



Center for Environmental Diplomacy

First TEPP Conference Deemed Success During September 4 ~ 7, 2003, CED brought an international group of environmental specialists to Aqaba, Jordan to introduce its Tri-lateral Environmental Peace Plan (TEPP). The TEPP Conference was co-hosted with its Japanese NGO partner, Asia-pacific Coalition for Environment (ACE), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD).

The innovative seminar and conference included a hands-on workshop for regional environmental experts from Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. The program, which received major funding from AEON Foundation in Japan, was deemed a strong success, according to UNCRD Director Dr. Kazunobu Onogawa.

(For more information on the UNCRD involvement, see http://www.uncrd.or.jp/res/index_env.htm and click - Innovative strategies for the sound management of solid waste)

A government official present, who had also participated in the Oslo Peace Process, noted that perhaps one reason for the success of the conference on Solid Waste Management was that discussions focused on solving pollution problems – not politics.

The workshop included delegates from the three core governments of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, as well as Japan, the US and the United Nations. In addition to delegates from governmental and finance organizations, the TEPP Conference included the regional NGOs of West Bank Environmental Clean Up Project (WECUP Israel), Water and Environmental Development Organization (WEDO) and Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME), as well as Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian academicians with programs on sustainable development and the environment.

Mr. Akel E. Biltaji, Chief Commissioner, Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) officially opened the TEPP Conference with a welcoming speech. Mr. Biltaji emphasized that the ASEZA places special importance on regional cooperation among businesses in Israel, Jordan and the greater region. He also stressed the value of using the environment as a tool for bringing about cooperation in the region, as a seed for peace and security.

A major outcome of the TEPP Conference and workshop on solid waste management was the Joint Communique (see: <http://www.wecup.org/newsflash.html> (News Flash 09/08/03)). The document was signed by the organizing bodies to commit to implementing the steps necessary to protect the mountain aquifers (water resource) in the West Bank and restoring the Jordan River.

National- and regional-level working sessions were proposed to immediately initiate the legal, jurisdictional and administrative frameworks for a Jordan Valley Environmental District (JVED). The conference participants concluded that an institutional framework and regional action plan are needed. The JVED would provide the institutional framework to oversee project implementation with private industry and local government. CED Executive Director Jeffrey Behr, in the closing address noted, “Building the Jordan Valley Environmental District (JVED) is a key activity for CED and its associates during 2004. CED is committed to working closely with the UNCRD and ACE to realize the financing and capacity building required for the JVED institutional framework and regional action plan.” In 2004, CED will locate a home for the JVED Institute for all concerned parties to gather and work on advancing the Tri-lateral Environmental Peace Plan in the region.

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