



September 2011

Middle East and North Africa ESTH Hub Activities Report

Jordan's Women in Science Hall of Fame Honoree Inspires Young Girls: At a September 19 Embassy reception held at the Royal Scientific Society, electrical engineer Reem Hamdan captivated a number of Jordanian public middle school girls aspiring to be Jordan's next generation of scientists. Deputy Chief of Mission Elizabeth Hopkins opened the session and emphasized President Obama's commitment to scientific development in the Arab world and to the empowerment of women. I talked briefly about the Women in Science Hall of Fame program, and the importance of having positive female role models. Hamdan delivered remarks in both Arabic and English, and encouraged the young women to set goals, remain true to their dreams, and consider careers in the sciences. We presented Hamdan with a framed copy of the Hall of Fame calendar and took several photos with the students, Royal Court members, and Embassy Amman leadership.



From left to right: Caron De Mars, Deputy Chief of Mission Elizabeth Hopkins and Eng. Reem Hamdan – Photo Courtesy of Embassy Amman



Deputy Chief of Mission Elizabeth Hopkins and Eng. Reem Hamdan surrounded by public middle school girls – Photo Courtesy of Embassy

MENA Online Resources: Thank you Ari Gore (Embassy Riyadh) for the following links to environmental contacts, organizations, and news in the MENA region through the Arab Forum for Environment and Development . <http://www.afedonline.org> and http://www.afedonline.org/en/en_links.aspx.



Yara being awarded by HRH Princess Sumaya, photo courtesy of the Royal Scientific Society

The Fourth Queen Rania National Entrepreneurship Competition: Back in March this year, Yara was asked to participate in the “Fourth Queen Rania National Entrepreneurship Competition” (QRNEC) as a mentor to one of the contestants. On September 18, Yara attended the ceremony honoring the winners, mentors, and judges. The ceremony was under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya, President of the El Hassan Science City and the Royal Scientific Society. Princess Sumaya presented the awards to nineteen projects in three sectors: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Clean Technology, and Life Sciences. Each year

QRNEC awards USD 50,000 to projects in the fields of ICT, Agricultural Technology, Renewable Energy, Water, Life Sciences, and Advanced Technologies. For a list of the

winning start-ups, go to <http://arabcrunch.com/2011/09/list-of-winners-of-queen-rania-national-entrepreneurship-competition.html>. The Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship is a non-profit organization established in 2004 to help develop Technology Entrepreneurship in Jordan. For more information on the center go to <http://www.qrce.org/>.



Mike Foose presenting at the NRA, photo courtesy of ESTH Hub

U.S. Geological Survey's Visit: During a stop in Amman on the way to Saudi Arabia, our friend Mike Foose from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) agreed to be a speaker at an event organized by our office and the Public Diplomacy office at Embassy Amman. Mike spoke about USGS environmental activities in the international arena at the Natural Resources Authority (NRA). We also arranged for Mike to meet with relevant NRA contacts and visit the mapping and remote sensing offices at the Royal Geographic Center. Mike even agreed to be the guest speaker at a special Amman Green Team meeting!

Arab-American Frontiers of Science, Engineering, and Medicine: Based on the success of the long standing "Kavli Frontiers of Science" of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and the Frontiers of Engineering program of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering, the National Academies are introducing an Arab-American Frontiers of Science, Engineering, and Medicine program. That program will bring together outstanding young scientists, engineers, and medical professionals from the United States and the 22 countries of the Arab League for a series of symposia to discuss exciting advances and opportunities in their fields. The goal of these meetings is to enhance the scientific exchange and dialogue among young researchers in Arab countries and the United States, including the Arab science diaspora, and through this interaction facilitate research collaboration within and beyond the region. The first symposium will be held October 17-19, 2011 in Kuwait hosted by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (<http://www.kisr.edu.kw/>).

ECON and ESTH Hub visit the Jordan Gaming Lab:

Yara and I joined our colleagues in Embassy Amman's ECON Section for a trip to the Jordan Gaming Lab. The facility is specifically designed to meet the needs of the individuals and companies involved with game design and development, and act as an incubator where young Jordanians can experiment with technology and work on developing their own game ideas. We met with Jordan's Gaming Task Force Chairman Nour Khrais, the Lab's Director. Mr. Khrais told us about the gaming industry in the region, the current focus on creating mobile applications, and the growing audience of online and offline games. For more information on the Jordan Gaming Taskforce go to: <http://www.gamingtaskforce.com/>.





Green Team Updates: Here is a recap of what the Embassy Amman Green Team was busy with!

CLO's Welcome Potluck Event: On September 8, the Green Team participated in the Community Liaison Office's (CLO) "welcome potluck" event. Showcasing our new Green Team Booth/recycle bin, we gathered signatures and asked people to commit to a "green pledge"!

Employees and family members signed the pledge including our new Ambassador Stuart Jones!

Ornament Competition: Following last year's successful activity, we are organizing a holiday competition for children in the Amman's U.S. Embassy community who will decorate the Embassy's Christmas tree by making ornaments from trash!

