



UNESCO-IHP ECOMED Academy
Nominated Secretariat



Under the Auspices of UNESCO-IHP
IHP Lebanese National Delegation



UNESCO-IHP ECOMED Academy
Host Institute

UNESCO-IHP ECOMED Academy Network

*Stakeholders Consultation Meeting on the Further Development of the ECOMED Academy Network Proposal
Strategic Program Development, Implementation Planning & Feasibility Assessment
December 16 and 17, 2025, at UNESCO HQ, 7 Place de Fontenoy, Paris, 75007*

Proposed Meeting Agenda

Background – The prime goal of the UNESCO-IHP ECOMED Academy Network is to promote *environmental coastal cooperation for metropolitan eco-sustainable development* among the MENA/Mediterranean member-states through regional knowledge-bases, experience sharing platforms, collaborative regional research and co-development of professional education and training programs in order to effectively support their capacity building for responding to their ever-growing eco-sustainability challenges. Their ever-growing critical needs of climate change adaptation, upgrading coastal ecosystems pollution monitoring and protection, improving WEFE (Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems) security and accelerating resilience building to extreme climate events, are exacerbated in the current context of rapid coastal urbanization, insufficient sanitation, fast deteriorating critical infrastructure with substantial water leaks in the distribution systems, ever-growing water scarcity, greater frequency of extreme climate events, and massive population displacements.

For this purpose, the UNESCO-IHP Council's resolution of the IHP 26th Session, June 2024 (ref. IHP resolution attached), recognizing the eco-sustainability challenges of the MENA/ Mediterranean member-states concerned invites the Lebanese IHP National Delegation to further develop, in consultation with the member-states, its proposal, initially presented at the 4th Extraordinary Council, 2021 (ref. IHP resolution XTR-IV-3 attached) to establish the UNESCO-IHP ECOMED Academy Network of capacity building centers in the MENA/Mediterranean member-states. The revised proposal is expected to be submitted to UNESCO, as the IHP Secretariat, by the end of January 2026. Inspired by global frameworks such as the UN resolution on water as a human right, the Paris Agreement, the Union for the Mediterranean strategies, the Barcelona Convention and the UN 2030 Agenda (SDG 6), the main purpose is to foster strategic regional partnerships and accelerate the capacity building of the member-states concerned in order to effectively address the challenges of WEFE security management, climate resilience building and sustainable coastal eco-development.

The proposed Academy's core objectives are focused on:

1. **Creating a Network of Capacity Building Centers** hosted by Academic Research Institutions, NGOs or other Stakeholders in the member-states concerned in order to support their capacity building for eco-sustainable urbanization, ecosystems monitoring, climate adaptation and resilience building to extreme climate events;
2. **Engaging experience and knowledge sharing among the Co-Host institutes** to effectively support and leverage their research programs, professional education and training, and eco-urbanization planning, and accelerate the development and deployment of innovative solutions
3. **Promoting coastal ecosystems monitoring with regional knowledge-bases and industry-academia stakeholders' partnerships** to effectively support sustainable coastal eco-urbanization planning policies;
4. **Improving WEFE Nexus Management** and promoting sustainable ecosystem security, coastal pollution prevention measures, nature-based solutions and hydrodiplomacy-based IWRM strategies;
5. **Raising Public Awareness** with the support of educational systems and media-assisted platforms to promote societal resilience, climate adaptation and public support to sustainable eco-urbanization policies;
6. **Upgrading Crisis Management Capabilities and Best Practice of Mitigation and Recovery** tailored to the operational conditions of the water and sanitation agencies for resilience building to extreme climate events;
7. **Promoting strategic partnerships**, which may include UN organizations, leading regional NGO, research institutions, funding agencies and other stakeholders with similar objectives.
8. **Engaging with the network of host and co-host institutions the planning of pilot programs** responding to the priority capacity building needs of the member-states concerned.

