

### Stockholm World Water Week | Water for sustainable growth 28 August-2 September 2016

#### MENA FOCUS

**Stockholm, Tuesday 30 August & Wednesday 31 August 2016**

*Regional Day Coordinator: Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)*

**MENA has now its own Regional Focus during the World Water Week! |** The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a region shaped by unique geographical, ecological, geopolitical and cultural features, offering important lessons and potentially replicable practices within and beyond its boundaries. In a rapidly changing world, the region is challenged by natural conditions, including water scarcity, demographic change, unemployment, poverty, changing consumption patterns, urbanisation, rising water and food demands, growing energy needs, environmental degradation, climate change, gender disparities and more. Part of the region currently faces an enduring economic crisis, socio-political instability, conflicts and large-scale migratory movements often under dramatic conditions.

Building on previous efforts for region-focused days supported by the Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency (Sida), 2016 will launch the official inclusion of dedicated MENA Regional Focus as part of the Water Weeks' programme, alongside the regional days for Africa, Asia and Latin America. The overall coordination of the MENA Focus has been entrusted to GWP-Med that will work closely with regional partners, each leading targeted sessions, to ensure that the region's priorities are duly reflected in the programme, aligning at the same time with the Week's annual themes.

**Methodology & Structure of the MENA Focus |** Aiming for a participatory mode, the sessions' design is based on limited presentations, panel discussions with experts from the Region and an emphasis on facilitated open discussions.

The MENA Focus will bring together key stakeholders, including policy makers and government officials, academia and civil society, private sector, regional organisations, donors and media, youth representatives and with a gender-balanced approach, to reflect upon, discuss, share their experiences and insights on key impediments to the region's sustainable and inclusive growth and explore solutions that are tailor-made to the region's context, aligning at the same time with key regional initiatives and political processes.

Four (4) sessions of ninety (90) minutes each comprise the 2016 MENA Focus and will be split with two sessions per day on the 30<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> of August respectively.

**Topics & Themes |** MENA Focus 2016 aims to enhance experience and knowledge sharing as well as to promote MENA priority issues in the global water agenda. Within this Year's thematic scope '*Water for sustainable growth*', the Region will address key issues that impede sustainable growth, and at the same time contribute to the global water agenda by showcasing replicable practices and lessons learnt.

Brief information on the four sessions, following a chronological order, is provided below. It is noted that the first session will also serve as the official opening of the MENA Focus.

**Tuesday, 30 August 2016, 09h00-10h30, NL Auditorium / Aulan**  
***Seeking answers to the water crisis in the MENA***

Convenors: Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR), Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)

Being among the most water scarce areas in the world, the MENA faces multiple challenges, including extreme events and climate change, demographics and growing urbanisation, poverty, changing consumption patterns and energy needs, rising water and food demands, environmental degradation. Part of the region currently faces an enduring economic crisis, lingering socio-political instability, conflicts and large-scale migratory movements.

This session, will open and set the stage for the MENA Focus Day, highlighting the region's priority issues and concerns that impede sustainable growth, and contributing to the global water agenda by showcasing replicable practices and lessons learnt.

Special focus will be attributed to the refugee crisis, not only in terms of the needed infrastructure/ resources, but also in view of the human right to water and sanitation. The example of Jordan will be showcased; considered as one of the most politically stable countries in the region, Jordan has experienced major refugees' waves from Syria, resulting in an addition of about 20% to its population. Addressing this emergency is critical; with a new Water Strategy that focuses on water protection zones, a water-efficient agricultural production, improved infrastructure along with enhanced governance and with the Jordan Response Plan, the country links refugee and development responses in one comprehensive national plan.

**Tuesday, 30 August 2016, 11h00-12h30, NL Pillar Hall / Pelarsalen**  
***Strengthening Water Governance through Sustainable Financing & Integrity***

Convenors: Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

The crucial role of water for sustainable growth is well acknowledged, including in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With governance seen as the centrepiece of the water crisis, ensuring good governance at all levels is essential for integrated water resources management and the implementation of impartial, pro-poor, gender and youth-sensitive policies/strategies. Governance bottlenecks and unethical practices jeopardise the human right to water and sanitation and hamper the financial sustainability of the water sector and the efforts towards a circular economy with the creation of 'green/blue jobs'.

In view also of the SDGs' implementation in the MENA, efforts towards professional and impartial implementation of integrity-focused institutional and regulatory frameworks and cross-sectoral approaches, represent a solid way towards efficiency and optimisation of resources, investments and the sector's sustainability. Effective water governance enforced by corruption-resistant institutions will overcome the challenges, and deliver concrete benefits for the citizens and the environment of the MENA and contribute to the regional peace and stability.

The event is supported by Sida, through the UfM-labelled projects, "Governance & Financing for the Mediterranean Water Sector" implemented by GWP-Med and the OECD, and "Water Integrity for the MENA" implemented by the UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI.

**Wednesday, 31 August 2016, 09h00-10h30, Room FH 202**  
***Informing the SDGs through the Arab MDG+ Initiative***

Convenors: Arab Countries Water Utilities Association (ACWUA), League of Arab States (LAS), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA)

The SDGs and targets recognize the importance of considering water availability and sustainability, which is a marked improvement on the MDGs.

The Arab Ministerial Water Council in 2009 had expressed concerns regarding the indicators used to monitor access to water and sanitation under the MDGs. This resulted in their establishment of the MDG+ Initiative as a Regional Mechanism for Improved Monitoring and Reporting on Access to Water Supply and Sanitation Services in the Arab Region. The initiative has generated annual reports on a set of water supply and sanitation indicators that take into consideration water scarcity, water quality, service intermittency, affordability, wastewater treatment and reuse. The data is collected from National Monitoring Teams established in 18 Arab States, who are technically supported by ESCWA, ACWUA with funding provided by Sida.

