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# **Jordan-Palestine Joint Workshop on Strengthening National Capacities to Manage Water Scarcity and Drought Management Plans in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

Amman, Jordan, *June 7-9, 2015*

## **Concept Note**

Prepared by UN-DESA

In Partnership with the Government of Jordan and the State of Palestine

### **I. Background**

Water is a crucial sector and a key resource for economic growth, social development and environmental integrity. West Asian and North African countries are especially vulnerable to drought and water scarcity. This is due to reliance on depleting groundwater sources and generated runoff from rainfall as the main supplies of water. However, the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), within the Post-2015 Development Agenda, have the potential to bridge the gap between global policies and national implementation, promote integrated policies and highlight strongly interlinked issues of important relevance for sustainable development.

### **Project Overview**

This workshop falls within the framework of UN-DESA capacity development Project ROA-207 entitled “*Strengthening National Capacities to Manage Water Scarcity and Drought in West Asia and North Africa*”. The rationale behind having a joint Jordan-Palestine capacity building workshop is that threefold. First, Jordan and Palestine are both pilot countries under this UN-DESA capacity building project. Second, this joint workshop aims to fortify relationships between Jordanian and Palestinian stakeholders in order to coordinate efforts in water scarcity and drought management. Third, the similarities and differences between both states will allow for a valuable exchange of experiences and will serve as an enabling environment for cooperation and information sharing. Therefore, the joint-workshop can act as a stepping stone for integrated policies, transboundary alliances and continued partnerships with the UN’s Post-2015 Development Agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

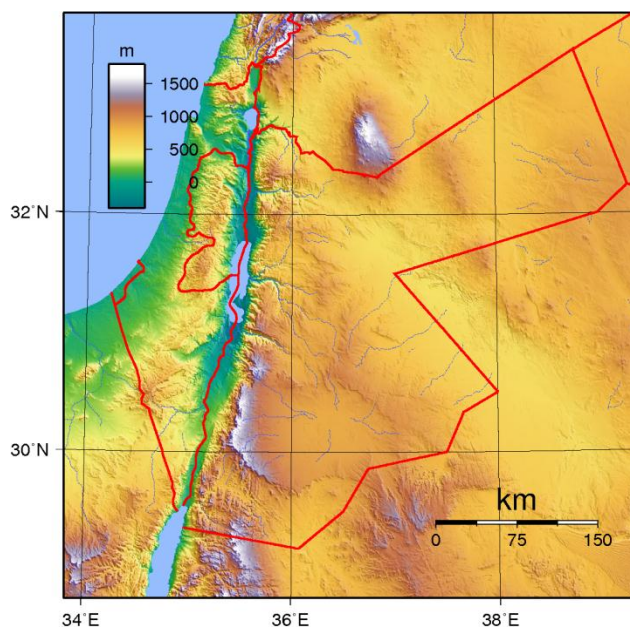


Figure 1. Topographic Map of Jordan and Palestine (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

*Geographically, Jordan and the State of Palestine share similar ecosystems that are subject to the challenges of climate mitigation and adaptation. As arid and semi-arid regions, they have endured years of below-average precipitation, more frequent and prolonged droughts and unsustainable supplies of water. Coupled with significant population growth and large proportions of the populations dependent on agriculture, Jordan and Palestine are both extremely vulnerable to the environmental effects of climate change.*

## Jordan and the State of Palestine

Both states have recognized the importance of establishing national strategies to mitigate the impacts and minimize the risk of drought and water scarcity related disasters. Since the last workshops organized by UN-DESA, several positive outcomes have been accomplished in both states:

### *Jordan*

- Based on the 1992 Rio Conventions, the Ministry of Environment's three Steering Committees drafted and adopted the following strategies:
  - National Strategy and Action Plan to Compact Desertification, 2006 - updated in 2015
  - National Policy on Climate Change, 2013 - updated in 2014
  - National Strategy of Biodiversity, 2015-2020
- The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has developed an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Plan which has tackled the development of standards for water-saving fixtures and has sought to raise awareness on IWRM in Jordan.
- Jordan's Water Strategy titled "Water for Life" establishes a mandate and an action plan for national efforts until the year 2022.

