

Sustainable Development of the Palestinian Water Sector within IWRM

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Abstract

The scarcity of water in Palestine, led to low consumption per capita to be far below WHO standards. At present water demand in Palestine exceeds the available water supply. The gap between water supply and demand is due not only to water quantities but also to water quality and. This growing gap is calling for the implementation of integrated water resources management in Palestine that should include in addition to utilization of additional conventional and non-conventional water resources as well as putting in place water policies based on sustainability assessment to the water resource taking into consideration socio-economic and environmental issues. This paper aims at assessing the status of water resources development and management in Palestine as well as assessing the status on the implementation of integrated water resources management.

The current management of water resources in Palestine is unsustainable due to the overexploitation of aquifers by the Israelis who imposed a political environment that constrains the efficient development of the Palestinian water sector. In addition, agriculture, demographic growth and urbanization are the major reasons of increased demand in Palestine. Pollution from sewage, solid waste and overuse of agrochemicals is a critical challenge to sustainable development of the Palestinian water sector. The establishment of the Palestinian National Council is a step forward to strengthen the institutional capacity towards the sustainable development of the water sector. This study concludes that integrated water resources management that takes into consideration structural and non-structural measures should be adopted for the sustainable development of the water sector. It is important to adjust unsustainable consumption (e.g., agricultural use) of water as well as protect water resources from pollution and support the promotion of reforms and strengthen water institutions within integrated approaches and improved governance. The participation by local people and other stakeholders in decision-making and management of water resources is recommended.



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