October 2016

Call for papers

The Middle East and North Africa region is well-known for its abundant natural resources and geostrategic significance. This image is currently over-shadowed by sectarian violence and trans-boundary conflicts that threaten the stability of the entire region with enormous global implications. Preoccupation with conflict has indeed come at the expense of addressing the region's other challenges and a failure to recognize the need for region-wide collective and collaborative effort to address these.

Although the region's fragile state of the environment has increasingly preoccupied policymakers in individual countries, there is as yet insufficient concerted effort for initiating or coordinating collaborative action to address these. In the absence of a positive agenda for addressing these, recurrent environmental setbacks and rapid depletion of the region's natural resources pose a major threat to long term economic, political and social stability of the region. This is despite the fact that the potential challenges from MENA's environmental insecurity in the 21st century may have worse consequences than the toll of current violence.

Despite the urgency of these challenges, there has been as yet no international conference dedicated to studying MENA's environmental sustainability in its entirety in recent years.

We are pleased to announce this major international and interdisciplinary conference **on the occasion of SOAS's centenary in 2016**. As a leading School for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, SOAS is uniquely placed to act as a constructive and forward-looking forum for an international and scientific gathering of experts and policy-makers concerned with the state of the MENA region's environmental predicament.

The conference is predicated upon two critical premises:

- (a) expertise and awareness from a wide range of disciplines is required to understand and address these challenges; and
- (b) to have a real chance of success, the MENA countries need to confront these problems as common threats with a real and positive desire for regional cooperation and policy coordination.



The London Middle East Institute (LMEI) at SOAS, University of London, is pleased to host the first international conference focused on the Middle East and North Africa environment in the 21st century. Taking advantage of SOAS's centenary landmark, we hope to bring together climate and natural scientists and environmental engineers along with social scientists and policy makers and practitioners to engage in urgent dialogue to pave the road for future collaborations.

The conference will comprise of scientific peer-reviewed submissions as well as invited keynote speakers to address the various dimensions of the region's challenges from across the region and disciplines.

Conference themes:

1. Climate change and its impact on the MENA region
2. Pollution (air, water and soil)
3. Waste management
4. The food/water nexus
5. Sustainable and renewable energy
6. Natural habitat, biodiversity and conservation
7. Demography, public health and well-being
8. Disasters (floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, sandstorms and radiation): impact, risk management, and damage mitigation
9. The role of NGOs, community organisations and civil institutions.

The above list is not exhaustive and is meant to be indicative.

The criteria for the selection of the submissions are: (I) focus on the MENA region widely defined to encompass a good cross section of countries from Morocco to Iran; (II) quality of work and rigour of the analysis, and (III) history of the authors' contributions to research in the field (this last criterion will not be applied to posters submitted by PhD students and recent graduates and those focused on specific projects).

The conference will have limited funds to provide partial financial support for travel and lodging costs of those presenting a full paper.

Instructions for submission

Please provide the following:

- (i) An abstract of the paper being proposed for presentation (maximum of 500 words). Please use the [template provided](#).
- (ii) Abstracts should describe concisely the hypotheses, the data, the methodology and the potential results and policy implications of the research being conducted.
- (iii) Short CV(s) of the author(s)
- (iv) Only original and unpublished research should be submitted.



Poster sessions

PhD researchers and recent graduates are encouraged to present their works as poster. Further details, including poster preparation guidelines will be available shortly on the conference website: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/centenary-conference/>

Key dates

- The deadline for abstract submission has been extended to **25/04/2016**. Please email your abstract to LMEIenvironment@soas.ac.uk
- Decisions on abstracts will be communicated by **15/06/2016**
- Final Papers should be submitted by **10/09/2016**.

Advisory Group

- [Tony Allan](#), Emeritus Professor, Department of Geography, King's College London and SOAS
- [Hassan Arafat](#), Associate Professor - Water and Environmental Engineering, Masdar Institute, UAE)
- [Rosaleen Duffy](#), Professor in the Political Ecology of Development, SOAS, University of London
- [Hassan Hakimian](#), Director, London Middle East Institute, SOAS
- [Kaveh Madani](#), Senior Lecturer, Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College, London
- [Hamid Pouran](#), IHF Visiting Fellow in Iran's Environmental Sustainability, London Middle East Institute, SOAS.

100 years of SOAS

SOAS, University of London celebrates its centenary in 2016-17.

SOAS was founded as the School of Oriental Studies. Over the last century we have built a strong academic reputation throughout the world and especially in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. As SOAS approaches its centenary, our goal is to deepen our impact on Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Phenomenal economic growth in China and India, political upheaval in the Middle East, the burgeoning middle classes of Africa – our world class scholars are well-placed to provide the analysis and understanding of our rapidly changing world. As SOAS embarks on its second century, it will offer state of the art research, teaching and student provision, all in one precinct. It will ensure the future of SOAS as a top flight university which offers a unique resource for a complex world, and an institution of which our alumni can remain truly proud.



The London Middle East Institute

The aim of the [LMEI](#), through education and research, is to promote knowledge of all aspects of the Middle East including its complexities, problems, achievements and assets, both among the general public and with those who have a special interest in the region. In this task it builds on two essential assets.

LMEI is based in London, a city which has unrivalled contemporary and historical connections and communications with the Middle East including political, social, cultural, commercial and educational aspects. Secondly, the LMEI is at SOAS, the only tertiary educational institution in the world whose explicit purpose is to provide education and scholarship on the whole Middle East from prehistory until today.



