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# **Navigating Environmental Security in the Arab World**

— By Natalie Ashkar —

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# Introduction



# Session Outline

**ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY**

**CAUSAL CHAINS**

**CASE STUDIES**

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

**SUSTAINABILITY BARRIERS**

# Baby Turtles





# Intro to Environmental Security

- The environment is a key element of regional and national security
- National security depends on the environment, including
  - Consumption
  - Ecosystem services
  - Restoration / preservation
  - Climate change
- Environmental issues are **threat multipliers** for concerns of national security (and vice versa)



# Impact of conflict on the environment



Artillery used during WWI  
led to avalanches in Europe



Agent Orange damaged  
Vietnamese forests

# Impact of the environment on national security



Drought contributed to the Syrian conflict



Water shortages causes tension in N & S Sudan

# Causal Chains

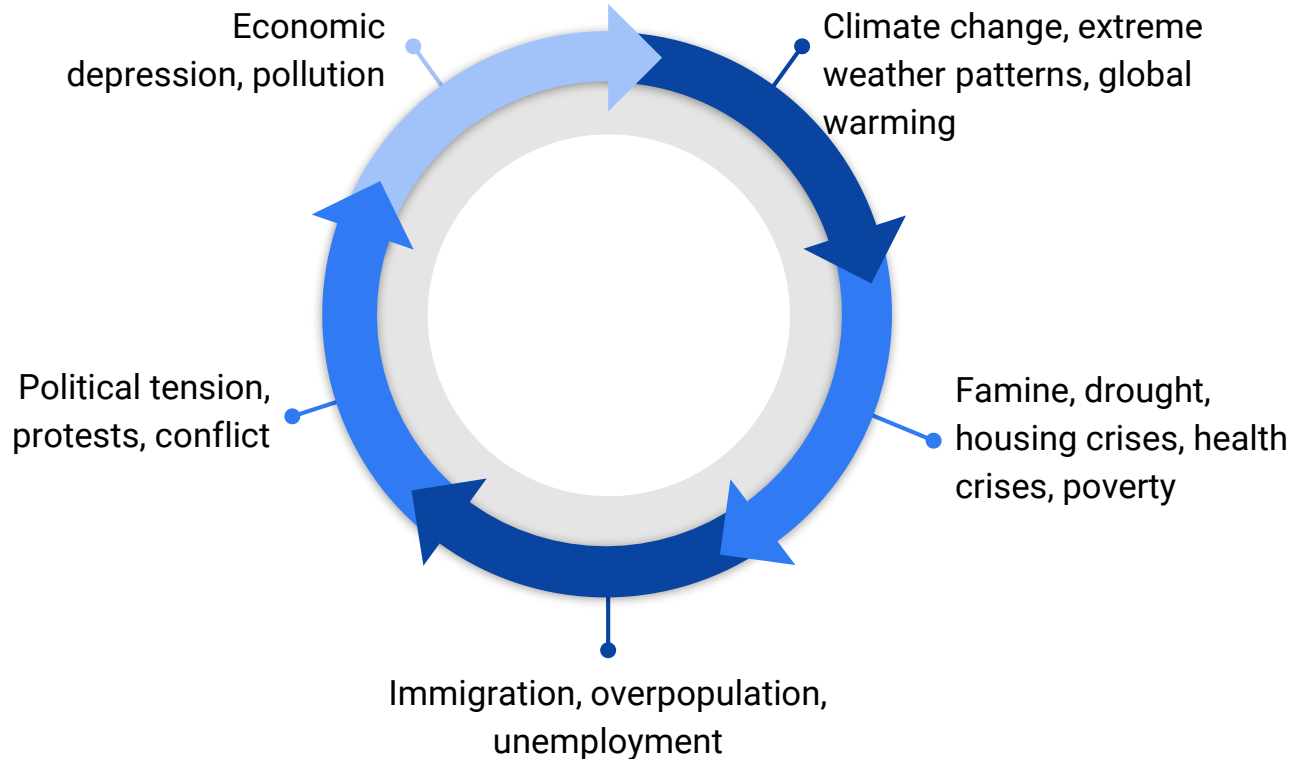
A chain showing how the environment affects an issue of national security

