On November 12-13, 2018, EcoPeace Middle East held its Annual International Conference on the shores of the Dead Sea in Jordan. The conference was titled “Water, Energy and Climate Change Security: Overarching Issues of Common Threats.” The event gathered over 180 high level government representatives, academia, local authorities, activists, business people from Israel, Palestine and Jordan, together with experts from the international community.

**Day One:**

Opening and Welcome Remarks:
Mr. Ghazi Musharbash, EcoPeace Middle East Chair, introduced the subject of the conference and outlined the conference objectives. He spoke of the common threat that climate change and water insecurity present to the region. He stressed that EcoPeace is all about being an ‘equalizer’ rather than being perceived as a ‘normalizer’, as cooperation is best achieved among equals. Mr. Musharbash thanked the governments of Sweden and Germany and the World Bank for their invaluable support for the work of EcoPeace and for support given for this conference.
Mr. Erik Ullenhag, Ambassador of Sweden to Jordan, reminded all that access to clean water and sanitation has been declared a human right by the UN and this speaks to the importance of the work of EcoPeace. He discussed the role of feminism in promoting change, concluding that “I can’t do everything, none of us can do everything, but all of us could do something.”

Dr. Johanna Speer, Head of Development Cooperation, German Embassy Amman, discussed sustainable access to water and sanitation as a key 21st century challenge, and showed hope that this conference will be one step in a cycle of positive interaction in the region that builds trust.
Keynote Speeches:
Mr. Omar Khader, Principal Banker, Infrastructure at European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Amman, spoke about the bank’s commitment to promoting renewable energy and sustainable development in the region in the context of combating climate change.

Mr. Omar Khader, Principal Banker, Infrastructure, EBRD

Mr. Kawa Hassan – Director of Middle East and North Africa Program, EastWest Institute Brussels, presented their latest report focused on climate change and security issues in Iraq, underlining how climate change has a destabilizing impact that can empower the rise of radical forces again in Iraq.

Mr. Kawa Hassan, Director of Middle East and North Africa Program, EastWest Institute, Brussels
Mr. Marc Yaggi – Executive Director of Waterkeeper Alliance, New York, discussed the role of civil society organizations advancing water security and shared management of transboundary water basins. He gave many examples of the critical work being done by members of the alliance on cleaning up rivers including his hometown river the Hudson in NYC.

Mr. Marc Yaggi, Executive Director of Waterkeeper Alliance, New York

High-Level Keynote Speeches:
H.E. Eng. Ali Subh, Secretary General of Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation, gave the keynote speech on behalf of H.E Raed abu Saud and spoke about how EcoPeace is bringing together people who would usually never meet and how water and energy are key issues needed to be discussed in order to advance regional cooperation.

H.E. Eng. Ali Subh, Secretary General of Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation

*NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations

EcoPeace Middle East
P.O. Box 9341 Amman 11191 Jordan
90 Begin Road Tel Aviv 67138 Israel
Louise Building, Ras Al Tahounah St. Al Bireh, PA

E-mail: info@ecopeaceme.org Website: www.ecopeaceme.org
Dr. Abdullah Allahlouh, Deputy Minister of the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, spoke about how focusing on water security will improve food security to combat the effect of climate change and spoke about the water scarcity Palestinians suffer from due to the seizure of their water resources from the occupation.

Advancing National and Regional Security through Climate, Water and Energy Diplomacy:
The topic of the session was introduced by Dr. Giulia Giordano, EcoPeace International Affairs Manager, who summarized the issues and the findings of three national workshops that took place in Jordan, Palestine and Israel to help prepare for the regional roundtable that was to follow later in the afternoon.
Ms. Sherri Goodman, Senior Advisor for International Security, Center for Climate & Security; Former Deputy Undersecretary of Defense (Environmental Security) and a Senior Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, highlighted the publication of a new US Global Water Strategy as an example of the deepening understanding of the national security implications connected to water security. Importantly she suggested to look at climate change not just as a threat multiplier but as an opportunity multiplier.

Dr. Andres Jagerskog, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist at the World Bank focused on climate change and its impact on water, food and energy in the MENA region, highlighting the linkages between climate change and fragility in the region.
High-Level Keynote Speech:
H.E Yuval Steinitz, Israeli Minister of Energy and Water, spoke about the current situation and future plans of Israel concerning water, energy and climate change.

