FOEME'S VISION FOR THE LOWER JORDAN RIVER: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES TO COME

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A commitment of Faith Conference

Supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Osprey Foundation

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FoEME

- FoEME celebrating 20 years of cross border environmental protection efforts.
- FoEME strategy: ‘bottom-up’ community based programming and ‘top-down’ national level advocacy campaigns.
Transboundary River System

Lower part of Jordan River divides into three political areas:

**Israeli:**
Sea of Galilee to Yarmouk River

**Jordanian-Israeli:**
Yarmouk River to Bezek Stream

**Palestinian-Jordanian:**
Bezek Stream to Dead Sea
The Lower Jordan River

- Rich in Cultural, Historical Heritage
- Holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims
- Unique Eco-System
- Meeting point for flora and fauna of three continents
- Migratory flyway for 500 million birds twice annually
The Historical Lower Jordan River

- Average annual flow of over 1.3 billion cubic meters including:
  - Upper Jordan: 540 mcm
  - Yarmouk: 480 mcm
  - Side Wadis: 280 mcm
- Supported a wide variety of habitats/ rich biodiversity
The Great Water Grab
What is left for the Jordan?
Lower Jordan River Rehabilitation Project

Rationale

- Over 96% of the Jordan River’s flow is diverted by Israel, Syria and Jordan.
- Resulting in ecological devastation of the Jordan River system.
- Loss of cultural heritage/tourism revenue.
Target Groups and Beneficiaries

- To create Political Will - Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli government ministries and authorities, national level decision makers and local government leaders.
- Benefit 600,000 Palestinian, Jordanian and Israeli residents of the Jordan Valley, International faith based communities, tourists etc.
Strong Grassroots Foundation: Good Water Neighbors

- Established in 2000
- Now includes 28 communities; 15 in the Jordan River / Dead Sea Valley
- Partner with municipalities, schools and community centers
Youth Water Trustees
Municipal Leadership
FoEME JV EcoParks

- Ein Gedi EcoCenter, Israel
- Auja Environmental Education Center, Palestine
- Sharhabil bin Hassneh EcoPark, Jordan
Advancing Transboundary Jordan River Peace Park

- Draft Studies, Plans & Designs prepared
- Israel Min of Regional Coop Invests in Northern Gate
- Jordanian National Committee Est.
- Tour Operators List Site
- Working on Establishing the Bakoura as a Jordanian National Park
Parliamentary Leadership

- **US Senate** Resolution supporting regional effort to rehabilitate the Jordan River passed unanimously November 2007
- **EU Parliament** Resolution 2010
- **Israeli Knesset** Hearings 2010, 2011 & 2012
- **Jordan Parliament** Hearing 2011
Media Attention

THE JORDAN TIMES
REUTERS
AFP
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
TIME
CNN
npr
HAARETZ.com
VOA
THE JERUSALEM POST
Friends of the Earth Middle East
Regional Studies on the State of the Environment of the Lower Jordan River

- Environmental Flow
- Economic Analysis of policy options for water conservation
- Economic Benefits study
Allocation estimates needed by each country to meet rehabilitation goal

Two criteria were utilized to estimate the allocations needed by country to meet the rehabilitation goal:

1) Amount Diverted by each Country
2) Socio-Economic considerations
FoEME Regional Rehabilitation Goal

- 400-600 mcm annually, one minor flood
- Salinity level less than 750 ppm; primarily fresh water with only the highest quality of effluents allowed up to 25% of the LJR's base flow
- This strategy would remove most of the disturbances, restore the river's structure and function, allow biodiversity to recover and achieve a fair to high ecosystem integrity and health.
Average Annual Flows Diverted by Each Country

- Israel: 46.47%
- Syria: 25.24%
- Jordan: 23.24%
- Palestine: 5.05%

These figures are based on a 1953 survey of Jordan River streams + Allocations decided upon in the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty
Amounts required by each country to meet annual rehabilitation goal

To implement a rehabilitation strategy requiring at least 400 mcm per year, the following quantities would be needed annually:

- Israel — 220 mcm (54%)
- Syria — 100 mcm (24%)
- Jordan — 90 mcm (22%)

Palestine would not be asked to contribute water rather it needs to receive riparian share of the Jordan River.
Study: Where Could the Water Come From?

- **Supply Side**: rainwater catchment, reduction in evaporation, leakage, wastewater reclamation in agriculture
- **Demand Side**: awareness raising, domestic demand management, grey water use, pricing reform in domestic and agriculture sectors, removal of trade restrictions, improved irrigation efficiency
914 million cubic meters of water can be saved/produced in Israel, Jordan and Palestine at less than the marginal cost of water.

Part of which, from Israel and Jordan, can be utilized to meet the rehabilitation goal for the Lower Jordan River.

Economic Benefit Study shows that rehabilitation makes economic and environmental sense.
Achievements

Governments are Removing Sewage!

- Construction of new sewage treatment plants in Israel, Jordan and Palestine will remove sewage waters currently discharged into LJRA and improve water quality.
Achievements

- Israeli Government initiates Master Plan for rehabilitation from the Sea of Galilee to Bezeq stream
- Israeli Commitment of 30 mcm
- Israeli Draft Cabinet Resolution that Rehabilitation of River be National Priority Project
To create a regional FoEME master plan for the Lower Jordan River

Based on harmonizing national master plans into a single cohesive FoEME Transboundary Master Plan.

Underlying principles: Sustainability, Equity, Shared Benefits
Launched Nov 2013

Faith based Campaign

Rehabilitation of the Jordan River: A commitment of Faith
Together we can bring Peace & Prosperity to the peoples of the Lower Jordan River!

For more information visit www.foeme.org