



International Conference
on
“Water Cooperation for a Secure World–Focus on the Middle East”
Amman, November 27-28, 2013

Co-Hosted by
Strategic Foresight Group
and
Royal Scientific Society

With Support from
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

CONFERENCE REPORT

Leading policy makers, Members of Parliament, former Ministers, media leaders and water experts from across the Middle East interacted with representatives of successful trans-boundary water cooperation institutions from Africa, Asia and Europe at an international conference in Amman, Jordan, as a part of the Blue Peace initiative of the Strategic Foresight Group. The participants strongly advocated collaborative management of water resources in the Middle East, learning from other parts of the world and recognising its importance for comprehensive peace and stability in the region. They decided to take the Blue Peace process ahead with concrete actions.

The conference was co-hosted by the Strategic Foresight Group and the Royal Scientific Society of Jordan with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). It is an important component of the Blue Peace initiative supported by the Swiss and Swedish Governments.



HRH Hassan bin Talal, Chairman of the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation launched the SFG report "Water Cooperation for a Secure World", in the inaugural session of the conference. He presented the first copies of the report to HRH Princess Sumaya, President of the Royal Scientific Society and HE Helena Rietz, Swedish Ambassador to Jordan.



On the occasion of the launch, a joint Op-Ed article co-authored by HRH Prince Hassan and Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President of SFG was simultaneously published in more than 25 leading newspapers across the Middle East including Jordan Times (Jordan), The Daily Star (Lebanon), The Yemen Times (Yemen), Gulf News (UAE), Zaman (Turkey), Al Mada (Iraq), Al Iqtisad (Syria), Al Arab (pan Arab), Al Monitor (pan Middle East) and many others. Besides, several newspapers from outside the region, including the Atlantic Post (USA) and Dhaka Tribune (Bangladesh) carried the same Op-Ed.

To read the op-ed and view full coverage of the conference please visit www.strategicforesight.com

INAUGURAL SESSION

In his Keynote Address, HRH Prince Hassan said, "The Middle East presents a stark warning to the rest of the world as to what happens when states fail to cooperate with their neighbours over shared resources upon which they depend. If only our regional states, including Israel could work together on water, could not his horrendous cost of conflict to the people of West Asia have been avoided? Can our states work together to build a new peaceful generation, founded upon cooperation in our shared water?" He appealed to the leaders of the region to follow the example of countries that cooperated in sharing their shared water resources.

HRH Princess Sumaya, in her welcome remarks underlined the importance of better governance and cooperation in the water sector. She said that it was more than urgent to address the water cooperation issue in the Middle East.

Ambassador Helena Rietz also emphasised the strong interdependence between water and peace in her address at the Inaugural Session. She explained the significance of water as a tool for peace and cooperation in the Swedish development cooperation policy in the region.

Dr Mahmoud Abu Zeid, Chairman of the Arab Water Council, and former Minister of Water of Egypt, said that it was important to create conflict resolution mechanisms to resolve trans-boundary water disputes.

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

The Conference provided a platform for experts from Asia, Africa and Europe to share their experiences in collaborative management of shared water resources. These included representatives of the Finnish-Russian Commission, UNECE Secretariat of the Parties to the 1992 Convention, Rhine River Commission, Okavango Commission, Senegal River Basin Commission, Mekong River Commission.

In addition, Muhammad Saidam, Executive Director of the Royal Scientific Society; Dr Maysoon Zoubi, former Secretary General of Jordan's Ministry



of Water and Irrigation Engineer Sa'ad Abu Hammour, Secretary General, Jordan Valley Authority shared Jordan's experience in the management of shared water resources with its neighbouring countries.

JORDAN'S EXPERIENCES IN TRANSBOUNDARY WATER MANAGEMENT

The Jordan River - The Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty was signed in October 1994 and includes extensive water provisions, such as allocation of rights to water resources in the Jordan Basin, as well as joint projects to develop further water resources and prevent pollution. Some potential projects include the Red -Dead Conveyance Project, a joint Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian initiative that aims to transfer 2 BCM of seawater. Half of this will be dedicated to saving the Dead Sea while the remaining amounts will be desalinated for use in Israel, Palestine and Jordan. The proposed conveyance project will benefit both countries greatly, with Jordan releasing more water in southern Israel and Israel releasing more water into the Jordan River in the north. Another project is the Regional Water Data Banks Project (RWDBP) which brought together decision-makers from all Israel, Palestine and Jordan to enhance water data availability.

