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## The Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean’s presence at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum

### *The way up to the Forum*

The Mediterranean water community has traditionally been very active at the World Water Forum, the global water community’s largest regular interface with an outreach to actors outside the water box, strongly voicing core messages and highlighting experiences from the region. This contribution has been systematically concretized for each Forum through a dedicated Mediterranean Cross-Continental Preparatory Process.

The Process towards the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum that convened on April 12-17, 2015, in the Republic of Korea, was launched in February 2014, coordinated by the Mediterranean Water Institute (IME), in close collaboration with the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), and steered by a multi-stakeholder Committee involving national and regional water actors. Over the last year, a series of milestone meetings took place, structuring the work in six working groups focused on identified thematic priorities, namely: effective water governance; integrated water resources management (IWRM); sanitation for all; adaptation to climate change; improving education and capacity building; science and technology. These working groups formed the Mediterranean Regional Process’ dedicated sessions during the World Water Forum along with a concluding session of the overall Process.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Beirut Water Week (Beirut, 22-23 May 2014), the Kick-off Meeting (Rabat, 18 June 2014), the [2<sup>nd</sup> Mediterranean Water Forum](#) (Murcia, 25-27 November 2014), as well as the Mediterranean Concluding Workshop (Athens, 1 April 2015) marked the Mediterranean Process’ way to the Korea Forum, along with regular Steering Committee meetings that provided the necessary guidance. For example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mediterranean Water Forum hosted plenaries, debate panels, side events and working groups with more than 300 participating stakeholders, exchanging views on common key water challenges, solutions, priority actions for the world water community, innovative ways to strengthen the water management knowledge base, as well as current and upcoming issues, such as the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus.

GWP-Med coordinated the working group on Effective Water Governance and co-coordinated the one on Science & Technology, while the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) led the Education & Capacity Building group. Discussions in the effective governance group focused on the need to nurture a culture of dialogue, to insist on institutional and legislative reforms, to ensure social participation including through decentralized models, to overcome mistrust through awareness raising, to strengthen accountability and create the enabling environment for sustainable financing; and all these under the recent and ongoing socio-political turmoil. The session on Science and Technology presented best cases from the region, indicating the level of expertise developed, and discussed ways to successfully integrate science and technology into policy, business and sustainable development and concluded with key recommendations. In parallel, the Education & Capacity Building Group discussed, among other, the role of water in all education types and levels, as well as the need for multi/trans-disciplinary approaches in teaching Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). The region’s pioneering contribution to the 7<sup>th</sup> WWF, with the Mediterranean Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) endorsed by the UfM’s 43 Ministers of Environment in May 2014, was emphasized.

Overall, representatives from a wide range of national and regional stakeholders involved in the water and environment sectors – national and local authorities, regional organizations, private sector, civil society, institutes, initiatives, donors, consultancies – took part in this consultative, inclusive and participatory process. They ultimately finalized the Mediterranean contribution for Korea during the final Steering Committee Meeting of the Mediterranean Process at the Athens Concluding Workshop (1 April 2015), synthesizing the main messages and sharing views on the key regional concerns into a Mediterranean [Position Paper](#) on “Addressing the crisis and ‘nexus’ through innovation and good governance”, which was widely disseminated during the Forum.

### *The presence on site*

In accordance to its key role during the preparatory phase, GWP-Med also had a strong presence on site at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, leading, co-leading and coordinating three sessions:

#### **- on Effective Water Governance in the Mediterranean (April 14, 2015)**



As coordinator of the respective working group during the Regional Preparatory Process, GWP-Med held the leading role in Korea as well, represented by Dr. Anthi Brouma, Senior Programme Officer and Head of the MENA Region. The Mediterranean Session on effective water governance was part of the respective Inter-Regional Session, hosting also similar regional sessions for the Americas and the Economically Water Insecure regions (EWI), with a common session opening and closing facilitated by the Regional Sessions' Coordinators. The exchange with the other two regions of the session has contributed to further elucidating the question whether effective water governance is attainable and how.

With the complexity of pursuing effective water governance widely acknowledged, careful and informed examination of policy options is required to ensure implementation and sustainability of results, along with political willingness and commitment, both from policy makers and other stakeholders. It is crucial going beyond core elements, such as inclusiveness through access to information, active engagement through transparent mechanisms and a socially sensitive and human rights-focused approach: In fact, most Mediterranean countries are amidst water sector reform processes with governance firmly placed at the center, and IWRM forming the guiding framework. A careful examination of the situation, at national and regional level, shows that governance bottlenecks and mismanagement remain a lingering reality, exacerbated further due to the socio-political turmoil of recent years in the South Mediterranean.

