International Conference
Planning for Our Shared Future:
Public Release of NGO Regional Master Plan
for Sustainable Development in the Jordan Valley

Conference Proceedings

June 9-10, 2015
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dead Sea, Jordan

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The SWIM-JR master plan project is supported by the European Union’s Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM) Programme
1. Note of Gratitude

EcoPeace Middle East (formerly known as Friends of the Earth Middle East) / WEDO would like to recognize and thank the European Union’s Sustainable Water Integrated Management programme for their support of the Regional NGO Master Plan [SWIM-JR] Project without which this effort could not be possible. Additional thanks are due to the many international, regional and local experts for their participation in the project’s meetings, stakeholder workshops and conferences, including the June 9-10, 2015 International Conference Planning for Our Shared Future: Public Release of NGO Regional Master Plan for Sustainable Development in the Jordan Valley

Further thank you’s are due to the hard work of the project team and their supporting institutions including EcoPeace Middle East’s teams in Palestine, Jordan and Israel (with special thanks to Helen Wilkinson and Ferris Storke, interning with EcoPeace, in helping to compile this document) as well as partners in the effort from the Stockholm International Water Institute and Global Nature Fund.

The views expressed are those of EcoPeace Middle East and do not necessarily represent the views of our expert team, project advisers, or participants in the project’s activities or our funders.
EcoPeace Middle East / WEDO and its consortium partners at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and Global Nature Fund (GNF), with lead consultant Royal HaskoningDHV, released the first ever Regional NGO Master Plan for Sustainable Development in the Jordan Valley at a regional conference held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dead Sea, in Jordan from June 9-10, 2015.

Under the patronage of the Jordanian Minister of Water, Dr. Hazim al Nasser, the conference marked the conclusion of a 3-year European Union 'SWIM' funded program and brought together an impressive number of high-level government officials from Jordan, Palestine and Israel, international diplomatic representatives, international development agency representatives, and basin experts to discuss the advancement of the program from planning to implementation.

The Master Plan was presented according to its 7 strategic planning objectives: (1) Pollution Control, (2) Sustainable Water Management & River Rehabilitation, (3) Sustainable Agriculture, (4) Jordan River Basin Governance, (5) Ecological Rehabilitation, (6) Sustainable Tourism & Cultural Heritage Development, and (7) Urban & Infrastructure Development. The Master Plan also identified 127 specific regional and national projects ("interventions") in relation to the above mentioned strategic planning objectives, with a total investment value of 4.58 billion USD until the year 2050. Levant Consultancy, financial experts, also gave an overview of capital market funding opportunities that will serve to finance the projects together with donor states.

The conference concluded with clear support from government representatives from Palestine, Jordan and Israel to continue this very important work presented in the Master Plan and to advance its interventions to secure sustainable development and prosperity in the Jordan Valley.

Dr. Mohammed Hmaidi, CEO of the Palestinian Water Council said: "The Palestinian delegation came from five different governmental institutions and that shows, that just like Jordan and Israel, we are interested in this conference, its recommendations, and outcomes. The Master Plan is in harmony with the Palestinian policies and expectations. We do have national strategies and plans and the proposed interventions do not contradict with these plans and priorities. There are a number of initiatives that can be implemented as of tomorrow."

Eng. Khalil Al Absi, Director of Planning and Regional Water Unit, Jordan Valley Authority speaking for H.E. Eng. Saed Abu Hammour: "The projects articulated in the master plan are important for Jordan, in particular those that deal with wastewater and solid waste management. Among the priorities of the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation is the implementation of these projects through donor agencies and the Jordanian government."

Adi Ashkenazi, Director of the Economic Research Division of Israel’s Ministry of Regional Cooperation: "The most important thing that we learned from what we saw here is the great willingness and the commitment of the people that came here from all parties - the Palestinians, the Jordanians, and also ours, our people in Israel - to rehabilitate this River. I will take with me your enthusiasm about this plan, and we will examine it and hopefully implement part of it with coordination, and with cooperation with all the stakeholders in the area."

EcoPeace will continue to use the Regional Master Plan to advocate for regional integration in the Jordan Valley and for increasing political will for the adoption in full, or in part, of the study's recommendations by the national authorities in the region.
# 3. Actual Conference Agenda

## Tuesday, June 9, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td><strong>Welcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Mr. Munqeth Mehyar, Chairman and Jordanian Director, EcoPeace Middle East&lt;br&gt;- H.E. Joanna Wronecka, Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan&lt;br&gt;- H.E. Helena Gröndahl Rietz, Swedish Ambassador to Jordan&lt;br&gt;- Mr. Ayoub Kara, Israeli Deputy Minister of Regional Cooperation&lt;br&gt;- Mr. Abdullah Lahlouh, Palestinian Deputy Minister of Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:45</td>
<td>H.E. Saed Abu Hammour, Secretary General, Jordan Valley Authority, Jordan</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td><strong>Investing in a shared future: EcoPeace Regional Vision for the Jordan Valley</strong>&lt;br&gt;Nader Khateeb, Yana Abu Taleb, Gidon Bromberg</td>
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<td><strong>Addresses by Israeli Members of Knesset</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Omer Bar Lev&lt;br&gt;- Meirav Michaeli&lt;br&gt;- Yosef Yona</td>
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<td>10:30</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<td>11:00</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to the NGO Regional Master Plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jeroen Kool, Royal HaskoningDHV, Master Plan Consultant</td>
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<td>11:20</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to the NGO Regional Master Plan Investment &amp; Finance Strategy</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ramzi Maayteh, Levant Consulting, Financial Consultant</td>
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<td>11:30</td>
<td><strong>Presentation of each of the thematic groups of interventions included in the NGO Regional Master Plan, with a corresponding presentation of capital market funding opportunities</strong>&lt;br&gt;Royal HaskoningDHV, Master Plan Consultant; Levant Consulting, Financial Consultant</td>
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<td><strong>Pollution Control:</strong> Regional Target, Key National and Regional Interventions, Financial Implications</td>
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<td><strong>Sustainable Water Management and River Rehabilitation:</strong> Regional Target, Key National and Regional Interventions, Financial Implications</td>
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<td><strong>Sustainable Agriculture:</strong> Regional Target, Key National and Regional Interventions, Financial Implications</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Q&amp;A</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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14:15 **Governance:** Regional Target, Key National and Regional Interventions, Financial Implications

**Supporting Regional Governance for the Lower Jordan River**
Dr. Therese Sjomander Magnusson, Director, Transboundary Water Management Unit, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

14:45 Q&A

15:00 **Ecological Rehabilitation:** Regional Target, Key National and Regional Interventions, Financial Implications

**Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage Development:** Regional Target, Key National and Regional Interventions, Financial Implications

**Urban and Infrastructure Development:** Regional Target, Key National and Regional Interventions, Financial Implications

16:00 Q&A

16:15 **The Master Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Lower Jordan River – (phase A) – Israel’s Lower Jordan River Drainage Authority:** Ram Aviram

16:30 Concluding Remarks

19:00 Dinner

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**Wednesday, June 10, 2015**