This event will elaborate on lessons learned from implementing the inter-governmental MDG+ Initiative with the aim of fostering discussion on water-related indicators and institutional mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the water-related SDGs at the national, regional and global levels.

It is expected that the event would contribute to the MENA Water Day programme and build upon discussions initiated during a high level session at the start of the day.

**Wednesday, 31 August 2016, 11h00-12h30, Room FH 202**  
***World Café 2016: Water, Growth, Stability***

Convenor: Regional Environmental Center (REC)

Using modified World Café Method ([www.theworldcafe.com/method.html](http://www.theworldcafe.com/method.html)) the event will kick-off with a brief plenary session, during which discussion topics will be outlined while dividing participants in 3 working groups. Groups will receive a background document (distributed in advance) and will have facilitator. We are envisaging following three working groups with discussion topics: Governing water for sustainable growth (group 1), Water related mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change for sustainable growth (group 2) and Water security action planning for sustainable growth (group 3) issues in the MENA region. The event will bring together leaders representing central and local governments, regional bodies, NGOs, academia and businesses from the region. Working groups will be rotating on in intervals of 25-20-15 minutes while facilitators will stay at the respective area during the entire process and later support outcome's summary. We expect to have lively discussions in a pleasant atmosphere, closely echoing and following up on the MENA Focus Day opening session themes. Namely, how MENA countries can contribute to the implementation of the water related SDGs and the new climate agreement, while addressing horizontally the cross cutting issues including migration, gender, youth and human rights, and water related security issues.

### **Join the MENA Focus!**

Working in partnership is the rule of conduct for all co-convenors of the MENA Focus Day. Outreach and involvement are key ingredients for collaborative efforts to be successful. Join us in our sessions in Stockholm and let's jointly explore ways to strengthen Water for Sustainable Growth!

For more information, please contact:

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## About the 2016 Stockholm World Water Week

The 26th edition of the [World Water Week](#), organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), will bring together actors from across the globe to discuss critical water challenges and reflect on solutions. Every year, more than 200 organisations convene events including scientific workshops on water-specific topics. This year, 'Water for Sustainable Growth' is the focus theme.

### This Year's Theme: **Water for sustainable growth**

**Water, jobs and sustainable growth** | Stockholm World Water Week echoes and follows up on the UN "water and jobs" theme and in the broader context of sustainable growth, thus contributing directly and indirectly to the SDG 8 to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". This Year's theme will address sustainable growth for all by focusing on inclusiveness in terms of the societal and human dimensions. The Week will also follow up more generally on the implementation of the water related SDGs and the new climate agreement.

**The water and growth challenge** | Millions of water related jobs ensure that water is made available every day for domestic use, and for removing our wastes, as well as for sustaining our production of food, energy, industrial products and other societal goods and functions. At the same time the daily livelihoods of millions of people depend on well-functioning and well-managed ecosystems. Growth as a result of population increase, rapid urbanization and economic development, along with changing consumption and water use patterns for an increasingly demanding population, is therefore putting considerable pressure on the availability and quality of our water resources.

**The economic perspective** | As recently demonstrated by the "Global Dialogue on Water Security and Sustainable Growth", coordinated by OECD and GWP, significant evidence connects water security to economic development, hence reinforcing the link between water and sustainable growth. This in turn calls for investments in water security, in water infrastructure, in risk management, as well as in knowledge, people and partnerships. Financing of such investments is a major challenge for many countries; new financing models, innovative financial instruments and incentives for financing jobs and growth are needed.

**The social perspective** | As formulated in SDG 8, water shall promote "sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth". This needs to occur in a way in which the benefits of growth are shared in an equitable and reasonable manner, thus contributing to poverty reduction and narrowing the gap between rich and poor everywhere. Water needs to become a driver for economic growth and social well-being at the same time, and decent work must be considered as an important contributor to human dignity.

**The ecosystem perspective** | Sustainable growth implies, importantly, that economic growth and human development is de-coupled from negative environmental impact, including ecosystem degradation, and vice-versa that the impacts and threats of ecosystem degradation on economic activities are minimized. Our societies must keep sustaining and improving ecosystem-based productive functions, services and livelihoods, and address these from a holistic perspective from 'source to sea'. This includes enhancing the growth potential by improved water quality standards and management, and by ensuring sustainable infrastructure development, with special focus on green infrastructure.

**Governing water for sustainable growth** | Good water governance at all levels, from local through national to regional, is a precondition for water security and sustainable economic and social development, and hence also to maintain and create jobs and growth. This includes proper planning in space and time, along with improved management and water allocation for protection, production and service provision. It must do so in a transparent, non-corrupt and inclusive manner. Good water governance must include all sectors and stakeholder groups, and recognize the vital role of new public-private-civic partnerships underpinning innovation and technology development for job creation and growth.

**About GWP-Med**

The [Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean](#) is a regional partnership of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) working towards a water-secure Mediterranean. GWP-Med is a multi-stakeholder action network of more than 100 organisations, advocating, facilitating and supporting action on Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and the sustainable use of water resources in the region. Through dialogue, targeted technical work and demo applications at local, national and regional levels, it supports knowledge exchange, sharing of experiences and capacity-building. For more information: [www.gwpmed.org](http://www.gwpmed.org)