Opening speech by Dr Therese Sjomander Magnusson at the International Conference on Sustainable Development in the Jordan Valley organized by EcoPeace Middle East

10th November, 2014

Dead Sea, Jordan

Your excellences, honorable dignitaries, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues

It is a great honor for me to address this important conference on behalf of the Stockholm International Water Institute. SIWI is a politically neutral policy institute that generates knowledge and informs decision-making towards water wise policy and sustainable development.

Our ultimate aim is to be partner to decision makers in taking these informed steps and to provide them with the opportunities to discuss and prepare for robust decisions. This, together with our long-term engagement in the Lower Jordan River, is why SIWI is providing this neutral platform to harness positive developments in the region. Our aim is to facilitate dialogue on a win-win-win scenario where the collaborative governance of the Lower Jordan River would attract investments that contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

I am extremely pleased to the commitment of stakeholders, representatives from Governments, Development Partners and International Financing Institutions, reflected in your presence in the room. It is a sign of commitment to continue the dialogue on the shared waters of the Lower Jordan River. But it is also a recognition of the need to cooperate for a more sustainable and prosperous future along and beyond the River itself.

This conference follows a process that SIWI started with regional partners three years ago. In 2012, we held a similar conference in Amman, with Jordanian, Israeli, Palestinian and International participants, to jointly provide input into the terms of reference for a master plan for the rehabilitation of the Lower Jordan River. The conference was successful and the input that was provided has shaped the development of this Master Plan. This was then followed up by a seminar at the 2013 World Water week in Stockholm to raise the international profile of this Master Plan. In the next two days, we will listen to the outcomes of this process, as the consultants present their draft set of interventions as part of the Master Plan for your review and input.

In the spirit of cooperation, I urge you to discuss and debate the developments proposed in a constructive, forward-looking and solution-oriented atmosphere.

And please feel free to share your ideas openly, knowing the Chatham rule applies.

We had exciting and inspiring days ahead of us. I look forward to fruitful deliberations in the plenary and in breakout sessions, but I also encourage you to make use of the fact that we are all gathered here at this magnificent and beautiful place, so do engage in informal discussions and networking opportunities.

Thank you