08:30 Registration opens

09:30 **Keynote Address - World Bank Experience on International Waters**
Claudia Sadoff, PhD, Lead Economist, Water World Bank Group, Washington DC, USA

10:00 Q&A

10:15 **Video Presentation of International Support**
- Member of the European Parliament, Mr Davor Skrlec
- US Congressman, Earl Blumenauer

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 **High Level Panel**
- Dr. Mohammed Hmaidi, CEO of the Palestinian Water S.R. Council
- Eng. Khalil Al Absi, Director of Planning and Regional Water Unit, Jordan Valley Authority
- Adi Ashkenazi, Director of the Economic Research Division of Israel’s Ministry of Regional Cooperation

12:15 **Closing Remarks**

12:30 Lunch
Session Summaries

Tuesday, June 9, 2015

Session I: Conference Opening and Welcomes

Munqeth Mehyar, Chairman and Jordanian Director, EcoPeace Middle East

Good morning Your Excellency’s, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Munqeth Mehyar. I am Chairman and the Jordanian Director of EcoPeace. I would like to begin this morning by a list of thank you, which will be in English, then switching to Arabic, my mother tongue. Your Excellency Dr. Hazim El-Nasser, the Minister of Water and Irrigation in Jordan, we cannot thank you enough for all your vision, support, and leadership. The same line of thanks goes to his Excellency Sa’ed Abu Hammour, Secretary General of the Jordan Valley Authority. Without your vision, guidance, and leadership none of this could have happened or been possible. We are honored & pleased to have with us today the Israeli Deputy Minister of Regional Cooperation, H.E. Ayoub Kara, who will be here shortly. Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Palestine, H.E. Abdullah Lahlouh, H.E. Ma’arouf Zahran, Deputy Minister of Civil Affairs in Palestine. We thank you all and believe that you can all make what it takes to implement this master plan – such an important plan for the future. With us here today are Members of the Jordanian Parliament and Members of the Knesset. We thank you for being here with us and hope for your support. Your Excellency, Ms. Joanna Wronecka, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; special thanks for your continuous support by financially supporting this plan and personally being here for all our events. H.E. Helena Rietz, Ambassador of Sweden to Jordan, our gratitude goes to you, our main donor and main supporter, but above all our dear friend. Our thanks also to our dear representatives from the government ministries, to the mayors of the Jordan Valley, to the members of the Board of Directors, members of the International Advisory Committee of EcoPeace, our guests from India and Pakistan, and finally our master plan partners, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and Global Nature fund. I welcome you all in our lovely beloved Kingdom of Jordan.

(Translation) Dear guests,

There is more than one person here with us and I don’t know you all personally but I can say something about you all: you are distinguished people because you are different from the others because of your penetrating vision for the future. People come to you to ask for your help because you have the courage to understand the world in a different way. Your courage has meant that you’re here at this conference. I feel strongly that we have you here at the conference. Your strength and presence are necessary to help us realize the vision. We strive for a better life and a better future for us all. This vision is the master plan that we are presenting today. This is the first step for positive change in the Jordan Valley. Responsibility and burden can’t be on civil society or donors alone, but it’s a participatory effort to achieve its success. We commend the efforts in the Jordan Valley Authority and hope that we will see this initiative being repeated beyond and across the borders. Wish us all success.
H.E. Joanna Wronecka, Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

[Translation] Dear Guests, good morning. It is my pleasure to be with you today to present the NGO regional masterplan for the development of the Jordan River Valley. A few months ago, in November of last year, we met in a conference for sustainable development in the Jordan valley. It was an important event, not only because of the importance of sustainable development within the Jordan River valley, but because of the presence of important people.

[Direct transcription] We need to protect our heritage for the benefit of all of us. As you know we witnessed sadly how the cultural and natural heritage is suffering from irresponsible human action. However, in some cases, the threat comes rather from the inaction. The Jordan Valley makes up part of our heritage and we are obliged to do our best for the future of the generations. This does not mean that we will not feel the benefits of protecting this beautiful and environmentally rich area; the site, having a rich ecosystem where fauna and flora can live and flourish. Activities such as agriculture and tourism can directly and indirectly benefit from the well-kept river and valley. Moreover communities around will have access to water, for human water consumption and other daily activities.

Regional cooperation is essential to ensure proper management of shared resources and a peaceful relationship between communities. Water is the key element for the cohesion. Therefore water resources and the responsibility for the protection need to be fairly shared between communities. The European Union supports sustainable development. As I mentioned last time, sustainable development is a basic principle and objective that the European Union has at the core of its policies. The European Union has always been sensitive to the problem of the Jordan Valley and the Jordan River.

That is why the European Union is funding the design of the regional master plan. This support has been provided in the framework of the programme SWIM, and concludes with the launch of the plan. The Regional Master Plan is a reality. Now it's time to work together. Much work has been done during the past 3 years to identify feasible interventions, and the design of a roadmap for the implementation. The preparation of the Regional NGO Master Plan is now a reality. But this is not the end; this is just a beginning. Work is to be done to implement the actions, locally and regionally, and to support the initiatives that can bring prosperity and sustainability to the Valley. We should look at the common interest... It is step by step that cooperation and partnership becomes strong. We know this very well at the European Union, since this is how our project started.

Action is needed both and to bring sustainability to the Valley. Now we need to move on to work to achieve the reality. Small initiatives set the foundations for peaceful cooperation and understanding, allowing us to go much further. Sustainability should be our focus, not short round benefits. There is only one way towards prosperity and peace – to work together with energy, enthusiasm, trust, conviction and courage.

[Translated] Partnerships can become stronger. I wish that all the participants come up with good ideas – I wish you success.
H.E. Helena Gröndahl Rietz, Swedish Ambassador to Jordan [Summary of comments]

The Swedish Ambassador congratulated EcoPeace Middle East, SIWI, and the GNF for their role in advancing this important regional process and acknowledged the presence of decision makers from Jordan, Israel, and Palestine at the conference. Their active engagement, she said, will be crucial for the outcome of this process. Ambassador Rietz said that Sweden would continue its longstanding support to the region for efforts aiming for sustainable and equitable water solutions. She mentioned that in the past, EcoPeace has proven that there are win-win-win opportunities across the borders in spite of political and security challenges. She stated that a more equitable sharing of waters is a prerequisite for a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine and a future peace agreement should include clear definitions of Palestinian water rights as well as appropriate structures for the joint management of water resources. In this regard, the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan can be an important lesson. The Ambassador saw that the vision in the regional plan clearly emphasizes that the Lower Jordan River is a shared system. The regional efforts to advance this shared vision on how to jointly manage the water resources are important building blocks for the future, she said, confirming that Sweden will continue to support them over the coming years. She expressed the need of a regional governance structure to achieve the goal of a rehabilitated Lower Jordan River and to leverage the economic and geo-political benefits of cooperation for Palestinians, Jordanians and Israelis. Ambassador Rietz concluded her speech by saying that through the cooperation with SIWI, EcoPeace would be able to use the experiences of existing river basin organizations around the world to better understand what type of governance structure would be appropriate for the Jordan River.