*Palestine*

- The Palestinian National Authority and the Environment Quality Authority (EQA) developed the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in 2011 to integrated climate change mitigation and adaptation in the National Action Plan for Adaptation.
- The Palestinian Water Authority developed a Strategic Water Sector Plan for the years 2011-2013 to guarantee the sustainability of water resources based on economic, social and environmental principles.
- National stakeholders from the Palestinian Authority and Civil Society attended the National Capacity Development Training of Trainers (TOTs) Workshop on *Developing and Implementing Mitigation and Preparedness Water Scarcity and Drought (WS&D) Management Plans* in Zaragoza, Spain in May 2014<sup>1</sup>. The lessons learned and outcomes from the presentations provided the participants with the basic knowledge for development of drought management and mitigation plans.
- The first National Workshop on ‘*Strengthening National Capacities to Manage Water Scarcity and Drought Management Plans*’ in Palestine was then organized in September 2014<sup>2</sup>. The primary goal of the workshop was to focus on the technical and social processes of effective drought management, and the two key focus areas were:
  - Formulating specific elements of a comprehensive drought management plan;
  - Planning, coordination, information-sharing, and stakeholder involvement.

Jordan and Palestine are making significant efforts towards achieving practical drought monitoring and preparedness plans (including early warning systems). Via the outcome documents from each workshop, the following areas and initiatives could be improved and will be critical to the successful implementation of SDGs:

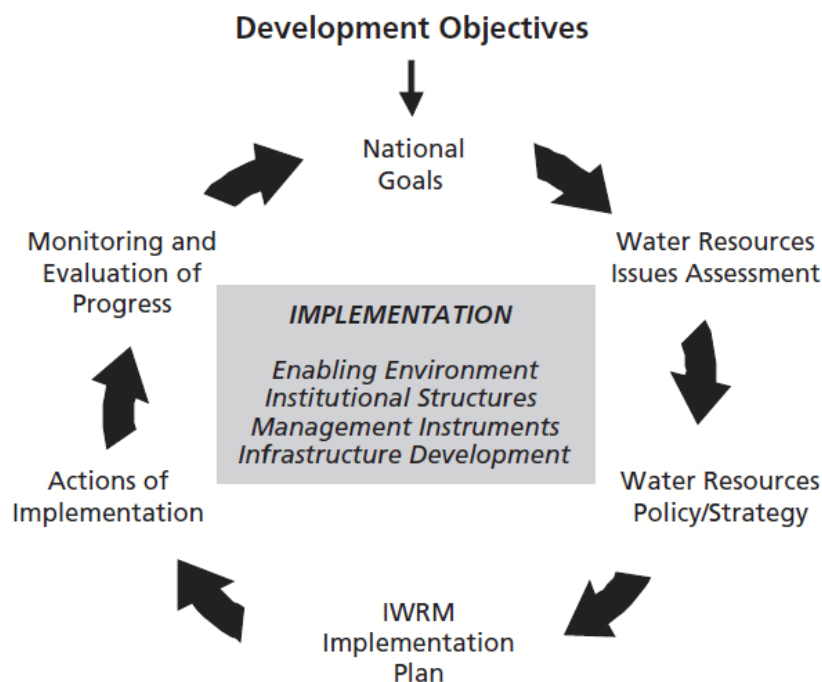
<i>Jordan</i>	<i>Palestine</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Drought projection capabilities</li> <li>→ Adopting a standard approach to drought identification and management</li> <li>→ Creating a drought monitoring and early warning system</li> <li>→ Implementing drought preparedness and mitigation plans</li> <li>→ Conducting drought impact assessments</li> <li>→ Ensuring continuous coordination between all relevant stakeholders at all levels of intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Developing relevant indicator(s) for monitoring drought</li> <li>→ Acknowledging threshold for taking action</li> <li>→ Modernizing the meteorological stations in Palestine and installing new stations in areas not already served (Priority should be given to the Eastern Slope and Jordan Valley, where condensed irrigated agriculture is practiced)</li> <li>→ Facilitating data sharing by transferring responsibility to a single authoritative body</li> <li>→ Creating a timely, accurate and succinct information platform for drought conditions</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1691>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/6664Progress%20for%20the%20Implementation%20of%20the%20National%20Drought%20Management%20Plan%20for%20Palestine%20.pdf>

## Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus

Ultimately, this project aims to strengthen the capacity of the pilot countries, including Jordan and Palestine, in water scarcity and drought management and preparedness at the national level. As shown in Figure 1 below, this project would serve to be an important component of each country's National Integrated Water Resources Management Plan.



**Figure 1.** Stages in IWRM Planning and Implementation. Adapted from [un.org/waterforlifedecade/iwrn.shtml](http://un.org/waterforlifedecade/iwrn.shtml)

It is recommended to provide practical support focusing on policy, monitoring and reporting structures; mobilizing innovative financing mechanisms; and promoting capacity development. With its multidisciplinary and holistic approach, this project will aim to identify and restructure Jordan and Palestine's water issues by tackling both the sectorial and nexus dimensions of water. In other words, this project will facilitate a transition from silo-based water scarcity and drought management to a more integrated and inclusive framework. Equipping regional countries to achieve the SDG on Water, as well link to other SDGs that focus on food security, sanitation, ecosystem management and the role of women in the changing agenda.

