

## Syria, Lebanon in joint venture to build north river dam - reports

28 August 2010

BEIRUT: A joint dam construction project between Syria and Lebanon along the Nahr al-Kabir river may be in the pipeline, a string of news reports have suggested this week.

"There is currently a joint venture with Lebanon to set up a dam on the river," Syrian Irrigation Minister Said al-Bunni was quoted by Syrian Aks Alser news website as saying Wednesday. "[The project] will have a capacity of 80-million cubic meters, 60 percent of which will be designated for Syria."

According to international conventions, Syria lies on a greater share of the water reserves and is therefore entitled to a larger share of the proceeds from the dam.

Bunni is now expected to hold talks with Energy Minister Jibril Bassil regarding the project, the Central News Agency (CNA) reported Friday.

Citing an anonymous energy-sector source, the CNA said preparations for the meeting were under way. Fadi Comair, director general of water resources and electricity, was preparing an integrated agenda for the meeting, CNA reported.

Rising temperatures and a lack of precipitation since 2006, caused by global warming, are having an adverse affect on regional water resources, Aks Alser quoted Bunni as saying.

"It doesn't constitute a crisis so far, but this doesn't mean we are immune from a water crisis," he said. This will impact on a range of ministries, including agriculture and the environment, and a "collective action plan must" therefore be put to work.