



January 2012

Middle East and North Africa ESTH Hub Activities Report

We are pleased to feature Iraqi female scientist Ms. Bushra Ali Ahmed, Director General of the Radiation Protection Center at the Iraqi Ministry of Environment in our Hall of Fame for 2012 series submitted by Embassy Baghdad.

Middle East and North Africa Women in Science Hall of Fame 2012: Bushra Ali Ahmed obtained her B.Sc. and M.Sc. from Baghdad University, where she is currently pursuing her Ph.D. She has worked at the Radiation Protection Center (RPC) in Baghdad since 1987. She has managed radiation source investigations, transportation and occupational safety, and nuclear waste storage. Ms. Bushra directed RPC's Laboratory of Radioactivity Analysis until 2002, was appointed Deputy Director in 2003, and promoted to her current position of Director General in 2004. She is a member of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Committee and chairs the committee responsible for drafting Iraq's nuclear regulations.

Trip to Baghdad Jan. 24-Jan. 28:



Iraq National Science Policy Workshop: Iraq's ESTH Section worked tirelessly to execute a workshop, which brought together U.S. officials and Iraqis from universities and the government. Most of the Iraqis had participated in two International Visitor Leadership Programs (IVLP) that took place within the last two years. I facilitated the workshop and was energized by the commitment and vision of our ESTH Section, Sr. Iraq Desk Officer Dianna Chiannis, and the Iraqi participants. The keynote address was delivered by Georgia Tech graduate and Deputy Minister of Science and Technology Dr. Samir Raouf. He noted that since modern Iraq's

founding in 1921, Iraq has been an Arab leader in science and technology, and had one of the best educational systems in the Middle East. Wars and sanctions eroded those competencies, but Iraq is now in a position to leverage human capital to rebuild. Current challenges in science and technology include lack of constant financing, a dearth of current statistics or indicators, and that research outcomes aren't easily applied. Dr. Samir insisted that science and technology is as essential to Iraq's economy as any other issue. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Planning, and other senior-level Iraqi policy-makers responded to a 2009 conference hosted by the U.S. National Science Foundation by increasing the science budget, but there a mechanism to disperse these funds has yet to emerge. Dr. Samir encouraged our workshop participants to find ways to develop a common vision between research institutes and universities, develop an innovation ecosystem that creates



Photo courtesy of the Embassy Amman

a culture beyond planned incubator buildings, and have meaningful technology transfer that can be felt by the ordinary citizen. Dr. Samir set the tone for the four proceeding panels, which covered legislation and administration, and the roles of the government, universities, NGOs, and the private sector. During the wrap-up session, we analyzed each of the suggestions to determine if they were deliverables or aspirations. For suggestions that can be implemented, we assigned an action agent and a time-line for accomplishment. Watch for a comprehensive cable, which will document the workshop proceedings and the deliverables.

Iraq's Green Team: Can you imagine how difficult it would be to have commitment and continuity for Green Team housed in an embassy that changes personnel every summer? Despite this challenge, Embassy Baghdad has a vibrant Green Team! There are ample recycling containers on the embassy compound, every suite has a list of green tips above the light switches at the exit door, and there is information by each elevator with tips on saving energy and water. For example, the flyer noted you can save eight gallons of water if you turn the spigot off while you brush your teeth. I gave a presentation to a dedicated green embassy contingent. Ambassador Jeffrey's wife had led the team until her departure and ESTH Officer Stephanie Hauser recently volunteered to take over these responsibilities. I have some ideas for Stephanie, and will work as the institutional memory bridge when she transfers in August.

