

indirect role of water resources management for the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MOLAE) via its executive agency: General Council for Environmental Affairs (GCEA). The Law which identifies the responsibilities of GCEA does not mention explicitly a direct involvement in water resources management and protection. However, the law articulates the responsibility of GCEA for setting up public policy to protect the environment, monitor economic activities and issuing standards and regulation.

Also, the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Tourism cooperate with the Ministry of Irrigation to assign water to industrial and tourist usages and for the issue of water pollution caused by their activities.

Finally, there has to be mention of the effective roles carried out by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Basically, the Ministry of Interior supports the Ministry of Irrigation in preventing illegal wells drilling and protecting water resources and water structures. While Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a major role in the internationally shared water resources issues, particularly in development protocols, agreements and conventions.

Water Consumption

The average annual water consumption in Syria is about 19.614 billion cubic meters consumed in irrigated agriculture (81%), domestic uses (6.5%), tourist and industrial utilisations

(2.4%), and evaporation loses (10.1%). That exceeds the average annual water resources by 1.614 billion cubic meters.

It is worth mentioning that the shortage (1.614) has been calculated by assuming that the country basins are indemnifying each others. This is not the real situation; by that the shortage should be evaluated at the level of each basin. In fact, the water shortage in the country exceeds 3 billion cubic meters.

Figure (4) overleaf illustrates the percentage of water consumption in Syria.

Therefore, the contrast between water availability and water consumption resulted in water shortage. However, the shortage indemnifies by depleting groundwater. Figure (5) illustrates the water balance in



Fig 3

Syria.

Moreover, the effects of drought and climate variability in addition to the continues depleting of ground water hold up the indemnifying of groundwater; accumulate the water shortage and year by year lead to degradation of the water resources quantity and quantity.

In fact, the degradation of water resource dominates most basins in Syria. The groundwater and surface water resources in most basins – Orontes, Damascus and Yarmouk – are fully or already over-used. Unlike, Euphrates and Costal Basins, they still a slight surplus. However, the ambitious irrigation plans in addition to none reaching of permanent agreement with neighbouring countries for allocating the international water resources may end up a similar situation.