The session provided an overview of key challenges and opportunities, while the discussion and exchanges identified three key areas of concern and priority for good governance, namely the organisational mode (who does what and at which level), the regulation of the water sector and the urgent need for sustainable financing. Reflections on the topic were presented in the form of targeted presentations by representatives from the Embassy of Lebanon in Korea; the Ministry of Energy, Mines, Water & Environment of Morocco; the Palestinian Water Authority; the Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia; and the Euro-Mediterranean Irrigators Community (EIC/FENACORE). The session also included a facilitated panel discussion on innovative water governance, involving representatives from MIO-ECSDE, Societe des Eaux de Marseille, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature - Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN ROWA), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Confederación Hidrográfica del Júcar, the Institut de Prospective Economique du Monde Mediterranéen (IPEMED), the Geneva United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office, the ART Initiative - Global Water Solidarity, and Grupo Tragsa.

The inter-regional session acknowledged the occurred shifts in the conceptual approaches to water governance and stressed that practices are well known, but that practice needs to be strengthened and that further investment on knowledge and on a continuous and monitored learning process is needed.

### **- on Linking Science and Technology for managing global water challenges & on Finding ways to overcome the barriers for improved research uptake - European and Mediterranean experiences (April 14, 2015)**

Science and Technology was in the focus of the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum with a dedicated process. In the interregional process, Europe and the Mediterranean led the theme, with a jointly organised session by the Netherlands Water Partnership on behalf of the former and by IME/TYPSA and GWP-Med on behalf of the latter.

Despite the development of promising innovative solutions that have the potential to address current global water challenges, large-scale worldwide implementation continues to be a challenge. Science enables the development of new technologies, and putting 'knowledge to use' by implementing technologies under local conditions is a necessary next step. In this context, this interregional session provided an insight into the two regions' specificities, as the key driver and bottleneck for integration of science and new technologies, presented best cases from both regions and discussed ways to implement solutions based on best practices and scale-up solutions, also through international cooperation projects.

Being a North-South interface, the Mediterranean brings the strengths of both North and South, as a response to the region's water challenges. Some well-functioning science and technology cases, aiming to promote knowledge and indicating the expertise in the region, were presented by the Spanish Federation of Irrigators Communities (FENACORE), the Mediterranean Network of River Basin Authorities (MENBO), Group Eaux de Marseille, the Palestinian Water Authority and GWP-Med. The latter involved the presentation of the Non Conventional Water Resources (NCWR) Programme in the Mediterranean, by Ms. Konstantina Toli, Senior Programme Officer at GWP-Med and co-coordinator of the session, which was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Water Showcase Global Final of the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, on 15 April, 2015. Further experiences shared included European cases from the Dutch Water Authorities, Eawag in Switzerland, the Joint Research Centre in Ispra, SUEN in Turkey, the Danish Technological Institute and China Europe Water Platform.



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A panel including stakeholders from various sectors, such as science, government, universities and international organisations, discussed options on how to best integrate science and technology and upscale solutions to address water challenges in the two regions and beyond. The GWP Acting Executive Secretary, Mr. Rudolph Cleveringa, along representatives from the Water Science Center of the University of Exeter; the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland; the Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia; as well as the innovative water technology company Tocardo exchanged views on how to implement solutions based on best practices and how to integrate Science and Technology into Policy, Business and Sustainable Development. The discussion resulted into three key recommendations, which fed the Science and Technology Process, as follows:

- Water science and technology need to be considered in a holistic way, encompassing not only the available water resources but the entire water cycle, with all streams, including non conventional water inputs.
- Water science and technology should correspond to all characteristics of water, being not only a commodity, but also bearing intrinsic value, cultural and social aspects. In this respect science, technology and development of innovation related to water cannot solely rely on private sector investments, but requires the support of governments, combined with a fair distribution of the benefits and costs to the society. At Euro-Mediterranean level, appropriate institutional and regulatory frameworks, along with the needed financial means, should be in place.
- Provided that we secure the first two, we need to better understand the inter-relationships among the demand, the non-linear cycle of development of science-technology-innovation and the use of new water related products, in order to achieve faster progress and socially accountable applications.

### **- The Final Mediterranean Session (April 16, 2015)**

Jointly coordinated by Ms. Milagros Couchoud from IME and Prof. Michael Scoullou from GWP-Med, this Final Session synthesized all six thematic sessions held during the Forum, with each Focal Point presenting the highlights and main conclusions. Having led/co-led the respective inter-regional sessions, GWP-Med representatives, Dr. Anthi Brouma and Ms. Konstantina Toli – the latter along the co-coordinator from TYPISA - were respectively the Focal Points for the effective water governance and the Science & Technology sessions, while Ms. Iro Alampei from MIO-ECSDE was the Focal Point for the [Education & Capacity Building Regional Session](#). It is worth pointing out the recognition of the indispensable role of water education towards Sustainable Development, as well as its identification as a prerequisite and tool for management in all sessions of the Mediterranean Process: the Mediterranean is the only region within WWF7 that organised a dedicated session on the topic. Further Focal Points included representatives from the Mediterranean Network of Basin Organisations (MENBO) for the IWRM session; the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) for the session on adaptation to climate change; IME for the session on sanitation for all.