The Academy Concept Note, prepared for UNESCO by the W-SMART NGO, as the Academy Secretariat, and reviewed by the UNESCO ECOMED Academy Taskforce, chaired by Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR, is attached for your consideration. We would like to thank Dr Abou AMANI, Secretary of the UNESCO-IHP, Dr Sarantuyaa ZANDARYAA and Ms. Hong Huynh for their support and for kindly hosting this Stakeholders' Planning meeting.



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Purpose & Agenda of the Academy Network Stakeholders Consultation Meeting - The main purpose of the Academy Network Stakeholders Consultation meeting is to bring together the strategic partners of the Academy Network, including the host and co-host institutions of the capacity building centers, as well as delegates of IHP national delegations, NGOs, and other stakeholders for a discussion forum on the development of a consensus-based improved IHP ECOMED Academy Network proposal. The current proposal follows upon the IHP ECOMED Academy Concept Note attached as reference for your consideration, which was prepared by the W-SMART NGO, as the nominated Academy Secretariat, for UNESCO and reviewed by the UNESCO ECOMED Taskforce chaired by Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR, former IHP Chair. Based upon the concept of establishing a network of capacity building centers in the states concerned, it includes proposed terms of reference for the Academy goals, strategic program development, institutional governance, implementation planning and management, program financing strategies, feasibility and sustainability assessment, and the potential Academy impacts on the capacity building of the states concerned. The stakeholders' planning meeting goal is to review and improve the current proposal through consultations with the member-states concerned, taking into account review comments and recommendations of the UNESCO ECOMED taskforce, and provide stakeholders' recommendations for preparing the improved Academy proposal for submitting to UNESCO by February 2026.

For this purpose, the following meeting agenda and discussion issues are proposed for your consideration:

1. **Proposed Academy Constitutional Terms of Reference** including: mission goals, scope of programs, governance, role of the host and co-host institutes, financing strategies and program implementation;
2. **Strategic Network Development and Planning Challenges of Capacity Building Programs** for the network of states concerned to effectively support and leverage their experience, research programs, professional education and training, coastal eco-development, and resilience building to extreme climate events;
3. **Network Development Planning of a 3yrs Pilot Program** to address the priority capacity building needs of the states involved and demonstrate the multi-stakeholders' network benefit for education and training, sponsored research programs, coastal ecosystems pollution monitoring, and WEFE nexus management;
4. **Engaging Stakeholders' Partnerships** and exploring with potential sponsors program financing strategies for a feasible and sustainable program development, including scope of core programs, financing feasibility, and strategic partnerships for sponsored research, professional education and urbanization planning;
5. **Feasibility and Sustainability Assessment** of the proposed core programs, their strategic development framework, financing strategies and potential impacts on the capacity building programs of the states;
6. **Stakeholders' recommendations** for a consensus-based flagship initiative proposal for the IHP Council;
7. **Establishing the Way Forward** – next implementation steps and timelines for addressing the Stakeholders recommendations for the proposed strategic program development and its implementation planning.

At this stage, we would like to acknowledge and thank the UNESCO Taskforce members for their relevant review and recommendations and the Cyprus Institute for its commitment to serve as the Host Institute for the IHP ECOMED Academy Network. We would also like to gratefully thank your excellencies, as the Academy strategic partners, for kindly confirming to UNESCO-IHP Secretary, Dr. Abou Amani, your interest and intent of joining the Academy Network as co-host institutes in your states and for your participation in this planning meeting.

Logistics - for virtual participation please register ASAP using the UNESCO link:

https://unesco-org.zoom.us/joining/register/FP_-HvFnQtqag9WpEBXmCA

A list of attendees that have confirmed their participation, either Presentially or Virtually, is attached. Please review this list and kindly alert us at your earliest for any errors. For security reasons, please process your registration ASAP. For information at UNESCO please contact Ms. Elena SPALLART at e.spallart@unesco.org. Please let us know for any further information you may need at this time.

