

Roundtable on Water:
*The role of science and technology
in projects of peace*

Geneva, 23 May 2016

Concept Note

At its most recent session held in Lusaka in March 2016, the Committee on Middle East Questions adopted the Terms of Reference for a regional Roundtable on Water. This is not intended to be part of the final stages of political negotiations between Israel and Palestine, or indeed between any other countries. Members of the Committee are imminently aware that it is not up to parliaments to negotiate peace, let alone sign peace agreements. The Committee concluded its discussion of the recommendations of its last mission to the Middle East in January 2016. It considered that the global parliamentary community should invest in establishing projects of peace that could transform elements of conflict, such as water, food, and power, into factors of co-existence that could create an atmosphere that is conducive to peaceful political solutions. The Committee agreed that science is the most neutral umbrella for spearheading the collective regional efforts aimed at addressing this regional challenge.

At its session held in Geneva in March 2014, the Committee debated a number of possible topics for its dialogue sessions and ultimately selected water, and its different dimensions, for the first session. It also decided that a roundtable approach would be the best format to encourage inclusive and effective exchanges on water. Given WaterLex's expertise in this area and the fact that it has collaborated with the IPU in the past, this organization is seen as a natural partner in the roundtable.

The European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) has worked on science for peace projects for over 60 years, delivering the message of the enormous potential of science as a driver of peaceful relations among cultures and nations, and as a force for sustainability and in tackling the major challenges facing society today. CERN conducts scientific research programmes on particle physics, with the added benefit of promoting the importance of science for society, including peace. This model includes a number of training and educational initiatives for international students, as well as training schools for high school teachers. These initiatives are not intended exclusively for students and teachers from CERN Member States, but also to those from non-Member States, with particular attention to developing countries or countries belonging to sensitive areas, including the Middle East.

Another organization working in the field of science and technology is the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), a regional scientific laboratory that hosts members from a wide variety of countries in the region, ranging from Arab States, Iran (Islamic Rep. of) and Turkey, to Israel and Palestine, and European States, on a platform that provides an example of co-existence. Jordan plays host to SESAME, as well as a number of other national and international scientific research institutions.

Objectives and expected outcomes of the roundtable

The aim of the roundtable is to foster discussions among MPs, scientists, and experts from the region and the regional exchange of scientific experiences and projects on addressing the water issue between the countries involved. The roundtable will aim to develop a tailored cooperative project involving scientific research teams composed of young scientists and regional experts to deal with the water issue. The discussions will elaborate on testimonials from relevant existing models in the region, such as SESAME. Through the creation of common projects related to water, this controversial issue can be transformed into a factor of co-existence which can in turn revive other projects of peace.

The roundtable will aim to explore means of bringing science closer to people, by literally helping to bring water to the table in a region that faces water scarcity, and to countries that face drought or a sudden surge of water consumption due to the increased flow of refugees. Parliaments have a responsibility for representing their people, protecting them and meeting their basic needs and aspirations, including their

desire to live in peace. The roundtable discussion will provide inspiration for the establishment of an action plan. The Committee will submit a report on the roundtable to the IPU's governing bodies at its next session in October 2016.

Format

The roundtable will consist of interventions by relevant experts followed by presentations by MPs of their country's relevant experiences. A concluding session will be held on the last day and will provide an opportunity for the participants to develop a plan of action and consider future roundtables.

Venue and dates: IPU Headquarters, Geneva, 31 May to 2 June 2016

Participation: The roundtable is open to the members of the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions, the parliaments of Arab States as observers, as well as experts from CERN, SESAME and WaterLex.

Languages: The working languages will be English, French, Arabic and Spanish.