Deputy Special Envoy for Climate Change Visit to the Region Jan. 15-20: Dr. Jonathan Pershing was in the U.A.E. from Jan.15-18 at the 5th World Future Energy Summit. He made a quick stop in Doha in the morning of Jan. 18 to call on the Environment Minister, who will host the next round of climate change negotiations - COP 18. Dr. Pershing also talked to the Qatari Environment Minister about the possibility of joining the Global Methane Initiative. I picked Dr. Pershing up at the Amman airport that afternoon, and we drove to Jerusalem for a dinner arranged by Tel Aviv's ESTH Officer Ingrid Kollist with five women from Israel's Environment Ministry, including Chief Scientist Dr. Sinaia Netanyahu. During the interesting dinner, Dr. Netanyahu lamented that Israel was too small to be a major player in climate negotiations. Dr. Pershing disputed that, sighting Granada as an example of a small country that asserts itself as a major player during the negotiations. He suggested Israel consider marketing itself as a technology provider for clean energy solutions during the Nov. 27 Doha meeting. Dr. Pershing stayed in Israel until Jan. 20 and also met separately with the Ministers of Energy and Water; Environment; and Industry, Trade and Labor. He also addressed the Environment of Tomorrow conference.

Iraq Scientist Engagement Program (ISEP)-Reinvigorating the Iraq Chemical Society: I gave opening remarks at the ISEP meeting held in Amman from Jan. 22-24. This workshop was supported by the State Department, CRDF Global, and the American Chemical Society. The Iraq Chemical Society (ICS) was founded in the mid-60s and was the second such society in the Arab world: Egypt's Chemical Society pre-dated ICS. ICS published its first journal in 1965, and published a total of 29 journals before the organization ceased operating in 2002. American Chemical Society's (ACS) International Activities Director Dr. Bradley Miller was on hand to talk about the ACS experience. ACS has two annual national meetings that include papers, oral presentations, roundtables, and student posters. ACS informs U.S. decision makers on state, local and national policies involving science. Dr. Sultan Abu Orabi is the president of the Jordan Chemical Society and the Arab Union of Chemists. The objectives of those organizations are similar to those of ACS: strengthen relationship between chemists; improve chemists' scientific levels; cooperate with chemical companies; and sponsor science events in schools. Most of the

Iraqi participants had been members of the previous society, and look forward to strengthening their organization with the support of the ACS and the Arab societies.

USAID Supports a New Interactive Exhibit on Water and Energy at the Children's Museum of Jordan: U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Public Action Project signed an agreement with ROTO Studio, a design and production firm specializing in interactive experiences for museums and science centers, for the design and manufacture of a new exhibit to be installed at the Children's Museum of Jordan. ROTO will conceptualize, design, and manufacture a 428 square meter exhibit, exploring ideas related to Jordan's water and energy crises. The cost of this state-of-the-art exhibit, which will be the largest of its kind in the region, is \$1.4 million dollars, and will be open to visitors by March 2013. The interactive exhibit will encourage children to build critical thinking skills, work within a team, and learn through play. The Children's Museum Jordan is a non-profit educational initiative of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, founded in 2007. With over 120 interactive exhibits and year-round immersive programming, the Children's Museum works towards nurturing curious children who love to learn through hands-on play and exploration. Since opening, over 750,000 individuals have benefited from visiting the Museum's Exhibit Hall, Art Studio, and Library!

GLOBE Picks Jordan for its New Near East and North Africa (NENA) Regional Hub Office: The Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research announced that Jordanian NGO Friends of the Environment (FoE) will host GLOBE's Regional Office. The Lebanese Association for Forest Development and Conservation hosted the regional office since 2009. FoE's leaders Raouf Dabbas and Basem Abdelrahman will present their goals during GLOBE's regional meeting in Oman February 7-9, and then will establish the new GLOBE NENA Regional Office upon their return from the meeting. GLOBE is a worldwide hands-on, primary and secondary school-based science and education program. Students, teachers, and scientists collaborate on inquiry-based investigations with NASA, NOAA, and NSF to research the dynamics of the Earth's environment. For more information, follow this link: <http://globe.gov/>



Amman Green Team: Amman Green Team held its New Year's Resolutions meeting on January 11. During the meeting, the team set goals and developed its 2012 calendar. For the first quarter the team will organize a bike trip to Azraq Wetlands to celebrate the World Wetlands Day; raise awareness within the community about the right way to recycle; and promote and participate in local events celebrating World Water Day (March 22) and Earth Hour (March 31.) We also talked about contests that we can run to increase awareness and community involvement, quarterly field trips, and to support ongoing programs within the Embassy to minimize energy and water consumption. We will keep you updated!!

