



منتدى الاستراتيجيات الأردني
JORDAN STRATEGY FORUM

The UN International Mother Earth Day: Let Us Make It a Day to Celebrate

May 2023



1. Background:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) back in 1988. The overall task of the IPCC is to prepare a **“comprehensive review and recommendations with respect to the state of knowledge of the science of climate change; the social and economic impact of climate change, and potential response strategies and elements for inclusion in a possible future international convention on climate”**.

Since its establishment, the IPCC has published five assessment reports. On the 20th of March 2023, the IPCC published its 6th assessment report. This Report “summarizes the state of knowledge of climate change, its widespread impacts and risks, and climate change mitigation and adaptation”.

Based on the 6th assessment report, it is critically important for all stakeholders to consider the following quotations.

1. “Climate change has caused widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people that are unequally distributed across systems, regions and sectors. Economic damages from climate change have been detected in climate-exposed sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, fishery, energy, and tourism”.
2. “Between 2010 and 2020, human mortality from floods, droughts and storms was 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions, compared to regions with very low vulnerability”.
3. “Most observed adaptation responses are fragmented, incremental, sector-specific and unequally distributed across regions. Despite progress, adaptation gaps exist across sectors and regions, and will continue to grow under current levels of implementation, with the largest adaptation gaps among lower income groups”.

In addition, it is worth remembering the following two quotations from the United Nations webpage.

1. “To preserve a livable climate, greenhouse-gas emissions must be reduced by half by 2030 and to net zero by 2050. Bold, fast, and wide-ranging action needs to be taken by governments and businesses. **But the transition to a low-carbon world also requires the participation of citizens**”.

2. “Every one of us can help limit global warming and take care of our planet. **By making choices that have less harmful effects on the environment, we can be part of the solution and influence change**”.

Given its global implications, the issue of climate change requires intense efforts by governments across the world to tackle it. The issue of climate change requires the general public to see it as a serious issue as well. Indeed, climate change appreciation and concerns by the public would only enhance their support for public policies and their willingness to make the necessary lifestyle changes.

Relative to the above, it is informative to note that **“The Social Progress Imperative”** (a global nonprofit think tank based in Washington, DC) has published its **“Climate Perception Index” in September 2022**.

This Index is based on a survey of people in 109 countries. The survey’s overall objective is to ask individuals about their **“awareness of climate change, perception of the risks associated with it, and their commitment to climate action”** In other words, the survey results provide **“insights for policymakers on where to potentially focus their efforts to improve public support for climate action across the globe”**.

This Policy Brief is issued by the Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF), to celebrate **Earth Day on April 22**. **In more specific terms, this Policy Brief** sheds some light on where the Arab countries including Jordan stand on the 2022 Climate Perception Index. Naturally, the objective is to recommend some policy measures whose objective is to improve the region’s standing on the Index.

2. The Climate Perception Index: The Framework

The Framework of the Climate Perception Index is based on 12 questions (grouped under 3 dimensions of Climate Perceptions):

Awareness:

This dimension measures the level of knowledge, belief that climate change is a real phenomenon, ideas about the causes, and the frequency of hearing about climate change. It consists of 4 questions:

1. How much do you know about global warming or climate change?
2. Do you think climate change is happening?

3. Assuming that climate change is happening, do you think it is caused by human activities?
4. About how often do you hear about climate change in your daily life?

Risk Perception:

This dimension measures the extent of the perceived risk of climate change. It consists of 4 questions:

1. How worried are you about climate change?
2. How much do you think climate change will harm you personally?
3. How much do you think climate change will harm future generations of people?
4. Do you think that climate change is a very serious threat, a somewhat serious threat, or not a threat at all to the people in the country you live in over the next 20 years?