Following a brief presentation of the Mediterranean position paper as elaborated during the Regional Preparatory Process, a plenary discussion with targeted interventions jointly facilitated by IME and GWP-Med, took stock of the current state of water in the region, asserted the context of the Position Paper and discussed areas in need of urgent action through an inclusive, transparent and informative multi-stakeholder process. Some key points highlighted include the following:

- the Mediterranean being a microcosm itself feels the global change circumstances in a stronger and more urgent way, and therefore needs more innovative approaches and an overall behavioral/mindset change;
- for the 7th World Water Forum the selection of topics/themes within the Mediterranean Process was not random; there was a rationale underpinning those areas also reflecting on the knowledge and understanding of a range of Mediterranean actors. In future World Water Fora, the Mediterranean Process shall place emphasis on urban issues, as well as on exogenous factors, such as climate change, socioeconomic pressure from refugee flows, unemployment, etc. For the 7th World Water Forum, effort was placed on tackling urban issues horizontally, hence the absence of a dedicated working group.
- There are several strengths in the region, notwithstanding the solid and long-standing experience with political and economic processes;

- Some recommendations include:
  - Learn from others and from existing knowledge available around the world and especially the one that goes into the roots of education. Develop more the South-South knowledge transfer;
  - Need to convince Governments to dedicate resources for the needed soft activities (that are often marginalised as the benefits are not immediate);
  - Develop innovative Science & Technology for water knowledge sharing, also with relation to climate change;
  - Allow for more transparency in the decision making, including for the storage and transfer of water;
  - Understand better and provide the financing for ecosystem services. Consider nature as one of the providers and not only as a user.

**Overall, three pillars are expected to guide the Mediterranean Process' priorities:**

- a renewed governance approach that will trigger the necessary change of mind-set/behaviour;
- sustainable and transparent financing;
- the apparent link between transfer of knowledge, education and Science- Technology -Innovation.

With a dedicated discussion, the Final Mediterranean session discussed the 'Regional Water Knowledge Platform' project, presented by MENBO on behalf and as one of the project promoters. The Platform shall include all main components required to develop a regional vision and strategic plan for the sustainable management of water resources. This Regional Platform should bring together as many Mediterranean water and environmental stakeholders as possible, improving the coordination on challenges and solutions, helping implement good practices in integrated water management in the Mediterranean region, enhancing good governance, bringing forward the best information systems, and above all, proposing tools to help decision-making for rational use of water resources and the improvement of populations' living conditions. The first reactions to the Platform echoed that this is a positive, yet ambitious initiative, that needs to link closely to existing institutions and networks, particularly for securing the needed financial resources. Also, adjustments may be required in the process, especially considering the emphasis on information gathering, the rapid changes with new technologies and the semi-static nature of assessments in view of the region's prospect analysis.

The Final Mediterranean session also included a keynote speech by the Honorary President of World Water Council, as well as a High-Level Panel Discussion with representatives from the Foundation Prince Albert II of Monaco, governments of Algeria and Spain, the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)/The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT), GWP-Med, as well as IME.

***A great distinction at the Water Showcase Global Final***

Apart from the above-mentioned sessions of the Mediterranean Regional Process, GWP-Med participated and contributed actively in a number of other sessions, within and well beyond the Mediterranean Regional Process. And of course last, but not least, it gained a great distinction at the Water Showcase Global Final of the 7th World Water Forum, in Daegu, Korea, on 15 April 2015, [with the 2<sup>nd</sup> place ranking of the Non Conventional Water Resources \(NCWR\) Programme in the Mediterranean](#), a multi-stakeholder programme, with activities in water scarce insular communities in Greece, Malta, Cyprus and Italy. The NCWR Programme in the Mediterranean was the only non-Asian showcase, with strong competition from India, South Korea, Bangladesh and Indonesia, among more than 120 showcases from around the world. *"This distinction is a proof of acknowledgement that the programme constitutes a showcase which can be adapted and replicated in water scarce communities not only in the Mediterranean but also around the world. For GWP Mediterranean, it has been a continuous effort to develop and expand the programme in the Mediterranean since 2008 with the support of Coca-Cola"*, said Ms. Konstantina Toli, Senior Programme Officer at GWP Mediterranean and Coordinator of the NCWR Programme, as the result was announced.