

## PROJECT TO SAFEGUARD WATER RESOURCES, PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

By Khetam Malkawi

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**AMMAN** - While climate change is often associated with its environmental impacts, for Jordan the phenomenon is a threat to public health, health officials warned on Sunday.

Basel Yousfi, director of the WHO Centre for Environmental Health Activities (CEHA), said that for Jordan, one of the water poorest countries in the world, the fallout of climate change can quickly turn into a health crisis.

“The lack of water and the secondary effects of these changes are considered the biggest threat to health in Jordan,” Yousfi said at the launch of the “Piloting climate change adaptation to protect human health” initiative.

According to Yousfi, the project, implemented in Jordan by WHO CEHA in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the UNDP, aims to curb such risks by boosting the Kingdom’s ability to respond to health risks resulting from water scarcity induced by climate change.

UNDP Jordan Director Jacinta Barrins said the project aims to assist national health system institutions in responding to climate-sensitive health risks.

Under the initiative, UN and ministry experts are to establish early warning systems and a health risk prevention system as well as a comprehensive monitoring and surveillance systems for wastewater reuse.

Bassam Hijjawi, director of the health ministry’s primary healthcare directorate, stressed the importance of cooperation between WHO and UNDP in implementing the initiative, adding that the ministry cannot develop strategies for the management of rehabilitated water alone.

The project, which seeks to address health risks exacerbated by climate change, is a global initiative being piloted in seven countries: Barbados, Fiji, Uzbekistan, Bhutan, Kenya, China and Jordan.

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