

Experts discuss water resource management

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Water experts on Sunday said the need for better management of water resources has become increasingly important, as the Kingdom continues to suffer from a chronic water shortage.

"Jordan still has a long way to go before it can be considered a model for water management," Regional Monitoring and Support Unit (RMSU) team leader Gert Soer said on the sidelines of an international conference on water management.

Participants at the first Euro-Mediterranean Programme for Local Water Management (MEDA) Water Partners Conference which opened at the Dead Sea yesterday, seek to improve water management by sharing experiences and knowledge on latest methods and technology.

MEDA is designed to improve local water manage-

ment conditions through co-operation of nonprofit organisations from the European Union and MENA countries, capacity building, construction of demonstration plants, technology transfer and creation of awareness among concerned parties in the use of water, according to a MEDA statement.

Three main issues are under the spotlight: Water supply and wastewater reuse, irrigation water management and improvement of decision-making structures in irrigation, rural water supply and sanitation, and drought management.

Water experts told The Jordan Times that half the water used for agriculture is lost.

"Jordan is one of the most water scarce countries, therefore it needs to improve the management of water... Our aim is to make the Kingdom use 100 per cent of the water designated for agriculture," said Soer.

Several projects are cur-

rently being implemented in Jordan with the help of the MEDA programme, including improvement in irrigation water management, efficient management of wastewater, its treatment and reuse, and autonomous desalination system concepts for supplying rural areas with fresh water. The systems would be powered by solar or wind energy.

Another project also involves development of tools and guidelines for the promotion of sustainable urban wastewater use.

Soer indicated that Jordan — considered among the 10 most water-deprived countries in the world — needs to invest in such projects.

Representatives of MEDA water projects, local and regional stakeholders, water authorities from MEDA countries, the European Commission and relevant international and regional organisations are attending the two-day conference, organised by the RMSU.