For the Ambassador's full speech, please click here

Ayoub Kara, Israeli Deputy Minister of Regional Cooperation [Summary of comments]

Deputy Minister Kara began by paying his respects and congratulating all those working on the important Regional Master Plan. He described the unique nature of the Jordan River as an asset to millions around the world, and emphasized the importance of finding every way possible to protect and develop the natural treasures that God has given us. The deputy minister continued to explain how the Master Plan document allows for new opportunities, building on the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel, and how Israel supports this position, and has already started to develop the Jordan River beginning in 2013, with the release of 9 million cubic meters of water from the Sea of Galilee. The program that has been proposed would, in his opinion, need cooperation between all ministries, and he is hoping for more cooperation for developing vital projects and other initiatives in the future. He called upon the conference delegates to put politics aside, as cooperation will be the secret to success. He had no doubt that this program will have an echo throughout the world and open up opportunities beneficial for all people in the region. Finally, Deputy Minister Kara called upon delegates to think of those suffering from religious extremism with organizations like Daesh in Syria, and to form an alliance to cooperate against this extremism.

Click here for a full transcript of his speech.
Abdullah Lahlouh, Palestinian Deputy Minister of Agriculture [Summary of comments]

Deputy Minister Lahlouh stressed the historical, economic, political, and religious significance of the Jordan Valley for all people in this region. He spoke of Palestine's goal to improve agriculture, industry, tourism, water, and the environment to be able to access regional and international markets. However, any rehabilitation efforts are almost impossible, he said, because the Palestinian side of the Jordan Valley has suffered from negligence and pollution for decades and the military occupation lead to usurpation of water resources. The Palestinian Deputy Minister of Agriculture said that his government is looking forward to the NGO Master Plan for the recognition of the legitimacy and fair rights of the Palestinian people. The plans and studies of his government confirm that a Palestinian State within the borders of 1967 with control over its own natural resources needs to be established. All riparians have shared responsibilities, he said, and he demanded that there should be no Jewish settlements. The Master Plan was commended for its comprehensive scope, and Lahlouh reiterated that the environment and water represent basic elements for any plan for the Lower Jordan River. He was happy to see that some interventions could even be implemented immediately. The Master Plan, he said, will help build confidence and joint cooperation of the parties in addition to improve the life of local people and improve infrastructure for local towns in the Jordan Valley, which is a basic right of these people. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture concluded his intervention by emphasizing that a sustainable environment is an important incentive for lasting peace, but that there can be no sustainable development under the occupation. Click here for a full transcript of his speech.

H.E. Eng. Saed Abu Hammour, Secretary General, Jordan Valley Authority, Jordan (in place of H.E. Dr. Hazim Al Nasser, Minister of Water & Irrigation, Jordan)

Abu Hammour's opening words were of welcome to all the delegates who had travelled from Israel and Palestine, and he thanked them and the representatives from beyond the region too, for their support for this conference. He spoke of the importance of rehabilitating the Jordan River, and hoped that the NGO Master Plan might be flexible since it would require much funding. He continued to highlight how the Jordan Valley Authority had worked with the Israeli side very seriously, so as to stop the deterioration of the Jordan Valley. He gave credit to EcoPeace for initiating this effort 10 years ago, and thanked them and the sponsors of this conference. He mentioned how he planned to implement a set of projects costing around 20 million JD from negotiations with Israel. He emphasized how he wanted to negotiate with Palestinian neighbors as well. Describing how farmers could see the difference in the river after some projects had been completed, and how the water quality at the baptism site had been improved, he said, however, that this was still not enough, and hoped that Israel would increase the release of water to Jordan. He explained the issues of salty water in the river between Jordan and Palestine, and the lack of sanitation systems within Jordan. He hoped that by meeting donors he could market this long-term plan, so he could align with developments on the western shores of the river. The responsibility for protecting the River was shared by all, and he was hopeful that the three nations would meet for the benefit of all, and for the public interest. Click here for a full transcript of his speech.
Investing in a shared future: EcoPeace Regional Vision for the Jordan Valley

Nader Khateeb, Munqeth Mehyar, Gidon Bromberg, EcoPeace Middle East Directors

Palestinian Co-Director Nader Khateeb focused his opening words by describing the situation of the Jordan Valley in the past. He reminded listeners that the River used to attract many people and birds, and the Yarmouk River once provided hydro powered energy to the region. Then, everything changed; peace was replaced with conflict and occupation, and economic growth with high unemployment and poverty. Mr. Khateeb expressed his hope that one day all riparians can work together and the Jordan Valley can become an economic engine to improve the situation and living standards of all people of the region. He explained how the Master Plan is based on equal rights for everyone, including the Palestinian people. In order for all riparians to work together and serve their people and give them hope for a dignified life, Khateeb called on Israel to end the occupation. He concluded by thanking the Swedish government and its people, as well as the EU, for recognizing the Palestinian state and for supporting EcoPeace.

Talking about the achievements of the last 20 years, Munqeth Mehyar first reminded the conference participants of the problems of the region. From here, he spoke of the important step that was taken when partners stopped blaming each other for their role in the demise of the Jordan River, and rather recognized their own parts in the situation, and then from there, were better able to address each other, and work together. He described how EcoPeace had pushed governments to take sewerage out of the River, and where possible, have water treatment plants built, with foreign aid, to treat the wastewater. This achievement stood alongside that of freshwater being put back into the river. This particular achievement was emphasized as being important for maintaining hope for river restoration; that something could be done in the future to restore it. Then he spoke of the establishment of the Israeli-Jordanian Joint Water Committee, with a sub-committee focusing on the rehabilitation of the River in particular. With the release of the Master Plan, he believed that the whole region could be developed; all countries adjacent to the river; we can turn things around to a win-win–win–win situation, stating that he was really looking forward to that reality.

Gidon Bromberg, EcoPeace Israeli Co-Director, outlined the next steps following the presentation of the Master Plan and EcoPeace’s vision. The goal is to turn the River from being a sewerage canal and a border with fences & barriers, to a River that supplies multifunction water needs for Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians and use it as an economic engine for tourism, agriculture, and trade. To people that say it is naïve to think that things can move forward because there is no hope and trust, Bromberg responded that it’s naïve to think that the status quo can continue. He said that it’s rather the status quo that is not sustainable; a dead river leads to massive unemployment, which amounts to 40% of the population of the Jordan Valley today. Bromberg explained that it was this hardship that brought the Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli mayors of the Jordan Valley to the table. They support EcoPeace in its vision to reverse the status quo and create the needed economic engine through a healthy river. He brought up the rise of fundamentalism in the region, and expressed his concern that it could brainwash the young unemployed in the Jordan Valley. Bromberg commended the participation of ministers from all three governments in spite of the difficulties, saying that this shows that cooperation is possible. To move forward and take on the proposed interventions, he called for the establishment of informal working groups on tourism, agriculture, and trade. Click here to read their full speeches.
Address by Israeli Member of Knesset, Omer Bar Lev [Summary of Comments]

