



ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin by ORSAM Water Research Programme

Events-News-Politics-Projects-Environment-ClimateChange-Neighbourhoods-Cooperation-Disputes-Scarcity and more



ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

31 March –06 April 2014

- ❖ **Can Turkey use water to exert power across the Middle East?**
- ❖ **Iraq says ISIL cuts off Euphrates water from Central, S. areas**
- ❖ **Precipitation in Iran decreases by 8 percent**
- ❖ **Japan, Iran to boost environmental cooperation**
- ❖ **Sinking Dead Sea forces rescue operation for rare fish**
- ❖ **Growing Together: Aquaponics in Rural Israel and Palestine**
- ❖ **Jerusalem's water crisis**
- ❖ **Israel Fights Water Contamination**
- ❖ **The Manitoban Publishes "Apartheid" Screeed, Refuses Counter Op-Ed**
- ❖ **Water issue overshadowed by peace negotiations**
- ❖ **Can Capitalism Quench Beirut's Thirst?**
- ❖ **Lebanon faces water crisis**
- ❖ **Water can't wait for a peace agreement**
- ❖ **Desalination: A Major Success For Israel?**
- ❖ **Alternative water sources help Israel in drought**
- ❖ **In Some Palestinian Neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, Not Even 17 Liters of Water Per Day**
- ❖ **Ethiopia: Egypt and the Nile politics**
- ❖ **Egypt-Sudan water relations**
- ❖ **Egypt: Ramzy Responded Ethiopian Nile Politics**
- ❖ **Binding Ethio-Sudanese Relations**
- ❖ **Ethiopia ready for Nile dam talks with Egypt: Minister**
- ❖ **Environment Groups Plan to Oppose Laos Mega Dams**
- ❖ **Xayaburi dam in Laos "23% complete"**
- ❖ **Concerns mount over Lao dam projects**

-
- ❖ **Uranium Miners in Namibia Face Rise in Water Price, Paladin Says**
 - ❖ **Clean Water In Short Supply In Ghana**
 - ❖ **Snow Survey Reveals Depth of California's Water Woes**

❖ Can Turkey use water to exert power across the Middle East?

ISTANBUL // Turkey hopes to take a first step this year towards long-held ambitions to be a supplier of fresh water across the Middle East.

The first phase of a project to pump fresh water from the Anamur River in southern Turkey to the drought-stricken northern part of Cyprus is slated to be completed this year, according to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and the Turkish government in Ankara.

Hassan Gungor, undersecretary for the presidency of Northern Cyprus, said the 88-kilometre pipeline “can be taken as a pilot project” that Turkey could replicate across the region.

The 1.2 billion lira (Dh2bn) pipeline, which runs under the Mediterranean, is to bring 75 million cubic metres of water a year to Northern Cyprus, an isolated self-declared republic recognised only by Ankara.

The Turkish ministry for forests and water said in a statement that work will be finished by July 20, the 40th anniversary of Turkey’s 1974 military intervention in Cyprus. Several experts in Turkey said the Cyprus water project could be a first step for Ankara to boost its role as a regional power by providing water to Middle East countries.

“It is technically feasible,” Ibrahim Gurer, a hydrologist at Gazi University in Ankara, said. “And it’s possible not only for Cyprus, but also for other countries like Israel or even Libya. It is not a distant dream.”

In recent years, Turkey’s relative water wealth created problems with several neighbours. Syria and Iraq, which rely on water from the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers that originate in Turkey, complained that dam projects in Turkey diminish the amount of water that reaches their territories.

Last year, Karim Elewi, an Iraqi member of parliament, accused Turkey of holding back water from the two rivers. But Ankara says water demands by its two southern neighbours are unrealistic.

“The demands of Iraq and Syria [for water from the two rivers] tacitly assume that Turkey releases all the flow of the river without utilising any of it,” the Turkish foreign ministry said on its website.

A US study supported by Nasa found last year that 144 cubic kilometres of fresh water in the Eurphrates and Tigris regions had been lost since 2003. The study said that roughly 60 per cent of the loss was caused by pumping water from underground reservoirs.

Factors such as climate change and decreasing water resources were pushing countries in the eastern Mediterranean to think about closer cooperation, said Dursun Yildiz, a water expert at the Working Group on Earth, Water, Energy, a non-governmental group in Ankara.

“Climate change is everybody’s problem,” he said. “We are much closer to each other now.”

Since work on the Cyprus water project started in 2008, Turkey’s government has indicated its readiness to export fresh water to other parts of the Middle East. The water could be provided by rivers running down from the Taurus mountain range in southern Turkey towards the Mediterranean, officials say.

Last year, Shaddad Attili, the water minister of the Palestinian Authority, told Turkish media that Turkey had offered to deliver fresh water to the Gaza Strip by tankers.

The Turkish foreign ministry did not respond to requests for comment on water issues.

It is not the first time that Turkey’s fresh water resources have become the subject of ambitious regional plans. In 1986, the Turkish prime minister, Turgut Ozal, proposed to build water pipelines from two rivers in southern Turkey through Syria and Lebanon. The plan, dubbed “Water for Peace” by Ankara, never got traction amid the conflict between Arab countries and Israel.

In another project, Turkey planned to bring 50 billion cubic meters of water a year from the southern Turkish Manavgat River to Israel in tankers. The project was cancelled by Turkey in 2010 after nine Turkish activists were killed in a raid by Israeli forces on a Turkish ship carrying aid to the Gaza Strip.

But Mr Yildiz said advances in technology meant that international water projects were back on the agenda. “Technological development is helping to bring down costs,” he said.

Mr Yildiz said possible Turkish water exports to the Middle East were likely to be handled by pipelines on land, rather than pipelines under the sea like in the Cyprus project, because land-based transport was much cheaper.

But the civil war in Syria and growing unrest in Iraq have hampered plans to increase water exports.

“But we have to look beyond today, we have to look to tomorrow and the day after tomorrow,” Mr Yildiz said.

Oytun Orhan, an analyst at the Centre for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (Orsam), a think tank in Ankara, said Turkey’s political weight could increase in the long run because of the water issue.

“It could boost Turkey’s geostrategic significance,” he said.

But Mr Orhan cautioned that sharing water resources would not automatically move political issues into the background. As an example, he pointed to vast natural gasfields that have been found under the eastern Mediterranean Sea near the coasts of Israel, Gaza, Syria, Lebanon and Cyprus.

“Countries already have a chance for cooperation in exploiting resources jointly today,” Mr Orhan said. “But it is not happening, political problems are preventing that kind of cooperation.”

“Can Turkey use water to exert power across the Middle East?”, 05/04/2014, online at:
<http://www.thenational.ae/world/turkey/can-turkey-use-water-to-exert-power-across-the-middle-east>

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Iraq says ISIL cuts off Ephurates water from Central, S. areas**

BAGHDAD, April 6 (KUNA) -- Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki's office said Sunday the Islamic Stat in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) blocked flow of Ephurates river water from the central and southern Iraq.

"The ISIL and their baathist supporters ... in the city of Fallujah have committed a dangerous act ... by cutting off water from Center and South areas," thus threatening lives of people, the office said in a statement.

"We are compelled to use maximum force to save lives of people and farm lands" by preventing "those murderers from using Fallujah as a launch pad for their crimes," it added.

ISIL cut off the river flow at Fallujah, causing decline in water levels in provinces in the center and the south of Iraq.

The statement called on the citizens in the Anbar province to support the armed forces in cracking down on the the ISIL militants. (end) ahh.bs

"Iraq says ISIL cuts off Ephurates water from Central, S. Areas", 06/04/2014, online at:
<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2370849&language=en>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Precipitation in Iran decreases by 8 percent

Total precipitation in Iran has reached some 283.461 billion cubic meters during the current crop year started on September 22, 2013.

Iran has experienced 172 millimeters of precipitation from the beginning of the current crop year, which indicates an 8 percent decline compared to the long-term average precipitation, Iranian Mehr news agency reported on April 4.

Compared to the same period of the last crop year, total precipitation in Iran indicates a fall by 3 percent.

The situation of water resources in Iran has passed beyond the critical stage, the country's media outlets quoted the Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian as saying in February. During the past decade, precipitations have declined to 242 millimetres from 250 millimetres, he noted.

At present, 96 billion cubic meters of the country's total 120 billion cubic meters of renewable water resources is being consumed annually, he said, adding that if 40-60 percent of renewable water resources is consumed in any country, that country is said to be in critical condition.

The water shortage has reached a critical level in Tabriz, Isfahan, Ahwaz, Qum, Mashhad and Hamadan cities, advisor to Iran's Energy Minister, Hamidrza Janbaz said on Nov.17, Mehr agency reported.

"A drought has being observed in the country for nearly 13 years. The demand for water increases with population growth," Janbaz added.

Last summer, Iran's water supply company warned in a special statement about the water shortage in several cities of the country and imposed quotas for fresh water.

Iran is located in an arid zone and the country has been repeatedly been faced with drought over the past 40 years. The drought of 1992-2002 caused a major blow to agriculture. There were quotas imposed for fresh water in several cities including Tehran.

"Precipitation in Iran decreases by 8 percent", 04/04/2014, online at: <http://en.trend.az/regions/iran/2259194.html>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Japan, Iran to boost environmental cooperation

TOKYO – Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Iranian Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar have agreed that the two countries boost environmental cooperation.

Abe met Ebtekar in Tokyo on Thursday. The Iranian vice president also heads her country's Environment Department.

Their talks come as environmental cooperation between Japan and Iran is expanding. This includes an effort to improve the water quality for lakes in Iran.

Abe touched on last year's summit meeting between Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and himself and on the visit by Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida to Iran.

Abe said he is glad bilateral exchanges are increasing and that the two countries' traditional and friendly ties have great potential for development.

Ebtekar said Iran shares many cultural affinities with Japan and Iranians have a strongly favorable sentiment toward Japan.

She added that conditions are set for the two Asian countries to develop bilateral relations.

Abe also referred to the talks between Iran and Western countries over Tehran's nuclear development, saying he wants to see a complete resolution to the matter and would like the vice president to convey his hope to President Rouhani.

“Japan, Iran to boost environmental cooperation”, 05/04/2014, online at: <http://tehrantimes.com/politics/114870-japan-iran-to-boost-environmental-cooperation>

BACK TO TOP

WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ Sinking Dead Sea forces rescue operation for rare fish

As ponds near the Dead Sea dry up, nature authority compelled to make artificial homes for Jordan tilapia.

By Zafrir Rinat | Mar. 30, 2014

Jordan tilapia have returned to the Ein Feshkha nature reserve, next to the Dead Sea, but not to the natural habitat they have always known.

Agriculture Ministry specialists carried out a special rescue project to raise the tilapia, while the Israel Nature and Parks Authority workers built an artificial pond to replace their natural habitat that has dried up as Dead Sea levels continue to drop.

Two years ago, INPA brought the fish over to the research center of the Agriculture Ministry's fish division, located near Dor, in an effort to save the rare strain of tilapia. Ministry workers managed to breed the fish successfully and decided recently to return them to their habitat.

The first group of fish returned a few weeks ago to one of two artificial pools that the INPA constructed. Last week, other groups were brought in. Nature authority officials also brought additional tilapia to the artificial pool from natural pools at the reserve that did not yet dry up. Agriculture Ministry officials continue to hold a small tilapia population in their research center at Dor and in the Volcani Center in Beit Dagan.

“The success of this operation will be tested by the ability of the fish to reproduce,” Eldad Hazan, director of the Ein Feshkha reserve, the world's lowest nature reserve, said on Sunday.

Preservationist have been rescuing fish species in danger of extinction due to drying up water sources in a number of places throughout the country. Just over a decade ago, the Yarkon River Authority and the Parks Authority extracted Lebanon fish from the river's sources that were about to dry up. They transferred them to Tel Aviv University, where they were successfully bred for a return to the river.

Last year, scientists in the Haifa area collected hundreds of rare Syrian spadefoot toads from a winter pond that was about to dry up. The toads are still at TAU, and researchers hope to place them in another winter pool.

“Sinking Dead Sea forces rescue operation for rare fish” , Haaretz, 04/04/2014, online at:

<http://mideastenvironment.apps01.yorku.ca/2014/04/sinking-dead-sea-forces-rescue-operation-for-rare-fish-haaretz/>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Growing Together: Aquaponics in Rural Israel and Palestine

IPCRI is partnered with Byspokes, an innovative UK-based NGO, to introduce water-efficient food production systems in two communities identified as being disproportionately impacted by the conflict (one in Israel, one in the Palestine).

Starting in September 2013, IPCRI and Byspokes are introducing water-efficient food production systems in two communities identified as being disproportionately impacted by the conflict; these communities are a Bedouin village in Israel's Negev and a refugee camp in the West Bank.

“Growing Together” is an 8-month, pilot program that educates average citizens about aquaponics and hydroponics systems and how to build and capitalize on these systems. This skill will increase the capacity of host communities to produce organic vegetables, fruit and fish, resulting in nutritious food, while also conserving water and land. The pilot program includes trainings, aquaponic system installation, outreach events, local internships and more.

What is “aquaponics?”