## Mitigations and Preparedness Measures

The future *Red Sea-Dead Sea Conduit (Canal Project)* is an example of important water scarcity management measures under consideration by the two countries. It touches on preparedness, mitigation and supply management interventions and can forge strong, lasting partnerships between all parties involved. It also demonstrates the way forward for the implementation of various SDG targets and indicators. It will provide potable water to the two countries, bring seawater to stabilise the Dead Sea water level and generate electricity to support the energy needs of the project.

## **II. The Sustainable Development Goals**

The Post-2015 Development Agenda has sparked great international interest in the SDGs. Building on the Rio+20 outcomes and other work streams, the Open Working Group (OWG) has identified 17 goals and 169 target areas, and submitted them for General Assembly considerations. In comparison to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there is now a more obvious importance placed on water-related goals. In the Rio+20 document “The Future We Want”, it states that “water is at the core of sustainable development”.<sup>3</sup>

As such, water is at the core of both Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, titled as “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, and SDG 2, titled as “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”<sup>4</sup>. The indispensable relationship between agriculture and water resources in a country characterized by limited land and water resources makes an integrated development approach critical to the successful implementation of this project. It can also provide a significant increase in scope, opportunities and challenges.

Indeed, having a holistic approach to water scarcity and drought management in Jordan and in Palestine will underpin progress across many other SDGs. Understanding the links that connect the SDGs is vital to addressing the development challenges in these West Asian states. Furthermore, creating an open dialogue throughout this project will allow both states to move forward with their respective development plans while sharing experiences with their neighbour.

An important element of this workshop will be to pinpoint where water-related strategies can enable progress in other development sectors. Water is known to be at the foundation of several other SDGs:

- SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
- SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

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<sup>3</sup> Global Water Partnership. (2014). The post-2015 development agenda: National stakeholder perspectives on a water goal and its implementation. Stockholm, Sweden: Global Water Partnership.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations. (n.d.). Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals. <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

Consequently, unlike the MDGs, which were mainly focused on water supply and sanitation in relation to water under the heading of MDG7 (environmental sustainability), the SDGs encompass water in many development strategies; thus creating the opportunity for a more holistic and integrated approach to human development. Of particular interest to this project is the ability for water scarcity and drought management initiatives to strengthen efforts relating to sustainable agriculture, food security, economic growth, human health, global partnerships and climate change, just to name a few.

### **III. Objectives**

The Workshop is organized by UN-DESA, in partnership with the Government of Jordan and the State of Palestine, and coordinated by the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Palestinian Water Authority. The workshop falls within the framework of the UN-DESA Capacity Development Project 121C ROA-207 entitled “*Strengthening National Capacities to Manage Water Scarcity and Drought in West Asia and North Africa*”.

The objective of the workshop is to enhance the capacity of national stakeholders to integrate water and sustainable development into a national development strategy. The specific objectives include:

1. Updating stakeholders on work progress since the first national meeting;
2. Involving all stakeholders in planning for drought management activities in Jordan and Palestine;
3. Developing the operational component of the drought plan, encompassing the following six aspects:
  - Preparedness plans, monitoring systems
  - Establishing priorities of water use
  - Defining the conditions and the thresholds to declare drought levels
  - Establishing the management options in each drought level
  - Defining the actions
  - Implementing actions;
4. Organizing and preparing risk and vulnerability profiles and maps;
5. Strengthening coordination and timely information-sharing among stakeholders and drought management task forces from both Jordan and Palestine;
6. Increasing understanding of the evolving SDGs and target areas, including the cross-sectorial linkages between planning and development of the SDGs on a national level; and
7. Promoting investment of human and financial resources for research on drought forecasting methods and geospatial technologies.

### **IV. Participants**

The workshop will bring together members of government ministries, technical experts, civil society actors and organizations, and community groups. The Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Palestinian Water Authority are the responsible Ministries who will take the

lead and coordinate with other ministries and stakeholders in planning the workshop. The Project National Coordinators worked closely with focal points from the Jordan and Palestinian authorities as well as in coordination with national stakeholders. Please see **Annex A** for the lists of participants and their organizations.

### **V. Methodology**

The primary goal of the workshop is to focus on the processes of effective drought management, which includes an emphasis on information-sharing, coordination, and inclusion of stakeholders. It also seeks to link the water and agriculture SDGs with integrated national policies. Lastly, this joint workshop aims to discuss challenges and potential solutions for water scarcity and drought issues from both Jordanian and Palestinian points of view.