Ambassador Shapiro Visit to Nazareth Honoring Tel Aviv's Woman In Science for 2012: Congratulations to Embassy Tel Aviv for its coverage of U.S. Ambassador Dan Shapiro's visit to Nazareth, Israel on December 22, 2011. The Ambassador met Nazareth's mayor and representatives from the Secretariat of the National Committee of the Heads of Local Arab Authorities in Israel. Ambassador Shapiro then met Dr. Amal Ayoub at New Generation Technology. Dr. Ayoub used her doctoral dissertation research to develop a technology to improve radiotherapy and diagnostics methods. Her "Metallo Therapy" uses

gold nanoparticles to target tumors. Ambassador Shapiro surprised Dr. Ayoub with a certificate, and announced that she was honored as one of twelve outstanding professional women selected for the Women in Science Hall of Fame Program!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzo2iIkOrA>.

Consulate Jerusalem Rewards a 2010 Alum of the Study of the United States Institutes (SUSI) Program on Global Environmental Issues: PD Jerusalem awarded 2010 SUSI alum Ahmad Al Barki a small grant to produce short Arabic-language film sketches introducing important environmental topics. Mr. Al Barki wrote and produced



Photo courtesy of the Consulate Jerusalem

three public service announcements on environmental issues that he had learned about while attending last year's SUSI program in Hawaii. Mr. Al Barki believes youth in the Palestinian Territories will relate to his anti-litter, recycling, and reusing materials campaigns. Mr. Bakri shot the three sketches with help with fellow SUSI 2010 alumni, and has incorporated educational facts. The project helps link the experience that Mr. Bakri and the other SUSI alumni gained from their time in the U.S. to problems and possible solutions in their local environment, while highlighting the importance of taking care of the

environment. Video samples can be found at

<http://www.vimeo.com/28234606>, <http://vimeo.com/28231966> , and <http://vimeo.com/28233049>.

West Bank Farmers Learn Benefits of Biogas in Sustainable Energy Project:

Through a project funded by PD Jerusalem, An Najah University launched an environmental initiative to develop renewable energy sources in sixteen Palestinian districts, starting with the West Bank village of Aqaaba on January 4. In partnership with the Palestine Wildlife Society and Engineers without Borders, An Najah's Water and Environmental Studies Institute (WESI) distributed the first of sixteen biogas digester units and conducted a workshop to demonstrate its use and maintenance to local beneficiaries. The demonstration of the renewable energy source was attended by 40 farmers interested in the possibility of implementing the green technology on their own farms. Afterward, the unit was installed at one attendee's farm (a farmer chosen at random by the local council) for which the beneficiary signed an agreement to use, maintain, and take care of the unit and allow the University to demonstrate the use of the technique to neighboring villagers.



(L) Dr. Marwan Haddad of WESI instructs the workshop participants; (R) A local farmer tries the digester for himself

TechWomen 2012: The TechWomen initiative is a mentorship opportunity for approximately 42 women who are emerging leaders in technology sectors for a five-week program. Women selected from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Tunis, and Yemen will participate in project-based mentorships in California, workshops, networking events, a conference, and meetings in Washington, D.C. Participants will be women engaged or rising in professional careers that require significant expertise/knowledge of technology and/or innovative application of these skills, and who already are – or show promise of being – role models for others in their countries. “Technology” should be interpreted broadly to include – but not be limited to – the fields of science, education, and business. **The deadline for submission is February 15, 2012.** For more information on the program, eligibility and application go to: <http://www.techwomen.org/>. If you have questions about process, please contact techwomen@iie.org or Tel: +1-415-362-6520 (Ext. 257) Fax: +1-415-392-4667.

Cancer Prevention course at the National Cancer Institute: This link details a wonderful opportunity for English-speaking physicians, scientists, and other health care professionals at the National Cancer Institute’s summer cancer prevention courses: <https://cpfp.cancer.gov/summer/summer.php>. These two courses are open to international participants and there is no cost to register or attend either course. In addition, limited funding for living expenses may be available from NCI's Center for Global Health. The registration deadline is **February 15, 2012.**

Other News:

Disclaimer: The following news articles do not represent the point of view of the ESTH Hub or any USG representative and are merely a collection of articles gathered from local and online media.