Aquaponics is a contained, low-cost, low-resource-intensive method of growing vegetables and farming fish. Byspokes is a leader in the development and implementation of this technology in Israel and the Palestinian territories, with active sites in Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Jericho.

Byspokes hydroponics and aquaponics systems:

Use cheap, locally available materials (mainly reclaimed or recycled)

Work with the extremely high alkalinity and high pH of the groundwater in the West Bank / Israel

Grow plants which thrive in the local conditions, and are already part of the local diet

Enable production of plants with high water requirements even during the driest times of the year

Offer the opportunity to grow nutritious and marketable plant species that are not consumed locally at present, such as basil, lemongrass and butternut squash.

“Growing Together: Aquaponics in Rural Israel and Palestine” ,IPCRI, 04/04/2014, online at:

<http://mideastenvironment.apps01.yorku.ca/2014/04/growing-together-aquaponics-in-rural-israel-and-palestine-ipcric/>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Jerusalem's water crisis

On March 4, the day Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu started off his [speech at the annual AIPAC conference](#) in Washington with a greeting from Jerusalem, “the eternal and undivided capital of Israel and the Jewish people,” the water was turned off in the homes of tens of thousands of families in the municipal area of the “undivided city.”

The neighborhoods of Ras Khamis, Ras Shehadeh, as-Salam and the Shuafat refugee camp are [disconnected from the municipal water supply](#). (Several families “enjoy” an occasional slight drip from their taps.) These houses in East Jerusalem, on the other side of the separation fence, are home to Israeli residents who hold blue Israeli identity cards. The elderly and disabled people there, who have to wash in pails of water and carry drinking water in bottles, live a 10-minute car ride away from the affluent Jewish neighborhood of Givat HaMivtar.

The water infrastructure in the region, like all other infrastructure, may adequately provide for the consumption needs of 15,000 people, while the local population numbers 60,000 to 80,000. In the absence of urban development plans for these neighborhoods, hundreds of apartments have been built in the area without permits. Consequently, they cannot be legally connected to the water supply and sanitation systems. What's more, the workers of the Jerusalem area's water and wastewater utility corporation Hagihon are afraid to cross the separation fence because of security concerns.

Those neighborhoods lie on the northeastern side of the fence. A physical, ethnic, social, economic and moral barrier separates them from the rest of Israel — a state that annexed them without asking.

“In any other place in Israel, the problem of tens of thousands of residents without running water would have been sorted out quickly,” says Jamil Sanduka, chairman of the residents' association of Ras Khamis. “The problem is first and foremost that all of those in charge simply don't care.”

The Jewish Israelis and the Israeli authorities do not seem to see these Israeli Palestinian neighbors, of whom [74% live under the poverty line](#), among them 53% of the children, according to official figures from 2009-2010.

The [Association of Civil Rights in Israel](#) (ACRI) petitioned the High Court on March 23 together with neighborhood representatives and the local community administration to demand that the authorities be ordered to deal immediately with the water problem. ACRI claims that this is

an egregious manifestation of neglect of the neighborhoods on the other side of the wall. In almost every sphere, from education, welfare and transportation services to garbage collection and police presence, the state authorities have abandoned this section of the “eternal capital.”

Indeed, the corporation's top officials themselves have confirmed that the water, sewage and draining infrastructure in the neighborhoods beyond the wall are inadequate in view of the population living there. They have further noted that extensive development works are required to solve the problem. According to the Hagihon officials, the Jerusalem water corporation alerted the Israel Water Authority on numerous occasions to the urgent need to regulate the financing of water supply and infrastructure development and maintenance in the medium and long term. However, so far, the issue has not been settled. In a comment to the media issued by Israel Water Authority officials, they explained, “The issue is far beyond the action capabilities of the [Israeli] water economy. [Inter-ministerial cooperation](#) is required to deal with the whole set of problems and risks involved and solve the problem once and for all.”

The East Jerusalem neighborhoods on the other side of the fence are not the only areas where the water-supply issue far exceeds the capacity of the Israeli water network. In his Knesset speech Feb. 12, [European Parliament President Martin Schultz](#) raised the issue of water-resource allocation between Israelis and the Palestinian residents of the territories. If the diplomatic process fails, the water crisis will deepen. As noted by [Friends of the Earth](#) in Israel, the changes in demographics, standard of living and technology have made the current allocation of water resources, set 20 years ago as part of the second Oslo Accords, irrelevant. The management of the joint environment and water within the framework of this agreement has been proven ineffective. The Israeli-Palestinian committee, established to manage the joint water resources in the West Bank, has not met in an official session for more than two years.

There is no separation fence that will stop the raw sewage flowing from Hebron’s industrial zone, or from the Israeli industrial zone Mesilot Tulkarem in the West Bank, to the aquifer. Some 65 million cubic meters of raw or partially treated sewage from the Palestinian Authority and Israeli-controlled areas in the West Bank pollute the joint Israeli-Palestinian aquifer every year. The pollution of the water and other natural resources gets more severe with every passing day and threatens the health and well-being of both peoples.

Sewage that originates in the West Bank flows in the rivers near the Israeli towns of Haifa, Hadera, Netanya, Tel Aviv, Ashdod and Beersheba. Sewage-treatment facilities erected along the Green Line to deal with the sewage flowing in rivers from the West Bank are ineffectual because they cannot anticipate the type of sewage that will reach them downstream: industrial or domestic. A significant portion of the sewage flowing in the rivers seeps into the joint groundwater before it reaches the Green Line. An absence of regional environmental cooperation results in the prolonged decay of natural treasures like the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. Unilateral environmental measures have failed thus far.

Dealing with the entirety of the problems and risks to the water system in areas of Israel and the West Bank requires, therefore, cooperation not only among Israeli agencies, as the Water Authority said in its reaction, but also between them and the Palestinian Authority. The problem is far more severe in the [Gaza Strip](#). Experts predict that the demand for water in that area will increase by 60% by the end of the decade. According to UN estimates, only [10% of the drinking water](#) in the Strip conforms to the standards of the World Health Organization. The UN estimates that the groundwater reservoir will become unusable as early as 2016, and residents of the Strip will be left without a source of water.

At a Jan. 27 conference, Uri Shani, the former director of the Water Authority who represented Israel in talks with the Palestinians and Jordanians on water agreements, pointed to a significantly high rate of childhood diseases in the Gaza Strip, illnesses that [originate in polluted water](#). Gidon Bromberg, the Israeli director of Friends of the Earth-Middle East, said at the end of the conference that the power-supply problems in the Strip make it [difficult to build water desalination or sewage-treatment plants](#) and warned, “We are on the brink of disaster. No fence will stop 1.5 million people for whom the Hamas rulers do not provide a solution. They will try to reach Israel to obtain drinking water.”

In Netanyahu's AIPAC speech, as in any of his others, there was no hint of the ticking time bomb of the dire water shortages in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. As always, the only water in which he was interested was Iran's heavy water.

“Jerusalem's water crisis”, 31/03/2014, online at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/east-jerusalem-arab-israelis-water-pollution-palestine.html>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Israel Fights Water Contamination

In a move to eliminate water contamination, Israeli water monitoring company, *Blue I ('eye') Water Technologies* has introduced revolutionary water quality analyzing tools for industrial, municipal and private facilities that will ultimately keep an eye on the world's water. The technologies -*TurbiPlus and Prizma*- are currently being used by big brands such as Coca Cola, Nestlé and Bayar, among other corporate bodies to keep their food brands, food production water supplies as well as pools from contamination.

Blue I ('eye') currently has its technology installed in 25 Coca-Cola plants, from Israel to India. The giant soft-drink maker likes the system's ability to detect even trace levels of chlorine. Chief Technology Officer of Blue I Technologies, Stela Diamant remarks that 'this is critical because chlorine is added to the plant's water to sterilize it, and then must be entirely removed before being made into soda-pop'.

The water used in Coca Cola products follow a strict treatment process which includes the addition of chlorine, adjustment of the water chemistry and additional filtration. To prevent the products from having any after-taste effects from the chlorine, all the chlorine are removed using activated carbon. The Blue I ('eye') analyzer has proved the best accuracy and resolution in the low chlorine range, with a fast response time and a great correlation with Lab results.

TurbiPlus analyzers can pick up on the smallest hint of contamination in municipal, industrial or pool water; and the *Prizma* automatically measures and balances the chlorine and power of hydrogen (pH) levels in private pools and spas; prevents chemical overdosing and under-dosing and ensures the environmental and personal safety.

Pollution of water has been identified as one of the main challenge facing sustainable water service delivery in both urban and rural Ghana. This cutting-edge technology means the end of manual-testing and imprecise results and the beginning of a new era in water maintenance.

"Israel Fights Water Contamination", 05/04/2014, online at: <http://www.spyghana.com/israel-fights-water-contamination/>

BACK TO TOP

❖ The Manitoban Publishes “Apartheid” Screed, Refuses Counter Op-Ed

Writing in the Manitoban, the University of Manitoba’s student newspaper on March 17, Liz Carlyle and Bassam Hozaima fittingly employed the word “imagine” to describe the State of Israel, since their view of Israeli society is based on fantasy borne of either appalling ignorance or prejudice. In direct opposition to Canadian values of human rights, Israel “apartheid” week is the cynical brainchild of radical anti-Israel activists who believe they can fool Canadians into joining the cause of dismantling a democratic UN member state by quoting Nelson Mandela and comparing Israel to apartheid South Africa. Indeed, how else can this group of rabblers gain adherents for their sinister cause other than by inventing facts and spewing rhetoric? By having a little help from their friends at The Manitoban who not only published their screed, but have thus far refused to publish a counter op-ed setting the record straight.

Here are some real facts: The only country in the Middle East where apartheid is NOT practiced is in Israel. Not a single Jew is allowed to live in Gaza. According to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, not a single Jew would be allowed to live in a future Palestinian state. On the other hand, 20% of Israel’s population is Arab. Like all of Israel’s minorities, Arabs not only live in Israel but are equal under the law. Not so minorities elsewhere in the Middle East, such as in Lebanon where Palestinians are not allowed to practice certain professions or Saudi Arabia where women cannot leave home unaccompanied by a male, or Iran where gays are hanged publicly or elsewhere in the Middle East where Christians, Bahai and other minorities are persecuted relentlessly for their religious beliefs. Yet, anti-Israel activists are too busy sailing flotillas to support the Islamist regime in Gaza to notice or—heaven forbid—protest such appalling violations of human rights. Indeed, these activists prop up the Iranian proxy because of its steadfast and complete opposition to Israel’s very existence. How humanitarian.

Contrary to false assertions, there is no military occupation of Gaza or the West Bank. Carlyle and Hozaima obviously slept through Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005. Furthermore, since the Palestinian Authority took power in 1994, Israeli military control over most of the territories was phased out and Israel transferred virtually all civilian authority in the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority. Israel retained the power to control its own external security and that of its citizens, leaving 98 percent of the Palestinian population in the West Bank under the PA’s authority.

The Palestinian Authority thus has its own penal system, central bank, security forces, tax system, and its own media which it daily uses to incite hatred against Israel, rather than prepare its citizens for peace.

As for the water libel (facts are anathema to these activists), Israel exports volumes of water to the West Bank greatly in excess of what the Oslo Accords had mandated. This is done, among other reasons, to compensate for the Palestinian Water Authority's repeated failures to implement approved water projects. Over the past 20 years, the Palestinians have drilled at just one-third of sites identified for drilling in accordance with the Israel-PA Joint Water Committee, despite the fact that the international community has offered to finance the drilling of all sites.

The Palestinians refuse to build water treatment plants, despite their obligation to do so under the Oslo agreement. The international community has offered to build a desalination plant for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians have refused this gift. As for theft, it is the Palestinians who steal water by pirate tapping into pipes belonging to Mekorot, Israel's national water company. As a result, Mekorot's ability to supply water to Israelis and Palestinians alike has been compromised.

Lobbing libels at the State of Israel is a modus operandi of the "Israel Apartheid week" (IAW) crowd, preying as they do on the ignorance of well-intentioned humanistic minded students. Rather than helping to bridge differences and build a civic society ready to live side by side with Israel, they rely on negativity and advocate destruction using age old forms of hatred. IAW activists libel Israel so that those who support the democratic, Jewish state will expend their energy defending Israel from these accusations rather than exposing the bigoted, hateful objectives of IAW and BDS.

The next time you meet an "Israel apartheid week" supporter, ask them if they are organizing a 'Syrian Apartheid' week, day or even an hour in protest of the heart-wrenching siege and starvation of Palestinians in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria by the Assad regime. Ask if they have a kiosk in support of gays in Iran, women in Saudi Arabia, Christians in Egypt or journalists in the West Bank. China? North Korea? Anything?

IAW supporters don't really care about human rights or the Palestinians, however, because IAW is not about human rights or the Palestinians. It's about the Jews and the assault on the right of Jews to

self-determination as a democratic nation among the 22 non-democratic Arab states in the Middle East. That’s all you really need to know about “Israel apartheid Week”.