The Jordan River Without Any Water: Jordanian- Israeli Border



Source: Presentation by Dr Saidam, Royal Scientific Society, Jordan

The Yarmouk River – cooperation between Jordan and Syria on the Yarmouk River has come to a standstill and not much has been done in the last few years. There is also a lack of cooperation at the academic level where potential coordination between University of Aleppo in Syria and the Royal Scientific Society in Jordan launched in 2000 has stalled.

However, this river basin holds a lot of potential for cooperation in a number of different areas, which can be implemented when the political situation is conducive to cooperation. Some of these include –

- Better public transportation infrastructure between the two countries in order to facilitate tourism
- New export window for Syrian products through the Red Sea
- New export window for Jordanian products through the Mediterranean Sea
- Trade off strategies- Syria can improve the management of water upstream so Jordan can benefit. In exchange, Jordan can store extra quantities of water in the Wehdah dam, which can also be used to generate electricity for Syria

The Royal Scientific Society in Jordan has introduced an Integrated System for Water Quality Management and real time automated water quality monitoring system in both the Jordan and Yarmouk Rivers.

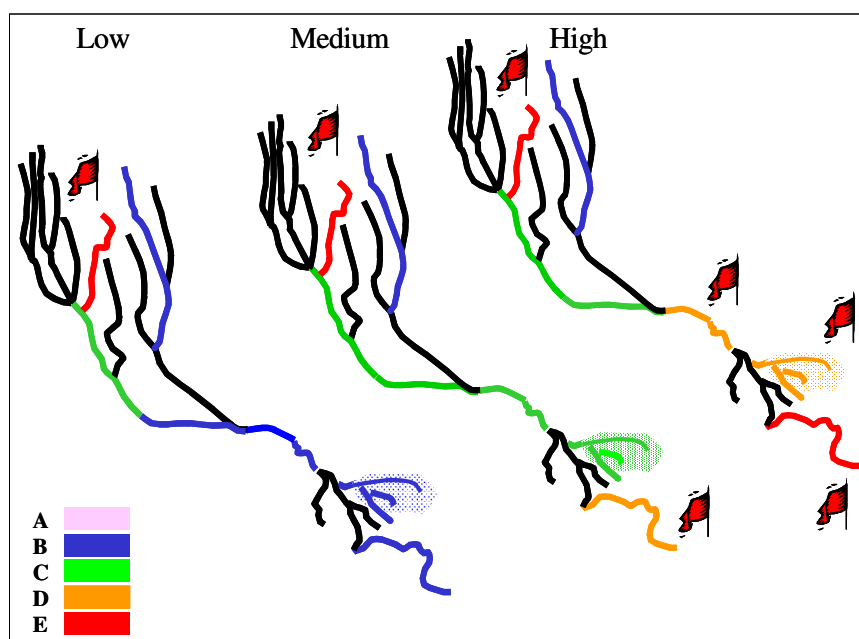


LESSONS FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Okavango River Basin – A key success of the Okavango is their **scenario planning exercises involving all the riparians** states which are held regularly to understand the functioning of the basin, systems sensitivity and response patterns to development activity. “What IF” questions are posed to the stakeholders and an Integrated Flows Assessment Methodology is used. The scenarios focus on eight sites along the river and have three outcomes for policy planning, in addition to integrating climate change models.

A number of drivers are used in this methodology, including simulated daily flows, biotic response (vegetation, fish, other), water quality change, hydraulic changes (depths, velocities, floodplain inundation), geomorphic change (channel, sediments, bank erosion, deep pools), ecosystem impact and social and resource economic impact.

**Scenarios
Developed for the
Okavango River
Basin**



*Source: Presentation by Dr
Dr. Ebenizário Chonguica,
Executive Secretary,
OKAVANGO River
Basin*

Senegal River Basin – established in 1972 by Mauritania, Senegal and Mali, the Senegal River Development Organization (OMVS) works towards maintaining a balance between the need for economic development for all member states and preserving the equilibrium of the ecosystem. In 2002 **a charter on the river was approved by the heads of states** of the three countries, with Guinea, the fourth riparian joining in 2006. After decades of being an observer, Guinea realized the benefits in hydroelectricity and irrigation that could be reaped from being a full member of the organization. A high level of political commitment by all 4 riparian states is ensuring that the uses of the river, as defined in the charter are followed.



