

Introduction

According to the Statistical Yearbook 2007, the Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria estimated the population actually living in the country at 18.94 million capita, with an annual growth rate estimated at 2.45% for the period of 2000-05.

In addition, the survey of the labour force in 2003 showed 4.5 million capita representing the Syrian total labour force, with more than 26% working for agriculture and a percentage working in the industrial sector of just 13.6%.

Moreover, the estimated agriculture revenues in the consolidated budget in 2003 forms more than 28% of GDP and 61% of non-oil exports, whereas the revenue from industry was less than 11%. Thus, the Syrian national income mainly depends on agriculture wherein water plays the major role.

In fact Syria's water resources are far from abundant. Syria has only about a tenth of the water available in water-rich regions which have 10.000 cubic meters of water per capita yearly. This is well below 1000 cubic meters per capita in Syria.

Water Resources in Syria

Syrian water resources consist of internal and international resources. The internal resources rise and flow within the country borders, whereas the international resources are shared with the neighbouring countries.

In 2001 the Ministry of Irrigation re-calculated the country's water balance according to the hydrological studies carried out by Russian consulting agencies during the early 1970s and the mid-1980s. The water balance indicated that the Annual Average income of Water resource in Syria reaches about 18 billion cubic meters, without considering the Syrian allocation of Tigris River, in which the internal resources are 9.929 billion cubic meters.

Euphrates River, which is an international river flows through Turkey, Syria and Iraq, represents the main source of the Syrian international water resources. The Syrian allocation of the Euphrates River is about 6.627 billion cubic meters in regard to the protocol signed with Turkey in 1987 and the agreement signed with Iraq in 1989.

However water becomes scarce, temporal and spatial variability of precipitation and runoff combined with growing water demand creates serious water supply problems at the local level. Thus, the previous



demonstration doesn't exactly reflect the current situation of the water resources in Syria and it is highly recommended that a new assessment has to be done.

Development of Water Sector Management

During earlier decades, the availability of water resources was not considered to be a serious problem. Responsibility for water management was shared by numerous institutions, without causing great inconvenience to water institutions and government departments charged with the responsibility of supervising and controlling water use according to the needs of the moment.

The drought of the late 1950s and early 1960s has, however, adversely affected the greater part of the country and several groundwater basins were depleted or faced serious water quality problems as a result of over-development and salt-water intrusion. Hence the weakness of distributing the water resources responsibilities between numerous institutions has emerged and remodelling the institutions obligation has become a pressing obligation.

In early 1980s the institutional framework was remodelled, and several water institutions were set up. The Ministry of Irrigation (MOI) was established by Law No. 16 in 1982, through a merger between certain sections of the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources and the Ministry of Euphrates Dam. It is the major institutional actor responsible for