Commitment to Action:

This dimension measures the willingness to adopt pro-environmental behavior. It consists of 4 questions:

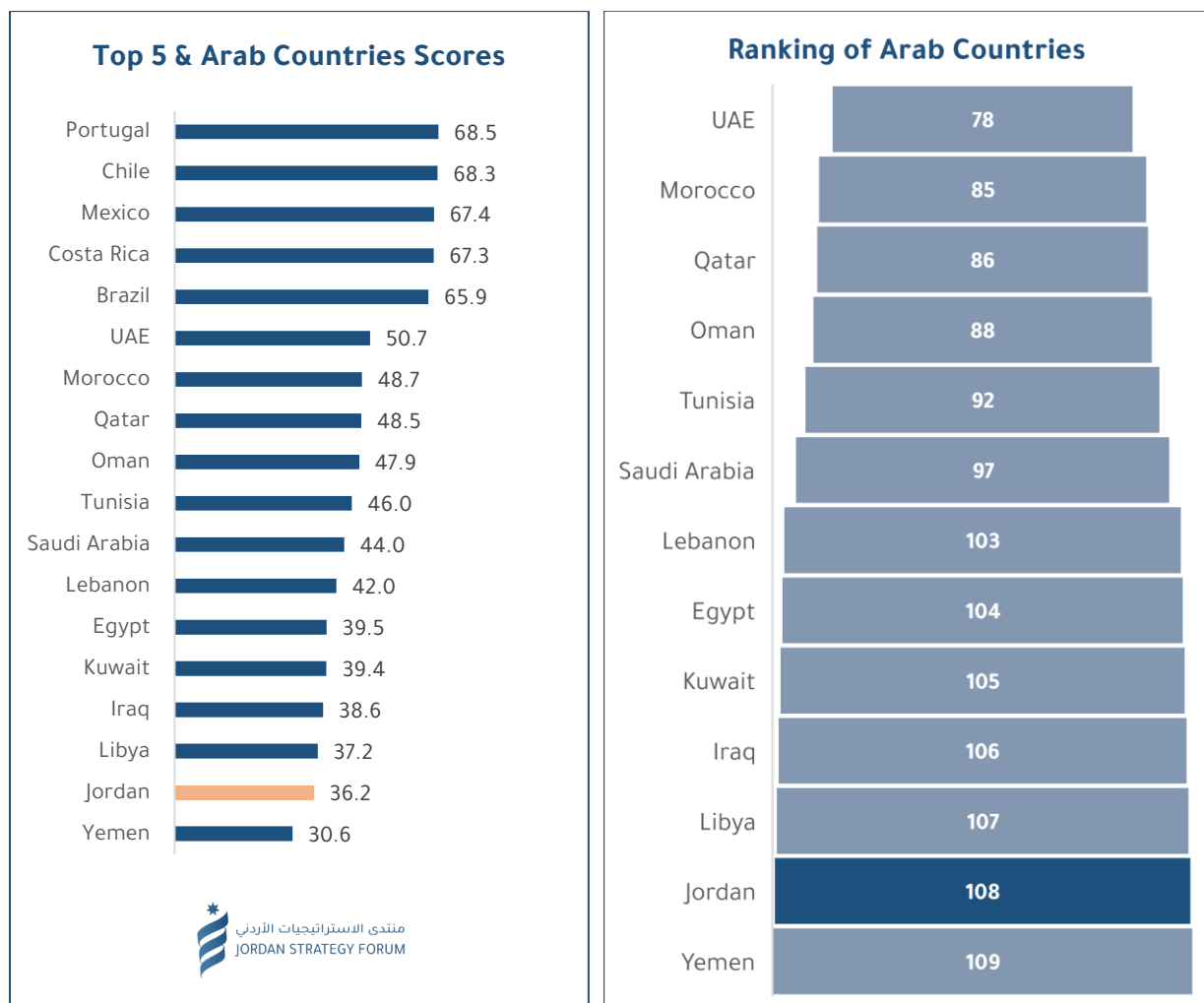
How important is the issue of climate change to you personally?

