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## AMMAN DECLARATION ON REGIONAL COOPERATION ON WATER

Amman. November 4-5 2009. Under the Patronage of HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, members of the EastWest Institute's Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention and Human Security from Africa, the Arab region, Asia, and Europe gathered in Amman to discuss the pressing issue of shared water resources management and agreed on actions to be taken by parliamentarians, government, and civil society.

By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity. Two-thirds of the world population will be faced with a severe imbalance between demand and availability of water. More than 1 billion people are already living without clean drinking water; more than 2.5 billion people lack adequate sanitation; and over 90 percent of the world's population lives in countries that must share water resources across borders.

Addressing these issues requires action notably for shared management of water resources. Participants recognized that cooperation is possible even under difficult circumstances. To address these urgent needs, Parliamentarians Network members acknowledge that:

- Riparian states should seek common understanding and possibly formal agreements including dispute resolving mechanisms to achieve cooperative management of trans-boundary water resources.
- People that live in shared lake and river basins need a voice at the table to make such agreements sustainable. Decision makers must be sensitized to communities' needs.
- There is a need for clear, transparent data and information on shared water resources as a prerequisite so that agreements can be reached in confidence by all parties. Parliamentarians will lobby for donor support including with regard to national capacity building to establish such data bases.

- Ultimately, difficult political decisions are necessary. This is why transparency, ownership by local communities, and commitment to international treaty obligations is essential.

Participants recognized that parliamentarians must lead the process of persuasion, build political will and hold governments accountable. As concrete first steps to take forward regional cooperation on water, participants recommend that:

- The call by the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly to establish an ad-hoc Committee on Water as a key space for inter-parliamentarian dialogue on improving regional cooperation should be implemented as soon as possible. Network members will work towards that end. The ad-hoc Committee should serve as a platform for members of parliament to share experiences, address difficult issues, raise attention to the importance on water and develop cooperative actions that can be brought back to national parliaments under the concept of shared responsibility.
- Parliamentarians call on their governments to recognize water as a shared resource and that cooperation between riparian states is the most effective way to achieve sustainable use and management of current water resources.
- Parliamentarians work towards efficient water use and management, such as covered irrigation systems and modern water transfer infrastructure saving technologies; they agreed to encourage through parliamentary action private sector investment in new technologies in that regard.
- Parliamentarians recognize the need for national planning for long term priorities and benchmarks to arrive at sustainable water management across sectors.
- Parliamentarians work to legislate for the real cost of water.
- Parliamentarians must act as an interface between communities, experts, technocrats and decision-makers through regular convening that build capacity, share experience, and foster collaboration.