

Resolution on the Water Crisis in Gaza

The Malta VIII Conference titled “Frontiers of Science: Research and Education in the Middle East—A Bridge to Peace” took place in the Republic of Malta. From the 10-15 December 2017, one hundred scientists, from 14 Middle East countries, who are committed to using science diplomacy for peace, spent five days collaborating with each other in order to solve regional problems of environmental degradation, water scarcity, chemical and nuclear security, and science and technology education.

This year, the scientists came from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. The conference has been held every two years since 2003. It has become increasingly difficult to obtain visas for everybody. But once there, the scientists engage with each other and create an atmosphere like a family reunion.

One of the outcomes of the Conference was a resolution written by Israeli and Gazan scientists, calling on the international community to leave politics aside and help solve the humanitarian crisis which stems in large part from the existence of widespread water pollution in Gaza. The resolution reads:

“We are scientists from all over the Middle East that met under the “umbrella” of the “Malta Conferences Foundation -Frontiers of Science Research and Education in the Middle East”. During our meeting, it became apparent that because of lack of suitable drinking water and energy, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is on the edge of becoming a catastrophe. The problem in Gaza is not confined and the bad environmental issue that may arise will affect neighboring countries like Israel and Egypt. For example, the lack of treatment to sewage causes its deposition in the sea and the pollution affects not only Gaza but also people living at the shore in other countries.

We call the international community to establish a task force that will be able to overcome the political difficulties and will enable professional treatment of the water and environment.”

Every Middle East participant voted in favor of the adoption of this resolution.

The Malta Conferences is the only platform where scientists from all over the Middle East can spend five days together, develop collaborations and friendships, which overcome the chasms of distrust and intolerance.

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The Chemical Weapons Convention: From Disarmament to Sustainable Development

Peace and security through the destruction of chemical weapons

2017 marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The Convention is a unique and powerful disarmament treaty with the aim of completely eliminating chemical weapons from the world. It is comprehensive, prohibiting not only the use of chemical weapons, but also their development, production, stockpiling, transfer and retention. Currently 192 States have committed to eradicating chemical weapons by becoming signatories to the Convention.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was founded in 1997 as the international organisation responsible for overseeing the