With this in mind, the workshop will primarily focus on two key areas – capacity development and water scarcity planning. The workshop will incorporate a range of learning and knowledge sharing approaches, including auditory/visual (e.g. presentations and panel discussions), collaborative (e.g. group exercises) and experiential (e.g. problem solving). Participants will be given the opportunity to share and learn from national country experiences implementing SD strategies in both Jordan and Palestine. The expectations will include:

1. Innovative tools and techniques for, and challenges to adopting, integrated systems planning
2. Drought Indices and classification
3. Framework for the process to:
  - a. Support the coordination and partnerships with stakeholders in-country, and
  - b. Contribute to an open dialogue between Jordan and Palestine regarding the SDGs platform and the strategies promoted to address water scarcity and drought. Linkage between country plans and the SDGs
4. Links between country plans and the SDGs
5. Presentation, discussion and documentation of the operational plans for drought management
6. Work progress by task force

## Tentative Schedule

*Draft Workshop Program*

Day 1: Sunday June 7, 2015		
Time	Theme	Presenter
9:30-9:45	Arrival of Participants and Registration	
9:45-10:15	<b>Opening Remarks and Welcoming Statements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting Opening</li> <li>- Welcoming Remarks</li> </ul>	<b>Opening:</b> Jordan & Palestine Government Reps. UN Reps. in Jordan & Palestine <b>Welcoming:</b> UN-DESA
10:15-11:00	<b>Workshop Overview and Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshop Goals &amp; Objectives</li> <li>- Roundtable Introductions</li> </ul>	Jordanian and Palestinian National Coordinators
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15-11:45	<b>Session 1 Overview of UN-DESA Capacity Building Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to UN-DESA and DSD</li> <li>- Overview of Project Objectives and Achievements</li> <li>- UN-DESA Support for the Post-2015 Development Agenda</li> </ul>	UN-DESA
11:45-12:15	<b>Session 2 Jordan's Progress since Last National Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity Building Project Overview</li> <li>- Work Update on Drought Management Plans</li> <li>- Drought Preparedness System Metrics</li> <li>- Discuss Recommendations from Previous Meetings</li> </ul>	Jordanian National Coordinator and National Consultant
12:15-12:45	<b>Session 3 Palestine's Progress since Last National Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity Building Project Overview</li> <li>- Work Update on Drought Management Plans</li> <li>- Drought Preparedness System Metrics</li> <li>- Discuss Recommendations from Previous Meetings</li> </ul>	Palestinian National Coordinator and National Consultant
12:45-1:45	Lunch	
1:45-2:30	<b>Session 4 Context Setting for Post-2015 Development Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lessons Learned from MDGs</li> <li>- Introduce the Post-2015 Development Agenda</li> <li>- Overview of the SDGs</li> <li>- Roundtable Discussions</li> </ul>	UN-DESA



2:30-3:00	<b>Session 5 Water Management Tools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supply Management, Demand Management, Mitigation and Preparedness, IWRM and transboundary alliances</li> </ul>	UN-DESA
3:00-3:15	Coffee Break	
3:15-3:45	<b>Session 6 Water Scarcity Case Studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water Management in the Mujib Reserve, Jordan</li> <li>- IWRM in the Lower Jordan Valley</li> <li>- Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal Project</li> <li>- Implications for SDGs</li> <li>- Roundtable Discussions</li> </ul>	Jordanian and Palestinian National Consultants
3:45-4:30	<b>Session 7 Jordan and Palestine's Strategic Planning and Coordination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drought Management Unit and Drought Management Institutional Setup                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Objectives, Mandate, Responsibilities</li> <li>➤ Coordination, Integration, Capacity</li> <li>➤ Overcoming the Challenges on National Scale</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Jordanian and Palestinian National Consultants, All stakeholders
4:30-5:00	<b>Wrap Up/Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Results</li> <li>- Housekeeping</li> <li>- Plans for Following Day</li> </ul>	UN-DESA, Jordanian and Palestinian National Consultants
<b>Day 2: Monday June 8, 2015</b>		
9:30-9:45	<b>Review of Day 1 and Plan for Day 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review Topics Covered and Lessons Learned from Day 1</li> <li>- Organize Agenda for Day 2</li> </ul>	Jordanian and Palestinian National Consultants
9:45-10:45	<b>Session 8 Linking Jordan and Palestine's Water Scarcity &amp; Drought Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss similarities in Water Master Plans</li> <li>- Transboundary Water Management</li> <li>- IWRM and Early Warning Systems</li> </ul>	Jordanian and Palestinian National Consultants and Coordinators
10:45-11:00	Coffee Break	
11:00-12:00	<b>Session 9 Planning, Coordination and Involvement of Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forming Operational Taskforces / Steering Committees</li> <li>- Coordination, Information-Sharing and Inclusion of All Relevant Stakeholders</li> </ul>	Moderated By: Jordanian and Palestinian National Consultants
12:00-1:00	Lunch	

