

‘Jordan needs long-term rather than short-term solutions to water crisis’

by Hana Namrouqa | May 31, 2015 | 23:32

Gefällt mir

[1](#)
g+ Teilen

[Tweet](#)

HRH Prince Hassan delivers an address at the third German-Arab Water Forum on Sunday (Petra photo)

AMMAN — Jordan is now implementing water projects that were meant for a decade from now despite a lack of financial and water resources due to the extraordinary population growth, a senior government official said on Sunday.

Water Minister Hazem Nasser said hosting hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees coupled with water scarcity “is putting the Kingdom in a unique status”, highlighting that the result is an emergency in water management operations.

“If the current situation continues like this, we will have soon [a] huge negative impact on both refugees and host communities, considering the fragility of the water sector,” Nasser said during the third German-Arab Water Forum, which focuses on refugees and the water sector.

The kind of water management projects that have been implemented at the beginning of the Syrian crisis will no longer serve the refugees and host communities within one to two years from now, he warned, noting that the projects were meant for short-term crisis management.

“Now we have to move from short-term crisis management into long-term and more sustainable solutions and this is a challenge,” Nasser added.

As the conflict in Syria enters its fifth year, Jordan is hosting 1.4 million Syrians, of whom some 650,000 are refugees and 85 per cent live among host communities, while the remainder live in camps, according to the 2015-2017 Jordan Response Plan for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

Since the breakout of the Syrian crisis in 2011, demand for water has increased by 40 per cent as supply remains scarce, according to the ministry, which said that the total cost incurred annually by the government for hosting refugees stands at \$360 million.

Nasser highlighted the importance of the German-Arab Water Forum in serving as a platform for the government, donors and the private sector to explore new solutions to match the country’s water needs.

During the three-day event, co-organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Arab Association (EMA), Amman Chamber of Commerce, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organisation (TAG-Org) and the Water Ministry, German and Arab researchers and policy makers are discussing means to sustain water services and improve demand management in light of the water shortage and the Syrian refugee influx.

Speaking at the forum, HRH Prince Hassan, honorary president of EMA, highlighted that water-human security for the region can only be achieved by joining forces with international communities

and organisations to design regional stabilisation and to avoid any possible conflicts that might directly affect human security by optimising the abundance of reliable water and energy resources.

“Years of war, irresponsible water supply management, unchecked population growth and ill-advised agricultural policies have worsened our water situation,” Prince Hassan said.

He underscored that “the three arms of resilience” are persistence, adaptability and transformability, which is the capacity to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social structures make the existing system untenable.

“The only way to achieve greater resilience is through regional cooperation and through forging innovative and strategic partnerships,” the prince added.

During the event, TAG-Org CEO Talal Abu-Ghazaleh announced plans for establishing a not-for-profit think tank with the aim of producing solutions for water and energy.

“The think tank will generate projects for the business sector... to motivate and mobilise the private sector in providing business solutions in water and energy,” Abu Ghazaleh said.