On behalf of the ECOMED Academy Strategic Development Council, with Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR and Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU, we would like to gratefully thank you for your consideration and effective support. Looking forward to meeting you soon in Paris
Sincerely,

Prof. Ilan JURAN
CEO, W-SMART Association

Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR
Chair, UNESCO ECOMED Taskforce

Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU
Head, Graduate School, Cyl



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Proposed Meeting Agenda

In order to address the Meeting objectives, the following agenda is proposed for your consideration. We would greatly appreciate any suggestions you may have for discussion issues to be included.

16/12/2025 UNESCO Room IX		
Schedule	Session	Issues & Participants
9:30	Registration	
9:45 – 10:15	Welcome Session - Opening Comments - Meeting Agenda - Professional Education Challenges	Welcome – IHP Perspectives and Goals <i>Dr. Abou AMANI, IHP Secretary, UNESCO Division of Water Science</i> Opening Comments - The ECOMED Academy Network Goals <i>Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR, Former IHP Chair, Chair of the Lebanese IHP National Committee</i> The Planning Meeting Purpose, Agenda and Expected Outcome <i>Prof. Ilan JURAN, CEO, W-SMART NGO, Secretariat of the Academy</i> The Academy Professional Education and Training Challenges <i>Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU, Head, Graduate School, Cyprus Institute</i>
10:15 – 11:10	Session 1 - proposed ECOMED Academy Network Goals, Core Programs & Strategic Development Planning	Agenda: Proposed ECOMED Academy Network Goals & Core Programs - Strategic Network Development & Program Implementation Planning Chair: Prof. Ilan JURAN The Academy Vision and Capacity Building Goals in the Context of Climate Adaptation and Resilience Building to Extreme Events <i>Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR</i> Proposed Core Programs & Strategic Implementation Planning <i>Prof. Ilan JURAN</i> The Cyl Experience of Regional Capacity Building Programs <i>Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU</i> The IHP Perspectives, Guidance & Proposal Review Process <i>Dr. Sarantuyaa ZANDARYAA, UNESCO Division of Water Science</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Coffee-Break	
11:30 – 11:50	Opening Key Note	Union for the Mediterranean – Mission, Goals and Experience in Capacity Building Programs facing Climate Adaptation Challenges <i>Federic de DINECHIN, Sr. Policy Adviser, UfM, IGO, Spain</i>
11:50 – 13:00	Session 2 The Academy Network Capacity Building Center in the Member-States – Role, Network Program Development Challenge, Experience Sharing of Host and Co-Host Institutes in Promoting Capacity Building Programs	Agenda: The Academy Network of Capacity Building Centers – The Role, Challenges and Experience Sharing of the Host and Co-Host Institutes Chair: Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU, Cyl Format: Panel of Experts of Host and Co-Host institutes sharing experience, assessment and perspectives on issues such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional Education & Training Challenges facing critical needs for climate adaptation, crisis management and resilience building; 2. Brief presentation and assessment of your current models of professional education and training programs at different levels; 3. Stakeholders' roles and industry-academia cooperation models for leveraging current and future capacity building programs; 4. Academic cooperation models for professional education and training programs in the digital era to meet the Network goals; 5. Your own Perspectives: how can the Academy best support your programs in responding to local and regional professional needs.



