Closing Remarks
Nader Khateeb, Munqeth Mehyar, Gidon Bromberg; EcoPeace Middle East Directors

Nader Khateeb, EcoPeace Middle East Palestinian co-director
I think we are now coming to the end of this event, but not the end of the work, which hasn’t started yet. It created more challenges, responsibilities, and more duties on our shoulders, at least within our organization. So this is just the beginning. I would be delighted and grateful for the opportunity to thank everybody who came here. Thank you to the official Palestinian delegation, the Deputy Ministers, the Representatives of the Negotiations Support Unit in Palestine, the Environmental Authority, the Civil Affairs Ministry represented by H.E. Mr Deputy Minister, the Water Regulatory Council Mr Hmaid, who is also a board member of our organization. I would also like to thank the EU because without their generous support for our project, we would not be here. It was a big challenge for the European Union to choose such a controversial and political project, but we are grateful for their support. We are thankful for the support of SIDA and the Swedish government, who are also supporting us at all of our events and our work in the Jordan Valley and the Jordan River and to the entire donor community for making this kind of work possible. We are very grateful to our own staff in our three offices because they've done most of the work. People don’t see the others, but we are very grateful. They were working day and night, taking care of the logistics, travel, governmental approval, etc. Thank you to the international advisory board for taking trips to come here and be with us. Thank you to our board (Mr Hmaid is here), we are thankful for their continuous guidance and support. Special welcome and thanks to our guests from India and Pakistan. It is unique for us to have your delegation and we are going to start another challenge together. We are grateful to our consultants, the DHV, Core, Levant, and our partners in the project: SIWI and GNF. We will follow this event up with our government officials and representatives. We can do something tomorrow if we have the resources, so let's not wait and move forward. We are having our first meeting with our respective donors. The presentation this morning showed that the trust funds are needed and the aid needs to be continuous and connected. We need to keep it in a general framework to show people and not disappoint them because this is a bottom up approach. Thank you for coming, have a safe trip and we look forward to seeing you here or somewhere else. Enjoy the Dead Sea before it disappears although we are very optimistic that we can reverse things.

Gidon Bromberg, EcoPeace Middle East Israeli co-director
Thanks to the Israeli delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Regional Cooperation and Adi Ashkenazi as he leaves. We were very, very delighted to bring such a large delegation from Israel, including ministerial and Members of Knesset. So we really saw the full spectrum of the political climate in Israel as well as from all sides. The concluding remarks that we’ve heard were quite remarkable. I say to those that, like we are of course, always skeptical, always worried, the challenges are so great. We have three champions, which are our governments. Despite all the challenges that they face - and they face those real challenges - they really prove themselves. They proved their commitment to something beyond themselves. That's what the Jordan Valley represents. I see the effort to get all mayors to sign a document of support for the master plan. We were in Chicago with mayors from the Jordan Valley from an Israeli community, the Palestinian side, and the Jordan Valley Council. They travelled together because of their commitment to their communities. This is heavy on our shoulders because we have developed relationships where there are expectations. There are expectations and things must get better
on the ground. It’s unacceptable that hundreds of thousands of people emit their sewerage into a hole in the ground outside their home and face terrible health and environmental consequences in doing so because they can’t meet their needs. Together, we can meet these needs. The championship that we’ve seen from our three governments should give us all confidence. This is a royal we that we can move forward. We will continue our discussions. As Nader said, he will continue with the Palestinian government, me with the Israeli government on those issues that we can move forward. There are no regret actions. There is a win-win for everybody tomorrow that is necessary to help create better livelihoods for these communities that we all care about so much. Let’s implement. Let’s improve their realities and start improving them tomorrow. These no-regret actions help create confidence to go further because in the end of course we must go further. The no-regret is not enough. It’s the holistic program, but it’s step-by-step. As we saw from the presentation of the World Bank, so many of the actions and best solutions we’ve seen from the World Bank and the international community are being implemented here step by step. This is a bottom up approach and we are not unique in the approach that we have launched here. We have firm top down commitment to this bottom up approach, which gives confidence and inspiration to us all to continue. I express my gratitude to all for joining the boat down the River Jordan. It’s not floating very much yet because we are all heavy and a large group and the river is small. We are all on the same boat and in the same river. Our goal is to have this boat move more, one step at a time, to start flowing with that river so that we see a region of greater peace and prosperity that the Jordan River represents. Thank you very much.

Munqeth Mehyar, EcoPeace Middle East Palestinian co-director

We finish the easy part of our trip with this study. I think there was something was missing still, we needed a plan so we knew how to be able to separate this magnificent plan from politics but I think this is something that we will work on, and that’s a big part of our efforts. Politics for the politicians; development and the water issues should be separated from the politicians. Unfortunately it is very much linked. We are only starting, but water cannot wait for politicians to resolve their differences. We have a plan, and a vision - and the vision now has a plan to make it a perfect vision to see it all. I thank you very much, especially to those still in this room who have stayed to the very very end, it shows commitment, and we appreciate your support also. I urge you to keep tracking us, to keep us one your radar and see how we can move together with this magnificent plan for the benefit of this region and the people of the Jordan River and the Jordan Valley. Thank you very much.