“The Manitoban Publishes “Apartheid” Screeed, Refuses Counter Op-Ed”, 01/04/2014, online at:
<http://www.honestreporting.ca/the-manitoban-publishes-apartheid-screed-refuses-counter-op-ed/13838>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Water issue overshadowed by peace negotiations

As the deadline for a framework peace talks quickly approaches, environmentalists and security strategists are demanding that the negotiators prioritize water issues, emphasizing the severity of the water scarcity.

Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME)—an umbrella organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli environmentalists— and the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) are drawing attention to the region’s water issues. Since the water problems have reached a critical point, they believe an agreement on the issue should be reached as soon as possible. Therefore, they asked Secretary Kerry to bring up the issue during the negotiations. If not a final peace agreement, at least a solution regarding these shared resources can be reached.

The water infrastructure in East Jerusalem can adequately provide for the consumption needs of 15,000 people, yet the local population numbers between 60,000 and 80,000. There are certain obstacles to allocating the water supply, including unplanned urbanization and illegal construction.

Actually, Jerusalem’s water companies, like Hagihon, are aware of the inadequate water infrastructure serving the Palestinian population living in East Jerusalem. Reportedly, Hagihon officials alerted the Israel Water Authority about the urgent need for additional water and infrastructure. However, there has been no progress to date. Officials at the Israel Water Authority stated, “the issue is far beyond the action capabilities of the [Israeli] water economy. Inter-ministerial cooperation is required to deal with the whole set of problems and risks involved and solve the problem once and for all.”

Gaza still worse

The Gaza Strip suffers from a much worse situation. A 60% increase in water demand is expected by the end of the decade. What is more, UN estimates that only 10% of the drinking water in Gaza is up to the standards of the World Health Organization, and that the groundwater reservoirs will be unusable as well as insufficient within a few years. As a result of these conditions, there are a

significantly high rate of childhood diseases and illnesses in the Gaza Strip.

Nevertheless, PM Netanyahu has preferred not to mention the water shortages in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza either in his AIPAC speech or in others. The current peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority are focusing on the basic issues and are trying to find a complete solution. Yet, the issue of water-resource allocation between Israelis and Palestinians residents can be solved before the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement.

On the other hand, the water crisis will deepen in case this process fails. Moreover, natural treasures like the Dead Sea and the Jordan River may be lost unless regional environmental cooperation can be achieved.

“Water issue overshadowed by peace negotiations”, 02/04/2014, online at:
<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/165128/water-issue-overshadowed-by-peace-negotiations.html>

BACK TO TOP

WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ Can Capitalism Quench Beirut's Thirst?

Waterless for three weeks over December and January, 26-year-old journalist Venetia Rainey took to showering using an elaborate pulley-and-bucket system, which she self-installed in her chic, inner-city apartment in Beirut.

“We had so many water shortages that my boyfriend figured out a way to take a shower while the main tank was empty,” she says. “He found a large, cleaned-out kitty-litter plastic bottle and decided it could work if he made some holes in the lid. We used a belt to tie it up above the shower. You had to tip it slightly to get the water to start coming out, but that meant that you only used water when you actually need to wet your hair or rinse it, rather than having it flowing the entire time.”

After months of arid weather, the five solid days of rain last week, which dropped nearly half an inch of water, were welcomed as a godsend in the Lebanese capital.

“Last week we had 90 millimeters of rain, which was the heaviest rainfall all year,” says Abed Zawawi, head of predictions for meteorology at the Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut. “We have not been lucky this year with rain.”

That's an understatement. Lebanon has enjoyed only 402 millimeters of rain in the last 12 months, less than half the 825 millimeters it received last year, in a country that sees an average of 714 millimeters per year.

The shortage has left Beirutis not only showerless, but also struggling financially as they fork over up to \$150 for roving water sellers to top up shared apartment tanks with 2,000 liters of water at a time. Beirut residents already buy bottled drinking water and pay annual rates for tank supplies for cleaning and washing.

The dwindling groundwater supply can only be partially blamed for Beirutis' water woes, however. Lebanon still has the most rainfall per capita in the Middle East, with over eight billion cubic meters per year. Poor resource management, a lack of regulatory framework and an aging and inefficient infrastructure means only 17 percent of available water resources are used, according to researchers.

Moreover, a lack of a united political agreement in the deeply divided country has meant little to no work on water sector reform for decades.

“We do not have integrated management of water resources,” says May Jurdi, professor and chair of the environmental health sciences department at the American University of Beirut. “We have a lot of wastage on the network,” she adds, listing outdated agricultural techniques and leaking pipes in the domestic sector as just two of the many ways precious water vanishes from the system.

Lack of a united political agreement in the deeply divided country has seen little to no work on water sector reform over decades. But a new group calling itself the Civic Influence Hub (CIH) recently launched an ambitious five-year water sector reform plan. Launched in 2012, CIH hopes its pilot initiative, Blue Gold, will increase the amount of clean water available in Lebanon to 500 million cubic meters by 2020, mitigate losses, provide jobs and protect one of the country’s strategic assets. Moreover, the CIH hopes the proposal for a unique public-private partnership to implement the initiative will work as a model to address some of Lebanon’s other core infrastructure and policy shortfalls, and unite the Lebanese people in implementing projects in the national interest.

“It’s time to unify Lebanese citizens through socio-economic projects. We are not talking about public-private partnerships, we are talking about public-private-citizen partnership — it’s a new model,” says Ziad Sayegh, CEO of the CIH. “We are convinced that the Lebanese citizens should be partners in every single policy. Through water we can unify Lebanese people. We are talking about a partnership for national wealth.”

Over 40 water and infrastructure experts have consulted on the Blue Gold initiative over 18 months to develop a comprehensive water sector reform model that Sayegh says will rehabilitate water supply networks, increase supply and spur sustainable development and economic growth. Sayegh estimates the cost of the plan to be \$5 billion, most of which will come from the private sector. He is confident Lebanon’s private sector will invest, but insists the plan does not amount to privatization of the water network.

“The water should still be owned by the people and the state,” he says. “The role of the private sector will be an operator.”

To ensure that's what happens, the vision requires a complete legal and regulatory overhaul of the water sector, including anti-monopoly laws and specific public-private partnership laws, with political top cover to implement. Sayegh hopes to replace the current water authorities, run by the Ministry of Energy and Water, with a National Water Council, a Water Regulatory Authority, a National Monitoring Center and a users' association, as well as an independent watchdog.

Paralyzed by a standoff between warring factions that saw the country without a government for 11 months until February, Lebanon does not have a history of productive sector reform. Nonetheless, Sayegh believes that as a non-sectarian and non-political lobby group, he has the right backing and that with a new government in place, CIH will manage to get the first water reform bill submitted to parliament in three months.

"It's time to lobby. There is no time to lose. We are working in parallel with the decision-makers and should be ready to submit to the parliament a serious, comprehensive and consultative law for the national water council in three months."

"We are convinced that we will succeed because this is a national initiative," he says. "Failure is not an option."

Jurdi agrees, describing integrated water as a "major resource essential for development."

"My concern is political will," she admits, but believes with interactions from all stakeholders and positive assessment of the model, "we can have a comprehensive, integrated water management."

"Can Capitalism Quench Beirut's Thirst?", 01/04/2014, <http://nextcity.org/daily/entry/can-capitalism-quench-beiruts-thirst>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Lebanon faces water crisis

In the past it has been a mere assumption, but Lebanon's dropping below the water poverty line is now becoming a reality. This is especially true in light of local and international studies, indicators and observations, which have started sending out a series of alerts and warnings to this effect.

On March 21, under the title of "Energy-Water Interdependence," a symposium was held at the Press Association Headquarters on the occasion of World Water Day. It was organized by the Friends of Ibrahim Abdel Aal Association, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Looming crisis

Speaking to *As-Safir* on the sidelines of the seminar, head of the Friends of Ibrahim Abdel Aal Association Naser Nasrallah explained that all indications suggested that "a water crisis is looming." He also questioned what had been circulated among concerned parties: that Lebanon was capable of meeting its own energy needs through water resources. "The parties making these claims are politicized. What they have been promoting is not even remotely close to reality," he said.

"The media should not be used to blind the Lebanese about what awaits them in the future. It has been said that in 2020 we will have a surplus of 500 million cubic meters, and in 2030, this surplus will rise to one billion cubic meters. This is not true," he added.

According to international averages, the water poverty line is set at 1,000 cubic meters of water per person annually. Lebanon's per capita annual share of water has dropped below this figure, meaning that Lebanon has fallen "below the water poverty line." According to Nasrallah, this situation was confirmed by the head of the Sustainable Development and Productivity Department at ESCWA, Roula Majdalani.

This fact can be explained as follows: the number of Lebanese, without taking into account tourists and the displaced, amounts to about 4 million people. This means that to be above the water poverty line Lebanon needs 4 billion cubic meters of water annually. The annual rainfall average is about 8 billion cubic meters (although the amount expected this year is much less than that). About 50% of

the rainfall evaporates, while a lesser percentage is wasted. Added to this is the waste caused by the Lebanese terrain and the amount of water seeping into the aquifer.

According to Nasrallah, all this indicates that we have a water deficit and that our needs exceed our water resources. Relying on water to produce energy is also a tricky matter.

Eliminating pollution

In light of this ominous reality, Nasrallah emphasized the need to work swiftly to protect water and water resources. The following steps should be taken:

- Eliminating pollution from all water basins where pollution has reached catastrophic levels due to sewage, domestic and industrial waste.
- Serious efforts should be made by the public and private sectors to prevent water pollution. Should the situation worsen, we will not be able to take advantage of the water.
- Encouraging the production of alternative energy in all fields: water, wind and solar, among others.

Nasrallah underlined the importance of developing a clear scientific policy based on statistics and numbers. However, he noted that political instability and national problems led to incomplete solutions. He also pointed out to contradictory arguments between technicians, especially those working in public administrations, where they adopted figures and information that were in direct conflict with the higher national interest.

On a global scale, out of 7 billion people, about 2.5 billion people are not provided with “reliable power or do not have power at all.” Furthermore, 2.8 billion people are living in areas suffering from great water scarcity, while one billion suffer from hunger, 1.1 billion live without safe drinking water and 1.3 billion live without electricity.

Interrelated resources

In light of these figures, the national program coordinator of Montreal Protocol Activities and Environmental Matters in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria at UNIDO, Dr. Nada Sabra — who spoke on behalf of the organization’s representative, Cristiano Pasini, during the seminar — said that “in our current situation, we are dealing with water security separately from energy security. We need to

address both issues from the same angle, as energy and water should be seen as interrelated natural resources.”

“Energy production requires water, particularly hydroelectric power, cooling, and fuel extraction, refining and treatment. Using water also requires energy in order to extract, treat and move water,” Sabra added.

It is expected that by 2035, due to population growth and urbanization, energy consumption will increase by 35%, which in turn will increase water consumption by 85%. This is why UNIDO warns that if the mismanagement of natural resources in energy production and water and energy consumption persists, our need for these resources will not be met in the future, mainly in light of global warming and population growth.

On the other hand, if water, energy and food are seen as correlated, there is a possibility to bring about change through the use of renewable energy, rationalization of water and energy consumption, reduction of food wastage, etc.

Industry consumption

“The international organization has placed the correlation between water and energy at the heart of its activities, particularly since industry is the most water and energy-intensive sector. It consumes around 20% of potable water around the world and accounts for one third of the world’s energy consumption,” Sabra affirmed. She pointed out that the mission of the organization was to support comprehensive and sustainable industrial development in order to promote efficient use of natural resources and the most efficient production techniques, in line with the green industry initiative the organization had launched.

During the seminar, Ziad Bakdash, vice president of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, reiterated that it was necessary that vital ministries not be assumed by politicians, but rather by unbiased ministers who were able to manage them. He considered that it was shameful not to have a vision to face the challenges of the water crisis in 2014. He noted that estimates showed that in case there was a good investment in water, revenues would stand at about \$1.5 billion a year.

Relying on an ESCWA study, Majdalani shed light on “the meaning of correlation between energy and water,” noting that the Arab world makes up around 5% of the world’s population and has only

0.5% of the world's renewable water sources. This means that the Arab world, including Lebanon, falls below the water poverty line, i.e. less than 1,000 cubic meters per capita annually.

40% of water wasted

Majdalani noted that the rate of water wastage was about 40%, while it was only 10% in other countries. She set forth a successful agriculture project implemented by the organization in the Lebanese town of Debel. She warned that the desalination of seawater would not be a process carried out only in Gulf countries, as other Arab countries intend to follow suit.

With the discovery of offshore gas and oil in Lebanon, Majdalani raised the alarm, since such a process will need amounts of water that will not be as available as before. She reiterated that the region was facing a significant challenge, including unstable weather and the issue of snow-water storage in Lebanon. Enhancing the efficiency between water and energy by establishing active institutions that can face the challenge of water scarcity and the threat of energy security was among the proposed solutions.

It is important to note that the seminar included a discussion panel led by the secretary general of the Friends of Abdel Aal Association, Ramzi Arab, with the participation of the director general of the Beqaa Water Establishment Maroun Msallem; industrialist Assad Saade; Director of Water Energy in the Litani Water Establishment Ghassan Gebran; member of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists Rana Salib; and farmer Mohammad Ali Nahouli.

