

*In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

**Message from**

**DR HUSSEIN A. GEZAIRY**

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

**WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

**to the**

**CEHA REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON GEMS/WATER  
IMPLEMENTATIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

**Amman, Jordan, 4-6 December 1995**

Your Excellency, Distinguished Participants, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the CEHA Regional Workshop on GEMS/Water Implementations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, which has been organized by the Centre for Environmental Health Activities and WHO headquarters under the sponsorship of the United Nations Environment Programme. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the excellent hospitality and support extended to CEHA and to thank, in particular, His Excellency the Minister of Health, Dr Aref Bataineh, and his staff for their courteous cooperation and collaboration in hosting this Workshop.

The active cooperation that has been developed over a period between CEHA and the United Nations Environment Programme will help promote the concept of water quality monitoring in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and will hopefully encourage the contribution of monitoring data to the Global Environment Monitoring System on Freshwater Quality, commonly referred to as the GEMS/Water Programme.

The first training workshop on the GEMS/Water Programme was held at CEHA in June 1994, and this workshop is in a way a follow-up to the first one; however, important issues such as major management priorities of the Region and how the GEMS/Water Programme can be adjusted to meet these priorities will also be discussed.

Overapplication of agrochemicals on agricultural lands without appropriate environmental safeguards is causing widespread deterioration of the soil/water ecosystem, as well as of underlying aquifers. As a consequence, a general need has emerged for a worldwide comprehensive and accurate assessment of trends in water quality deterioration, in order to increase awareness about the urgency of the situation and to provide a rational basis for international action. Reliable monitoring data are indispensable for such an assessment.

The GEMS/Water Programme is one component of the GEMS health-related monitoring programme. The objectives of the GEMS/Water Programme are:

- to collaborate with Member States in the establishment of new water monitoring systems and to strengthen existing ones;
- to improve the validity and comparability of water quality data from Member States;
- to assess the incidence and long-term trends of water quality deterioration by selected persistent and hazardous chemicals.

The agenda of your meeting addresses important issues relating to GEMS/Water Implementations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, which are highly important in setting the direction for the future of the GEMS/Water Programme in the Region.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you all in advance for your valuable contributions to, and your participation in this important workshop. I wish you success in your deliberations and look forward to receiving your positive, constructive proposals and recommendations. Lastly, may I wish you all a very pleasant and happy stay in this beautiful city of Amman.