

Posters

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## **The University of the Middle East Project (UMEP)**

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### **Abstract**

The University of the Middle East Project (UMEP) aims at the establishment of the University of the Middle East, a system of interconnected academic centers throughout the Middle East and North Africa which will promote academic excellence, regional cooperation, tolerance and peace.

As the first steps towards the implementation of this long-term vision, UMEP is organizing Summer Institutes for various audiences of students/academics/professionals from all the countries of the Middle East and North Africa in several academic fields which all are of particular relevance for the region. UMEP intends to organize in the summer of 2000 an Institute in Sustainable Development Strategies that will constitute the first step towards the implementation of a permanent academic center in Rabat, Morocco, which will open in 2001 and host its first Masters program in sustainable development in the fall of 2002. This Academic Center will be Interdisciplinary by essence, encompassing all the different dimensions of sustainable development:

- socio-economic and institutional dimensions: from the perspectives of business/management, socio-economic development, public administration, community development, etc...
- scientific/technological dimensions: from the perspectives of environmental sciences, technologies and engineering

The necessity of assuring both human and environmental sustainability of economic development paths has become one of the main concerns of the international community in the last decade. As the processes of untamed industrialization, urbanization and globalization bear risks on human health, on community structures and institutions, and on the environment, the necessity of redefining development in a more humane and environmentally friendly fashion has imposed itself as the major challenge of the next century for all the nations and people of the world.

However, the Middle East and North Africa region seems to be rather unprepared for these new challenges both at the governmental and at the societal level. In particular, at the academic level very little attention is given to these issues in the current curricula of universities across the region. UMEP is committed to provide the region with an interdisciplinary program on sustainable development strategies of the highest academic

standard. This program will be designed to prepare the future generations of public policy administrators, business managers, and leaders of the civil society to adequately address the challenges of sustainable development in the Middle East and North Africa in the twenty-first century.

The Summer Institute in Sustainable Development Strategies that UMEP will be organizing in Rabat, Morocco in July 2000 will have the following goals:

- 1) Offer an interdisciplinary program of the highest academic standard on the problem of sustainable development designed for the specific economic and environmental issues common to all the countries of the Middle East and North Africa.
- 2) Facilitate regional cooperation by engaging the participants to work as a cohesive, united group to solve common problems at the interface of economic development and environmental management in the MENA region. Participants of the summer institute will be able to build bridges in an open, democratic forum, free from the real and perceived barriers that discourage communication in the Middle East and North Africa.
- 3) Facilitate the emergence of a consensus on sustainable development and environmental issues by bringing together future key actors in economic development and environmental management who will represent diverse interest groups in the public and private sectors as well as in the civil society.