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IALC Assists Jordan With Water Crisis

February 20, 2003 - TUCSON, AZ – Scientists and researchers from the International Arid Lands Consortium (IALC) initiated the first steps of a four-year project to provide Jordan with the technology needed to alleviate the country's agricultural water crisis and bring it one step closer to long term regional peace.

Funded by a \$1 million grant from US Agency for International Development, IALC researchers from the University of Arizona are working in Jordan to develop water recycling for agricultural use. Congressman Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) was instrumental on obtaining the funding.

"Water shortages in Jordan and the entire Middle East, where there is a severe drought, are crucial to long term growth and survival. Researchers at the University of Arizona's Office of Arid Land Studies are leading the Jordan collaborative efforts, and the IALC will be providing the technical expertise to encourage the use of treated wastewater in a safe and appropriate manner," said Dr. Kenneth Foster, president of the IALC. Increasing wastewater treatment capacity in Jordan provides a growing supply of reclaimed water for irrigation.

Some of the technology for water reclamation was developed by Jewish National Fund, a founding member of the IALC, and is used successfully in Israel where JNF built more than 150 reservoirs and has developed the technology for recycling water, as well as conducted research to determine which crops respond to different types of recycled and brackish water.

IALC members include JNF, Egypt, Jordan and six American universities, with expertise in arid or semi-arid resource issues and technologies.

"Research by JNF on the uses of recycled water is useful not only to alleviating Israel's water crisis, but this knowledge can also be used to provide additional water supplies throughout the region. This is an integral part of the long-term plan for alleviating the water shortage" said Dr. Foster.

"Reclaimed water can help augment freshwater supplies in the region and enhance water security which can make a significant contribution to the agricultural economy and to peace in the region, where water plays a crucial role," said Dr. Foster.

The University of Illinois is conducting a second focus of the grant - to conduct training for Afghan farmers in Pakistan focusing on stabilizing food production efforts in a move toward increased self-sufficiency for the country.