Newcomers Orientation Event: On October 4, Yara introduced new Embassy Amman's newcomers to our Amman Green Team. Newcomers now know who we are, what we do, our meeting schedule, and how they can join the Amman Green Team!

Here are some photos of the Green Team booth at the "Welcome Potluck" event.



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.

MENA – en.v Releases “REUSE Speakers Forum” Videos Online to Educate the Public on Key Environmental Issues: In anticipation of the upcoming REUSE 5.0 exposition in early 2012 (www.projectreuseme.com), The en.v Initiative, a leading organization dedicated to social responsibility in the Arab World, released a video of the REUSE Speakers' Forum on YouTube (www.youtube.com/envearth). It launched an online awareness campaign to educate readers on key environmental issues facing the Arab World. Through videos of the forum, the general public will learn about the importance of sustainability as it relates to the private sector and public sectors. The videos further highlight issues related to gas emissions, renewable energy, agricultural productivity, waste management, and water shortage. For more on REUSE: <http://www.envearth.com/index.php?file=c-showcontentdetail&iId=258&eContentType=PressRelease&iAlbumId=354>. [Source: [envearth.com](http://www.envearth.com)]

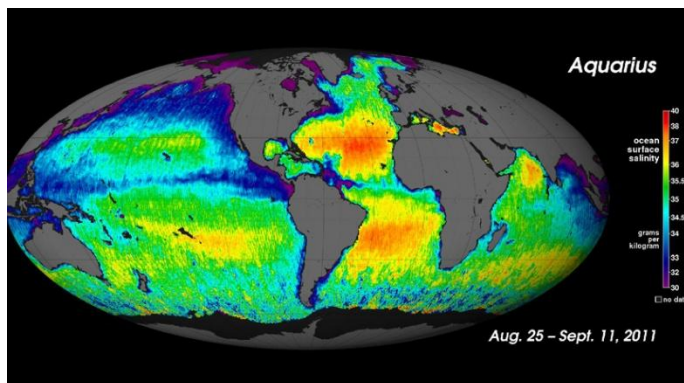


Photo courtesy of ZME Science

GLOBAL – Map of Earth’s Salinity released by NASA’s Aquarius: Earlier this year, NASA launched the Argentine SAC-D satellite that has a number of instruments whose sole goal is that of providing scientists with important data about the environment. *Aquarius* is the main instrument on-board the satellite, whose mission is to measure global sea surface salinity to better predict future climate conditions. Today, NASA released the first global map of the salinity of the Earth’s seas produced by the satellite. For more details:

<http://www.zmescience.com/ecology/map-of-earths-salinity-released-by-nasas-aquarius/>. [Source: ZME Science]

JORDAN - National Plan to Protect Ozone: On September 14, The Ministry of Environment launched a national strategy for phasing out hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), which cause depletion of the ozone layer. To read more about the new strategy to phase out 1,400 tons of HCFCs got to: <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=41330>. [Source: The Jordan Times]

JORDAN - Good Parks Start with Good Fences: JO Magazine published an article on the Friend’s of the Earth Middle East’s Sharhabil bin Hassneh Eco Park. http://foeme.org/uploads/JO_Magazine_SH_EcoPark_09_2011.pdf. [Source: JO Magazine]

JORDAN – Mujib Obtains New Status as Biosphere Reserve: On September 14, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared *Mujib* as a biosphere reserve, reinforcing Jordan's position on the world eco-tourism map and calling for greater support of the country's nature sanctuaries. Biosphere reserves are sites recognized by UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Program where local communities are actively involved in governance and management, research, education, training and monitoring the service of both socio-economic development and biodiversity conservation. <http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=41325>. [Source: The Jordan Times]

JORDAN – Ministry of Water and Irrigation Signs Agreement with USAID: On September 14, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed a \$23 million dollar agreement with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to expand The *Mafraq* Waste Water Treatment Plant and increase the capacity to 6,550 cubic meters per day to serve the governorate of *Mafraq* until 2025. The project will improve water quality. The treated water from the new plant will be suitable for agricultural, industrial, and environmental use. <http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=13711>. [Source: Ammon News Agency]

ISRAEL - Breakthrough Device Helps Alzheimer’s Patients Regain Cognitive Skills:

A new electromagnetic stimulation system has been developed in Israel that appears to change the course of the degenerative Alzheimer's disease and allow patients to regain faded cognitive skills. The non-invasive NeuroAD system, developed by Yokneam-based Neuronix, is the first medical device in the world to receive approval for treating mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease, a terminal brain disease affecting about 30 million elderly people worldwide. To read more about it: <http://israel21c.org/health/new-device-helps-alzheimers-patients-regain-cognitive-skills>. [Source: Israel21c.org]

K.S.A. - Restaurant Fines Diners for Leftovers: A Saudi restaurant has started charging diners if they order more than they can eat! The move against leftovers by *Marmar* Restaurant in the city of *Dammam* in the Eastern Province is aimed at stopping food wastage and reduce extravagance by rationalizing orders.

