



STRATEGY WORKSHOP ON BLUE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Zurich, Switzerland
August 21-22, 2017

Co-Hosted by
Strategic Foresight Group
and
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

In Cooperation with
Human Security Division of Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

A group of regional experts from Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Iran met in Zurich, Switzerland on 21-22 August, 2017 for a strategy workshop with a main objective of exploring the future of the Blue Peace Process and ideas for the transfer of management leadership to regional institutions. The desired outcome of the workshop was to establish a coordinating committee or mechanism under regional management for the future of the Blue Peace initiative as well as to identify the road map for the next few years. The workshop was co-hosted by Strategic Foresight Group and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in cooperation with the Human Security Division of Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.





KEY MESSAGES

- Objective of the workshop was three-fold – one, forming a shared vision through listing priorities for the next phase of Blue Peace in the Middle East, two, creating a mechanism to enable this and three, envisioning an action plan to transfer management of the Blue Peace in the Middle East to regional actors.
- The situation on the ground has shifted from the time of the inception of Blue Peace in the Middle East to the present – due primarily to the fact that the fundamental political drivers that existed in 2009, no longer do so. However, there is latent interest in the process, laced with caution and a hope for productivity. More importantly, overall support exists for technical cooperation from the region which has been born from political consensus across the spectrum.
- Technical cooperation should be predicated on the idea of ‘win-win’ projects and initiatives.
- Priorities that were agreed upon included the following technical areas – water use efficiency, water quality, water governance and climate issues.
- Further specific activities and aspects were discussed and agreed upon for each of the technical areas listed above.
- Capacity building is needed for all technical areas in all of the countries concerned.
- It is important to take lessons from other models of cooperation and best practices from around the world. Learning Journeys can be organized to achieve this.
- The Blue Peace initiative is built around transforming water from an instrument of conflict into one of cooperation. By working on specific technical issues in the coming years, and improving the quality and quantity of shared water resources as well as bolstering the resiliency of water resources to the impacts of climate change, it is possible for countries to relieve water stress and thereby reduce the potential for conflict.
- It is important to engage and utilise the broader Blue Peace Middle East community that consists of over 200 members across the region. There is an existing expertise in

this community that has been built up through many years. This is also another way to preserve the spirit and values of Blue Peace in the long term.

- It was agreed that an interim body was required to create the mechanism populated by actors from the Middle East that will eventually take over management of the Blue Peace Initiative. In order to create this mechanism, it was agreed that a two-track process will be adopted – one track will be a ‘transition committee’ that will work towards strengthening the priorities, the vision, the modalities, the legal and administrative aspects of the future mechanism while the second track will work in ‘thematic activity centres’ towards aspects of the technical priorities identified.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants from Middle East

1. Mr Hassan Z Sarikaya, former State Secretary and current Advisor to the Minister, Turkey
2. Dr. Ahmet Mete Saatci, President, Turkish Water Institute (SUEN), Turkey
3. Dr. Hakam Alalami, Advisor to HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal on Water and Sanitation, Jordan
4. Eng. Khaldon Khashman, Secretary General at Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), Jordan
5. Eng. Jamal Mohsin, DG Planning and Follow-Up Directorate, Iraq
6. Mr Dhafir Abdalla Hussain, Advisor to Minister of Water Resources, Iraq
7. Mr Muhammed Amin Faris, Director General, General Directorate of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq
8. Ms Marwa Osman, Journalist and University Lecturer, Lebanese International University, Lebanon
9. Mr. Youssef Marai, Water Expert, Water Resources Department, Arab Center for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry lands (ACSAD), Syria
10. Dr. Shahab Araghinejad, Deputy Director of Tehran Water Institute at University of Tehran, Iran
11. Dr Mohammad Reza Shahbazbegian, Faculty at Tarbiat Modares University, Iran

Government of Switzerland

1. Mr Mario Carera, Senior Advisor, Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
2. Ms Eileen Hofstetter, Water Policy Advisor, Global Programme Water, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
3. Mr Mufleh Aref Haza' Alalaween, National Program Officer, Blue Peace Middle East, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
4. Mr Stephan Kellenberger, Human Security Division, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Swedish International Development cooperation Agency

1. Ms Esse Nilsson, Senior Programme Manager, Regional water, environment, climate change, renewable energy and food security Unit for MENA

Strategic Foresight Group

1. Dr Sundeep Waslekar, President
2. Ms Ilmas Futehally, Executive Director
3. Ms Anumita Raj, Senior Programme Manager

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