The organization has implemented several important and vital programmes over time to enhance collaboration, partnership, equity and a culture of peace in the river. Collaborative projects, many of which are owned and managed by the River Basin Organization include –

- A river transportation system with a parallel land transportation system
- Large scale dams for agriculture and hydroelectricity, such as the Manantali Dam and Diama Dam
- Optic fibres that link Mauritania, Mali and Senegal.

The river basin organization has survived political upheavals and ethnic tensions between member states, and **has played a key role as an efficient mediator to settle disputes about issues not related to water.** Two important examples are –

- The ethnic hostilities in 1989 following confrontation between Senegalese farmers and Mauritanians breeders by the river lead to a major death toll in both countries and tense diplomatic relations for three years. The OMVS was an effective mediator and helped in reducing tensions.
- In the early 1990s the Senegal government expressed its intention to develop 200 artificial lakes in 340 towns by the southern part of the Senegal River. The Mauritanian government reacted by threatening to expel Senegalese labourers in Mauritania, escalating tension between the two countries. The fossil valley crisis was subsequently resolved by the OMVS.

Mekong River Basin – Experts of the MRC stressed the importance of **keeping dialogue open with all riparian states including those countries which may not be Members of the Joint Body.** Even though China is not a full member of the Mekong River Commission, it provides hydrological data and information daily during the wet season and upon request during the critical dry season. Myanmar, another country with an observer status as dialogue member like China, has also worked with MRC in some areas.

The Mekong River Commission and the riparians members have developed comprehensive data collection systems and basin wide models to study climate change, flooding and navigation potential. These models are used to develop future strategies for agricultural activities, emergency response systems, forecasting and other similar plans. By starting with small technical projects,

such as joint hydrological stations and irrigations projects, the riparians countries in the lower Mekong basin have slowly moved from humanitarian cooperation to economic cooperation.

Finnish – Russian Transboundary Waters – joint transboundary water cooperation agreement was signed by Finland and the Soviet Union in 1964. **With a strong political commitment and institutional base, the agreement and commission survived the Cold War and the collapse of Soviet Union.** The cooperation covers all transboundary inland waters which number 20 watersheds, where most of the rivers flow from Finland to Russian.

Over the years there has been a clear focus on finding joint management interests which will benefit both countries. Some of these projects include flood risk management, fisheries, pollution control and water traffic. Regulations have been put into place to curb the impact of adverse activities in the neighbouring country. A common understanding of risks, benefits and costs are a key ingredient in transboundary water cooperation between these two countries. **The institution has created a mechanism to resolve conflicts at a low threshold.**

A key lesson from the Finnish-Russian transboundary cooperation is the step by step approach developed over the last 50 years. The approach began with

- Solving of organisational arrangements
- Resolving issues of hydropower and flood damage
- Developing principles and methodologies for monitoring

The next phase moved into

- Sophisticated Discharge Rule: Planning, assessment and discussion which took almost 20 years from 1973 to1991
- A long-term commitment and strengthening of trust
- Examining the possibility of tackling new challenges, e.g. climate change

The joint transboundary commission is still seen as a good example by both parties and commitment for the future is strong.

Europe is now the most advance in transboundary Cooperation



Source: Presentation by Ms Sonja Koepfel, Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe - There are currently two global conventions which are based on the same principles and are compatible with each other - the 1997 New York Convention and the 1992 UNECE Water or Helsinki Convention.

The 1992 Helsinki Convention, which has an intergovernmental framework and came into force in 1996 played a crucial role in supporting regional water cooperation in Europe.

Most of the existing river basin agreements in Europe are modelled on the Convention, such as - Danube, Sava, Bug, Kazakh-Russian, Lake Peipsi, as well as the Water Framework Directive.

The Helsinki Convention also helped in establishing river basin commissions, such as – Sava, Chu Talas amongst others.

With the entry into force of amendments in February 2013 the Convention turned into a global legal framework for transboundary water cooperation. It is expected that non-ECE countries can accede to it as of early 2014.