MK Bar Lev was impressed by the trilateral work involved in the preparation of the Master Plan, and the ability to present this project in light of the deadlock in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. He stated that the Master plan was not only an ecological and environmental mission of the highest order, but also proof that our relations are not a zero sum game. He explained how important water is to us all, and that the threats of climate change are making matters worse in this arid region. Water could be a cause of conflict, or of unity, and the technologies developed in Israel could be used to share with Jordanians and Palestinians, turning a source of controversy into a joint mission. An example was given of the Dead-Sea Red-Sea Project, strengthening the general common interest, and weakening the opponents of cooperation in Israel, in the Palestinian Authority, and in Jordan. MK Bar Lev explained how the rehabilitation of the Jordan River was not only an environmental necessity, but that it had political, economic, and security implications as well. He mentioned that it would be impossible to ignore the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and it would be a long wait if we depended only on courageous leadership to make peace. The better solution of choosing to work together in specific fields was proposed. The collapse of Syria and Iraq was mentioned, and a call against extremism supported by development. The interests held by all in transferring the reconstruction budget, and then the development budget to the Gaza Strip through the PA were brought up, so demilitarization in exchange for development could be achieved. Support from the international community would be sought. The potential of the region was raised, an example for cooperation and prosperity if thousands could be lifted out of poverty, and the deficit of water overcome.

Click here for a full transcript of his speech.

Address by Israeli Member of Knesset, Meirav Micha'eli [Summary of Comments]

MK Michaeli’s speech was dedicated to the concept of security, which is often discussed in bilateral and multilateral relationships. She criticized that too often, a very narrow definition of security is used and she brought up the point that real security for physical, as well as social well-being, have to do with things that many people do not relate to as security. Thus, basic issues such as health, education, and the possibility to live prosperous, calm, and stable lives, have been neglected in the Jordan Valley. She drew the conclusion that their quality of and possibilities in life have decreased as a result. MK Michaeli warned that this will become a danger not only for Israel, but also to its neighbors and the people of the Jordan Valley themselves. She explained that the Master Plan creates such a common good for all, which is what a large part of Israelis are interested in for the area and themselves, as it helps overcome the current zero-sum game by creating a totally new kind of security. Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians should all strive for, and be able to achieve, this kind of human security, she concluded.

Click here for a full transcript of her speech.
Address by Israeli Member of Knesset, Yosef Yona [Summary of Comments - Translated]

MK Yona highlighted the poor situation of the Jordan River, and the need for action in order to rehabilitate it. The emergency actions between Jordan and Israel to rehabilitate the river were mentioned, but conference participants were also reminded that it is not possible to rehabilitate the upper part of the river without the lower part; a partial rehabilitation is a waste of money and effort. The Labor party calls for a 2 State solution, but this ecological project should be looked into, regardless of political interests, since cooperation will increase confidence between the parties. He spoke again on the urgency for action, stressing that if we don’t do it now, we won’t have anything to rehabilitate in a few years, and all parties will lose the Jordan River.

Session II: Introduction to the NGO Regional Master Plan

Introduction to the NGO Regional Master Plan

Jeroen Kool, Royal HaskoningDHV, Master Plan Consultant

Mr. Jeroen Kool, Royal HaskoningDHV Lead Consultant presented the overall objective of the Master Plan as promoting peace, prosperity, and security in the Jordan Valley through the identification of feasible interventions or projects that will restore the Valley’s environmental and ecological values within a realistic financial and economic development framework. He explained that the underlying scenario for this plan was that there will be a future independent State of Palestine that will be recognized as one of the three riparians of the Jordan River, side-by-side with Jordan and Israel, with all three nations entitled to an equitable share of the Valley’s resources.

Mr. Kool presented the different thematic areas around which the analysis of the existing problems was done. Pollution control was the first area mentioned, as pollution is one of the major problems in the Jordan Valley. Sustainable water management was the second area he talked about because currently, there is no balance between the actual water demands and the water availability in the basin, which hampers future development. Another focus of the Master Plan that was presented was sustainable tourism and cultural heritage development as it would allow using the huge potentials in the Jordan Valley when it comes to cultural heritage and tourism, which are at this moment absolutely underdeveloped. He also mentioned sustainable agriculture, saying that the goal of this area of intervention is to use the huge potential for improvements in terms of water efficiency, marketing, and export opportunities. Another group of interventions that were presented focused on the ecological restoration of the basin. Lastly, Kool expressed the need to promote urban energy and infrastructure development in order to sustain growth and prosperity in the Jordan Valley.
He said that all of these 127 interventions, representing an overall investment value of $4.58 billion USD, until 2050, have to be done within a joint and effective Jordan Valley governance system. The consultant put forward the importance of the regional interventions in this regard as they create the will, cooperation, and cement between the three riparian countries and facilitate a prosperous development framework. In order to eliminate all sources of environmental pollution in terms of wastewater and solid waste and improve water use and irrigation, he recommends the establishment of a trans-national Jordan River Basin Organization and a coordination structure for each strategic objective. He underlined that it is crucial to develop the Jordan River into a multifunctional water system that serves the need for ecology, economic development, tourism development, and water supply. The core idea of the Master Plan is to share the water instead of dividing it among people.

After analyzing the Master Plan from an economic point of view, he concluded that the implementation of this Master Plan could boost the GDP of the Jordan Valley from $4 billion USD today to up to $73 billion USD in 2050 and achieve a more equal share than today. It was said that some of the interventions could even be implemented in the short-term to control pollution and improve the agricultural sector, and that they would require a total investment value of about $500 million USD.

Mr. Kool concluded that the study confirms that a sustainable and environmentally friendly water regime can be created in the Jordan Valley by 2050. It would create a clean and healthy river system and facilitate the economic interests of all riparian states appropriately, including the future independent state of Palestine.

For the full power point presentation, please click here.

Introduction to the NGO Regional Master Plan Investment & Finance Strategy

Ramzi Maayteh, Levant Consulting, Financial Consultant

Mr. Maayteh described the investment strategy proposed by Levant consulting. The most important part of that strategy was the vision. The pillars of the vision are peace, prosperity, stability, and security, sufficient urban housing, infrastructure and facilities, traffic safety and public transport capacities, stronger economic development opportunities, and restoring the Valley's environmental and ecologic values, and of course eliminating all sources of environmental pollution, as highlighted in the Regional Master Plan. Each intervention would contribute to the ultimate “wants” of the Jordan Valley: peace, prosperity, stability, and security. This is paramount for the three countries.

What the valley has is geographic location, heritage & history and a very unique ecosystem and environment, of which the river basin is the basis. He also emphasized the importance of the supporting network, in the form of NGOs, municipalities, civil societies, and the donor community. The means to achieving the master plan lie in awareness & willingness, planning & cooperation, access to financing and inclusive & comprehensive development.
The interventions were arranged in sectors for the Master Plan; however they can also be seen in three clusters. Enablers lay the foundation that will enable us to develop the sectors productivity sectors, creation of jobs and economic welfare. The final cluster is the vision – the final result of the master plan. The interdependency between sectors was also explained, and the interdependency between the sectors has impacts on the value chain. Also, the potential for public-private partnership investment in certain sectors, such as water management and renewable technologies was discussed.

