

1. The Mediterranean Session at the 5th World Water Forum, 19 March 2009

Continuing the legacy of regional dialogue in the framework of World Water Fora, the Mediterranean Session at the 5th World Water Forum was organized in Istanbul, on 19 March 2009. It was delivered by a Coordination Group that consisted of Blue Plan MAP/UNEP, GWP-Med, IME, MENBO and PAP/RAC MAP/UNEP as well as the governments of France, Greece, Spain and Morocco. IME chaired the Coordination Group.

A Mediterranean Consultation Process leading to the Forum was launched already in December 2006 and until February 2009 it received input from more than 20 regional events of different backgrounds. Materials from these events were aggregated and contributed to the 'Mediterranean Message to the Forum' which was finally discussed in detail during two major preparatory regional conferences: in Tunis on 15 January 2009 and in Beirut on 4-7 February 2009 (during the 2nd Beirut Water Week).

Furthermore, the 'Mediterranean Regional Document' was elaborated, largely building on the background documents prepared for the Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Water (Dead Sea – Jordan, December 2009). The document provides insight on key issues of water resources management in the Mediterranean and it is expected to be used as a reference source in the future.

The Mediterranean Session at the Istanbul Forum was held in a steadily packed conference room and received attention and appreciation by the audience. It included statements from high level speakers, illustrative presentations and panel discussions among prominent regional figures while more than half of its time was devoted to interventions from the floor and debate. Issues presented and discussed during Session I included water governance, water financing, water demand management and climate change adaptation. Session II was devoted to water and the coastal development, a critical issue in the Mediterranean.

As a key output of the regional Consultation Process and the Istanbul Session, the 'Mediterranean Message' was agreed and submitted to the Ministerial Conference in Istanbul while it constitutes a contribution to the works related to water within the Union for the Mediterranean.

2. Advancing the MED EUWI activities in Lebanon

Within the MED EUWI Lebanon Dialogue on Water, the technical background documents for the review of the Lebanese 10-year National Strategy on Water were finalized. These documents addressed the following themes: (i) water development and water resources management, (ii) domestic and industrial water, (iii) sanitation, (iv) irrigation and (v) institutional settings and capacity building. Each document includes an evaluation of the current status, identification of constraints and problems as well as recommendations for action.

An outline of a National IWRM Plan is under elaboration and will guide next steps. The latter will be put forward in a multi-stakeholder consultation under the lead of the Ministry of Energy and Water. In that context, a multi-stakeholder Task Force is under formation while bilateral consultation meetings were held within March with representatives of 12 key public and civil society entities in the country. The next Dialogue Workshop is scheduled for 24 April 2009, in Beirut.

Activities of the current phase of work in Lebanon are supported by the MEDA Water Programme of the European Commission. Greece leads the overall MED EUWI activities in the Mediterranean.

3. Advancing the MED EUWI activities in Egypt

Within the MED EUWI Egypt Dialogue on Water, the Third Consultation Event was organized in Cairo on 5th March 2009, by GWP-Med, the Egyptian Holding Company for Water and Wastewater (HCWW) and OECD.

The Event gathered together about targeted 50 participants, representing Egyptian ministries, public water utilities, other national agencies, the donor community, international and civil society organisations, the vast majority of which have been following closely the work of the Dialogue and have attended the two previous Consultation Events.

The March Event discussed the final drafts of the analytical work carried out within the Dialogue's framework and which include: i) a Report on Household Affordability with regard to water tariffs and ii) studies on a sustainable Financing Strategy for the water supply and sanitation sector in the Greater Cairo area. Throughout the Dialogue's trajectory, the development and progressing of the analytical work has been based on the input received and feedback provided by the participants, both through the Consultation Events and bilateral meetings. As the current –first- phase of the Egypt Dialogue is approaching its completion (in April 2009), it was also particularly important to receive support from the participants on continuing the MED EUWI activities in the country, with the first step being the translation of the largely-technical reports into policy documents that can be easily employed by policy- and decision-makers.

Activities of the current phase of work in Egypt are supported by the MEDA Water Programme of the European Commission. Greece leads the overall MED EUWI activities in the Mediterranean. The continuation of the work in Egypt will be implemented in close collaboration with the HCWW and OECD and will be supported by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For more information, please contact:

GWP-Med Secretariat, 12, Kyristou str, 10556 Athens, Greece, T: +30210-3247490, F: +30210-3317127
Web: www.gwpmed.org and www.watersee.net