1. Do you think climate change should be a very high, high, medium, or low priority for the government of the country where you live?
2. Do you think that the country where you live should reduce its pollution that causes climate change?
3. In the country where you live, who do you think is most responsible for reducing the pollution that causes climate change?

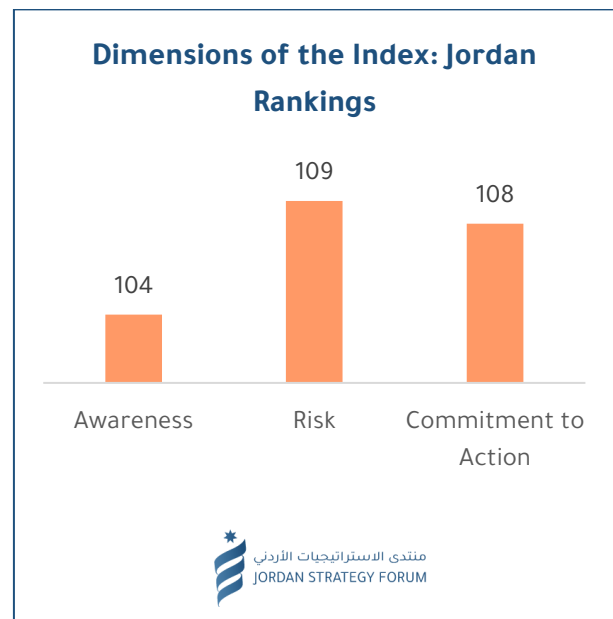
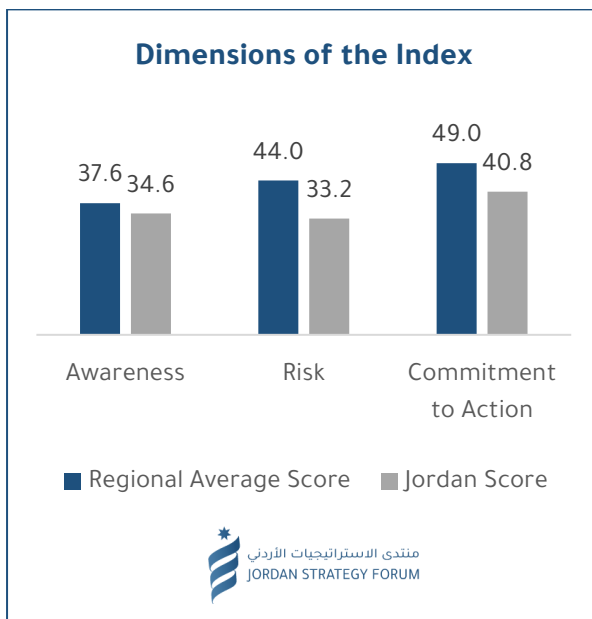
3. The Climate Perception Index: Where Does Jordan Stand?

Based on the 2022 Climate Perception Index, we outline where Jordan stands on the Index.

1. With a score of 68.5, the Portugal tops the 109 countries. Chile, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Brazil come in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th respectively.
2. It is interesting to note that the performance of most developed countries was modest. For example, while India ranks 42nd, Norway, Netherlands, Finland, USA, come in at 87th, 80th, 68th, and 60th respectively.
3. It is discouraging to note that the rankings of the Arab countries are poor. With a score of 30.6 Yemen's rank is last (109th). **With a score of 36.2, Jordan comes in second last. While the United Arab Emirates (UAE) tops the Arab countries, its global ranks (78th) is still weak.**



4. As far as Jordan is concerned, the scores (and rankings) in all three dimensions are poor. Indeed, Jordan's scores are below the regional average. In the dimension of risk, Jordan comes in last.