The development of an investment strategy was described as being based on the different interventions; political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal impacts, the most important pillars to make a business enabling environment, before looking at the funding options.

For the full power point presentation, please click here.

### Session III: Presentation of the Regional Master Plan according to Strategic Objectives

Presentations of each of the 7 thematic groups of interventions included in the NGO Regional Master Plan were given, with a corresponding presentation of capital market funding opportunities.

#### (1) POLLUTION CONTROL

*Presented by Mark de Groot, RHDHV Consultancy Team*

Mark de Groot identified the discharge of untreated wastewater and sewage, dumping of solid waste, and pollution from agriculture, animal husbandry, and fishponds as the major sources of pollution in the Jordan Valley. The Master Plan aims to eliminate all sources of environmental pollution in the Jordan Valley by 2025 by treating and reusing all wastewater and saline flows in the Valley, as well as embarking on fully integrated solid waste management. De Groot explained the 16 environmental pollution interventions, including one regional intervention; the establishment of a steering committee with stakeholders from all three countries.

For the full power point presentation, please click here

Corresponding presentation of financial opportunities: *Maysoon Zoubi, Levant Consulting*

Maysoon Zoubi from Levant Consulting assessed the pollution control interventions from an economic point of view, using the PESTEL indicators, which analyze the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal repercussions of each planned intervention. The model for financing these interventions would best be private-public-partnership with support from the government. Ms. Zoubi underlined the importance of an Environmental Management and Public Awareness Program to inform people and gain their buy-in.

For the power point presentation, please [click here](#).
(2) SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT AND RIVER REHABILITATION
Presented by Gilad Safier, RHDHV Consultancy Team

Gilad Safier described the current status of the River, and how, by thinking of the basin as a whole, the projection of the River in 2050 could be much healthier with the implementation of the masterplan interventions. Some of the waters will be too saline still for agriculture, or only good for the growth of dates, which have adapted to cope with saline waters, but local water demands will be met on average, and the River will be restored as the main water conveyor in the Jordan Valley. The modelling does not take into account any changes in water use from Syria, but all of the changes in the Yarmouk River from Jordan. Climate change impacts expected natural water sources to fall by 20% and evaporation to increase by 8%. Three major water pumping stations were introduced, with large reservoirs that will facilitate the storage of water from winter to summer. All sources of pollution will be removed from the River under the Master Plan, with waste water reclaimed for use in agriculture irrigation. With an additional 120 mcm - that could be supplied (by Syria, upstream in the Jordan Basin, desalination, and/or wastewater reuse from the wider basin) - the LJR could be fully rehabilitated while meeting the water demands in the basin.

For the full power point presentation, please click here

Corresponding presentation of financial opportunities: Maysoon Zoubi, Levant Consulting

In discussing the financing of these interventions, Maysoon called for a change in paradigm when it came to waste water, thinking of it no longer as "waste", but as a renewable resource. Private investment would be sought in Jordan for the sewerage and sanitation proposal to make the Jordan Valley investment affordable. For Palestine, artificial recharge would improve the situation of the groundwater, but it is not attractive to private investment, so government input is set at 15% with 85% coming from the donors. Finally the construction of water networks will be needed in Palestine to reduce the loss of water.

For the power point presentation, please click here, (pages 13-14)

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(3) SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
Presented by Samer Talozi, RHDHV Consultancy Team

Dr Talozi introduced the intervention by saying that agriculture in the Jordan Valley is one of the most contested issues because many people feel that it uses a lot of water and that it produces very little in cash revenue. He explained that his analysis resulted in the finding that the most potential for development lies in Palestine, where exports of agricultural goods dropped from 13% of the GDP in 1993 to 4.5% today, mainly due to restricted water access. Talozi identified water shortage, a lack of coordination in the cropping pattern, and a lack of irrigation efficiency as the major challenges. He explained that the proposed interventions either improve water use efficiency and the economic output or even reduce the total water demand in the agricultural sector while increasing output. At the end of his presentation, he elaborated on the different planned interventions.

For the full power point presentation, please click here
Ms Zoubi analyzed the interventions from an economic point of view, concluding that their focus must lie on using water for agriculture more efficiently and choosing crops, which are either cash crops or crops that require less water. For the power point presentation, please click here, (pages 15-16)

(4) GOVERNANCE

Presented by Saeb Bamya, RHDHV Consultancy Team

Mr. Bamya discussed the challenging and complex topic of governance. Currently, in Jordan, the Jordan Valley Authority is the focal point for management in development as well as being the regulatory body. Palestinians want to follow this structure, however, more than 80% of the land is under Area C restrictions, and fully controlled by Israel. He described getting permits for construction in Area C as “mission impossible”, and without a permit, any construction would be demolished. In Israel, governance is under the jurisdiction of 20 different bodies and ministries. Donor communities were called upon to request that Israel give power to Palestine so they might implement the masterplan interventions, and benefit from the infrastructure of the occupation. As a Palestinian, Bamya expressed his fatigue at hearing nice words without action that deal with the Palestinians as human beings with rights to all the services that a human can enjoy. The initial governance approach proposed is an informal trilateral committee in order to send a positive signal that these strategies can be employed. The role of Palestine in the Master Plan was highlighted. Unless their needs and requirements are met and addressed, peace in the Valley may not be realized. But the idea is not just to create a body, but a regional coordination structure with steering committees for the different sectors. A Palestinian Jordan Valley Authority would be created so that a single Palestinian entity can be responsible for development planning and regulation of the Palestinian part of the Jordan Valley, similar to the JVA on the Jordanian side. For the full power point presentation, please click here

Ms Maysoon described how in the Master Plan, governance would be formed in stages, culminating in a joint Jordan River Basin Commission. Stakeholders would have requirements for a technical group of concerned ministries, local authorities and water authorities. Think tanks, research groups and civil society groups would be needed to support the decisions of the committee with an international council of donor countries and organizations with an independent secretariat. The function of the Jordan River Basin commission would be to articulate the strategic direction and goals of the regional collaborative and projects; identify and make the final selection of the national and regional projects that support growth and economic advancement in the region over the next 10 to 35 years; ensure work plans and monitoring systems are developed; foster partnerships and promote a coordinated approach; and foster strong relationships with local governments, key stakeholders i.e. international investors and domestic private sector. A Jordan Valley development trust fund would need to be established to support this, with an independent bank account, open and objective project selection criteria, and a monitoring framework in alignment with international guidelines and development practices. For the power point presentation, please click here, (pages 17-22)
Supporting Regional Governance for the Lower Jordan River
Dr. Therese Sjomander Magnusson, Director, Transboundary Water Management Unit, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

On behalf of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Dr. Magnusson presented the organization and explained its aim; to combat the world’s escalating water crisis by building and bridging policy & practice, and generating knowledge. SIWI was recently mandated to produce a policy tool to support EcoPeace Middle East in advancing the regional cooperation for the adoption of transboundary governance institutions. Dr. Magnusson emphasized how governance would play a key part in the Master Plan, because with stronger governance structures, the leverage of funding, cooperation, and stability will follow. She also put forward that regional governance structures are a social political process, which requires them to be contextualized according to the political arena of the region.

