

Jordan, US sign \$275m deal to fund Zarqa water projects



Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh speaks alongside US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during a signing ceremony for an agreement to fund water projects in Jordan at the US State Department in Washington, DC, on Monday (AFP photo)

AMMAN (JT) - Jordan on Monday signed a \$275 million grant agreement with the US to fund water projects in the Kingdom, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the signing ceremony, which took place at the US Department of State headquarters in Washington, Minister of Water and Irrigation Mohammad Najjar and CEO of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Daniel Yohannes signed the funding deal, which will continue for a period of five years starting this year.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the US intent to provide the grant to Jordan to improve its water situation during a meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah on September 16.

The grant, which is part of the MCC programme to provide water and sanitation services to over one million people in Zarqa city, will enhance the quality of water services in the governorate, increase the number of people covered by sewage services to around 82 per cent of the city's residents, and reduce the percentage of water loss.

In addition to increasing and enhancing the quantities of treated water to be used for agricultural purposes instead of pure drinking water, the projects funded by the grant will provide employment opportunities to Jordanians and raise water pumping in the governorate by 50 per cent.

The implementation and management of the projects, expected to start during the second quarter of 2011 and last five years, will be supervised by the MCC and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. The projects, once completed, will help deliver about 100 million cubic metres of treated water.

HRH Princess Aisha, Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh and Jordanian Ambassador in Washington Alia Buran were also present at yesterday's signing ceremony.

Also yesterday, Judeh and Clinton discussed the latest developments in the region, particularly efforts to overcome challenges facing the direct Palestinian-Israeli talks and means to create appropriate conditions to resume them, Petra reported.