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Committee on Middle East Questions
Roundtable on Water:
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in projects of peace*

31 May - 2 June 2016
Geneva, Switzerland

Provisional programme

Tuesday, 31 May

- 9:30 – 10:00 **Welcome and introduction to projects of peace**
- Opening addresses by:
 - o *Ms. Denise Pascal Allende, President of the Committee*
 - o *Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General*
- 10:00 – 11:00 **Session 1: Investing in water cooperation opportunities**
- Presentations by WaterLex
 - o *The session will underscore the importance of addressing the water issue in the Middle East region, and will set the stage for the presentation of several models. WaterLex will elaborate on the means and importance of promoting dialogue for water cooperation and water governance initiatives.*
 - Interventions
- 11:00 – 11:15 **Coffee break**
- 11:15 – 12:30 **Session 1: Investing in water cooperation opportunities (cont'd.)**
- Interventions
- 12:30 – 15:00 **Lunch break**
- 15:00 – 16:00 **Session 1: Investing in water cooperation opportunities (cont'd.)**
- As part of the session, the participants will be invited to discuss, report on and present relevant examples of models for addressing the water issue from their respective countries.
- 16:00 – 16:15 **Coffee break**
- 16:15 – 18:00 **Session 1: Investing in water cooperation opportunities (cont'd.)**
- Continuation of participants' discussions on models for addressing the water issue from their respective countries.
- 19:00 **Dinner at restaurant "Port Gitana"**

Wednesday, 1 June

9:30 – 11:00

Session 2: The role of science and technology in promoting dialogue

- Presentation by Dr. Maurizio Bona, Head of Relations with International Organizations at CERN
 - o *The session will highlight the role of science as a neutral umbrella for cooperation, and its potential as a driver of peace. Science is important for society and can provide an opportunity to improve people's lives in all aspects. Scientific innovations and approaches are central to the plan of dealing with the regional water issue. As an example, CERN will present their model of international scientific cooperation, with emphasis on initiatives for the promotion of the dialogue and peace, including their teacher and student school models.*
- Interventions

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee break

11:15 – 12:30

Session 2: The role of science and technology in promoting dialogue (cont'd.)

12:30 – 14:30

Lunch break

14:30 – 15:30

Session 3: Science for peace

- Presentation by Prof. Herwig Schopper on SESAME
 - o *This session will focus on the means through which science can help meet people's essential needs and foster cooperation for the greater good. SESAME will be presented as an existing exemplary platform for science, dialogue and peace.*
- Interventions

15:30 – 15:45

Coffee break

15:45 – 17:30

Session 3: Science for peace (cont'd.)

18:00

Visit to CERN

- The visit will provide an opportunity for the participants to see first-hand the organization and its work.

Thursday, 2 June

9:30 – 11:00

Session 4: Experiences from the region: Science and technology from an entrepreneurial perspective

- This session aims to present examples from the region of ways to tackle the water issue.
- Interventions

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee break

11:15 – 12:30

Conclusions and the roadmap

- Water projects, possibilities and the role of science education programmes for water in peace
 - o *This session will provide an opportunity for a general discussion on lessons learned from the roundtable, next steps and follow-up actions. It will also encourage reflection on the models presented in order to determine feasible projects for water in the Middle East in order to pave the way for peace.*
- Study and prioritization of projects
- The next steps: Turning words into actions
- Vision for the next roundtable on food



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Committee on Middle East Questions

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31 May - 02 June 2016
Geneva, Switzerland

One form per parliament

Registration Form

Country

Participant 1

Mr. Mrs. Ms.

First Name

Middle Name

Surname

Parliament (Chamber)

Function

Member of Parliament

Senator

Aide or staff

Other :

Full title

Office e-mail Address

Telephone

Date

Signature

Participant 2

Mr. Mrs. Ms.

First Name

Middle Name

Surname

Parliament (Chamber)

Function

Member of Parliament

Senator

Aide or staff

Other :

Full title

Office e-mail Address

Telephone

Date

Signature

Participant 3

Mr. Mrs. Ms.

First Name

Middle Name

Surname

Parliament (Chamber)

Function

Member of Parliament

Senator

Aide or staff

Other :

Full title

Office e-mail Address

Telephone

Date

Signature

Note

In order to benefit from a balanced range of views, we would ask you to consider designating a gender-balanced delegation. The delegation should be comprised of two to three members.

Please return this form to the address below **no later than 16 May 2016**:

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