Photo courtesy of the Green Prophet

GLOBAL - Woman Spins Camel Wool to Prevent Slaughter of 1.2 Million Wild Australian Camels:

Camels are valued in the Arab world for their meat, milk, and leather, but in Australia, more than one million wild Dromedary camels are considered pests. They are also a source of greenhouse gas emissions since each releases one pound of methane into the atmosphere every year. While this doesn't compare with Australia's coal pollution, last year Daily Mail website reported that the government was considering a

proposal to slaughter every single animal in order to "save the planet." Unhappy with this plan, Helen Durrant with Camel Wool Products started making beautiful apparel of camel wool in order to prove that these animals are a valuable natural resource to be cherished, not culled. <http://www.greenprophet.com/2012/01/camel-wool-products>. [Source: The Green Prophet]

GLOBAL - Women Need More Role Models, Tech Leaders Tell CES Panel: Even though women have taken great strides in technology, a panel of top women in the industry suggested that great role models could help them gain more! http://ces.cnet.com/8301-33363_1-57357500/women-need-more-role-models-tech-leaders-tell-ces-panel/. [Source: CNET]

Jordan – Students Influencing Change: Here is a feature on Alisa Ananbeh, one of our "Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on Global Environmental Issues" alumni! <http://www.greenprophet.com/2012/01/interview-jordans-new-green-generation/>. [Source: The Green Prophet]

ISRAEL – Chamber Of Commerce Pushes 'Med-Dead' Project: In light of the looming energy crisis and dwindling condition of the Dead Sea, Israel Chamber of Commerce President Uriel Lynn recently appealed to relevant ministers that they reexamine the idea of creating a canal between the Mediterranean and Dead seas. Lynn sent a joint letter to Environmental Protection Minister Gilad Erdan and Energy and Water Minister Dr. Uzi Landau, urging them to create a committee that would investigate the opportunities afforded by such a plan, according to his office. For more details: <http://www.jpost.com/Sci-Tech/Article.aspx?id=253253>. [Source: Jerusalem Post]



Photo by: Marc Israel Sellem, courtesy of Jerusalem Post

K.S.A. – Naqaa Enterprise's Saudi Green Revolution Week: Naqaa, an environmental enterprise, launched The Saudi Green Revolution Week on January 18. Unlike any other outreach initiative in Saudi, this campaign addressed the unique environmental problems related to the country. Every hour that week, Naqaa's website shared environmental facts

about Saudi, answered the public's questions, and gave simple and easy tips for making any Saudi home green! <http://naqaaenterprise.wordpress.com/2012/01/18/saudi-green-revolution-week-january-18th-january-24th/>. [Source: Naqaa Enterprise]

OMAN - Scientist Warns of Threatening Rising Sea Level in Coastal Zones: The land level in parts of Oman is sinking by a few millimeters each year, according to Professor Dr. Goesta Hoffmann, Associate Professor for Applied Geosciences at GUTech. <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/oman/parts-of-oman-sinking-each-year-scientist-says-1.963917>. [Source: Gulf News]

OMAN – Investing in Solar: The Sultanate of Oman is forming an unusual partnership with Terra Nex. This Switzerland-based wealth management company will attract institutional investors to finance solar infrastructure in Oman. In collaboration with the Middle East Best Select (MEBS) Group of Funds, Terra Nex plans to invest \$2 billion to develop local solar power factories in the Sultanate, with the capability of producing 400 MW of solar panels a year. <http://www.greenprophet.com/2012/01/terra-nex-to-help-oman-build-its-own-solar-supply-chain/>. [Source: The Green Prophet]

MOROCCO - Rocks Found in Morocco 'From Mars': Scientists say 15 pounds of rock collected recently in Morocco fell to Earth from Mars during a meteorite shower last July. <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/rocks-found-morocco-mars-015035008.html>. [Source: Press Association]

Green Tip of the month

Support your local community by buying “up-cycled” products, which are made from recycled materials. Most community-based organizations depend on the income generated by their products. Support organizations in your community that up-cycle waste to make new products.