

**Opening remarks by HE**  
**Ahmad Al Qatarneh**  
**Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment – Jordan**  
*in the opening of the*  
**Participatory Workshop on Environment and Security Issues in the**  
**Southern Mediterranean Region**  
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Your Excellencies,

Dear Distinguished guests,

It is my pleasure to be here today for the opening of such an important and dynamic gathering of experts and visionaries, aiming to discuss the security implications of environmental degradation and the scarcity of natural resources in our region.

This is not an academics issue that draws the attention of research only, but also policy makers in this region who are facing the reality of responding to the challenges of the environment, climate change and natural resources in political and economic decision making processes.

Our region is going through a deep transitional period with political and economic challenges shaping new forms of political powers and ways of governance. Many of the current and future challenges in the region will be driven by environmental causes such as the need for secure supplies of energy, the acquisition of affordable water resources and the need to deal with the impact of climate change and pollution.

Environmental security cannot be achieved by one country alone but only through cooperative measures built on trust and sustainable policy options. The Southern Mediterranean area is rich in history and culture and that positive past lead sometimes to cases of conflict that cannot be resolved only by political measures. The need to share our resources in a more fair way should drive our efforts to break political barriers for the benefit of our societies.

This is however, easier said than done. It will need visionary leaders at all ends of each “shared resource” conflict to come together and think of practical ways to reach agreements despite all the rapid changes that are open to all outcomes in this region.

Jordan under the leadership of HM King Abdullah II has always been a believer in supporting regional security and has linked theory with practice in many cases. Through its membership in the Arab league, the UN and many other forums, Jordan has always sought to reach security through peaceful measures and bringing all conflict parties together. Jordan believes in the right of all countries and societies to enjoy the full sovereignty on their own natural resources but at the same time it supports mutual agreements to maximize the benefits of sharing transboundary resources to enhance security at all levels.

At the heart of environmental security issues in this region lies the need to provide the Palestinian people with their right of governance and ownership of their water resources and energy security. All international agreements and guidelines on protecting the natural rights of people under occupation should be applied. Regional security will be highly strengthened once a sustainable and peaceful resolution to the Palestinian issues is reached that guarantees a full-fledged independent Palestinian state that enjoys sovereignty over all its natural resources. This has always been the position highlighted by HM King Abdullah II in his global and regional efforts in pursuing sustainable and just peace for all parties in the region, especially the Palestinians.

I welcome you again to Jordan and wish you all the best in your important discussions.