1:00-1:30	<b>Session 10 Insight from Jordanian and Palestinian Farmers' Associations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activities in Drought Management</li> <li>- Use of Water-Saving Technologies</li> <li>- Moderated Group Discussion</li> </ul>	Farmers' Associations
1:30-2:30	<b>Session 11 Incorporating the SDGs Into National Development Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review connections between SDGs</li> <li>- Water Scarcity and Drought Management as Enabling Elements for Achieving the SDGs in Water Scarce Countries</li> <li>- Assess Potential Areas for Inclusion</li> </ul>	UN-DESA
2:30-3:30	<b>Session 12 Summary of Actions and Priority Needs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on the outcome of the 2-day workshop</li> </ul>	Jordanian and Palestinian National Consultants
3:30-3:45	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
3:45-4:30	<b>Session 13 Next Steps and Way Forward</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recommendations for the Future</li> </ul>	All participants
4:30-5:00	<b>Closing Statements</b>	Jordan & Palestine Government Representatives, UN-DESA
<b>Day 3: Tuesday June 9, 2015</b>		
	<b>Field Visit – Jordan River Valley Authority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Briefing from the Project Manager, Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal Project</li> </ul>	
	<b>Field Visit – Wai Musa/Reuse Project</b>	
	<b>Lunch</b>	
	<b>Field Visit – Aqaba Water Company</b>	

## **VI. Correspondence**

Correspondence and inquiries concerning the workshop for Palestine should be addressed to:

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### Palestine

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## Annex A. List of Participants

### Amman, Jordan

#### *Government Representatives*

- Ministry of Water and Irrigation – Secretary General, Ali Subh, Ali Hayjeneh, Adel Obeiat
- Jordan Valley Authority – Khaled Qsous
- Ministry of Environment – Hussein Sharabati, Raed Bani Hani
- Ministry of Agriculture – TBD
- Meteorological Department – Mohammed Al Shawabkeh, Mohammed Samawi

#### *Regional and International Organizations*

- UNDP – Mohammed Al Utoom, Rana Ahmad
- FAO – Talal Al Fayez
- IUCN – Fida Haddad, Mufleh Abbadi

#### *Universities and Research Centres*

- National Centre for Agriculture Research and Extension – Muna Saba
- Jordan University – Jawad Al Bakri
- Al Balqa University – Rakad Ayed
- Al Beit University – Saad Al Ayash
- Royal Geographic Centre – Awni Khasawneh
- Jordanian Society for Desertification Control and Badia Development – Nidal Auran
- The Hashemite Fund for Human Development – Khalid Marafi

#### *Societies and NGOs*

- Azraq Development Society – TBD
- The Royal Society for Conservation of Nature – TBD

### Outside of Amman, Jordan

- Water Specialists – Saeed Ayash, Fawzi Nuehamt
- National Centre for Badia Research and Development – Odeh Mashan
- EKARDA – Haleem Al Hajj (Manager)
- Jordan Valley Farmers Association
  - North: Asharf Ghazawi
  - Middle: Walid Faqir, Ali Mustafa
  - South: Salem Hweimel
- Farmers
  - Ahmad Theibat, Mohammed Qrisha, Mansour Fawaz, Othman Merza

### Palestine

#### *Government Representatives*

- Palestinian Water Authority (National Focal Point) – Deeb Abdelghafour
- Meteorological Department – Yousef Abu Asad
- Energy Authority – Maan Rashed
- Ministry of Planning – Mohammad Tarshan, Rehab Daher
- Ministry of Agriculture – Ibtisam Abu Al-Haiga, Farah Swaftah

- Environment Quality Authority – Ibraheem Al-Quqa

*Regional and International Organizations*

- UNDP – Tagreed Najjar, Rima Abu Midein
- Negotiation Affairs Department – Natasha Carmi

*Universities and Research Centres*

- An-Najah National University – Dr. Anan Jayousi
- Applied Research Institute Jerusalem – Jane Hilal
- Birzeit University – Dr. Ziad Mimi

*Societies and NGOs*

- Palestinian Hydrology Group – Abdelatif Khalid