

## **WATER SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION (WSTA)**

### **The WSTA 11th Gulf Water Conference “ Water in the GCC States...Towards an Efficient Management” 20-22 October 2014, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman**

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Under the patronage of HH Sayed Shehab Bin Tariq Bin Taimour Al-Saeed, Advisor to His Majesty the Sultan of Oman, and with participation of HE Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Secretary General of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, a number of GCC ministers, experts and specialists from the GCC States and other Arab and friendly countries, in addition to representatives of government, non-government and private sector organizations, the WSTA 11th Gulf Water Conference was held during the period 20-22 October 2014, in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The Conference was co-organized by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, Water Science and Technology Association, the Public Authority of Electricity and Water, and the Omani Water Society, and was supported by the GCC Secretariat-General, international, regional and local organizations and private sector.

The conference was held under the theme "Water in the GCC...Towards an Efficient Management" to achieve the following objectives:

1. Raising awareness and influencing policy and decision making to the importance of improving water efficiency as a cost-effective option contributing to a more sustainable water management in the GCC states.
2. Identifying challenges and opportunities in improving water efficiency under the prevailing socio-economic, environmental, cultural, and political conditions in the GCC states.
3. Facilitating an open scientific discussion platform to share knowledge and experiences between researchers, executives, decision and policy makers, private sector, and other stakeholders, on improving water efficiency in the various water supply and consuming sectors in the GCC states.
4. Identifying scientific and technological research needs and priorities in the field of water efficiency to aid the process of policies formulation and decision making in the GCC states.
5. Building a research and experience exchange network between individuals, institutes, civil society/NGOs and private sector in the GCC states, other countries in the Arab region, and beyond in the field of water efficiency.

The Conference commended the efforts made by the GCC Secretariat-General in the preparation of the Unified GCC Water Strategy and its Implementation Plan for the period 2015-2035. The meeting also commended the official launching of the Arab GWADI Network and the selection of its Secretariat in Oman.

Through its scientific sessions and panel discussions with participation of more than 350 water officials, academics, researchers, and specialists from various water fields, the Conference has reached the following recommendations:

1. To increase GCC investment and joint actions in the transfer, localization and possession of water desalination technology and manufacturing of desalination spare parts in collaboration with the national private sector.
2. To set up a joint GCC research center specializing in water desalination and treatment, including oil-associated water, to enhance GCC joint actions and to make the GCC states the pioneers in these fields.
3. To provide drinking water during emergencies in the GCC States through a GCC water grid.
4. To improve governance and to adopt a participatory approach in water resource management, and to promote a culture of water conservation and rationalization in the GCC States.
5. To adopt economic tools as one of the most effective tools for water resources management, to set appropriate tariffs for water use in the various consuming sectors to increase use efficiency, water resources sustainability, and cost recovery for the O&M costs in various water utilities; and to change the dominating general subsidy system into targeted subsidies to raise use efficiency while taking into consideration the low income segments of society.
6. To adopt an integrated policy that balances local agriculture, food imports, and agricultural investment abroad to ensure food security of strategic commodities in the GCC States, and to develop realistic agricultural policies and plans that are commensurable with available water resources.
7. To continue work and follow up of the impacts of climate change on the GCC water resources, and to intensify studies on storm water and flood disasters to reduce their damages and to benefit from these waters.
8. To increase the dependence on renewable energy, particularly solar energy, for various water operations, especially in water desalination technology.
9. To increase the use of treated wastewater in the agricultural and industrial sectors to increase water efficiency.
10. To intensify the use of appropriate technologies to alleviate the impacts of seawater intrusion into coastal aquifers.
11. To develop mechanisms for connecting scientific research and local capacity building in water resources planning and management, and to encourage mutual cooperation between research institutes, water authorities, and R&D private sector in research and development in the various water fields.
12. To avail GCC water data and information in various water resources management, and to establish a specialized electronic portals to this effect; to establish information center that contains various water studies and research related to water in the region; and to encourage the establishment of GCC and Arab research networks for information exchange.

The conference delegated the Board of Directors of the WSTA to submit these recommendations to the GCC Secretariat-General for presentation to the Ministerial Committee on Water and to follow up these recommendations. The WSTA Board of Directors is also requested to distribute these recommendations to the relevant regional organizations, countries in arid regions, and relevant agencies to benefit from them.

In conclusion, the participants extend their gratitude to HH sayed Shehab bin Tariq bin Taimour Al-Saeed , advisor of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman, for his kind patronage of the conference and HE honorable attendance to its opening ceremony. Gratitude also goes to Their Excellencies the Ministers for their attendance in the conference, and to the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources, for hosting the conference. The participants also commend the efforts of the Conference Organizing Committee that made this conference a success, the Conference Scientific Committee for its efforts in refereeing and selecting the presented scientific papers, the regional organizations scientific contribution and support, and the support of the private sector, all contributing to the success of the conference.

**Prof. Dr. Waleed K. Al-Zubari**  
Conference Chairman

**Prof. Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Turbak**  
Scientific Committee Chairman