Ban Ki-moon to provide resources for the majority

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon conveyed a message on World Water Day, stressing that water was at the core of sustainable development. He touched on “the links between water and energy,” noting that “both are critical for eradicating poverty. They interact with each other in ways that can help — or hinder — our efforts to build stable societies and lives of dignity for all.” He continued, “Climate change driven in great part by the unsustainable use of energy will exacerbate water stress and scarcity in many regions. Efforts to provide universal access to water and energy will be undermined if the current warming trend continues.”

“The many strong links between water and energy demand coherent, integrated policies and innovative strategies. Water must be used — and electricity must be generated and distributed — equitably and efficiently, so all users get a fair share,” Ban affirmed.

He ended his message as follows: “On World Water Day, let us pledge to develop the policies needed to ensure that sustainable water and energy are secured for the many and not just the few.”

“Lebanon faces water crisis”, 30/03/2014, online at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/03/lebanon-water-poverty-line-crisis.html>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Water can't wait for a peace agreement

As US Secretary of State John Kerry's deadline for a framework peace agreement quickly approaches, environmental and security strategists are pressuring negotiators to prioritize shared infrastructural issues in their discussions, arguing that the water sector in particular simply cannot wait.

Regional environmental organization Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME), in collaboration with the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), is asking that Kerry integrate within the framework agreement emergency measures related to water resources and environments shared by Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Solutions regarding these shared resources cannot wait until the formulation of a final peace agreement, and require urgent attention as "a ticking ecological time bomb," the organizations argue.

"Regional water policies have gained a place in recent years of increasing importance for the State of Israel, in the background of a growing shortage of freshwater in the Middle East," said Gidon Bromberg, FoEME's Israel director. "Israel's water policies today influence not only the price of water in Israel, but also our security and political situation. Surpluses of water that are sold or transferred to our neighbors can help strengthen relationships, serve as a gesture to prevent escalation, and serve as a basis for creating mutual interests among Israel and its neighbors."

The water shortage in Gaza and the West Bank is critical, and a solution to these issues could strengthen Israel's ties with its neighbors, Bromberg explained.

To this effect, FoEME and INSS recently unveiled an outline plan to solve cross-border environmental and water issues in the region. Even if the peace talks were to fail, the outline could be a key basis for tightening mutual trust, the organizations argue. FoEME and INSS therefore recently presented their outline to Kerry, American peace envoy Martin Indyk, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, and PA President Mahmoud Abbas.

The outline, which FoEME and the INSS hope could be integrated into the framework agreement,

calls for a “final water agreement” to be achieved within three months after the adoption of the framework agreement. Such a water agreement would replace article 40 of the 1994 Oslo Accords, establishing a new joint management structure with a third party presence, which would replace a largely defunct Joint Water Committee. The jurisdiction of the new management team would “be based on all sources of shared natural water and be governed by principles of equity, efficiency, environmental sustainability, and participatory structures,” according to the outline.

In addition, the outline calls for the creation of an action plan to address Palestinian water and environmental projects in order to solve urgent issues like water supply and sanitation in Gaza and the West Bank. Such action, the outline explains, would result “in immediate improvement in quality of life for the Palestinian population with direct cross border benefits to the Israeli population.”

A final stipulation of the outline involves the creation of a trilateral committee, including representation from Israel, the PA, and Jordan, with the goal of rehabilitating the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.

While not included in the outline, the organizations is also calling for the immediate release of 70 infrastructure projects currently awaiting Joint Water Committee approval. In addition, they called for the accelerated promotion of the forthcoming desalination plant in Gaza, and also suggested that Israel release 30 million cubic meters of additional freshwater to Gaza.

Such quantities could replace one commitment Israel made in a Jordanian-Israeli-Palestinian trilateral water agreement in December 2013, to make an additional 20 million cubic meters of water available to the PA, the organization said.

“The treatment of water issues and the shared environment serve as hostage to a complex political reality,” Bromberg said. “Both sides depend on outdated mechanisms designed for a short-term interim period, and today, 20 years later, still remain in force and unchanged during a time that the population of the region and the consumption of natural resources has doubled.”

Dr. Oded Eran, a senior research fellow at the INSS, told The Jerusalem Post on Monday that water

“is one of the major issues that was always on the agenda of the negotiations.”

“We look at this issue from a strategic point of view in context of Israeli-Palestinian relations and on a regional level,” said Eran, who headed Israel’s negotiation team with the Palestinians from 1999-2000. “We see that water, energy, infrastructure can be a confidence building measure, but also something that can precede the political peace.”

While the current negotiations are based upon the paradigm that all of the core issues need to be solved at once, Eran and his colleagues at the INSS argue that water problems can, in fact, be solved before a comprehensive agreement occurs.

“This is something that can really enhance the process of the negotiations and the process of normalization among Israel and its neighbors,” he said.

“Water can’t wait for a peace agreement”, 01/04/2014, online at: <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/165075/water-can-t-wait-for-a-peace-agreement.html>

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Desalination: A Major Success For Israel?**

Despite persistent dry weather, Israel has backed off its efforts to promote conservation, instead placing its confidence in desalination.

For those accustomed to the country's emphasis on saving water, the policy pivot is stark.

"The familiar public messages during recent years of drought, often showing images of parched earth, have disappeared from television despite weeks of balmy weather with record low rainfall in some areas," McClatchy *reported*.

"The level of the Sea of Galilee, the country's natural water reservoir, is no longer closely tracked in news reports nor the subject of anxious national discussion," the report said.

Instead, the country is pinning its hopes on plants that desalinate seawater from the Mediterranean. Since 2005, Israel has built and begun operation of four facilities. A fifth will begin service this year. Around 80 percent of water used in homes in Israel is produced by desalination, the report said.

"There's no water problem because of the desalination," Hila Gil, director of the desalination division in the Israel Water Authority, said in the report. "The problem is no longer on the agenda."

Desalination backers say Israel's track record with this technology shows it can be useful in California, as well. Israeli experts have already begun deploying technology in the Golden State.

"In an effort to conquer the scarcity of water in California, Israel's IDE Technologies will be constructing (in Carlsbad, CA) what is the Western Hemisphere's largest desalination plant," *according to* a commentary in *U-T San Diego*.

The potential cost burden on ratepayers is a barrier to the construction and operation of more desalination plants worldwide.

For instance, in the state of Victoria, Australia, a desalination plant was recently constructed, but the effort is delayed and no water has been ordered as government officials look to lower their costs.

"A refinancing of the desalination plant would save Victorian families \$187 million on their water bills," *The Age* reported, citing the state's water minister Peter Walsh.

"A full desalinated water order for 2014-15 would cost Melbourne families an extra \$114 million and would be a waste of money given the healthy dam levels," he said in the report.

"Desalination: A Major Success For Israel?", 02/04/2014, online at: <http://www.wateronline.com/doc/desalination-a-major-success-for-israel-0001>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Alternative water sources help Israel in drought

JERUSALEM (TNA)- Israel has experienced this winter the worst drought recorded in modern history. Since the mega snow storm in the beginning of December there has been no significant rainfall. Israel's Water Authority has noted with some degree of alarm that the drought is the harshest around its main water bodies, in the north and in Samaria. Israeli's Meteorological Service (IMS) stated that this winter has been the driest since records began more than 70 years ago, some of them even for more than 100 years as rainfall reports in Jerusalem date back to the mid 19th century. Precipitation totals were less than 20% of the normal in many parts of the country.

"Such extreme dryness has never been recorded," a spokesperson for the Water Authority said, "We should also remember that last year's winter ended early, with less rainfall than usual." The full extent of the drought will only be determined at the end of the season.

These severe conditions are felt not only in Israel, but throughout the entire Middle East. Australia, China and some areas in the US are experiencing droughts as well. California authorities have recently announced a cut-back in water supply for agriculture.

Israel has made preparations for such a scenario and there will be no need for a diminishing of its water supply. "Thanks to outstanding measures and vast investments made by the State of Israel in its water economy over the past years Israel is no longer dependent solely on rainfall. Integrative administration of the water resources together with the construction of desalination plants and purification and reclamation of treated waste water enables us today to fully provide all private and industrial segments with the water they require, and they no longer are required to take drastic measure such as the destruction of crops, like in the past," they said at the Water Authority. Israel is the number one leader in the world in the field of purification and reclamation of treated waste water and its water technologies are sought around the world.

"The State of Israel, together with the Water Authority, has made preparations for the developing circumstances we are now experiencing: prolonged and extreme droughts. Thanks to these prior arrangements Israel will not experience a water crisis and will provide water to all its consumers," they concluded.

"Alternative water sources help Israel in drought", 01/04/2014, online at:
<http://www.sdjewishworld.com/2014/04/01/alternative-water-sources-help-israel-drought/>

BACK TO TOP

❖ In Some Palestinian Neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, Not Even 17 Liters of Water Per Day

Recently, an international figure visiting Israel asked the following question: "...I could not check the exact figures ... how can it be that an Israeli is allowed to use 70 liters of water per day, but a Palestinian only 17?"

The question was met with ire by Israel's Economy Minister, who dubbed it a "blatant lie," and stated that he "will not accept a false moralizing narrative against Israel." In the visitor's own country, the official response was that "...it was a mistake. [He] would be well advised to try to repair the situation."

Well, it seems that what requires urgent repair is not the question -- but rather the water pipes. Those, and a system that allows for tens of thousands of people to live for weeks without running water while those in power have no sense of urgency, responsibility, or humanity to fix this outrage.

He who dared to ask that now-famous question is of course Mr. Martin Schulz, president of the European Parliament. So was Mr. Shulz's 70-to-17 liter water-consumption ratio a "blatant lie"? In actuality, for Palestinians in some neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, the situation can be much worse.

Welcome to Ras Hamis, Ras Shahada, Dahyat a-Salam, and the Shuafat Refugee Camp. Together, these neighborhoods of East Jerusalem are home to some 80,000 Palestinians. Some 80,000 human beings who since early March have almost no running water.

Imagine what would happen if your neighborhood was suddenly cut off from the water supply. The municipality would surely do everything it could to fix the situation within hours; if for some reason the fix was delayed, the city would rush in water trucks, and keep updating the residents on its progress.

How long would you take it, with no running water to drink, cook, shower, clean?

In East Jerusalem it took countless interventions to finally get the local water authority to just bother to take a look at the situation in the neighborhoods cut from supply -- after 17 days. Not 17 hours: 17 days before they bothered to show up. And still they have not fixed the situation. Hence an urgent

appeal submitted to the High Court of Justice on behalf of the residents of these East Jerusalem neighborhoods by Attorney Keren Tsafir from the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI). Ras Hamis, Ras Shahada, Dahyat a-Salam, and the Shuafat Refugee Camp all happen to be Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, on the east side of the separation wall. After 1967, Israel expanded the municipal boundaries of West Jerusalem and annexed these neighborhoods, as well as many others in the East. But in 2008, when Israel built the separation wall cutting through East Jerusalem, these four neighborhoods were left on its East (Palestinian) side. In principle, Israel's, and the municipality's, responsibility toward these neighborhoods should not have changed. In fact, it did.

No garbage collection, almost no public transportation, a dearth of schools, lack of health services, no sidewalks, no street names, no green public spaces, no street lighting; the list goes on and on.

And now, for almost three weeks already, no running water. In the first few days --no water at all. Then water came back, in trickles, to some of the residents. The situation now: Some have intermittent water supply; others get low pressure supply; and the rest get no water.

With its treatment of these Palestinian neighborhoods, Israel has given new meaning to the word "in." While being in a state of denial that it could ever act in such a way toward Palestinians, Israel is the state that denies these Palestinians of water. Surely, a State of denial.

After three weeks without water, it is not just time to ask questions. It is time to get answers.

“In Some Palestinian Neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, Not Even 17 Liters of Water Per Day”, 01/04/2014, online at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hagai-elad/in-some-palestinian-neigh_b_5058107.html

BACK TO TOP

❖ Ethiopia: Egypt and the Nile politics

Addis Ababa (HAN) April 4, 2014- BY YEMANE NAGISH, Reporter. An Interview With Ambassador Ibrahim Idris is director-general of the trans-boundary resources directorate at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to that he had a long and distinguished career as dean of the Law Faculty at the Addis Ababa University. On top of that he was also known to be a well-published scholar who later left for the US after winning the Fullbright Scholarship. Most importantly, Idris served as Ambassador in Cairo from 2006 to 2011. After being hit with the Arab Spring that swept across the Middle East and North Africa, Egypt is on way to crown its next president, the former chief of the Egyptian armed forces, Field Marshal Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi. Yemane Nagish of The Reporter sat down with the Ambassador to explore the possible political direction the country might take and the implication for the Nile and the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Excerpts:

The Reporter: Going back in history, can we evaluate what the Nile meant for Presidents Gamal Abdul Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak?

