

## **Arab Environment Forum 2008 concluded**

*Manama, 27 October 2008*

The Annual Conference of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) resumed its sessions in Manama on Monday. Minister of Environment of Jordan Mr. Khalid Al Irani chaired Monday meeting that focused on 'Financing The Environmental Programs and Partnership of the Private and Public Sectors'.

Mr. Suleiman Al-Herbish, Director General of OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) pointed out that the poverty is the main obstacle for development and the success of environmental projects would depend on involvement of the official and private sector bodies.

Fighting poverty is one of the most important issues and should be listed in millennium development goals, and fighting energy poverty has to be added as the ninth goal, Al-Herbish stressed.

Hussein Abaza, Chief of Commerce, Trade and Environment of at UNEP underlined importance of the financial sector that is able to facilitate the environmental projects loans in the private sector and encourage the relevant investments making the projects successful.

Ronald Portelli, Executive Director of Turkey Environment Company, gave examples about partnership of private and public sectors in terms of waste processing in Malaysia, Canada, South America and Middle East. He estimated that environment sector has potential to grow in the Arab World and it could amount to \$80bn within two years.

### **Water Management**

Chaired by Dr. Mohamed Kassas, the third session focused on management of water. Dr. Waleed Abdulrahman, Professor of Water Resources at King Fahd Petroleum University in Dahrán, pointed out that 40% of water in the region is wasted.

He urged all countries to put down water strategies and use management tools to achieve such strategies. He underlined the role of private sector in this regard.

Mr. Ahmed Al Noaimi, CEO of Alba, regarded the Gulf as poor of water despite the high consumption. He said that the industrial sector consumed only 2% of total water. He highlighted importance of sewerage water processing. Al Noaimi reaffirmed Alba's commitment to recommendations of Abu Dhabi Corporate Summit organized by AFED in November 2007

regarding reducing consumption of water and energy by 20% by the year 2012.

Dr. Mohammed Dawood, Manager of Water Department in Abu Dhabi Environment Agency, explained that desalination is costly, consumes much power and negatively affect marine ecology system. He underlined importance of green spaces in the deserts. He also underlined the need for emergency drinking water storage. He said that Gulf reserve doesn't exceed 48 hours.

Two round tables were held, one for announcing and discussing the Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) Programme launched by AFED, the other for discussing the solid waste processing in aluminum smelters.

### **Policies and Cooperation**

Dr. Mostafa Kamal Tolba announced that AFED's 2009 Report will be on effects of climate change on the Arab region, proposing plans for adaptation.

Dr. Adnan Badran, President of Petra University and former Prime Minister of Jordan, underlined importance of incorporating a fund to face the coming danger.

Dr. Abdul Rahman Al Awadi, Executive Secretary of the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME) urged to offer the youth the opportunity to be involved in the Forum and asked the scientists to urge their students to participate.

Jordanian Minister of Environment Mr. Khalid Al Irani urged the Ministers of Environment in the Arab World to employ economists in their ministries and urged parliaments to monitor the governments' environment procedures.

The conference concluded with a discussion and adoption of a set of recommendations, based on the Report's findings as well as deliberations.

AFED's Secretary General Najib Saab and Alba's CEO Ahmed Al-Noaimi distributed awards to sponsors and speakers, and honored the organizing team from AFED, Alba and Environment & Development magazine.