

# WATER IN THE MIDDLE EAST

## “Conflict or Cooperation?”



**España**  
expone

Sociedad Estatal  
para Exposiciones  
Internacionales

*The Closing Conference is included in  
the “Programming of Parallel Events and Gatherings of  
Water Tribune, 2008 EXPO of Zaragoza”*



**Oil is undeniably a coveted and problematic natural resource, which without a doubt generates the largest compulsion for foreign intervention in the Middle East; but it is also a historical fact that water has been and continues to be an endless source of conflict between states in the region.**

In effect, apart from serving as a basis for geo-strategic alliances between Israel and Turkey, for example, water has been a recurrent cause of tension between Israel and its neighbours, including Lebanon and Syria. Jordan, for its part, has been an interesting case of how, over the years, cooperation has reduced existing frictions. Via its “Water Initiative”, the EU supports activities and projects promoting river-basin approaches to national and trans-boundary waters, strengthening cooperation amongst countries, contributing to water security and thereby reducing the potential for conflict over water. The products of this regional water approach should continue to expand with greater international participation and support.

This seminar will examine how water has been a source of tortuous disputes, and how it can become a current for peace in the Middle East. Limited water resources have always been a serious question of national and regional security, even more so in recent years with the growth of population and the effects of “global warming”. However, water scarcity can and should – paradoxically – be treated and converted into a pretext and cause for cooperation across the region.

In these successive meetings in Madrid and Zaragoza, CITpax and SEEI, in collaboration with the Water Tribune of the International Exposition of Zaragoza 2008, also advance the notion that within its Neighbourhood Policy around the Mediterranean, the EU can play a positive role in contributing to the struggle against hydrologic resource scarcity, to improve the usage and quality of water, and to promote collaboration amongst regional actors. The EU can enhance security and stability by encouraging cooperation amongst the people of the region. The seminar will examine a success case and a more difficult scenario with larger obstacles and complications, in order to determine which venues would be most amenable for cooperation in the Middle East. Through this approach, this meeting intends to open a space – based on the broad political and technical experience of the participants – to reassess the means for regional collaboration on water issues, focusing on innovative and imaginative proposals to identify the possible next steps in support of a process to develop sustainable peace in the Middle East.

## PROGRAMME

**Madrid, 7-8 September 2008**  
**Zaragoza, 9 September 2008**

### Madrid

***Sunday, 7 September*** (Arrival of participants to Madrid)

**21:15** *Dinner at Restaurant Samarkanda, Madrid*

***Monday, 8 September (Real Fábrica de Tapices)***

**09:30** **Opening and welcoming remarks**

- Emilio Cassinello, *Director General, CITpax*
- Javier Conde, *President of the Spanish State Agency for International Exhibitions*
- Josep Puxeu, *Secretary of State for Rural Development and Water, Spanish Ministry for Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs*

**10:00** **Session 1: “Source of Conflict or Cooperation?”**

Moderator: Ramón Llamas, *Professor of Hydrogeology, University Complutense of Madrid*

- Mohamed Nasser Ezzat, *Principal Advisor of the Minister, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt*
- Munther Haddadin, *former Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation (1997-98), former Senior Negotiator for Jordan’s delegation to the Middle East Peace Process*
- Uri Shamir, *Emeritus Professor, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the Technion, Israel*

**11:30** ***Coffee Break***

**12:00** **Session 2: “The Jordan River Valley - Cross-border Cooperation”**

Moderator: Anders Jägerskog, *Projects Director, Stockholm International Water Institute - SIWI*

- Munther Haddadin, *former Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation (1997-98), former Senior Negotiator for Jordan’s delegation to the Middle East Peace Process*
- Fadel Kawash, *former Water Commissioner, Palestine*
- Shimon Tal, *former Water Commissioner, Israel*

**14:00** ***Lunch at the Real Fábrica de Tapices***

**15:30 Session 3: “Regional Dimensions: EU–Mediterranean Cooperation on Water Issues”**

Moderator: Walter Mazzitti, *President of the Network of Organizations for the Mediterranean Basin*

Speakers:

- Ram Aviram, *CEO, BIT Consultancy LTD*
- Jean-François Donzier, *General Manager, International Office for Water, France*
- Koussai Quteishat, *Director of Middle East Desalination Research Centre – MEDREC*
- Consuelo Varela Ortega, *Professor of Rural Economy, Universidad Politécnica, Madrid*

**18:00 – 18:30 Conclusions**

- Antonio Garrigues, *President, CITpax*
- Javier Conde, *President of the Spanish State Agency for International Exhibitions*

**20:30 Dinner at the Casino de Madrid**

Special guests:

María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, *First Vice-President of Spain and Minister of the Presidency*

Mikhail Gorbachev, *Founding President, Green Cross International and International Foundation for Socio-Economic and Political Studies*

Joschka Fischer, *former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Germany*

Closing remarks

- Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Vice-president of CITpax; former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Israel*
- Nabil Shaath, *Vice-president of CITpax; former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Palestine*

## **2008 EXPO Zaragoza “Water and Sustainable Development”<sup>1</sup>**

***Tuesday, 9 September***

### ***Travel from Madrid to Zaragoza***

***10:30*** *Departure from Madrid (Atocha Renfe)*

***11:51*** *Arrival in Zaragoza (Delicias train station)*

### **12.30 Closing Conference “Water in the Middle East: Conflict or cooperation?”**

#### **Spanish Pavilion**

##### ***Guest Speakers:***

Joschka Fischer, *former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Germany*

Munther Haddadin, *former Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation (1997-98), former Senior Negotiator for Jordan’s delegation to the Middle East Peace Process*

Nabil Shaath, *Vice-president of CITpax; former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Palestine*

Miguel Ángel Moratinos, *Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain*

##### ***Moderator:***

Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Vice-President of CITpax, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Israel*

### **14:00 Lunch at the Spanish Pavilion**

### **16.00 Visit to the Spanish Pavilion, the Bridge-Pavilion, and the Pavilions of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Turkey**

### ***Travel from Zaragoza to Madrid***

***20:20*** *Departure from Zaragoza (Delicias train station)*

***21:41*** *Arrival in Madrid (Atocha Renfe)*

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