Example: Natural Disaster → Migration → Overpopulation → Job Shortages

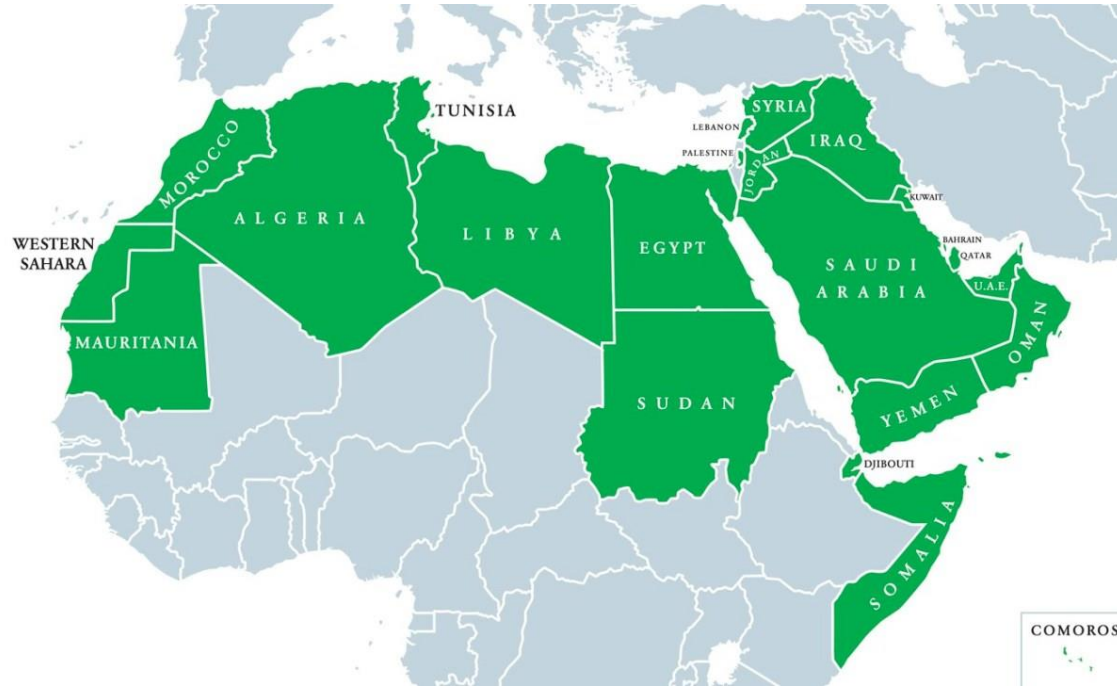




# Causal chains but they're actually circles



# Instability in the Arab World



# Case Study #1 - Lebanon



High temperatures, dry winds, little rainfall (October 2019)

Wildfires

Poor response, media attention, other factors

Public outrage, environmental damage

Lebanese Revolution

Political unrest, governmental collapse, hyperinflation, unemployment, increased crime, inability to live sustainably

# Case Study #2 - Syria



**Human-induced climate change and global warming**

**Warmer and drier conditions in the Mediterranean, weakening of moist winds, more evaporation**

**Extreme drought between 2006 and 2009**

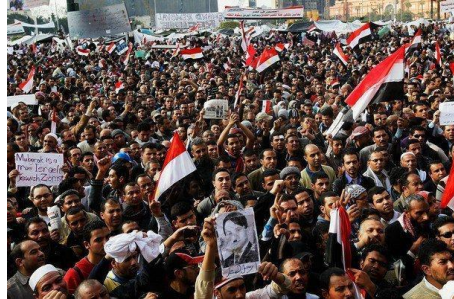
**Misguided agricultural and water-use policies, crop failure**