Ambassador Ibrahim Idris: As far as I am concerned, the Nile has the same meaning for all three presidents. They all share one strong conviction: to cling onto the older water agreements that were signed on the River Nile. Among these agreements, the one signed in 1929 and 1959 are the most significant ones since these are the only ones that clearly talk about water share from the river. In the case of the first, the Egyptians signed favorable terms about this river since the British were the ones who signed the accord in the place of the upper riparian states, except Ethiopia, as they were the colonial overlords at that time. Whereas the 1959 agreement was also most preferred by Egyptians because the agreement gave 100 percent of the water to Egypt and Sudan. I think this desire to perpetuate the two agreements has been and is still shared by political leaders in Cairo.

But, how big is the Nile in the foreign policy of that country across the rule of the aforementioned leaders?

During my tenure there as a diplomat, I had a first-hand account of what the foreign policy of Egypt was. In that regard, I doubt that there could be a shift now or in the future leadership of Egypt. Even if one goes back to study their political history, especially during the era of those three leaders you have mentioned, the story is almost similar. The two most important agenda in Egyptian foreign policy direction are the issue of the Nile and the Middle East (the issue of Israel and the Palestine). I

also observed that there is little debate on the subject of the Nile and that it is the least controversial issue in Egypt.

What about between the leadership and the general populace is there any difference of opinion?

Let me tell you one interesting fact. I remember that the general populace in Egypt had never been told that the bulk of this water is sourced from another country located to the south of theirs until very recently. More specifically, the talk of Ethiopia being a source of most of the Nile surfaced in Egypt after the meeting in Sharm al Sheik, where the riparian nations, with the exception of Egypt and Sudan, took a strong stance to ink the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) that was later signed. It was a meeting that spanned 21 hours and in connection with the decision to ink the CFA rumors of Ethiopia being behind the decision of other riparian states to sign the agreement spread. And together with that, the Egyptian public for the first time learned about Ethiopia being the source of this water body.

Going back to that meeting (Sharm al Sheik meeting), how was the debate and position of the Egyptians?

Generally, the Egyptians argued strongly on three points. The first one was on how to pass decisions regarding the River Nile. The Egyptians insisted that any decision that is passed should be based on consensus rather than votes. You see, back then there were nine riparian countries taking part in the talks. Hence, if it was to be decided on votes it was clear that the upper riparian states would have the upper hand. But, a consensus would give each country, including Egypt, the right to veto any position taken by the riparian states. The other one was the protection of what they call water security and water use rights. What this entails is simply this: they wanted not only their old shares of the water to be protected but also the rights to continue using the water, which they have acquired and extended since old colonial agreements. You see, this meant that there was no point to negotiate on the issue anymore, and, of course, the upper riparian states categorically rejected it. The third one was to hold the right to give consent to any water-related development activity that is undertaken in the upper riparian nations. We were trying to reconcile these issues for 21 hours. The thing is that this position of the Egyptians was hardly new to the other riparian nations and since the Kinshasa meeting they were given time to present alternatives on which we could come to an understanding. But, they were insistent, and finally the seven nations had to take a step, which they did by agreeing to sign the accord in Entebbe.

But the discussion went on for ten years. Surely there must have been some progress during that time. Why did things revert back to square one after all these negotiations?

Basically, the Egyptians came to a decision in the end that the CFA should grant recognition to the older agreements that favor them. And this in effect meant nullifying the whole effort of negotiating and drafting a new agreement. Why would there be a CFA, if it was to recognize the older accords, which were unjust? This did not make any sense and finally the seven had to move on with signing the CFA.

How does the CFA compare with older water treaties?

Simply, we can consider that the older colonial agreements are documents signed between the two lower riparian countries and a colonial power, while the CFA is a document shared by six nations. So far, Ethiopia and Rwanda have ratified the document and ratification of the others is pending, but it will become a legal document far more powerful in the future. But, as it is at the moment, the CFA has greater value in terms of offering a viable and reasonable alternative to the Nile than the contorted and slanted treaties that Egypt wants to keep alive. Regarding the content, the CFA is far better than the old treaties since one, it offers a sustainable solution to the Nile as it recognizes the rights of lower riparian countries to use the water and that there is a proper framework for Egypt to negotiate her right should it decide to join the accord. Second, the CFA also offers a futuristic solution to the water share by considering the development and protection of the water share by all riparian nations. How can people who are forbidden from taking a sip be expected to develop and insure sustainability of the water resource? Mind you about one-third or 50 million of Ethiopians are touched by this water body and what kind of logic would there be to argue that these people shouldn't see any benefit coming from this particular river.

How do you see the strategy of Egyptian leaders in the past and those in power today?

Although the overall spirit remains, the strategies do change according to various factors. I do believe that the overall dynamics surrounding the Nile have seen a marked shift between the time of the previous leaders and now. For one, the upper riparian states as a group have altered their previous ways to come together for a common interest; this would surely impact the strategists. Another is that these upper riparian nations' political, economic and social conditions are changing, which have a bearing on the matter. Also, the internal condition in Egypt is something to consider. In this regard, I see the politicians of this generation using the Nile to divert attention from the real issues in their domestic political spheres.

Can we say that Ethiopia has now acquired the strength to withstand the age-long Egyptian tactic of working to cut the country's external financing? Can we say this shift has, in fact, happened? How do you view recent Egyptian moves to internationalize the issue?

In short, I think the shift is there economically. It is easily visible in terms of our development projects undertaken without external assistance. In fact, the main project on the River Nile, GERD, itself has been built without any external assistance. Yet, following the recommendation of an international Panel of Experts, Egypt has embarked on a campaign to internationalize the dam. Personally, I do not understand the rationale behind this effort. Look, to begin with, what they are claiming has no legal basis in international law. There is no law that would tell the upper riparian nations to be a bystander while lower riparian nations exploit a resource that they all share. Egypt is saying that we should not touch a drop of the Nile but, of course, the upper riparian nations reject it; I do not see this campaign going anywhere. Rather, if at all their concern is real regarding, for instance, GERD, the sane thing to do is be included in the process of implementing the Panel's recommendations and voice their problems appropriately. Apart from that, with Ethiopia saying the dam project is paid for from their own resources and other upper riparian nations doing the same tomorrow, what the outcome of this campaign could be is confusing.

Recent developments have shown that Egypt has included the stringiest positions in their constitution. Does it amount to anything?

For Ethiopia or the other riparian nations it would not make any difference if Egypt chooses to articulate its position on the Nile anywhere; whether on their policy document or their constitution. For what it is worth, this move has contributed more to alienating Egypt from the rest of the riparian nations and has badly impacted any hope of working together in the future. What Article 44 proclaimed is the dogmatic historical water right statement; this has been and still is rejected by other nations. So, I say, it is to no effect.

But, we have seen at times some positive diplomatic developments between the two nations only to regress back to older war rhetoric and tension. Why such a fluctuation? And with Marshal Al Sisi's prospectus to secure the presidency, what can be expected?

All I can understand from this is that the Egyptians are still not concerned with the technical matters and the impact of this dam. Rather I feel that they are using it for their own domestic political agenda. This is why they keep oscillating between peaceful negotiation and war rhetoric. As far as the ex-military man coming to power is concerned, I am afraid I have to say that I cannot see any significant

change from what they are not doing now or before. You see, Egypt has a long history of being ruled by a military leader, this prospectus president was also part of the administration during the previous military eras, and hence I do not see why it should be unique this time around.

Finally, where do you think the political turmoil in Egypt is going? Are they out of the woods?

It is really difficult to predict where the situation is heading. But one thing is quite clear: the political leadership, instead of addressing matters domestically, has opted to externalize them. This, in part, entails keeping the public in constant fear by telling them a dam project in Ethiopia has endangered its water security. But, one would have to wait and see how things turn out

-
Speaking Freely is an Geeska Afrika Online and Horn of Africa Newsline (HAN) feature that allows guest writers to have their say. if you are interested in contributing or sending News, Views and Comments. Please email at: han@geeskaafrika.com

-
HAN & Geeska Afrika Online (1985-2014), the oldest free independent Free Press in the region, brings together top journalists from across the Horn of Africa. Including Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Djibouti, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Oromo, Amhara, Somali, Afar and Harari. Plus, we have daily translations from 150 major news organizations in the Middle East and East African regions.

“Ethiopia: Egypt and the Nile politics”, 04/04/2014, online at: <http://geeskaafrika.com/?p=2114>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Egypt-Sudan water relations

Historically, Sudan and Egypt together formed the Nile Valley region, as defined by the Nile tributaries from Ethiopia and the equatorial plateau that converge to form the Blue Nile and White Nile respectively, and the convergence of these two major arteries at Khartoum to form the Nile that wends its way northward into Egypt. This crucial riparian connection has given rise to an array of factors that combine to make Sudan one of the most important countries to Egypt in the world. In addition to their geographical contiguity in the Nile Valley, they share common bonds of history, religion, language and kinship. Geopolitically, Sudan is Egypt's gateway into Africa. However, perhaps their most salient point in common is that they are the two Nile estuary countries. Cooperation between them would strengthen their position among the countries of the Nile Basin. Combined, they occupy the largest segment of the Nile system, while both are heavily dependent on Nile waters — Egypt primarily so and Sudan to a great extent.

Historically, a concept of unity has prevailed in the Egyptian political consciousness of its relationship with Sudan. The 'Unity of the Nile Valley' had existed as a nationalist calling and administrative reality until the July 1952 Revolution. In February 1953, Cairo and Sudan signed the Sudanese autonomous rule agreement and this was shortly followed by the Anglo-Egyptian evacuation agreement of 1954. Nevertheless, the history of Egypt-Sudanese political relations has been punctuated by numerous crises that ricocheted through other dimensions of their relations, with detrimental effects on bilateral cooperation, especially in the domain of water resource management and hydraulic projects.

Even before the transition to Sudanese self-rule and independence, media campaigns and various third party interventions worked to sour relations between the Egyptian and Sudanese peoples. As a result, Sudanese society grew sharply divided over the question of its country's special relationship with Egypt. While some quarters continued to support this relationship, others opposed what they called the Egyptian mandate over Sudan.

The Sudanese civil war in the south, which rocked political stability in the country following

independence, also lured foreign intervention into Sudanese affairs. Often, one of the aims of the foreign powers was to further disconnect Sudan from Egypt. Although Egypt tried to remain neutral on the civil war in Sudan, this did not spare Egypt adverse reactions from the warring sides. The southern secessionist movement (the Sudan People's Liberation Movement — SPLM) set itself against the Jonglei Canal project, which therefore had to be suspended in spite of the benefits it promised to both Sudan and Egypt. The northern Islamist front constantly accused Egypt of helping the South.

The Machakos Protocol of July 2002 heralded further troubles for relations between Cairo and Khartoum. The agreement was the first in a series that would lead to the creation of a new state — South Sudan — which would naturally have its own water needs, water rights demands and visions for hydraulic projects of its own. This necessarily complicated Egypt's relationship with the North.

But Egyptian-Sudanese relations had been strained before this for other reasons. Prime among them was contention over the area known as the Halayeb Triangle. When, in 1992, Khartoum took measures to alter the status quo in the area defined by Halayeb, Shalatin and Abu Ramad, Egypt responded with measures that eventually led to the annexation of that region to Egyptian administration. Tensions over that issue reverberated through the economic and commercial relations between the countries. With regards to water resources, in December 1992 Khartoum froze its cooperation in the Nile Waters Technical Organisation. It then threatened to ignore the 1959 Nile Waters Agreement between Egypt and Sudan. Khartoum accused Egypt of confiscating a portion of Sudan's quota (it cited five billion cubic metres), closed the Rosaris Dam on the Blue Nile and began construction of the Kenana and Rahaq canals without coordinating with Egypt over these projects, in violation of the provisions of the 1959 agreement. Sudan has other hydraulic projects that could jeopardise Egypt's water security, especially in view of fluctuating relations between the two countries and volatile political relations inside Sudan itself.

In spite of such problems, water relations between the two countries have remained uninterrupted. Bilateral communications between Cairo and Khartoum's water authorities have continued and it is likely that Egyptian-Sudanese relations will improve. After all, Egyptian-Sudanese solidarity is strategically beneficial to both sides. They are already bound, in their capacity as the two Nile estuary

nations, by a number of bilateral water agreements that they continue to recognise, even if other Nile Basin countries refuse to do so. These agreements are:

- The 1913 agreement: In 1913, Britain (on behalf of the government of Sudan) notified Egypt of its plans to construct a dam as part of a plan to irrigate a portion of Sudanese land called Al-Gazira. The two sides agreed to study means to control the Nile in ways that would benefit both Egypt and Sudan. The studies gave rise to proposals for the construction of the Sennar Dam and Gazira irrigation project, the Jabal Al-Awliya Dam to create an emergency water reservoir for Egypt, and other reservoir projects in the Great Lakes area. Egypt initially objected on the grounds of the possible harm that such projects might cause it. Therefore, a committee of experts was formed to study the matter. Headed by an Indian expert, the committee found that Egypt's annual water need amounted to 60 billion cubic metres. Accordingly, Britain pledged not to expand the area of reclaimed land in the Gazira project beyond 300,000 hectares without first notifying the Egyptian government. Following the agreement, the Sennar and the Jabal Al-Awliya dams were indeed constructed.
- The 1929 agreement between Egypt and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: Following the assassination in Cairo of the British governor-general of Sudan, Sir Lee Stack, Britain notified Egypt that it would increase the scope of the Gazira irrigation scheme to the degree it saw fit. Faced with Egypt's adamant objections, however, it agreed to form a commission of experts and through an exchange of letters in May 1925, Britain (on behalf of Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania) acknowledged Egypt's rights to Nile waters and pledged to safeguard these rights and not to undertake any irrigation or electricity generating projects on the Nile or its subsidiaries, the Great Lakes region, or in any areas under British control that would prejudice Egyptian rights. Egypt was also granted the right to monitor the Nile flow in upper riparian countries and would be given the facilities to conduct the necessary studies on the Nile in Sudan.
- The 1959 Nile Waters Agreement: After winning its independence in 1956, Sudan objected to the 1929 agreement on the grounds of its political nature. Cairo and Khartoum entered into negotiations that resulted in the agreement between Sudan and Egypt for full control utilisation of the Nile waters. Signed in 1959, that agreement sought to regulate the use of Nile waters to ensure its optimal utilisation in accordance with the provisions of international law.