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/saudi-arabia/saudi-restaurant-fines-diners-for-leftovers-1.866759>. [Source: Gulf News]

UAE - Demand for Water to Double by 2030: The demand for water in the UAE will likely double by 2030 to nine billion cubic meters per year, according to the environment ministry. Currently, each resident uses approximately 364 liters per day, way above the global average of 200 liters per person per day. The UAE lacks water as a natural resource and relies heavily on desalination and groundwater to meet the country's needs. The UAE Environment Ministry has come up with a six-part plan to enhance water security and stem the rising tide of water consumption.

<http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/environment/local-water-demand-likely-to-double-by-2030-1.869877>.

[Source: Gulf News]



Photo courtesy of Gulf News

Green Tip of the month

When the little ghosts and goblins in your family go trick-or-treating this Halloween, make sure they carry reusable bags or containers that don't need to be discarded after they are used. Cloth or canvas shopping bags, or even pillowcases, make terrific eco-friendly alternatives to paper or plastic bags!

FUTURE EVENTS:

October 16 – 21, Cairo: Africa-GIS Conference, for more info: africagis2011@narss.sci.eg or info.africagis2011@narss.sci.eg.

October 17-19, Kuwait: The First Arab Frontiers in Science Symposium, <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/dsc/AAFfrontiers/index.htm>.

October 21-23, Cairo: International Conference on Computer Engineering and Bioinformatics (ICCEB 2011), <http://www.icceb.org/>

October 11 – 12, Marseille: ECO-CITIES FORUM 2011, <http://www.semaine-eco-med.com/en/eco-cities-forum>.

October 29 – November 1, Abu Dhabi: 1st International Conference on Desalination and Environment, <http://www.icodeconference.com/>.

November 1 – 3, Beirut: ESRI Middle East and Africa Users Conference, <http://www.esri.com/events/meauc/index.html>.

November 21 – 24, Amman: Technology and its Applications in Environmental Management & Planning, <http://www.enviro-arab.com/enviromatics11/>.

November 22 – 23, Amman: The 2nd International Conference on Alternative Energy/Bio-fuels, <http://www.tc-center.com/conferences.htm>.

November 25 - 27, Maldives: 2011 International Conference on Environment Science and Biotechnology (ICESB 2011), <http://www.icesb.org>.

November 28 – 30, Dammam: Sustainability through Biomimicry: Discovering a World of Solutions Inspired by Nature, <http://ud.edu.sa/web/college/137/2250>.

November 29 - 30, Amman: Solar Levant and GCC, <http://www2.greenpowerconferences.co.uk/EF/?sSubSystem=Prospectus&sEventCode=SP1111JO&sSessionID=755c11fd728b8d0858f2e52c4fee9beb-3679443>.

December 7-8, Sharjah: The International Conference on the Use of X-ray Techniques in Arts and Cultural Heritage, <http://www2.aus.edu/conferences/XTACH11/>

December 8-10, Alexandria: The Second Euro-Med Conference Plant Natural Products from Biodiversity to Bioindustry "BioNat-II", <http://www.bionats.org/main/>.

December 12 – 15, Abu Dhabi: "Eye on Earth" Summit, <http://eyeonearthsummit.net/>.

December 19-20, Amman: GIST Entrepreneurship Workshop/Business Pitch Competition/Award Ceremony event.

January 23 – 26, 2012, Cairo: The First International Conference on New Trends and Applications of GNSS, <http://www.ssc-cu.edu.eg/ar/node/14>.

February 6-8, 2012, Jeddah: First International Conference on Environmental Challenges in Arid Regions, <http://www.visbdev.net/visbdev/fe/Docs/ECAR-brochure-Ar.pdf>.

February 14 – 15, 2012, Dubai: The 1st Biotechnology World Congress, <http://www.biotechworldcongress.com/>.

April 17 – 28, 2012, San Francisco: The Third National Parks Institute Executive Leadership Seminar, <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JPKB2R>.

April 22-25, 2012, Alexandria: The Sixth International Biennial Conference, BioVision Alexandria (BVA) 2012/New Life Sciences: Linking Science to Society, <http://www.bibalex.org/bva2012/Home/Home.aspx>.

March 12 – 17, 2012, Marseille: Sixth World Water Forum, <http://www.worldwaterforum6.org/en/home/>.

March 26 – 29, 2012, Alexandria: The 3rd Mediterranean Poultry summit of WPSA (3rd MPS) and the 6th International Poultry Conference (6th IPC), http://www.mpn-wpsa.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=55.

June 6 – 8, 2012, New York: SR2A: Synchrotron Radiation in Art and Archaeology, <http://www.sr2a.ua.ac.be/>.

September 5 – 9, 2013: COBRA 2013 - RICS Legal Research Symposium, <http://www.lawlectures.co.uk/w113/cobra2013.htm>.