For the full power point presentation, please click here.

(5) ECOLOGICAL REHABILITATION
Presented by Banan El Sheikh, RHDHV Consultancy Team

Mr. Banan Al Sheikh explained how ecology is the cornerstone for the decision makers. Ecological flows play an important part in the accessibility of resources to all in the Jordan River Valley, and the potential for development. The ecological threats to the river basin were described, including pollution, habitat fragmentation, water diversion, inappropriate agricultural development, solid wastes, hunting, overgrazing, tree cutting for subsistence fuels and the loss of flooding, low flow levels and bad water quality.

Mr. Sheikh explained how as a result, aquatic habitats have deteriorated, accompanied by the extinction of many macro-invertebrates, fish populations and a decline in vegetation diversity. The interventions are for the restoration of functioning ecosystems. Restoring the Jordan River as a strategic water conveyor will make the most of the green infrastructure in the region.

For the full power point presentation, please click here.

Corresponding presentation of financial opportunities: Bashar Haddaden, Levant Consulting

Bashar Hadadden from the financial consultancy explained how the ecological projects needed to be worked on together – regionally – as a priority that feeds into agriculture and tourism. The commitment for these interventions should come at 30% from governments and 70% from donor finance.

For the power point presentation, please click here, (pages 23-25).
(6) SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & CULTURAL HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT
Presented by Jeroen Kool, RHDHV

Jeroen Kool, lead Master Plan consultant, pointed out the unique geographic features of the Jordan Valley, as well as its historic, religious, cultural and archeological values and their potential for tourism. If well developed, he said, this would help to boost the economy and create jobs in the area. Kool explained that although these interventions can be implemented on short notice, they require planning for investments in related sites and infrastructure. He put forward EcoPeace’s effort to bring the cultural heritage and environmental values and challenges of the Jordan Valley to the attention of faith-based communities that reside in and visit the valley due to the symbolic value of the Jordan River for Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. He concluded his presentation by going through all the planned interventions on Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage Development. For the full power point presentation, please click here.

Corresponding presentation of financial opportunities: Bashar Haddaden, Levant Consulting

The economic consultant, Bashar Haddaden, explained that among all the different areas identified in the Master Plan, this is a productivity activity, which creates jobs. He stressed that there is a lot of potential especially on the Palestinian side as the tourism sector is still very underdeveloped. For the power point presentation, please click here, (page 26)

(7) URBAN & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
Presented by Saad Khateeb

Mr Khateeb centered on infrastructure development within the socio-economic constraints of the region. Israeli infrastructure is quite advanced. The Jordanian is less advanced, but both are more advanced than that found on the Palestinian side. He stressed the importance of raising the standards to be on a par with the infrastructure found in Israel. The importance of transport infrastructure was explained with its impact on trade and tourism, and the limits placed by only having the Allenby and King Hussain bridges open. The re-opening of the King Abdullah Bridge near the Dead Sea to specialize in the movement of tourists was suggested. Infrastructure creates an enabling environment for business. The consultant explained how the educational capacity and household numbers will need to increase. The benefits of master plan implementation projected average income per person will be around $14,000 USD per year, with the focus on the service sector, and sustainable energy linking education and research. For the full power point presentation, please click here.

Corresponding presentation of financial opportunities: Bashar Haddaden, Levant Consulting

Mr. Haddaden explained that infrastructure had a great value. He explained how the importance of infrastructure changed a lot for the short and long term, and that governance was key to establish before infrastructure investments would go ahead on the whole. It was expected that 20% would be financed by governments, 40% from private funding, and 40% from donors. For the power point presentation, please click here, (pages 27-28)
Session IV: Q&A Session - Moderated by Munqeth Mehyar

Question:
- How did you define this study area? And also concerning water harvesting – I am not sure I saw a project or intervention focusing on water harvesting.

Answer:
- Jeroen Kool: The boundaries are based on the escarpments of the Jordan Valley, altitude on a topographic basis and not on an administrative basis, because that is where the valley watershed sits. It is not based on governance but on geography.
Your other question was about water harvesting, and the groundwater recharge is indeed part of the interventions. We have talked particularly about using wastewater treatment for agriculture rather than harvesting. In Gaza, the water is first put into the groundwater and then used for agricultural purposes. We strongly support the idea that harvesting is important.
- Bashar Haddaden: Water harvesting is very much part of our priority initiatives.

Question:
- Each activity has an impact on the Jordan Valley. The plan is so strongly based on change of the political situation. What happens if the projects cannot be completed?

Answer:
- Jeroen Kool: What will happen to the project is that the plan will be used as a tool for advocacy for each intervention. The donors have been invited tomorrow to speak to EcoPeace for the implementation of this plan, and we are opening the door for the private sector. We hope that the Master Plan provides a vision that can be developed.

Question:
- What about the feasibility, as the project is based on the hope of a Palestinian agreement?

Answer:
- Bashar Haddaden: We have priority projects with strong economic impact and those with a strong impact on the value chain. We have chosen projects that have socio-economic impacts that develop the value chain and create an economic environment enabling chain. There was also risk assessment and we will share everything with the next draft delivered in July, and can be shared with the wider public.

Question:
- Who’s in charge of running the whole thing tomorrow? There really needs to be an organization to run this.
Answer:
- Jeroen: Each intervention has a paragraph on the responsible organizations in each page. We propose to establish steering committees on each. Governance of the project will start soon with steering committees for each group of interventions, but eventually it is up to the financial and donor communities to take this onwards.
- Munqeth Mehyar: Remember that we [EcoPeace] are still here; we are the regional organization and the voice of the people. So we will be following the governments to see what is being implemented. At the moment, the Jordan River Commission from the three countries will be the body that will look into the projects in the future.

Question:
What about the distribution of projects in the 3 countries? How was it chosen?

Answer:
- Jeroen Kool: The master planning was done with a bottom up approach. We looked at the problems, and then the interventions are the potential solutions. You can see a lot of investments are required but we didn't have a figure in mind beforehand for each country, it was just a result of the process.
- Bashar Haddaden: For selecting out priority interventions, we adopted a top to bottom approach from the start. We defined the priority sectors and mixed use developments that are more attractive to donors and will make it thrive.

Question:
We hear the phrase “political will” and I believe the distance between political will and commitment is the difference between winners and losers, between suffering and prosperity. We need willingness and commitment of all three governments. What are the incentives to make the government commit to this Master Plan with all the assumptions and proposed interventions? Is the regional framework enough?

Answer:
- Jeroen Kool: I think you are hitting the core for why this Master Plan was made. It was written as a magnet to show that the cooperation model is of benefit to all, and certainly a better alternative than the current status quo. We have no other means to show that other than this Master Plan.
- Bashar Haddaden: This Master Plan looked for the first time at competitive basis. It looks independently, free of politics, and lays the foundation for the 3 countries to look at a governance model for the access for a trust fund and bridge the gap. This is the foundation towards bridging the gap. If we do nothing about it and do not coordinate, we have no dialogue.
Question:
- There are many watercourses, but very few agreements have been made. Even fewer organizations would have been made for governance. Why was this proposed? How would this organization relate to all the bilateral organizations that are already in place? There's a lot of investment going into place in this organization. There is more of a trend in joint managements rather than cooperative ones.