The provisions of the agreement, if faithfully applied, would benefit both Egypt and Sudan and unify their positions with respect to the other Nile Basin countries on the basis of their realisation that they are both estuary countries endowed with natural and acquired rights. According to the agreement, both nations have the right to undertake water-regulating projects within the limits of their established quotas. The costs and benefits of projects that would enhance the Nile flow by preventing evaporation losses in the marshes of the White Nile in southern Sudan would be shared equally between the two countries. The two countries also agreed that Sudan would have the right to build the Rosaris Dam on the Blue Nile and that they would share the benefits of the waters that would be retained as the result of the construction of the High Dam at Aswan.

They determined that the average annual Nile flow was about 84 billion cubic metres, measured at Aswan, and that of this Egypt and Sudan would have a quota of 55.5 billion cubic metres and 18.5 billion cubic metres respectively, after Sudan obtained 14.5 billion cubic metres of what the High Dam furnished and Egypt obtained 7.5 billion cubic metres of the waters of the High Dam lake. The two sides further agreed to share equally any increase in flow due to higher than average flooding of the Nile. In addition, Egypt agreed to pay Sudan LE15 million in compensation for damage caused by the reservoir created by the construction of the High Dam and it relinquished its right to waters in the reservoir of the Jabal Al-Awliya Dam, title to which it handed to Khartoum.

The 1959 agreement also established the principle of cooperation in — and sharing the costs and benefits of — the utilisation of lost waters in the Nile Basin. Accordingly, the two countries created a framework for cooperation in water loss reduction projects in the Sudanese regions of Bahr Al-Jabal, Bahr Al-Zaraf and Bahr Al-Ghazal and in the Subat River and White Nile basin.

In spite of the foregoing, Khartoum undertook a major shift in its position on Ethiopian hydraulic works such as the Renaissance Dam and other major dams on the Blue Nile. In December 2013, the Sudanese president declared his support for the construction of the Renaissance Dam, which, he said, would benefit Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. The shift was closely connected to a range of domestic political issues and problems in Sudan in which Addis Ababa is closely involved, most notably Sudan's dispute with South Sudan over the oil-rich Abyei region. But Sudan also stands to benefit

directly from the Renaissance Dam project. It will furnish a permanent supply of irrigation water for territories that Sudan has earmarked for major development projects. With the secession of South Sudan, Sudan lost the water diversion projects in the Bahr Ghazal area and the Jonglei Canal project ground to a halt. It is therefore searching for alternative and perpetual water sources and believes that the Renaissance Dam is the key. In siding with Ethiopia, Sudan has overlooked the advantages of its strategic alliance with Egypt, especially in the face of schemes to partition it further. It has also chosen to ignore the potential dangers of the Renaissance Dam from erosion and other environmental problems to massive flooding should part or all of the dam collapse.

“Egypt-Sudan water relations”, 03/04/2014, online at: <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/5823/21/Egypt-Sudan-water-relations.aspx>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Egypt: Ramzy Responded Ethiopian Nile Politics

Djibouti (HAN) April 4, 2014: – Opinion By.BISHOY RAMZY, Cairo Post- CAIRO: Ongoing debate between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project is heightening concern over the future of relations between the two countries.

Egyptian experts have said the dam poses clear threats to water security, while Ethiopian experts have been insisting that Egypt’s hard-line position lacks consideration for other countries and comes at the expense of Ethiopia’s right to development.

Egypt’s position on the Nile

Ethiopia’s former ambassador to Egypt, Ibrahim Idris, said in an interview with the newspaper The Ethiopian Reporter on Saturday, “I see the politicians of this generation using the Nile to divert attention from the real issues in their domestic political spheres.”

Idris said such distraction strategies change with leaders and factors related to the political, economic and social situations of countries of the Nile Basin. He added, “I do believe that the overall dynamics surrounding the Nile have seen a marked shift between the time of the previous leaders and now.”

He said during his tenure he observed there was “little debate on the subject of the Nile,” as it was the least controversial issue in Egypt. He said now, the Palestinian issue and the Nile represent top priorities for Egypt’s foreign policy agenda.

However, Dr. Amany al-Taweel, director of the African Unit at the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, said the Nile has represented “a top priority for Egyptians since time immemorial.”

“They sanctified the Nile during the era of pharaohs and worked to maximize its utilization to build their civilization,” she said.

Taweel added in a statement to The Cairo Post on Monday that Egyptian support for Palestinian rights stems from its role defending the rights of Palestinian people to their land. She said the Nile River represents one of the main components of Egypt’s national security, and Egypt’s position on the river is not a cover for its internal problems, but rather a defense “from a serious threat.”

Ayman Shabana, political science professor at the Institute of African Research and Studies at Cairo University, said the Ethiopian dam “poses two serious threats against Egypt.” The first, he said, is the threat of water shortage, and the other is the possibility of the dam’s future demolition, “which could flood Egypt.”

He said such threats are pushing decision-makers in Egypt to uphold old treaties.

Conflicting agreements

Egypt has insisted on maintaining treaties signed during the colonial era to ensure its historic right over Nile waters. The most prominent ones are a 1929 treaty that provided Egypt with the right to veto any projects on the Nile, and 1959 treaty which was signed between Egypt and Sudan and ensures Egypt 55.5 billion cubic meters of Nile water annually.

An Ethiopian diplomat told The Cairo Post that Egyptians insist on upholding old treaties that guarantee their share of the Nile water “at the expense of the rights of downstream countries,” adding that the Egyptian government refused to sign a Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) to provide more water from the Nile to other countries because it lacked recognition of their old treaties.

“Why would there be a CFA, if it was to recognize the older accords, which were unjust?” he asked.

Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Kenya have signed the agreement.

Dr. Ayman Abdel Wahab, a specialist in Nile Basin affairs at Al-Ahram Center for Political Studies, told The Cairo Post on March 20, “Egypt refuses the agreement because it violates Egypt’s right to study the effects of the projects established on Nile waters... this violates Egypt’s water security.”

Another major point of contention regarding the CFA is that it requires a majority vote for the passing of decisions on the viability of projects, he said, while Egypt requires such decisions to be based on consensus.

The need for mediation

Egyptian experts told The Cairo Post that direct negotiations with the Ethiopian side have failed and reached a dead end due to what some described as Ethiopia’s obstinacy.

Meanwhile, Ethiopian officials and experts have said similar things in the press about Egypt.

“There is a need for mediator to bridge the gap of difference between the two countries,” Shabana said.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Karty expressed his country’s readiness to mediate between Egypt and Ethiopia to reach a compromise and resolve the current crisis, during his recent visit to Egypt on March 3. He has even submitted a proposal to perform the role of a mediator, which is problematic because Sudanese officials have expressed their support for the dam, Shabana said.

“We need a neutral mediator,” he said.

The Ethiopian side has said in the press that Egyptian diplomatic efforts aim to “internationalize” the crisis by pressuring donor countries and organizations to suspend their financial support for the project.

Idris, Ethiopia’s former ambassador to Egypt, said during his interview with the Ethiopian Reporter that his government does not depend on external assistance regarding development projects. The Renaissance Dam is being built without foreign support, he said.

“Egypt has embarked on a campaign to internationalize the dam. Personally, I do not understand the rationale behind this effort,” he said.

Taweel, the director of the African Unit at the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, said that Egypt has turned to a number of Gulf states to mediate between the country and Ethiopia. She said a number of Gulf states may wield influence over Ethiopia due to their increasing investments in the country, adding such countries could pressure the African state to offer concessions.

Legal options for Egypt

Ambassador Ahmed Refaat, Beni Suef University president and professor of international law, said in a statement to The Cairo Post that the Egyptian government should turn to the international judiciary, even though it does not issue binding verdicts.

“If the government turns to the United Nations General Assembly, it could refer the case to the International Court of Justice. This would temporarily suspend the dam’s construction,” he said.

But the Ethiopian ambassador told The Cairo Post that such an attempt would have “no legal basis in international law.”

“There is no law that would tell the upper riparian nations to be a bystander while lower riparian nations exploit a resource that they all share,” he said.

Refaat said that international river laws provide upstream countries with veto rights over projects that could be established on the river and could harm their interests.

“Egypt: Ramzy Responded Ethiopian Nile Politics”, 04/04/2014,online at: <http://geeskaafrika.com/?p=2117>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Binding Ethio-Sudanese Relations

The changing world of the 21st century requires nation-states to transform the systems under which they have traditionally conducted their diplomatic activities. The contemporary media-saturated system of international politics needs wider public involvement in regional and global affairs to advance the desired goals of shared interests. Superseding traditional diplomacy, with ambassadors and politicians negotiating in dark corners, a new public approach to diplomacy has come to the fore, placing transparency at the center of affairs in attempts to communicate foreign policy goals and objectives, cultures, histories, traditions and values. The objective is to win the hearts and minds of both publics through discussions of ideas, the results will provide for a continuous development of friendly partnerships. It is in this sense that Ethiopia and Sudan have recently embarked on the process of sharing and communicating all-round ideas and publicizing their ties, in effect positioning two friendly peoples at the epicenter of their diplomacy.

One excellent example of this was the recent tour of an Ethiopian cultural troupe in the Sudan. The group toured a number of places in the Sudan during the second week of March (March 7 to 12) giving musical and cultural performances along with Sudanese counterparts in Medani, capital of Al Gezira State, El Damazine and Roseires as well as Omdurman, before ending their musical and cultural displays in Khartoum. Their much appreciated performances underlined the value and importance of deepening and enhancing already existing people-to-people relations.

The two countries have also been forging further partnerships in new areas including linking their universities, scholars and think tanks to promote scientific cooperation for the sustainable development, peace and stability of the Eastern Nile Basin communities. Addis Ababa University and University of Khartoum held a symposium under the theme “The Eastern Nile Cooperation: Opportunities for Regional Development” earlier last month (March 10 to 12). The symposium addressed five major themes: Water Resources of the Nile; Eastern Nile Geology; Trans-boundary Water Resources Management, Challenges and Opportunities for Cooperation in the Eastern Nile; Gaps in the Scientific Research and Capacity and the Role of Universities in filling these gaps; Bridging the Gaps between Policy and Research for Sustainable Management of Water Resources. These developments arise from Ethiopia’s change from the myopic foreign policy directions based upon suspicion and misperception that used to prevail under previous regimes into a farsighted approach devoted to seeking long-term mutually beneficial partnership with the Government and

People of Sudan focusing on promoting mutual progress, peace and prosperity. It is an approach that stresses, as Kinfé Abraham put it, that “mutual trust is the basis; mutual benefit is the objective; equality is the guarantee; and coordination is the means”. It is a policy that demonstrates that the future of the Sudan and Ethiopia, and other countries in the Horn, are intertwined. It also emphasizes that all should direct their efforts for the improvement of peoples’ lives through the spirit of peaceful interdependence, greater economic integration, joint-partnerships, and indeed a win-win approach to utilize trans-boundary resources.

This public diplomacy, which is characterized by cultural performances, academic and professional conferences, cultural events and other exchange programs, is in effect an extension of the current foreign policy of Ethiopia. In respect to the Sudan, its fundamental aim is to ensure that the challenges and opportunities of the bilateral, regional and global issues of the two countries remain in the public eye. It has the effect of cultivating long-term relationships, and increasing mutual understanding through dialogue as well as encouraging professional networking mechanisms, and promoting the shared interests of the respective populations. The recent cultural performances, which involved both Ethiopian and Sudanese performers, certainly helped communication of the cultures, values, traditions, histories and aspirations of both countries. They will motivate both peoples and encourage a common vision and their common interest in rooting out poverty, hunger, instability, drought, land degradation and other threats.