**Migration of 1.5 million people from rural to urban areas**

**Increased tension and social stresses that led to the uprising against President Bashar Al Assad**



# Case Study #3 - Egypt



**Global warming, increasing temperatures**

**Overpopulation and the construction of the New Administrative Capital City**

**Construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam**

**Reduction of arable land by 20%**

**Displacement of thousands of workers amidst a rapidly growing population**

**Social unrest and risk of a 3rd revolution**

# Case Study #4 - Saudi Arabia



Increased economic activity, Arab Spring, global warming

Dust, sand, chemicals in the air

Strokes, heart attacks, cancers, heart and respiratory diseases

14,600 deaths per year

Billions of dollars lost in workforce and productivity

Potential social tensions

# Case Study #5 - Yemen



Civil war, poverty, unravelling institutions

Population displacement, disputes, difficulty of access

Inability to produce food, limited arable land available for cultivation

Inability for international community to collect and analyze food data

Food and water scarcity

World's most urgent humanitarian crisis

# Disclaimers

**01** Educate yourself

**02** Question the media

**03** Use reliable sources

**04** Fight stereotypes

**05** Educate others





# GOOD NEWS :)



EXPO 2020 in Dubai



Morocco Solar Farm



Green Buildings

# My Personal Experience



Love at first sight

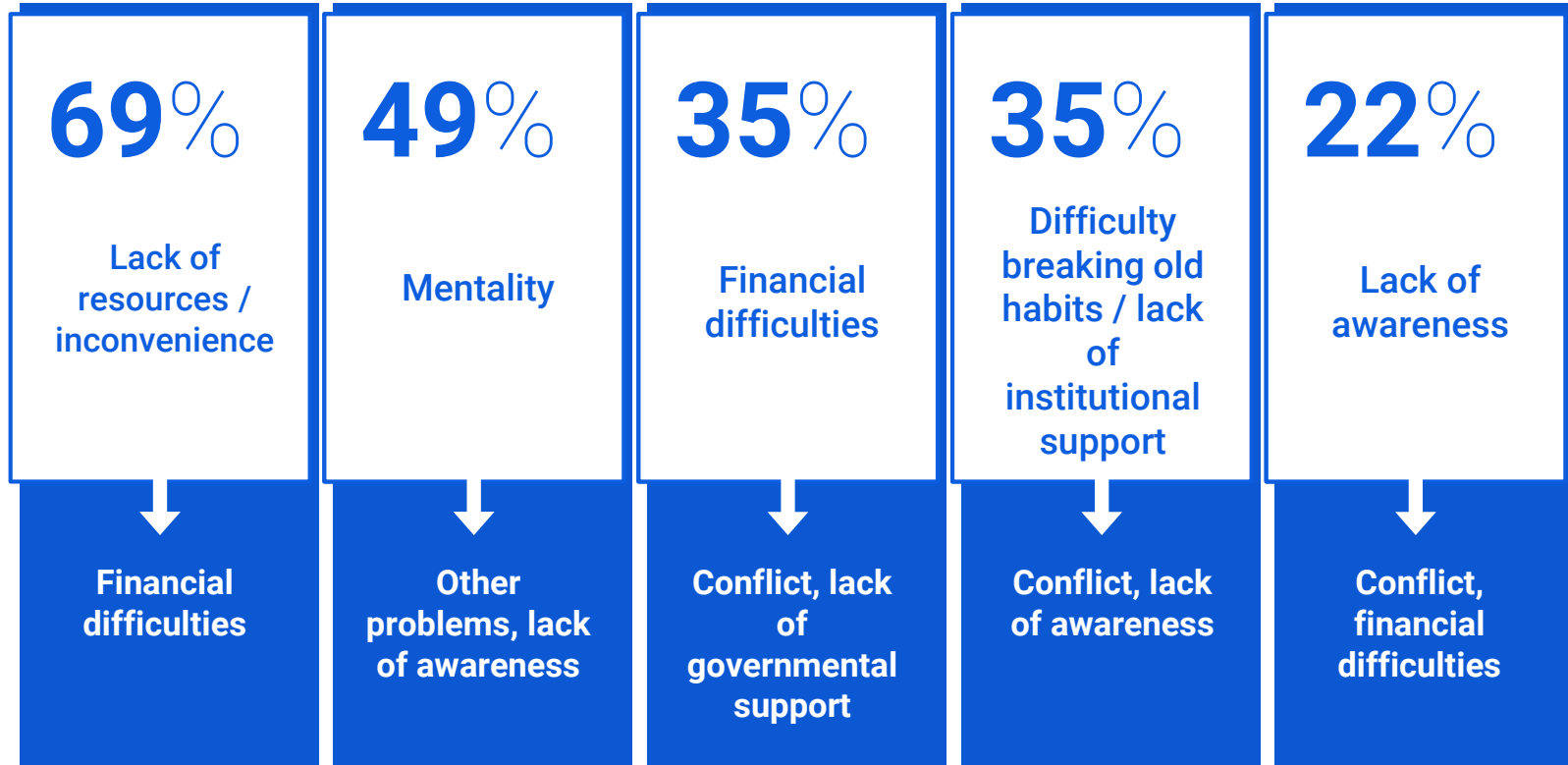


1st beach cleanup



1st panel discussion

# Sustainability Barriers in Turbulent Countries



# Overcoming Sustainability Barriers in Turbulent Countries

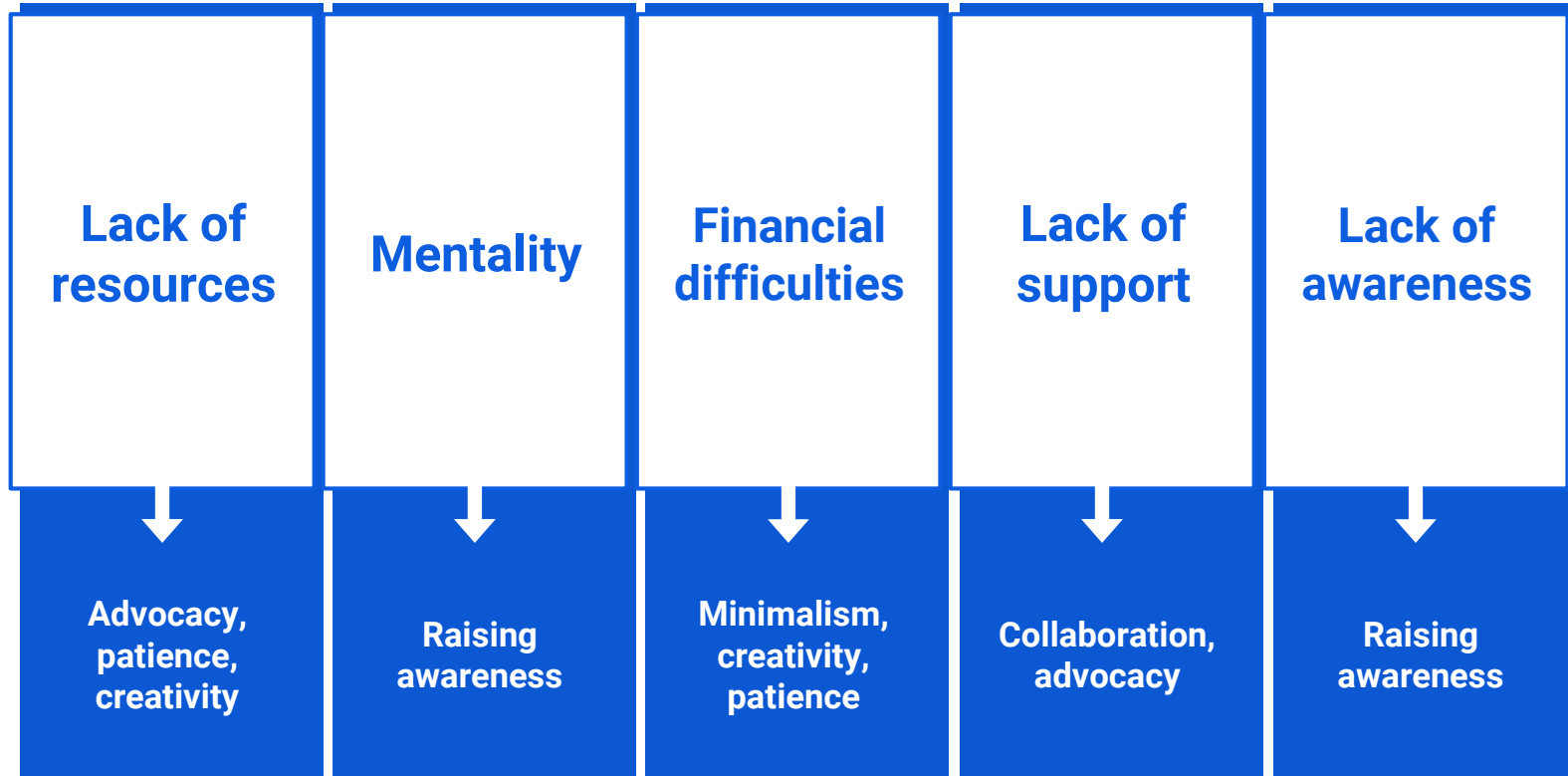
## - Why is it important?

- 22% of the world's population (1.3 billion people) live in poverty
- Ongoing wars or conflicts in 40+ countries
- Environmental security
- Linkages between ecosystem services and human well-being
- Looming deadlines





# Overcoming Sustainability Barriers in Turbulent Countries



# Hope !!!

Dr Jane Goodall's 5 Reasons for Hope:

1. Social Media
2. Human Intellect
3. Resilience of Nature
4. Youth
5. Indomitable Human Spirit



# Conclusion

**Environmental and national security are linked**

**Causal chains can be circles**

**The Arab World is progressing**

**You can make change, too**

**We need to have hope!**

# Thank you :)



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