CONCLUSION

In each presentation from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, it was observed that upper riparians and lower riparians have had a difficult relationship on many accounts but their ability to forge cooperation on transboundary water has contributed to peace in a broader context. These practical examples offer empirical evidence to demonstrate the key observation in the SFG Report “Water Cooperation for a Secure World” which was launched at the conference and was prepared with input from 148 countries with 205 shared river basins. The analysis and actual experience from around the world leads to the conclusion that water, peace and security are interdependent.



AMMAN ACTIONS

- ◆ The media participants in the conference decided to consolidate the Blue Peace Media Network, which was established at an earlier conference at Istanbul in March 2013. At the Amman Conference, editors of leading newspapers and other media personalities decided to form a core group and create a website to continue the work of the media network in an organised way.
- ◆ In a bilateral session between experts from Turkey and Iraq, they decided to identify concrete confidence building measures in the Euphrates and Tigris basin. The experts will continue their interaction to promote exchange and harmonisation of data related to the rivers and climate.
- ◆ In response to a suggestion made by HRH Prince Hassan in his Keynote Address, Strategic Foresight Group has decided to expand, consolidate and coordinate various activities of the Blue Peace initiative in the Middle East by transforming the High Level Group into a High Level Forum.



Strategic Foresight Group is grateful to the Swedish International Development Agency, the Royal Scientific Society and El Majlis El Hassan for their cooperation and support.

This report is a reflection of Strategic Foresight Group on the proceedings of the workshop on Water Cooperation for a Secure World held at Amman on November 27-28, 2013. It does not represent views of any of the above mentioned organizations, nor does it indicate consensus of the participants.

PROGRAMME

November 27, 2013

Wednesday

Venue – Royal Scientific Society, Amman

15.00 *Meet in Lobby of Marriott Hotel
Travel to Royal Scientific Society*

16.00 *Registration and Coffee*

Welcome by Dr Muhammad Saidam, Executive Director, Royal Scientific Society

16.30 – 18.30 **Working Session: Blue Peace Media Network and Activities**

Co-Chairs - Dr Bassem Shabb, Member of Parliament, Lebanon

Mr Saban Disli, Member of Parliament, Turkey

- ◆ Mr Kerim Balci, Editor, Turkish Review, Turkey
- ◆ Ms Reem Sharaf, Senior Columnist, Al Rai Newspaper, Jordan
- ◆ Mr Hiwa Osman, Senior Columnist, Al Alam, Iraq
- ◆ Ms Mey Sayegh, International News Editor, Al-Joumhouria, Lebanon

20.00 **Official Dinner for Invited Guests**

Guests of Honour:

HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan

HRH Princess Sumaya bint el Hassan of Jordan

Venue: Salon 1, Amman Marriott Hotel

November 28, 2013

Thursday

Venue – Royal Scientific Society, Amman

08.30 *Meet in Lobby of Marriott Hotel.
Travel to Royal Scientific Society*

09.30 – 11.00 **Inaugural Session: *Launch of new Strategic Foresight Group Report***

- ◆ Welcome by HRH Princess Sumaya bint el Hassan
- ◆ Remarks by Ambassador Helena Rietz, Swedish Ambassador to Jordan
- ◆ Introduction to the report “Water Cooperation for a Secure World” by Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President, Strategic Foresight Group

Short film on World Toilet Day

- ◆ Keynote address and launch of the report by HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal
- ◆ Remarks by Dr Mahmoud Abu Zeid, President, Arab Water Council

11.00 *Coffee Break*

Session 2 **Jordan’s Experience in Transboundary Water Management**
11:30–13:00

Chair – Engineer Sa’ad Abu Hammour, Secretary General, Jordan Valley Authority

- ◆ Dr Maysoun Zoubi, former Secretary General, Ministry of Water and Irrigation, Jordan
- ◆ Dr Muhammad Saidam, Executive Director, Royal Scientific Society

13.00 *Lunch*

Session 3 **Experiences from Africa and Asia on Transboundary Water Cooperation**
14:00–15:30

Chair – Mr Yasar Yakis, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkey

- ◆ Dr Ebenizario Chonguica, Executive Secretary, Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission
- ◆ Mr Sophearin Chea, Program Officer, Mekong River Commission