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		<p>Panel of Experts (with brief 5min presentations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prof. David BLANCHON, UNESCO Chair, Univ. of Paris Nanterre ○ Prof. Elena RIDOLFI, Sapienza Univ. of Rome, Italy, and/or ○ Prof. Federica ROSSO, Sapienza Univ. of Rome, Italy, ○ Prof. Hosam El NAZER, National Research Center, Egypt, ○ Prof. Uri SHAVIT, Technion, Israel, ○ Prof. Anan JAYOUSI, UNESCO Chair, An-Najah National Un. Palestine,
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 – 15:40	<p>Session 3 Government – Industry - Academia Cooperation for Capacity building programs of Member States to effectively address sustainable urban eco-development and ecosystem pollution prevention challenges</p>	<p>Agenda: Government – Industry - Academia Cooperation for Capacity Building Needs Assessment and Programs Development of the Member States facing Metropolitan eco-sustainability challenges and critical needs for climate adaptation, WEFE security measures, ecosystem monitoring, eco-urbanization planning and resilience Building to extreme Events Chair: Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR</p> <p>Format: Panel of Experts of local governments, national delegations, water and sanitation utilities, academics, NGOs and other stakeholders sharing experience, assessment and perspectives on issues such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable coastal urbanization planning challenges and climate adaptation policies for resilience building and eco-development; 2. UNESCO-IHP perspectives in the context of Hydrodiplomacy-based coastal ecosystems protection policies, monitoring, data sharing platforms and sustainable coastal eco-development; 3. Upgrading crisis management capabilities and practice of extreme events mitigation and recovery tailored to operational, cultural and economic conditions of water and sanitation agencies; 4. Regulatory Compliance challenges of water and sanitation utilities, as drivers for investments in research and innovative solutions; 5. Engaging government-industry-academia co-development of capacity building program with resources and investments in leveraging research, professional education and training programs, and sustainable coastal eco-development. <p>Panel of Experts of Local Governments and Water Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR, Univ. of Balamand, Lebanon, ○ Prof. Youssef DIAB, Research Director, EIVP, Gustave Eiffel Univ. ○ MEd. Miguel COSTA, Lead Professional Training, Acaemia das Águas Livres, EPAL, Portugal ○ Dr. Laurent MOULIN, Director, R&D, Eau de Paris, France ○ H.E. Charafat AFAILAL, Former Minister of Water, Morocco ○ H.E. Tamar Zandberg, Former Minister of Env., Ben Gurion Univ. Israel
15:40 – 16:00	Coffee Break	
16:00 – 17:30	<p>Session 4 Engaging the Network Planning of Capacity Building Support</p>	<p>Agenda: Engaging The Academy Network Planning of Capacity Building Support Programs and their Implementation Framework to leverage current programs with the network of host and co-host institutes for</p>



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	Programs and their Implementation practice	<p>research, professional education and training, ecosystems monitoring, crisis management, urban eco-development and explore resources. Chair: <i>Gerard LUYET, President, W-SMART</i></p> <p>Format: Panel of Experts of Water Agencies, Host & Co-Host Institutes, and other Stakeholders sharing experience and perspectives on issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Industry perspectives: professional development priority needs for urban eco-development, WEFE security and resilience challenges; 2. Assessment measures of current educational and training models – do we address current and emerging industry needs? 3. Experience sharing of R&D challenges and current programs for accelerating capacity building deployment of innovative solutions; 4. Government–Industry–Academia partnership to support research, ecosystems monitoring, data sharing, and regional eco-planning; 5. Potential sponsors and resources for regional research programs focused on MENA/ Mediterranean eco-sustainability challenges; 6. Perspectives of the ECOMED Academy Network vision and experts' recommendations for planning feasible capacity building programs <p>Panel of Experts of Industry and Academia (with brief presentations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prof. Leonor Amaral, Nova Univ. of Lisbon, FST., Portugal ○ Dr. Capt. Kazem AGAMY, Arab Academy of Science, Technology, Maritime Transportation, Egypt. ○ Prof. Chiara BISCARINI, University of Perugia, Italy ○ H.E. Dr. Benny VAKNIN, Former Mayor of Ashkelon, Israel ○ Dr Georges GHARIOUS, Associate National Program Officer, Natural Sciences, UNESCO ○ Prof. Munqez Jy. SHTAYA, An-Najah National Univ., Palestine, ○ Dr. Marcello SERRAO, Research Associate, W-SMART Association,
17/12/25		
Room VI Flagship		
9:30	Registration	
9:45 – 10:00	Introduction	Summary - The Way Forward - Planning the Academy Proposal Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR
10:00 – 11:10	Session 5 – Review of the Concept Note ToR & Planning improved Academy Flagship Proposal for the IHP Council	<p>Agenda: Review of the proposed Academy Concept Note Terms of Reference (ToR) and Planning a Consensus-based ECOMED Academy Proposal for the IHP Council, covering issues such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Goals, Status & UNESCO-IHP Oversight & Collaboration 2) Proposed Scope of Core Programs 3) Governance and Strategic Network Development 4) Financing Strategies & Resources, 6) Performance Measures & Impacts Assessment 7) Communication Policy and publications 8) Other issues <p>Chair: <i>Prof. Ilan JURAN</i></p> <p>Summary of The Concept Note Proposal <i>Professor Ilan JURAN</i></p> <p>Summary of the UNESCO Taskforce Review and Recommendations <i>Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR</i></p> <p>The Role and Experience of Cyl as the Academy Host Institute <i>Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU, Cyl</i></p>



