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“Competition for Resources in a Changing World:
New Drive for Rural Development”

Change in Natural Resources vs. Socio-Economic Development – Identification of Bottlenecks for Exploiting Future Agricultural Potentials in the Jordan Valley

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Abstract

Competition for natural resources in the Jordan Valley takes place between the riparian countries and societies as well as within the concerned countries. Reasons for the latter are the expansion of urban areas and the demand for the preservation of nature. Research results from a team of German, Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian socio-economists indicate that Climate Change will most likely increase agricultural potentials in the area at least in the coming three decades due to the greenhouse effect. The subsequent step in this model-based analyses on the development of agricultural potentials, farming systems and enterprises were parametrisation procedures according to scenarios developed by a group of experts from the concerned countries under the umbrella of the project GLOWA Jordan River. Results indicate that assumptions about political, demographic and economic changes have a far greater impact on agricultural potentials than anticipated changes in the status of climate, water, land and ecosystems. A deadlock in the peace process combined with a slow economic growth would, as expected, engender a most unfavourable development of agricultural incomes in Israel and Jordan in the long run, but would first lead to a strong increase in value creation from agriculture until about 2010 for want of alternative resource use. Palestinian farmers would benefit even beyond that decade, even if their profit margin would just be sufficient for balancing the growing needs of their families. Progress in the peace process or, alternatively, strong economic growth would penalize Palestinian farmers due to the competition for land and water without adequate compensation from employment opportunities, while their Israeli and Jordanian colleagues would enjoy significant increases in profits at least until 2030. Progress in the peace process and simultaneous economic growth would stabilise farm incomes of Palestinian farmers after a slight decrease until 2010 and lead to a modest but constant increase of farm incomes in Israel and Jordan. However, indications are that improvements in the current institutional and infrastructural set up for agriculture in all countries may have the capacity to absorb substantial parts of negative impacts under all scenarios.

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