- ◆ Dr Ti Le Huu, Director of Water Security Centre, Water Resources University, Hanoi, Viet Nam
- ◆ Ambassador Babah Abdella, Director of External Relations and Communication, Global Dry Land Alliance

Remarks from the Middle East

- ◆ Ms Shirouk Abayachi, Advisor, Ministry of Water Resources, Iraq
- ◆ Dr Ahmet Saatci, President, Turkish Water Institute, Turkey

15.30 *Coffee Break*

Session 4
16:00–17:30 **Experiences from Europe and United Nations on Transboundary Water Cooperation**

Chair – Dr Mohammad Chatah former Minister of Finance, Lebanon

- ◆ Ms Minna Hanski, Advisor, Finnish-Russian Transboundary Water Commission and Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland
- ◆ Mr Koos Wieriks, Member of the UN Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation
- ◆ Ms Sonja Koepfel, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe United Nations

Remarks from the Middle East

- ◆ Mr Jean Ogassabian, Member of Parliament, Lebanon
- ◆ Dr Walid Saleh, Head, MENA Regional Programme, The United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment, & Health, UAE

17.30 – 18.30 **Closing Session**

Chair – Dr Bakhtiar Amin, former Human Rights Minister, Iraq

Short Presentation on Confidence Building Measures between Turkey and Iraq – Dr Aysegul Kibaroglu

- ◆ Closing remarks by Dr Muhammad Saidam, Executive Director, Royal Scientific Society
- ◆ Closing remarks by Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President, Strategic Foresight Group
- ◆ Closing remarks by Dr Bakhtiar Amin

18.30 Reception to follow for International and Invited Guests
Venue –Royal Scientific Society

List of Participants

GUESTS OF HONOUR

- HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan
- HRH Princess Sumaya bint el Hassan of Jordan

SPECIAL INVITEE

- Ambassador Helena Rietz, Swedish Ambassador to Jordan

HIGH LEVEL GROUP AND BLUE PEACE CORE GROUP

- Dr Yasar Yakis, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkey
- Dr Mohamad Chatah, former Minister of Finance, Lebanon
- Dr Bakhtiar Amin, former Human Rights Minister, Iraq
- Mr Saban Disli, Member of Parliament, Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, Turkey
- Dr Bassem Shabb, Member of Parliament, Lebanon
- Dr Maysoon Zoubi, former Secretary General, Ministry of Water Resources, Jordan

POLICY MAKERS AND EXPERTS

- Dr Mahmoud Abu Zeid, President, Arab Water Council
- Dr Khaled Shraydeh, former Minister of Energy, Jordan
- Mr Mohammad Kabbani, Member of Parliament, Chairman of Parliamentary Committee of Public Works, Transportation, Energy and Water, Lebanon
- Mr Jean Ogassabian, Member of Parliament, Lebanon
- Mrs Safia Al Suhail, Member of Parliament, Iraq
- Engineer Saleem Batayneh, Member of Parliament, Jordan
- Dr Odeh Al-Jayoussi, Vice President, Royal Scientific Society
- Ms Shirouk Abayachi, Advisor, Ministry of Water Resources, Iraq
- Mr Ali Ghalib, Water Resources Expert, Ministry of Water Resources, Iraq
- Engineer Sa'ad Abu Hammour, Secretary General, Jordan Valley Authority, Jordan
- Dr Altay Altinors, Senior Advisor and First Secretary, Deputy Directorate General for Energy, Water and Environment Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey
- Eng Zeina Majdalani, Economic Expert, Office of the Prime Minister, Lebanon
- Dr Maha Alziydi, Technical Expert, Ministry of Water, Iraq
- Dr Ahmad Saatci, President, Turkish Water Institute, Turkey
- Professor Hasan Z Sarikaya, former Undersecretary, Ministry of Forestry and Environment, Turkey
- Dr Selim Catafago, President of Board of Litani Water Authority, Lebanon
- Dr Walid Saleh, Head, MENA Regional Programme, The United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment, & Health (UNU-INWEH), UAE