A 90-minute session was then dedicated to a regional roundtable discussion on the subject of climate change and regional security. The roundtable gathered 10 experts and public officials from each country. Ms. Goodman and Dr. Jagerskog also contributed to the discussion, which was moderated by EcoPeace’s Israeli Co-Director, Gidon Bromberg. The discussion focused on six questions, which were formulated to start the debate and guide the participants. The outcomes of this roundtable will be incorporated in a discussion paper to be published by EcoPeace in December, 2018.
Finally, the first day of the conference was concluded with three parallel networking sessions: Business to Business, Women Leadership and the Jordan Valley networking event. These informal gatherings offered all participants the opportunity to network and learn from each other’s expertise.

**Day Two:**

**Parallel Breakout Sessions:**

The second day of the conference was opened with two parallel breakout sessions. The first session titled “*The Numbers Game – A business and financial perspective from leaders and experts in the fields of project finance, water, energy and infrastructure market investments panel about the Water-Energy Nexus*”, was moderated by Nada Majdalani, EcoPeace Palestinian Director and focused on EcoPeace’s initiative to create a water and renewable energy community among Jordan, Israel and Palestine.

Ms. Majdalani introduced the project and the pre-feasibility study that EcoPeace concluded in 2017, and then turned to the panellists to discuss business opportunities and how to attract further investments.

The opportunities that were suggested by the panellists were:

- A business model needs to be created to guide these billions of dollars of investments.
- The governments need to set proper regulatory platforms.
- Greater clarity on how power purchasing agreements will be set up.
- Incentives for the private sector to engage in these projects.

*N*GO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations
- We need to see how we can maximize the benefits of other economic sectors through the WEN and its interdependencies.
- International financial institutions can become involved and finance, in the beginning at least, the seed funding to bring the concept to life.

The second panel, "Advancing Regional Sustainable Development in the Jordan River Basin" was moderated by Ms. Yana Abu Taleb, EcoPeace Jordanian Director. Ms. Abu Taleb described EcoPeace’s initiative of a regional master plan for the Jordan Valley and discussed the opportunity for cross-border cooperation among local authorities to advance ecological rehabilitation and sustainable development in the valley. The panel included mayors from the Jordan Valley and a delegation of mayors from the Great Lakes Saint Lawrence Sister Cities Initiative from the USA and Canada. The panellists discussed the main issues that their communities face and talked about the opportunity to transfer knowledge and experience to enable them to serve their communities better.

Yana Abu Taleb, EcoPeace Jordanian Director, Moderating the Jordan River Basin Breakout Session

*NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations

---

EcoPeace Middle East

P.O. Box 9341
Amman 11191 Jordan

90 Begin Road
Tel Aviv 67138 Israel

Louise Building, Ras Al Tahounah St.
Al Bireh, PA

E-mail: info@ecopeaceme.org  Website: www.ecopeaceme.org
The outcomes of this breakout session were:

- The Great lakes St Lawrence and Sister Cities would like to renew the MoU with the Jordan Valley Mayors that was signed in 2015 and has therefore invited the three mayors from the lower Jordan river basin to visit the US and Canada to look at their experience and to sign a new MoU.

- Sherry Goodman from the Wilson center expressed interest in helping EcoPeace and the Great Lakes to invite the mayors from the Jordan Valley to the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington DC where they will meet to further discuss cooperation.

The Panelists for the “Advancing Regional Sustainable Development in the Jordan River Basin” Breakout Session

Key Note Presentation:
Presentation by Dr. Anders Jagerskog:
Following the breakout sessions, Dr. Anders Jagerskog – Senior Water Resources Management Specialist at the World Bank, Washington DC, gave a keynote presentation on the release of a new World Bank report on the MENA water-food-energy nexus, highlighting the need for urgent measures to be taken. Jagerskog called for a holistic approach, internally and regionally, collaborating between ministries and countries.
Panel Discussion:
The last panel, titled “The Role of the Business Community in Advancing Sustainable Development”, focused on the role of the business community in advancing sustainable development, regional cooperation and peace in the Middle East. The panel, moderated by Munqeth Mehyar, EcoPeace President, hosted business leaders from the three countries, who discussed difficulties and opportunities for the business community in creating shared prosperity.