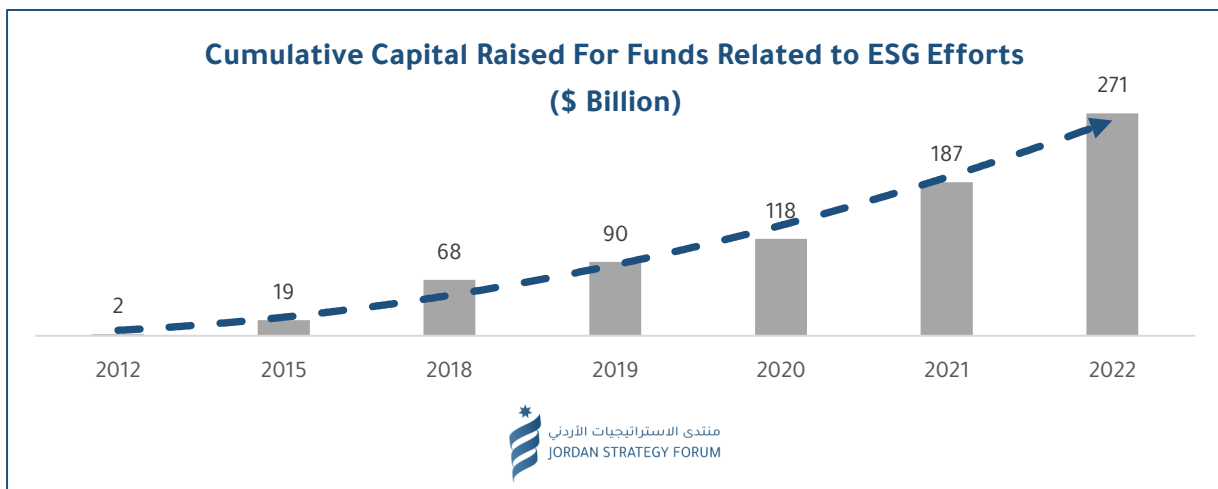
Relative to the above-mentioned observations about the status of the Arab countries on the climate perception index, no one should underestimate how pressing “climate change” is. Indeed, and within this context, two important observations are worth raising:

First, based on the accounting and consulting firm's (PwC) 26th Annual Global CEO Survey in 2023 (Winning Today's Race While Running Tomorrow's), and the responses of 4,410 CEOs across the globe, some interesting results are revealed.

1. During the financial year 2023, 50% of the responding CEOs see climate risk impacting their cost profiles.
2. To prepare for the risk of climate change, 66% of the CEOs stated that their company has “completed” or “in progress” of completing initiatives to reduced emissions.
3. To prepare for the risk of climate change, 61% of the CEOs stated that their company has “completed” or “in progress” of innovating climate-friendly products or processes.
4. To prepare for the risk of climate change, 58% of the CEOs stated that their company has “developed” or “in progress to develop” a data-driven, enterprise-level strategy for reducing emissions and mitigating climate risks.

Second, a recently published paper (March 2023) by McKinsey and Company (Climate Investing: Continuing Breakout Growth Through Uncertain Times) reveals some interesting results.

1. “Climate investing experienced a period of breakout growth in capital formation over the past four years. From 2019 until the end of 2022, private-market equity investors launched more than 330 new sustainability; environmental, social, and governance (ESG); and impact funds”.



2. “As of November 2022, around 140 countries had proposed or set net-zero targets that cover almost 90 percent of global emissions. In addition, 111 nations have made commitments to reduce methane emissions as part of the pledge launched by the United States and the European Union at COP26 in November 2021”.

4. TO SUM UP

One can probably argue that “climate change” is currently the most pressing issue facing mankind. Indeed, given its global implications, climate change requires intense efforts from governments all over the world to tackle it. In addition to the actions of governments and the private sector / companies, the public at large must also be prepared to make the necessary lifestyle changes that mitigate and adapt to climate change. The public must see climate change as a serious issue and make it a priority for action. Indeed, climate change concerns influence support for climate policies as well as individual willingness to make lifestyle changes to address climate change. This is why, the average Arab citizen, and the average Jordanian citizen, need to have greater levels of understanding of the issues that involve **“climate change”**. **This can only be done by raising people’s awareness by all the relevant stakeholders including the media and education.**



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