

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

STUDY TO RESTORE DEAD SEA LAUNCHED

Jordan, Israel, and Palestinian Representatives Agree to Undertake Joint Study

High level delegations from Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Presidency met today at the Dead Sea in Jordan with donor representatives from Europe, Japan and North America. The meeting, hosted by the Jordanian Government, launched a Feasibility Study and Environmental and Social Assessment for the Red Sea – Dead Sea Water Conveyance Study. The Study itself is expected to take approximately two years to complete. The three beneficiary parties have requested the World Bank to coordinate donor support and to manage the Study.

Over the past three years, Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian experts have worked together to prepare and finalize the Terms of Reference for the Study. “The significance of this joint study is not merely its importance in restoring the well-being of the Dead Sea and producing fresh water”, said **His Excellency Zafer Alem**, Minister of Water and Irrigation of Jordan.

The Study will investigate the feasibility of transferring water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea in order to address the declining level of the Dead Sea, which is currently falling at a rate of approximately one meter per year. “Immediate attention to the current crisis of the Dead Sea is urgent and important”, said **Dr. Mohammad Mustafa**, Economic advisor to the President of the Palestinian Authority.

All three delegations stressed the importance of this partnership to address an environmental and water resource challenge of global interest and significance. “The Study is an excellent example for cooperation, peace and conflict reduction. Hopefully it will become the first of many such cooperative endeavors” said **His Excellency Binyamin Ben Eliezer**, Minister of National Infrastructure of Israel.

“The World Bank is happy to provide support to the three beneficiary parties” said **Inger Andersen**, Director, Sustainable Development for Middle East and North Africa Region of the World Bank. “This study emphasizes the importance of cross-country synergies on a vital shared resource – water. The three parties are truly demonstrating how water can be a catalyst for regional cooperation. The World Bank is very pleased to have thus far received the support of France, Japan, the Netherlands and the USA to facilitate the financing of the study.”

For additional information on the study please visit the website at:

www.worldbank.org/rds

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