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		Format: Plenary Discussion & Experts' Recommendations for the preparation of the Academy proposal for the IHP Council
11:10 – 11:30	Coffee-Break	
11:30 – 13:00	Session 6 Roadmap for a 3yrs Network Pilot Capacity Building Program Planning – Needs Assessment, Goals & Scope for a Sustainable Program Co-Development	<p>Agenda: Roadmap for a 3yrs Network Pilot Capacity Building Program Planning – Priority Needs Assessment, Goals and Scope for a Sustainable Program Co-Development with the host and co-host institutions, engaging the stakeholders in the member-states with a program planning focusing on the three capacity building pillars of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government-Industry-Academia partnership for capacity building programs of research, professional training and eco-development ○ Building a community of practice of operators, engineers, policy decision-makers, academics and other professional stakeholders for accelerating the development and use of innovative solutions; ○ Enhancing capabilities to anticipate, monitor, and respond to extreme climate events - such as droughts, floods, pollution incidents, and infrastructure shocks—within the water sector. <p>Chair: <i>Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU, Cyl</i></p> <p>The Purpose of the 3years pilot program planning is to propose a roadmap for the Academy network strategic and sustainable program co-development with assessment and demonstration of the planning challenges and the potential benefit of the Academy Network of co-host institutes. Focusing on engaging the stakeholders in the states concerned, it aims at promoting experience sharing on regional eco-sustainability challenges, their risks assessment and mitigation measures, and accelerating the development and deployment of innovative solutions for climate adaptation, ecosystems monitoring and resilience building to extreme climate events. The pilot planning will involve experience and knowledge sharing for integrating, adapting and leveraging local practice and nature-based solutions with innovative solutions, smart management systems and ICT applications across the MENA/Mediterranean member-states, using a Living Lab approach. Professional training needs to embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI) with increasing use of Big Data and smart ecosystems management systems for transboundary water quality control, assets management, reuse integration in regional IWRM, early anomaly detection, risk assessment and optimal data-driven mitigation decision making to support climate adaptation, resilience building and coastal eco-development.</p> <p>Format: Plenary session with panel of experts of water agencies, co-host institutes, NGOs and other stakeholders sharing their experience with case studies in the assessment of the priority capacity building needs, with their insight and perspectives, along with key performance measures for the feasibility assessment of the proposed programs. Following the model presented by Cyl and other co-host institutes, the 3year pilot program planning is expected to demonstrate the feasibility and potential benefit of the network program co-development.</p> <p>Panel of Experts of Industry and Academia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Stakeholders Network of Co-Host Institutes
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch	



