The following notes are a synthesis and summary of the opinions, ideas and topics raised and addressed during the 3 breakout sessions held at the

November 2009 Conference in Amman

Break out session: “Influencing policy makers”

1. Concerns were raised over:
   - Palestinian rights to water from the Jordan and the Dead Seas
   - Countries and communities that don’t want to cooperate on projects like the Dead Sea and Jordan River rehabilitation.
   - Concerns were raised over the potentially negative impacts of communities opposing projects such as the “Good water neighbours” project on other communities.
   - Sewage in waterways, which must be dealt with.
   - Increasing the flows of fresh water in the Jordan River will just lead to a great extraction of this water for agricultural purposes.

2. Hopes were put forward that FoEME can play a role in directing decision makers towards better sewage management and removal

3. Importance of grass-roots discussion (e.g. with farmers and locals) highlighted during the session several times.

4. Success of the “Good water neighbours” project in several communities highlighted by participants as inspiration to continue with the projects

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5. Communal responsibility of all riparian stakeholders to care for, rehabilitate and reduce impacts on the Jordan River: it is important to look past the boundaries of our own municipalities.

6. There is a need for us all to change water use, allocation and consumer behaviour.

7. Mayors can play an important role as they are the bridge between the people and higher government and decision makers. The longer time frame that a Mayor is in office enables them to think long term about the communities needs and be truly representative of the communities opinions.

8. Economic benefits of eco-tourism from the rehabilitation of the Jordan River, success can already be seen in the “Neighbour’s Paths”.

9. Importance of thinking and acting locally on issues such as waste disposal and recycling, and dealing with sewage

10. Agriculture is the main industry of the people living off the Jordan River, changing everyone to eco-tourism is not realistic and it would be difficult to create such a shift. Farmers do need to change behaviour (farming practises) and find new ways to earn money.

11. Recycled water for use in agriculture as a prospective option proposed.

**Break out session: “My neighbours water reality”**

1. Concerns raised over access to enough fresh water to maintain communities and agricultural land

2. Water is not an ongoing resource we have to use is wisely and become self-sustaining, water is one of the main reasons that village can’t grow in drought stricken regions.

3. Lacks of success for Palestinian communities in obtaining permits to drill for fresh water from the Israeli government.

4. Water by desalinisation would be cheap for Israelis, but not for Jordanians.

5. The need to find a better balance between water use and producing agricultural goods. Depleting the water resource will result in the reduction of agricultural production.

6. Changing to farming crops that are less water intensive
7. Campaign farmers to grow crops in greenhouses (e.g. vegetables)

8. Potential to move towards more creative farming practises and increasing the use of native crop species.

**Break out session: “Why Cooperate”**

1. Because we share the same land, air and water. We are not alone, we are dependent on each other for resources and we can work together to find solutions to our shared problems.

2. We can do something on the ground. This may be difficult in the absence of a peace agreement, but that doesn't mean that it would be any easier if there was a peace agreement. We have the opportunity to cooperate now and lay the groundwork for a real, just peace agreement in the future.

3. Concrete actions can make a difference on the grassroots level. Actions to reduce or eliminate injustice and trying to accept each other rights help better cooperation.

4. Why? When? How? Why is not the only question, other ones also take place: **When**: there is mutual trust, then equal rights and justice will follow and will complete each other. Then the **How** should be identified.

5. Progress can be achieved much more easily when we work together. Each side can work on its’ own, but if it is not done in harmony with both sides it will not be efficient.

6. Why not cooperate? Cooperation does not mean collaboration. There is a big difference between cooperation and collaboration. Collaboration is hidden and has a negative impact. Cooperation is a clear and open process that involves everybody and brings positive results.