Answer:
- Jeroen Kool: It is a very complex issue we are discussing here. We use the word organization not as a physical building in mind. We simply concluded that coordination will be required, and there should be some well-structured organization to do that. Also, it helps in terms of commitment; this may include bilateral subjects that are discussed, not all participants would be needed. The sectoral approach, pollution control or agriculture, works because we would have three equal parties in that. One could merge this into a River Basin Committee or organization, but lots of investments are required, and this is a project now being led by SIWI.
- Bashar Haddaden: This is about stakeholder commitment and policy. This is its own study, which is being done by SIWI, and they need time to do their study with EcoPeace at this moment.
- Munqeth Mehyar: This is a very touchy issue in our organization. We would like to see a trilateral commission on the River that presents all the riparian countries. And we will keep after that until we achieve it - hopefully. And in this very conference we did have side-talks; this is one of the great things about conferences like this where there are high-level officials attending, that we can corner them and say „that's what we want”.
- Saeb – just a comment as I should not raise questions, I should be answering questions! We are facing a unique situation. Business as usual cannot be considered as in the interest of Palestinian interests. We need more consultation to see the Palestinian situation. We need to receive the draft and share our own ideas. You are reflecting the regional plan. You have still until July to conclude. We need to meet with you Jeroen to share our ideas. As I mentioned the Palestinian requirements are different from the common ones. They are exceptional requirements and enablers are needed.
- Munqeth Mehyar: Your point is well noted.

Question:
- This is good work but there is an essential problem. I am reminded of the Mekong commission and the non-participation of the upper riparian countries, which is important. Are you planning to do something about the lack of participation with Syria?

Answer:
- Jeroen Kool: The plan does say that eventually the basin commission will ultimately include Syria and Lebanon. But this is a long term goal. For now, we would be satisfied with this trilateral organization on the lower part of the Jordan basin.
Question:
- In the conclusion of the Master Plan, I saw a list of projects. I don’t know where we will start. Is there an action plan? Will we need to start with infrastructure? Are there top priority projects? Another question, what kind of mandate will we have in a different steering committee? Will they be choosing the action plan?

Answer:
- Bashar Haddaden: The list of interventions is vast, but that does not mean that this is the ultimate number. They are through 2050. It’s a vehicle to take us from one point to another. There are some short term interventions, with some being capital intensive, so we have identified projects that are catalysts, for further investment, but this cannot be conventionally approached.

Session V: Israeli Master Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Lower Jordan River

The Master Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Lower Jordan River – (phase A) – Israel’s Lower Jordan River Drainage Authority: Presented by Ram Aviram

Former Israeli Ambassador Ram Aviram talked about the plan of the Israeli Lower Jordan River Drainage Authority to revive the Jordan River and its natural surroundings while pursuing mutual acknowledgement and productive coexistence with its riparian neighbors. He said that the plan, which is being implemented by the Israeli government, also aims at enhancing the livelihood of local residents, building bridges, and developing reciprocal cooperation that crosses borders. Aviram explained that it is part of the implementation of the peace treaty, within which Jordan and Israel agreed to cooperate on any project that relates to the course of the river. It was said that the sectors on which the Israeli government is focusing, are land use, ecology, landscape, environment, tourism, archeology, economics, and water. The former Ambassador listed reducing the salinity of the river by increasing the release of fresh water from the Sea of Galilee, as well as decreasing sources of pollution, as the Israeli government’s immediate targets. It was said that to this end, two wastewater treatment plants were recently finished in Bitunia and Beit She’an. Aviram underlined that existing barriers, which are the result of many years of hostility between Israel and Jordan, should also be taken away and that Israel plans to clear its minefields on the banks of the River by the end of 2015. Areas of future projects that he discussed included wastewater, ecological restoration, drainage and cliff stabilization, and tourism, which Aviram believes will grow dramatically in the Jordan Valley in the near future.

For the full power point presentation, please click here

Concluding Remarks, Day 1

Gidon Bromberg, Israeli Director of EcoPeace, summarized the day and outlined the proceedings of the following conference day. He urged the participants to use the rare opportunity of having many Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians in one place. Bromberg said that this was the moment to interact and talk about their common future and discuss what they heard during the first conference day.
Dr. Sadoff presented the experiences of the World Bank in the field of transboundary water management. She emphasized that transboundary water cooperation is crucial to development and that water resource management is currently the top risk to economies and societies globally, because water risks are continuously rising as water stress and climate change proceed.

She provided the participants with background information on the increasing reliance on rivers because of economic growth, water stress, and climate change as droughts and floods become more extreme. She explained that transboundary basins are more difficult to manage because of the differing priorities, information, capacity asymmetries that are often causing distrust, and a lack of clear, binding rules and apex authorities to enforce them. Although the topic is often highly politicized and historical distrust is often present, however, she underlined that to effectively manage transboundary basins, countries have to cooperate. The Indus Treaty served as an example of cooperation and involvement of the World Bank to facilitate dialogue, help develop and propose potential options, secure financing, and implement infrastructure works that were required to implement the treaty. The World Bank, she said, was even signatory to the treaty, which shows how third parties can motivate governments to cooperate.

Dr. Sadoff laid out the basic principles of the World Bank, such as inclusivity of riparians and stakeholders, equity, and transparency. She dedicated the main part of her keynote to discuss the different approaches that can be taken to managing transboundary water basins. It was said that benefit sharing is a key approach of the World Bank as countries will cooperate when they perceive that it is in their national interest to do so. Thus, benefits motivate cooperation and the World Bank encourages countries to focus on sharing benefits, rather than water. She identified four different types of benefits: environmental benefits to the river (an improved ecosystem); economic benefits from the river (improved productivity); political benefits that decrease costs by shifting policies to cooperation and development; and indirect economic benefits beyond the river (broader regional cooperation and integration). Sadoff explained that the concept of benefit sharing is useful for many reasons such as enabling basin-wide planning, maximizing benefits, and providing greater flexibility. She stressed that cooperation is a continuum (as opposed to all or nothing) and the “right” level of cooperative effort depends on potential benefits. For example, cooperation can start with basic information sharing, increase in the form of regional assessments of the basin, and go so far that joint institutions or allocation mechanisms can be created. However, she said that more cooperation is not necessarily better and partners should not be pushed into a position that they can’t sustain politically. Examples she gave were from the World Bank involvement in transboundary water cooperation reached from low-level cooperation in the form of information sharing in the Mekong River, to extraordinary cooperation in the Senegal in the form of joint equity ownership by the different parties.
Dr. Sadoff talked about the different disciplines through which a river basin can be analyzed, such as from a socio-economic point of view, making the sharing of costs and benefits become the focus, or a legal point of view, focusing on which agreements are needed to ensure fair and efficient cooperation.

