

**ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS-INTERNATIONAL
REGIONAL MEETING
Larnaca, Cyprus, April 2-4, 2009**

**Sustainable Engineering in the Eastern Mediterranean Region
Sharing Knowledge, Lending a Hand**

Background

Scarcely a day goes by without some event impacting politics and relationships between the various countries and stakeholders in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Meanwhile, basic daily needs of many people are not being met and poverty is growing among many communities across the region. Access to clean water, sanitation, energy, shelter, and health is becoming more difficult; a problem that is often compounded by political realities.

Haphazard development in the Eastern Mediterranean region that does not take into account delicate environmental and geopolitical constraints may contribute to further problems that cross national borders. Engineers Without Borders International (EWB-I) in participation with its Eastern Mediterranean in-country member groups and local groups will meet in Cyprus in April 2009 to develop an action plan for collaborative initiatives in sustainable community development that cross borders in that region.

Objectives

- Identify and rank community development needs specific to the region;
- Create an effective discussion forum on sustainable community development for the region;
- Leverage existing community development initiatives in the region and create solid partnerships;
- Develop new initiatives for vocational training, education, and service learning;
- Review innovative technologies and alternative engineering solutions for the region;
- Develop projects targeted specifically towards assisting refugee communities.

Participants:

Representatives of the following EWB-I country groups are expected to attend the meeting: EWB-Palestine, EWB-Israel, EWB-Jordan, EWB-Egypt, EWB-Kosovo, EWB-Greece, EWB-Macedonia, and EWB-USA. Other groups with on-going initiatives in the Eastern Mediterranean region will also be invited. They include UNRWA, The Abraham Path Initiative and Friends of the Earth Middle East, among others. Participants are expected to contribute to the discussions by sharing their experience and knowledge and by their commitment to future involvement in bringing about the success of the ensuing proposed projects.

Program:

The meeting format is currently being planned to incorporate mostly roundtable discussions. The intention is to keep the group relatively small in order to build strong relationships between the participants. Ideally, the core network created in Cyprus will serve as a model of how diverse groups can come together to implement concrete sustainable community development projects with measurable outcomes at the regional and local levels.

The key topics to be addressed include the following:

- 1. Finding Common Ground by Addressing Regional Community Issues and Needs** – This opening session will set the tone for the rest of the meeting. Here we will identify the most pressing community needs (water, sanitation, health, shelter, etc.) in the region focusing on basic human welfare and environmental sustainability.
- 2. Refugee Assistance and Community Development** –Addressing the specific needs of refugees is an important objective for this conference. This session will discuss the problems that are specific to refugee camps. Do they need to be approached differently from other communities? What is the role of education and vocational training in addressing those problems?

3. Appropriate Technology and Economic Opportunity – Sustainable engineering technologies such as those associated with renewable energy or green building practices have potential to bring major positive changes to the region in terms of well being, resource use, and job creation. This session will look at the technologies themselves and possible models of social entrepreneurship.

4. Training and Education Needs and Resources – This session will explore the importance of education (vocational, higher education, continuing education) in building capacity and opportunities in the region.

5. Exploring Regional Partnerships – How, Where and What? – Participants will define opportunities for working together on specific (on-going or new) sustainable community development projects.

6. Creating an Action Plan – In order to complete this meeting in a practical way, it will be incumbent upon this group to develop a list of accomplishments achieved during the meeting and to create an action plan with clear next steps to ensure follow through on project ideas.

Conference Location:

Palm Beach Hotel and Bungalows, Larnaca, Cyprus. www.palmbeachhotel.com.

Funding:

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General Agenda:

- Wednesday April 1: Evening Reception
- Thursday – Saturday (April 2-4)
 - 9:00 -12:00 Technical Session
 - 12:00 – 1:30 Lunch
 - 1:30 – 17:00 Technical Session
- Saturday April 4: Adjourn at 17:00