



Press Release

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“When it comes to the supply of water to the people of Gaza, we have reached a critical stage” said the Palestinian Minister of Water during the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille.

On the occasion of the 6th World Water Forum convening in Marseille, a Special High-Level Panel Discussion dedicated to the Desalination Facility for Gaza was organized, moderated by UfM Deputy Secretary for Environment and Water, Dr. Rafiq Husseini. The debate, which was attended by around 400 persons, included the Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Salam Fayyad, Ms Jean Gough, UNICEF Special Representative to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Dr. Shaddad Attili, Palestinian Minister of Water, Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi, UfM Secretary General, and the European Investment Bank was represented by Mr. Ioannis Kaltsas.

Barcelona. - The panellists highlighted the significance of the Desalination Facility for the Gaza Strip Project from all aspects - humanitarian, environmental, developmental, and political – underlining that it is a concrete solution using alternative water sources, which is one of the objectives of World Water Forum. The speakers also underlined the importance of this project lies not only in the concrete benefits it will bring to a population of 1.6 million people, but it gathers a consortium of Arab, European and non-European donors to cooperate together in achieving such a life giving project.

Mr. Salam Fayyad, the Palestinian Prime Minister said during his intervention in the session: “I would like to convey to the French Government the appreciation of the Palestinian National Authority for this significant support, in addition to the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean and its 43 country members, for all its efforts in labelling this project. Also I extend our gratitude to the Arab and Gulf countries for their determination in putting an end to this drastic situation in Gaza, and I call upon all the other countries and financial institutions in making this project come true, because there is no other solution for this problem, except through making the Gaza Desalination project a vivid reality.”



UfM Secretary General Fathallah Sijilmassi said that “This project is a flagship example of the added value of the UfM labelling of projects that promote peace, stability, and economic prosperity in the region. The Gaza Desalination project was endorsed by Senior Officials representing the 43 UfM countries in June 2011, because it is considered to be a national project with regional impact.” He also added: “I am very enthusiastic, especially with the announcement of the French Government of pledging 10 million Euros to Gaza Project; we need to build on this momentum, for UfM countries together with the Secretariat to support the Palestinian Authority, in raising the needed funds for the project construction and implementation and in removing the political impediments”

Earlier, during the opening session of the World Water Forum, the French Prime Minister, Mr. François Fillon, announced that France pledged 10 million euros to support the Gaza Project. He also urged other countries and financial institutions to support this project and put an end to an on-going human challenge in Gaza.

On a different note, a bilateral meeting was held between the Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr. Salam Fayyad and the UfM Secretary General Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi, during the day, where both parties explored potential means of cooperation between the Palestinian National Authority and the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, and the way ahead in raising the needed funds for the completion of Gaza Desalination Project.

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