Similarly, the recent scientific symposium held in Khartoum from the two Universities of Khartoum and Addis Ababa will unquestionably provide the basis for scientific studies and enhance the capacity for policymakers on both countries to push forward efforts for sustainable and inclusive development of the Eastern Nile. The scientific cooperation the symposium will generate will also help the two countries work towards equitable and reasonable use of the waters of the Nile and move towards a win-win approach for sustainable management of trans-boundary water resources maximizing benefits for all. It is a very timely scientific partnership to encourage the region to remove their differences and look at ways to resolve the new security threats facing the region, including climate change, drought, inadequate rainfall, and food insecurity in the Eastern Nile region. Besides, the two countries share a long border together with similar cultures, languages, history, values, religions, and traditions that have cemented the bilateral relations in various fields including trade, businesses, investment, agri-business, and power supply. In the area of investment, 800 Sudanese investors have gotten investment licenses to work in Ethiopia. The new public diplomacy

accompanied by long historical ties and cultural affinities inspires the publics of the two countries to further join their efforts in the fight against poverty, famine and instability as they crushed the heels of colonial powers in Omdurman in 1898 and Adwa in 1896. It also helps them to revitalize and renew the civilizations of Nubia, Merowe and Aksum on the bosom of the Nile Valley. This will pave the way for the realization of African Renaissance or Rebirth.

This common understanding between the Governments of Ethiopia and the Sudan is making possible the creation of an enabling environment to cooperate on working for mutual benefits from the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project. Ethiopia and Sudan are following up the implementation of the recommendations of the International Panel of Experts report on the Dam. These included further studies on a water resource system/hydropower model and a trans-boundary environment and socio-economic impact assessment impact study on the GERD in the context of the Eastern Nile System. In the three rounds of the tripartite Water Ministers meetings in Khartoum, the Ethiopian and Sudanese sides agreed on most the proposals raised despite the unnecessary and unreasonable suggestions raised by Egypt. Among these was the creation of yet another Panel of Experts, parallel to that already agreed upon, and some proposed “Principles of Confidence Building, “ neither of which related to the purposes or agenda of the meetings. Indeed these two proposals were unequivocally rejected by Ethiopia, and by the Sudan.

This sort of understanding and the firm stance of both countries would have been unthinkable earlier in the second half of the 20th century. Prior to the independence of the Sudan in the 1960s and indeed afterwards until 1991, the relations of Ethiopia and the Sudan were marked by regional and international rivalry that paved the way for the various regimes in both countries to play lethal ‘tit-for-tat’ games as client states for their regional and international patrons. The ill-suited policies of these previous regimes in both countries, according to Professor Peter Woodward, allowed at various times passage for the ideologies and interests of a radical Nasserite Pan-Arabism (with Sudan signing a unilateral Nile waters agreement with Egypt in defiance of its own national interests and providing a limited water share for its own growing population). At other times it was a Pax Americana which allowed the projection of influence and its interests into the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, or a Pax Sovietica, creating a constellation of socialist states in the Horn and southern edge of the Middle East). Even the ideas of radical Ba’athist countries of the Middle East including Syria and Iraq were able to infiltrate the Horn of Africa. All operated at the expense of the peoples of Sudan and Ethiopia, and indeed of the peoples of the region. .

Both sides firmly relied on increased militarism and violence to accomplish the tasks given to them by their patrons. The regimes in Sudan supported any insurgents who claimed they wanted to throw Ethiopia's peace and stability into disarray. Following Ethiopia's failure to provide religious equality for Ethiopian Muslims, Sudan's rulers made efforts to encourage religious fundamentalism in Ethiopia. Leaders in Ethiopia failed to realize that religious inequality precipitated sympathy from Sudan's radical Islamism.

This encouraged Ethiopia's foreign policymakers to return to the old and deep-rooted anxieties of the 'siege mentality'. Aklilu Habte-Wold, Prime Minister in the 1960s and early 1970s even repeated the old medieval mantra: "Ethiopia is a Christian island in a Muslim sea." This sort of long outdated foreign policy direction prevented Ethiopia from rethinking its problems with Sudan, and led it into persisting in supporting the Anya Nya movements and SPLA insurgents in southern part of Sudan. Sudan reciprocated, extending its support to Ethiopian rebel groups. Unhappily, the destructive tit-for-tat game resulted in harrowing famines, droughts and deaths for the peoples of Ethiopia's Wollo and Tigre provinces, and of Sudan's Darfur and South Kordofan regions, and indeed more widely throughout the region in the 1970s and 1980s.

Today, all this is gone with the changes of regimes. Today is the time for both peoples of the two nations to fully own their own destinies and secure their own future in the spirit of shared visions for inclusive and sustainable development through the use of Nile waters. The peoples of the Sudan and Ethiopia can see the Nile today as a shared river through which all the peoples of the Nile Basin can ignite the fire of African Renaissance to build the modernization, development and transformation of the Nile Valley on the principles of comparative advantage.

This is not the time for any centralized, small or exclusive elites in our region to try to decide the fate of the people. Ethiopia's policies of public diplomacy are beginning to build a new tomorrow, improving personal and institutional ties to harness opportunities for the shared prosperity, peace and tranquility of the peoples of Sudan and Ethiopia. They are also righting the wrongs of yesterday through the genuine discussion, dialogue and scientific partnerships being built between the peoples of Ethiopia and Sudan. The way forward is very clear.

"Binding Ethio-Sudanese Relations", 05/04/2014, online at:
<http://news.sudanvisiondaily.com/details.html?rsnpid=234171>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Ethiopia ready for Nile dam talks with Egypt: Minister

ADDIS ABABA – Alemayehu Tegen, Ethiopian minister of water, irrigation and energy, has stated his country's readiness to open talks with Egypt over Ethiopia's multibillion-dollar hydroelectric dam project, which Cairo fears will threaten its traditional share of Nile water.

Speaking at a ceremony held to mark the passage of three years since construction on the mega-dam began, Tegen said his government had "exerted utmost efforts to build trust among all riparian countries."

"But Egypt has continued to engage in negative campaigning against the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam," Tegen said.

He also criticized Egyptian demands to include additional international representatives on a panel of experts tasked with studying the dam's potential impact on downstream states.

The committee currently contains two members each from Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, along with four others representing the international community.

Egypt, Tegen said, was "determined to delay the tripartite engagement by withdrawing from the Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt forum."

He added: "We urge Egypt to re-join the engagement and work for the benefits of our countries."

Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen, also speaking at the ceremony, said the expert panel's findings had confirmed that the dam's construction met international standards of efficiency and safety.

Mekonnen added that Sudan had publicly declared its support for the dam, going on to describe the project as a "correction" of previous unjust water-sharing agreements.

"The rule of the game of unjust utilization of the waters of the Nile is over," he said.

The dam, Mekonnen said, "symbolizes Ethiopia's determination and ability to get back to its ancient civilization and glory."

The ceremony, held at the construction site 980km northwest of Addis Ababa and carried live on local television and radio, was attended by officials, diplomats, religious leaders and public figures.

Ethiopia is building the \$6.4-billion dam on the Blue Nile, which represents Egypt's primary source of water. When finalized in 2017, it will have a 6000-megawatt production capacity, according to government sources.

Over 30 percent of construction work on the dam has already been completed, officials say.

The project has raised alarm bells in Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country, which fears a reduction of its historical share of Nile water.

Water distribution among Nile basin states has long been regulated by a colonial-era treaty giving Egypt and Sudan the lion's share of river water.

Citing its need for development, Ethiopia says it must build a series of dams to generate electricity, both for local consumption and export.

Addis Ababa insists the new dam will benefit downstream states Sudan and Egypt, both of which will be invited to purchase the electricity thus generated.

“Ethiopia ready for Nile dam talks with Egypt: Minister”, 02/04/2014, online at:
<http://www.turkishpress.com/news/398263/>

BACK TO TOP

WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ Environment Groups Plan to Oppose Laos Mega Dams

BANGKOK, THAILAND — This week officials from Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand will meet to discuss the impact of planned hydropower dams on the lower Mekong region. But several environmental groups have already concluded the main Xayaburi dam in Laos will devastate communities that depend on the Mekong river for food, and they want to stop the project.

Ahead of this week's meeting of the Mekong River Commission, 39 international environmental groups called on the government to halt construction on the Xayaburi dam before February 2015. The declaration also called on the government of Thailand to cancel its agreement to buy electricity generated by the dam.

The Xayaburi is the first of 11 proposed dams to be built on the Lower Mekong River. The \$3.8 billion, Thai-financed dam is intended primarily to produce electricity for the Thai market. Officials from countries in the region have been regularly meeting to discuss the planned dams, and review assessments of their environmental impact on a river basin that is a critical food source for some 60 million people.

The World Wildlife Fund's Marc Goichot, who is a regional expert on hydropower says more time is still needed to review these projects.

"The Xayaburi project will only contribute about 2% to the demand of Thailand and the demand of Thailand doesn't really need the project until 2026, so there's no rush," said Goichot. "The suspension of this power-purchasing agreement will give time to all parties to study the impact."

Construction has already begun on the Xayaburi dam, despite objections voiced by downstream countries Vietnam and Cambodia. Activists now hope they can stop the project before a coffer dam is built next February, which would divert water to allow construction of the main dam on the riverbed. The World Wildlife Fund says this would be the first step in the construction process to cause major irreversible damage to the river's ecosystem.

The Mekong Agreement, signed by Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam in 1995, precludes construction from going forward without mutual consent from other governments.

An initial assessment of the environmental impact was said to fall short of international standards, and further impact assessments are ongoing. At the MRC's last summit, the governments of Vietnam and Cambodia requested that construction be halted for 10 years, or until the impact can be accurately assessed.

“Environment Groups Plan to Oppose Laos Mega Dams”, 01/04/2014, online at:

<http://www.voacambodia.com/content/environment-groups-plan-to-oppose-laos-mega-dams/1883658.html>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Xayaburi dam in Laos "23% complete"

Vientiane - Construction of the controversial Xayaburi Hydro-power plant, the first dam on the lower stretch of the Mekong River, is now 23% complete, Lao media reports said Thursday.

The US\$3.5 billion dam and power plant in Xayaburi province is "on track to be operational in 2019 as planned," the *Vientiane Times* reported.

Xayaburi Power Co Ltd's deputy managing director gave US ambassador to Laos Daniel Clune a tour of the project this week, the state-run daily said.

The ambassador also visited the resettlement site under construction for the inhabitants of 15 villages displaced by the project.

The dam has been strongly opposed by environmentalists and neighbouring countries concerned about its potential impact on the river's fisheries.

The ambassador reportedly said the project would benefit the Lao people in the future as long as it was able to minimise downstream effects.

In November 2012, Laos officially began construction on the dam, despite serious objections from partners in the Mekong River Commission.

The prime ministers of the commission's four member countries - Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam - were to meet Saturday in Ho Chi Minh City to review development projects for the Mekong river, including the Xayaburi dam.

The Xayaburi project's Thai developers say they have answered critics' concerns by including fish ladders and fish elevators in their dam designs.

But questions remain about the potential impact on fish migration in the 4,880-kilometre-long Mekong.

"Xayaburi dam in Laos "23% complete"", 03/04/2014, online at:

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/403291/xayaburi-dam-almost-a-quarter-complete>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Concerns mount over Lao dam projects

When the leaders of the Mekong River Commission countries meet in Hanoi on Saturday, anti-dam protesters will be urging them to call a halt to the construction of the Xayaburi dam and to put a hold on Laos's plans to build a second dam, the Don Sahong.

Reporter: Kanaha Sabapathy reports.

Speakers: Dr Milton Osborne a non resident fellow at the Lowy Institute; Professor Philip Hirsch, University of Sydney

SABAPATHY: When the leaders of the four Mekong River Commission countries, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand meet in Hanoi along with their counterparts from China and Myanmar ... their aim would be to revive trans boundary cooperation in the areas of water, energy and food security.

Of greatest concern is the impact of Laos's dam projects on water quality, fish stocks and their equitable distribution.

On Monday 39 organisations based in Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Australia issued a joint declaration calling on Laos to halt the construction of the Xayaburi dam and on Thailand to cancel its power purchase agreement.

The chances of this happening may be weak, but Professor Philip Hirsch from the University of Sydney says it sends an important message.

HIRSCH: The Xayaburi is the first of potentially 11 dams, and even if it does go to completion, to actually make the point that it's going ahead without proper environmental or technical studies is a very untransparent process, it's an important point to make.

SABAPATHY: In fact over the weekend hundreds of Cambodians protested against Laos' second planned dam, the Don Sahong.

Protesters claim there has been no discussion of the dam with the other countries and no proper environmental impact assessment done.

But Laos claims since this dam will not cut across the main water channel of the Mekong it just need only inform the other members of its plan.

Dr Milton Osborne a non-resident fellow at the Lowy Institute however disputes the Laotian position.

OSBORNE: What is so particularly concerning about the Don Sahong dam is that it is being constructed upon that area of the Mekong where you have the only passage over the Khone Falls which permit fish to travel up and down the river in order to engage in their annual spawning activities, which then have an effect over a very large area of the river, including the Great Lake in Cambodia.

SABAPATHY: For Laos the development of the dams would provide a resource, electricity, which it can sell and earn hard cash. But Professor Hirsch says only a very few will enjoy the benefits.

HIRSCH: Lao farmer and fishers depend on the river as much as do farmers and fishers in any other country. So it's not simply a case of Laos benefitting and the other countries losing, there are many in Lao who also stand to lose the fisheries, lose their homes to the area flooded by reservoirs.