Dr. Sadoff explained that the World Bank’s program design rests on three main pillars: First; information, which builds knowledge and capacity, and allows us to identify risks and opportunities. Second; institutions, important for legitimacy, effectiveness, and transparency of the program, and lastly, investment, which can be structural or non-structural and can differ in scale. She underlined that in the experience of the World Bank, successful programs emphasize especially strong government ownership and stakeholder engagement. She explained that it is crucial to bring in mayors, the public, and organizations like EcoPeace, who are essential in this work.

To show how the World Bank was able to promote transboundary water cooperation, she discussed the three examples of the Nile River Basin, the Mekong River, and the South Asia Water Initiative in further detail.

She concluded her keynote by saying that rivers can be obstacles or entry points to cooperation and that there is never a blueprint on how to cooperate because contexts are continuously evolving. The key thing is to build institutions, capacity and trust. Sadoff expressed that principled pragmatism and a focus on benefits and interests are needed to find a way forward.

For the full power point presentation, please click here.

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Session VII: Video Presentations of International Support

**Member of the European Parliament, Mr. Davor Skrlec**

MEP Skrlec congratulated the conference members on the initiatives contained within the Regional Master Plan. He commended the contribution it would make towards increasing sustainable tourism and protecting cultural heritage. With the increase in public transport and infrastructure, he expected the opportunities, economic security and safety of the people of the Jordan Valley to increase. The role of the River as a strategic water conveyor could be fulfilled with its ecological restoration, and he commended this approach of bottom-up democracy. Watch the video here.

**US Congressman, Earl Blumenauer**

Congressman Blumenauer hoped that the conference would start long and fruitful conversations on our environmental stewardship. He gave his commitment to support and provide leverage as the Master Plan moved from a plan to reality. Implementing the plan was, to him, more than the desire across borders to restore the River, but also a matter of stability, economic growth, and public health. The Plan provides a template for building peace. Speaking of the River, Blumenauer said: “Its meandering ignorance could drive us apart, but with thoughtful leadership like yours it can also build a shared understanding needed for peace”. Watch the video here.
Dr. Mohammed Hmaidi - CEO, Palestinian Water S.R. Council

Dr. Hmaidi underlined that the Master Plan is in harmony with Palestinian policies and expectations and that the proposed interventions meet these plans and priorities. He reiterated that Palestine sent a strong governmental delegation, consisting of representatives from five different governmental institutions. He also welcomed the overall level of delegations of Israel and Jordan as they reflect the interest of their governments in this topic. He noted very positively the fact that a number of initiatives are ready to be implemented as of tomorrow. Dr Hmaidi called on all three governments to create national committees to look into the priorities, so that once developmental partners come in, the countries are ready for the implementation of the initiatives. He mentioned that it is important that such initiatives bring in trust and confidence, and serve as a bridge for peace at the community and governmental level. He said that the entire region has a duty, responsibility, and obligation to change the current situation. Click here for his full speech.

Eng. Khalil Al Absi - Director of Planning and Regional Water Unit Jordan Valley Authority, Jordan

Eng. Al Absi emphasized how seriously the Jordanian government takes the rehabilitation of the Jordan River and the ecological situation in the basin, highlighting Jordan's cooperation with EcoPeace to achieve these objectives. He explained that, as water is not only very vital for the Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian people, but all nations and future generations, the Master Plan is an important project and its implementation is crucial. He stressed the importance of wastewater and solid waste management for Jordan in particular, and said that if sufficient funds are available, these projects will be implemented. Jordan, he said, formed a national committee to deal with water flow of the Jordan River, which is at the heart of its rehabilitation. Al Absi hoped that this work can be done through trilateral cooperation and he reiterated the need of funds on the Jordanian side to realize the vision of rehabilitating the Jordan River. Click here for his full speech.

Adi Ashkenazi - Ministry of Regional Cooperation, Israel

Mr. Ashkenazi began by reminding the conference that he was not a politician but a professional official. He went on to say that “the most important thing that we learn from what we saw here is the great willingness and the commitment of the people that came here from all parties – the Palestinians, the Jordanians, and also ours, our people in Israel - to rehabilitate this river”, and continued to give an anecdote that highlighted the importance of the River in the minds of people all over the world. He described how Israel had begun rehabilitating the river with its own national master plan, and were injecting nine million cubic meters of water into the Jordan River. He emphasised the desire to be a good partner in all assets, not just water, but trade and industry too. He concluded by saying he will “take [with him] your enthusiasm about this plan and we will examine it and hopefully implement part of it with coordination, with cooperation with all the stakeholders in the area”. Click here for his full speech.
Session IX: Closing Remarks by 3 EcoPeace Directors

Final Closing Remarks

In his closing remarks, Nader Khateeb reminded all participants that this was the end of the conference, but only the beginning of the work to do, and that many more challenges, responsibilities, and duties are waiting. He thanked all delegations, ministers, governments, and organizations for attending the conference and supporting EcoPeace. Khateeb also thanked the EcoPeace staff for their work in realizing the conference, as well as the international advisory board and the EcoPeace board for their presence and continuous guidance and support. He also expressed his gratitude towards the consultants from DHV, Core, and Levant, as well as the project partners SIWI and GNF. He said things can be done as of tomorrow if resources are made available, and as the World Bank keynote speech showed, trust funds are needed and aid needs to be continuous and connected. Khateeb emphasized that it is important to show people some progress and that they cannot be disappointed.

Gidon Bromberg thanked the large Israeli delegation of representatives from ministries and members of Knesset for their presence. He admitted that the challenges are great, but that people of the region have three champions; their governments. Despite all the challenges that they face, they proved their commitment to something beyond themselves. Mr. Bromberg gave examples of the Jordan Valley mayors from Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian communities who recently travelled to Chicago together to sign a document of support for the Master Plan because of their commitment to their communities. He said that the people of the Jordan Valley expect things to get better. The Israeli Co-Director underlined that it is necessary to help create better livelihoods for these communities; that there is a win-win for everybody. It is EcoPeace’s firm bottom-up and top-down commitment which gives confidence and inspiration to continue the work, he expressed. Each EcoPeace office will continue working with its respective government on the issues that can be moved forward. He thanked all the participants and expressed everybody's wish to see a Jordan River of greater peace and prosperity.

Munqeth Mehyar explained how we have now finished the easy part of this project, with the release of this study. He thought that there was something missing however; a plan to separate politics from development and water issues, since water cannot wait for politicians to resolve their differences. He thanked the conference attendees for their commitment & support, and asked them to keep EcoPeace on their radar, to see how we can move together for the benefit of this region.

Click here for their full speeches.
5. Additional Information

For further information on the Regional NGO Master Plan [SWIM-JR] Project please visit www.foeme.org

Further information including pictures related to the International Conference on Planning for Our Shared Future: Public Release of NGO Regional Master Plan for Sustainable Development in the Jordan Valley, click on this events page: http://foeme.org/www/?module=events&record_id=138

Related documents and publications can be found here: http://foeme.org/www/?module=publications&project_id=23

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