- Dr Mahmoud Labadi, Senior Media Advisor, International Relations Commission, Palestine National Liberation Movement (Fatah)
- Ambassador Sedat Önal, Turkish Ambassador to Jordan
- Prof Dr Aysegul Kibaroglu, International Relations Department, Okan University, Turkey
- Dr Ibrahim Gurer, Faculty of Engineering, Gazi University, Turkey
- Mr Koos Wieriks, Member of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation
- Dr Ebenizario Chonguica, Executive Secretary, Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission, OKACOM
- Ms Minna Hanski, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland and Adviser, Finland – Russia Transboundary Water Cooperation
- Ms Sonja Koepfel, Office of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- Mr Sophearin Chea, Program Officer, Mekong River Commission
- Dr Ti Le Huu, Adjunct Professor on Water Security, Danang University and concurrently Director of Water Security Centre, Water Resources University, Hanoi, Viet Nam
- Ambassador Babah Abdella, Director of External Relations and Communication, Global Dry Land Alliance
- Dr Mukdad Al Jabbari, Independent Water Expert, Iraq
- Ms Tuğba Evrim Maden, Hydropolitics Researcher and Assistant Editor of Journal of Middle Eastern Analysis, ORSAM
- Mr Riad Al Khouri, Principal and Senior economist, DEA Inc, Jordan
- Eng Khaldon H Khashman, Secretary General, Arab Countries Water Utilities Association, Jordan
- Mr Phil Andrews, Chief Executive, Getenergy Ltd, UK
- Dr Loay Froukh, Senior Water Consultant, Jordan

IRAQ MEDIA

- Mr Hiwa Osman, Senior Columnist, Al Alam
- Dr Ghadah M Al-aammeli, Manager, Almada Group for Media, Culture & Arts

JORDAN MEDIA

- Ms Reem Sharaf, Senior Columnist, Al Rai Newspaper
- Ms Hana Namrouqa, Senior Columnist, Jordan Times
- Mr Abdul Hafeth Al Hrou, Editor, Petra News
- Mr Sharaf Abu Romman, Roya TV
- Mr Batir M. Wardam, Independent Environmental Journalist
- Mr Tariq al Hmedy, Journalist, Jordan Press Foundation
- Ms Iman Al Fares, Editor, Al Ghad Newspaper

LEBANON MEDIA

- Dr Haytham Mouzahem, Programme Writer, Al-mayadeen TV
- Ms Mey Sayegh, International News Editor, Al-Joumhouria
- Ms Sara Matar, Senior Columnist, Future Newspaper
- Ms Marwa Osman Khreiss, Political Show Host, Etejah English News Channel

TURKEY MEDIA

- Mr Kerim Balci, Editor, Turkish Review
- Ms Rana Cetin, Interview Producer, Al Jazeera Turk
- Mr Fehim Tastekin, Foreign News Manager, Daily Radikal
- Ms Ceyda Karan, Political Analyst, Daily Taraf

REGIONAL MEDIA

- Mr Abdelaziz Alkhamis, Editor in Chief, Al Arab Newspaper
- Mr Justin Olivier Salhani, Correspondent, The Atlantic Post
- Mr Nasser Abdulkarem, Reporter, Yemen Times

EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

- Dr Anders Jägerskog, Associate Professor, Counsellor, Regional Water Resources, MENA
- Ms Muna Barghouth, Regional Programme Manager, Water Cooperation, Human Rights and Democracy Programs

GOVERNMENT OF SWITZERLAND

- Mr Christophe Bosch, Program Manager, Global Program Water Initiatives, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT GROUP

- Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President
- Ms Ilmas Futehally, Vice-President and Executive Director
- Ms Ambika Vishwanath, Senior Programme Manager

EL MAJLIS EL HASSAN

- Mr Rami Shtieh, Director of the Private Office
- Mr James Quilligan, Senior Advisor to His Royal Highness
- Dr Hakam Alami, Advisor on water and sanitation

- Ms Helen Evans, Personal Assistant to His Royal Highness
- Mr Scott Taylor, Head of Communications
- Mr Ibrahim Makhaleh, Head of Protocol

ROYAL SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

- Dr Muhammad Saidam, Executive Director
- Mr Rafat Assi, Executive Director
- Eng Kholood Al-Majali, Executive Director
- Mr Nizar Zahran, Executive Director
- Dr Rafat Ahmad, Executive Director
- Eng Bassam Taan, Executive Director
- Eng Fawaz Al Labadi, Executive Director
- Dr Othman Al Mashaqbeh, Assistant Researcher