SABAPATHY: Dr Osborne fears if Laos goes ahead with the Don Sahong dam it may affect the way other countries review their dam projects.

OSBORNE: The fact that Laos is going ahead and disregarding the outlook and the interests of other people probably plays some part in the Cambodian determination to build the Sesan 2 Dam on the tributary of the Mekong flowing into the river near Stung Treng. And this dam is again one that is regarded as being very likely indeed to cause very considerable costs to the fish stocks within the river.

SABAPATHY: The summit meeting on Saturday will allow the leaders to review their concerns over Laos's development of dams ...but Professor Hirsch does not expect them to put pressure on Vientiane to halt its projects.

HIRSCH: The question becomes which area is the most important to government. In the past unfortunately the Mekong has always taken a back seat to maintaining good relations in other areas.

“Concerns mount over Lao dam projects”, 04/04/2014, online at:

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/program/asia-pacific/concerns-mount-over-lao-dam-projects/1290778>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Uranium Miners in Namibia Face Rise in Water Price, Paladin Says

Uranium miners in Namibia, already coping with water shortages in the semi-arid Erongo region, face a steep rise in costs, **Paladin Energy (PDN)** Ltd. said.

“When we get it, sometimes we have problems with the quality of the water and the cost,” said Simon Solomons, managing director of Paladin’s Langer Heinrich mine. “At the moment there is no long-term solution to the water-supply situation.”

The mines operated by Paladin, Rio Tinto Plc and China General Nuclear Power Group rely on water from a 20 million-cubic-meter capacity desalination plant operated by Areva SA, a French reactor maker. Areva is in talks to sell a majority stake in the plant to state utility Namibia Water Corp. after shelving its Trekkopje project in 2012 as uranium prices slumped in the wake of the Fukushima disaster.

Namwater has “to look for finance to buy the plant,” Solomons said yesterday during a tour of the Subiaco, Western Australia-based company’s mine. “They will pass on those charges to the uranium mines.”

Calls to Namwater weren't immediately answered.

The three mines, which require as much as 10 million cubic meters of water a year, were previously supplied by the Omaruru Delta aquifer, which has dwindling volumes as demand from the mines and surrounding towns of Swakopmund and Walvis Bay rises.

Langer Heinrich, which consumes 130,000 cubic meters of water a month, has had “no long-term and no firm discussion” with Namwater over supplies, Solomons said.

“Uranium Miners in Namibia Face Rise in Water Price, Paladin Says”, 04/04/2014, online at:
http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-04-04/uranium-miners-in-namibia-face-rise-in-water-price-paladin-says.html?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=df61df1d70-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-df61df1d70-250657169

BACK TO TOP

❖ Clean Water In Short Supply In Ghana

More than nine million people in the West African country of Ghana don't have access to clean drinking water, according to Water Aid America.

In fact, most Ghanaians even boil and filter tap water. In numerous, poor, remote areas, people can't afford filters, so they drink muddy water from nearby streams.

Take the town of Kordiabe. It takes about two hours to get there by car from Ghana's capital of Accra. Some of the paved roads near the village are muddy and filled with potholes so large, many drivers use the shoulder.

Many of the homes in Kordiabe are cinderblock, one-room, tin-roofed dwellings. Some are made of mud. Few of the town's 3600 residents have running water.

Father Andrew Campbell, a Catholic priest, lives in Accra, but has spent a lot of time in Kordiabe, building a clinic and fish farm and renovating the school, among other projects. He said most of Kordiabe's residents get their water from a large lake. "It's dirty water," he said. And it's unfortunate that that's what they have to bathe in and drink. "Goodness, it's no telling what sort of diseases you get from that lake."

A long, narrow dirt road leads to the lake, created by a dam across a nearby river. Small children walk along the side of the road carrying buckets of all sizes.

On a recent day, along the banks of the lake, four young boys drink the muddy-colored water they've been swimming in. Reuben Allotuynii said they don't have other options. "We drink this water if we come to the stream...if we are thirsty," Allotuynii said. He added that even though he has gotten sick from drinking the water, he is not afraid to continue drinking it. It's a way of life that he and the other boys accept.

A bit farther down the road, about 15 teenagers swim and frolic in the dam. They drink the water too, even though some have washed their clothes here today. "The water here is not hygienic at all," said Eeric Frempong, while taking a break from swimming. "Sometimes you drink the water and people

get diarrhea and typhoid fever and stuff.” Frempong has suffered from typhoid fever and other illnesses on several occasions after drinking the water.

But the lake is considered better than nearby streams, where others get their water. Most of the streams are murky, dirty water holes that cattle and other animals share with residents. These streams are the source of a lot of the illnesses that the people of Kordiabe, especially children, have had over the years.

Only 10 public water taps where residents can get water exist in Kordiabe. But that water also comes from the dam. In addition, sometimes the taps don't work. “Those who take care of the cattle, they purposely break the pipe so they can give water to the cattle,” Father Campbell said. “You see the kids having a bath in it and see the cattle coming and drinking from it. Large pools of muddy, dirty water. I used to be shocked when I saw that. I said how can they drink this water and share with the cattle? How?”

Bottled water and water sold in bags on the street are plentiful. But because there are few jobs in Kordiabe, according to Father Campbell, many residents live on less than a dollar a day and cannot afford to buy water. “A lot of poor families are out there, mainly the old women and men with children. The middle class is gone to the city looking for work, so it’s mainly the old people and the children who get left behind,” he said.

Back in the U.S. in Laurel, Maryland, Beverly Hunt recalled seeing first-hand the unsanitary water conditions in rural areas during several visits to Ghana. Hunt, co-founder of College Shine, a company that connects students in Africa with higher education institutions, took those trips with her business partner, Sylvia Baffour, a native Ghanaian, who lives in Washington. “I couldn’t help but notice that once we were out of the city in the rural areas, how people lived and particularly the bad situation with water,” Hunt said. “Sylvia and I were talking and we just wanted to do something. We came up with the idea of raising some money to get some water filters so families would have another option.”

“When she thought about the idea I wanted to run with it,” Baffour said. “I wondered why I had not thought of it myself, but sometimes it takes an outsider coming in and seeing things with a different set of eyes.”

Baffour and Hunt called on close friends and raised enough money to purchase 55 clay water filters at \$20 each. Baffour says her family used one for years. “It can filter out some of these water-borne diseases. We used to have to boil our water, then cool it down, and then filter it with the regular types of filters,” Baffour said. “With this one you can take it straight from the tap. The only drawback is that it takes longer to filter because it's going through all of these layers of clay.”

Hunt and Baffour delivered the clay water filters to families that Father Campbell and Baffour's uncle identified in Kordiabe and to a nearby leper community. Baffour's mother showed the recipients how to clean and take care of the filters. That was four years ago.

Recipients of the clay water filters are still using them today. There's Regina Tetteh and her eight children. She said through an interpreter, Eunice Nyamekye Jonathan, a reporter for e.TV Ghana, that the clay water filter she received from Hunt and Baffour changed her life.

“She said before they got the water filter, they got their water from the dam and her children had skin diseases and diarrhea too,” Jonathan said. “She says now they are OK.”

Tetteh's neighbor, Belinda Opong, said her health has also improved since receiving a filter. “Myself, I get typhoid and they give me the water filter. Now I get the clean water,” Opong said. “It makes me happy and it's easy to use.”

With her three children sitting beside her at the clinic that Father Campbell had built in Kordiabe, Salomey Tetteh said her family collected water from a stream used by cattle before they got their water filter. They were sick a lot with various illnesses. Jonathan acted as her interpreter as well. “She said the entire family was healthy with the arrival of the water filter and were no longer falling sick and the kids were always in good shape,” she said.

But sadly, Salomey Tetteh's children broke the water filter and they are getting their water from the public tap these days. “She says the taps are better than fetching from the stream, but because the filters are not available, they still fall sick, so they are not as healthy as when they had the water filter,” Jonathan translated for her.

In Laurel, Hunt and Baffour both remembered meeting Tetteh, as they sifted through recent pictures taken of her and her children. They were saddened that her water filter is broken. Hunt said they

would be sure to have Father Campbell get a new filter to that family. “Yes, that would be nice,” Baffour agreed. “It was also nice to know what a tangible difference it (the water filter) made that she could observe.”

Father Campbell said the water filters Hunt and Baffour delivered were a Godsend. “Because Kordiabe’s water problems are so serious, there’s always a need for these filters,” he said. “The 55 water filters is a drop of water, but yet the village is better off because of these drops of water. We wouldn't be able to estimate the good things that have happened because of that: the lives we saved, the health. It would be incalculable, all of the benefits.”

Hunt and Baffour said because of the scarcity of clean water in Ghana, they hope to raise additional funds to provide more clay water filters to other needy families. “It’s touching and makes me feel happy that in some small way, without over thinking it, that we’ve contributed to something so important,” Baffour said. “In the West, we take clean water for granted. I’ve never had to drink out of a river, so hopefully our efforts will start a trend to help those who do.”

“Clean Water In Short Supply In Ghana”, 05/04/2014, online at: http://news.wypr.org/post/clean-water-short-supply-ghana?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=df61df1d70-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-df61df1d70-250657169

BACK TO TOP

❖ Snow Survey Reveals Depth of California's Water Woes

After its third-driest winter on record, driest calendar year and third straight year of below-average precipitation, California water officials were no doubt bracing for bad news when they set out to conduct a statewide snow survey high in the Sierra Nevada Mountain range on April 1. The snow survey is seen as a key marker of the health of the state's water supplies, since it typically marks the peak snow cover for the season.

Snow surveyors found a snowpack on Tuesday that contains just 32% of the average water content typically observed at this time of year, which places 2014 as among the lowest water-content years on record since such records began in 1930.

The low water content, combined with unusually low reservoir levels, means that the country's most populous state faces a long and stressful dry season ahead, with farmers and their thirsty crops competing with urban residents for access to increasingly scarce supplies. The California agriculture industry is the largest of any state in the U.S., generating about \$45 billion in annual revenue, and the drought is projected to hit farmers especially hard.

"We're already seeing farmland fallowed and cities scrambling for water supplies," Mark Cowin, director of the California Department of Water Resources, said in a statement. "We can hope that conditions improve, but time is running out, and conservation is the only tool we have against nature's whim."

California has been mired in a historic drought for more than a year, part of a broader multi-year drought that is also affecting other states in the west. It had its warmest and third-driest winter on record, which intensified the preexisting drought following the state's driest calendar year on record in 2013. As of March 25, all of California was in some form of drought condition, with "exceptional drought" gripping about 23% of the state.

The drought is the most severe one-year drought on record in California, even more severe than the 1976-77 drought. To find a comparable drought, you have to go back to events that took place before instrument records began in the late 19th century.

"Snowpack measurement on April 1 is often considered a key measure of where we are," Peter Gleick, president of the Oakland-based environmental-research group Pacific Institute, told reporters on a conference call. "By any measures, our snowpack is low."

Recent storms have helped boost California's water supplies slightly, and forecasts show additional wet weather is possible in parts of the state during the next two weeks. However, precipitation on a scale that would be required to end the drought is not likely until next fall or winter.

Electronic readings from the California Department of Water Resources found that the central parts of the Sierra Nevada have the most snow, with snowpack water content 38% of normal. This compares to 23% of average for the northern mountains and 31% of normal for the south.

Runoff from mountain snowpack contributes about one-third of California's water supply, with the rest coming from reservoirs or piped in from out-of-state. According to the World Resources Institute, a Washington think tank, California draws water from 157 million acres of land across eight states.

Making matters worse, reservoirs are also running far below average levels for this time of year — another sign of the water stress that California will grapple with this summer.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, which is the State Water Project's largest reservoir, is at only 49% of its capacity. And San Luis Reservoir, which contributes water to the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project, is at just 42% of its capacity, the Department of Water Resources said.

Responding to the drought conditions, water suppliers — including the state — have been slashing their promised deliveries. On Jan. 1, the State Water Project, which supplies supplemental water to nearly 25 million Californians and 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland, set its water delivery estimate at zero, which — if it remains at that level — would be the first time that has happened in the 54-year history of the project. In addition, the Department of Water Resources also said it planned to reduce allocations to farmland by 50%, the maximum extent allowable by law.

Santa Clara Valley Water District, which supplies water for much of Silicon Valley, has instituted a mandatory reduction in water use to 20% below 2013 levels, after a series of water-delivery cutbacks from state and federal agencies.

The role of climate change in the current drought is complicated, since natural variability in the climate system has brought more severe and far longer-lasting droughts to the west in the past. However, a new report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other data show that increased temperatures help dry out soils faster and melt more snow, thereby acting as a drought amplifier.

“We know that climate change is contributing to the current drought,” Pacific Institute's Gleick said.
“Climate change now influences extreme events and will continue to do so.”

“Snow Survey Reveals Depth of California's Water Woes”, 02/04/2014, online at: http://mashable.com/2014/04/01/snow-survey-california-drought/?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=b9c34d649d-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-b9c34d649d-250657169

BACK TO TOP