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14:30 – 16:00	Session 7 Feasibility and Sustainability Assessment of the proposed Academy Network Strategic Program Development	<p>Agenda: Feasibility & Sustainability Assessment of the proposed ECOMED Academy Network Strategic Programs Development and of its proposed ToR for Goals, Governance, Scope of Core Programs, financing strategies, and Implementation Planning to meet the capacity building needs of the member-states concerned and accelerate the development and deployment of innovative adaptable solutions. Chair: H.E. Charafat AFAILAL, <i>Former Minister of Water, Morocco</i></p> <p>Format: Panel of Experts of local governments, NGOs, water agencies and academia sharing their feasibility and sustainability assessment, review comments and recommendations with a plenary stakeholders' discussion as essential input for a consensus-based preparation of the Academy proposal for the IHP Council.</p> <p>Panel of Experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ H.E. Tamar Zandberg, Former Minister of Env., Ben Gurion Univ. Israel ○ Annick GNANOU MAURY, Directeur Général - Fondation UPN, France ○ Dr. Laurent MOULIN, Director, R&D, Eau de Paris, France ○ H.E. Prof. Elias WARAK, President, Univ. of Balamand, Lebanon, ○ Prof. Hussein ELAFTY, Secretary General, Arab Water Council, (TBC), Egypt ○ Eng. Ahmed TOWFIK ABED, International Cooperation, Egypt ○ H.E. Dr. Shaddad Al ATTILI, Former. Minister of Water and Head, PWA, Palestine ○ Dr. Sarantuyaa ZANDARYAA, Specialist, Water Science Division
16:00 – 16:20	Coffee-Break	
16:20 – 17:15	Session 8 The Way Forward	<p>The Way Forward – Summary of Experts Planning Recommendations and next steps for the preparation of a consensus-based Academy Flagship Initiative Proposal for the IHP Council. Chair: Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR</p> <p>Format: Panel of Experts - the Chairs of all the sessions will summarize for each session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The agenda purpose and main points of discussion outcome ○ Review comments on the proposed Network ToR for the Academy strategic program development framework ○ Recommendations for the Academy proposal to the IHP Council and the way forward <p>Panel of Experts - Chairs of the Meeting Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR, Univ. of Balamand, Lebanon ○ Dr. Chrysanthia LEONTIOU, Cyl ○ Prof. Ilan JURAN, W-SMART, Paris ○ Gerard LUYET, W-SMART, Paris ○ H.E. Charafat AFAILAL ○ Dr. Sarantuyaa ZANDARYAA, Specialist, Water Science Division
17:15 – 17:30	Concluding Remarks	<p>Dr. Abou AMANI, IHP Secretary Prof. Fadi G. COMAIR, Chair, Academy Strategic Development Council</p>



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Invited Excellencies, National Delegations, Strategic Partners, Experts and Colleagues

Name	Affiliation/ Organization	Member -State	Title/Position	Contact	Registration
Academy Strategic Development Council Host and Co-Host Institutes, Strategic Partners and Experts					
Dr. Helmut HABERSACK President, UNESCO-IHP, Helmut.habersack@boku.ac.at		Not Available	Frederic de DINECHIN Sr. Policy Adviser, UfM, IGO, Spain, frederic.dedinechin@ufmsecretariat.org In Presential		
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Dr. Laurent MOULIN Director, R&D, Eau de Paris, Laurent.Moulin@eaudeparis.fr		In Presential	Prof. Federica ROSSO Sapienza Univ. of Rome, Italy, federica.rosso@uniroma1.it		On Line
Prof. David BLANCHON UNESCO Chair, Head, Geography & Planning Univ. of Paris Nanterre, dblanchon@parisnanterre.fr		In Presential	Annick GNANOU MAURY Directeur Général - Fondation UPN Univ. of Paris Nanterre, Direction@fondationupn.fr		In Presential
Prof. Nicolas CHAVENT Director, Projet Open StreetMap Univ. of Paris Nanterre, nicolas.chavent@protonmail.com		(TBC)	Prof. Youssef DIAB Research Director, EIVP Gustave Eiffel Univ. youssef.diab@univ-eiffel.fr		In Presential
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H.E. Ms. Tamar Zandberg Former Minister of Env., Head, Climate & Env. Policy Inst., Ben Gurion Univ., Israel Tamarz@bgu.ac.il		On-Line	H.E. Dr. Benny VAKNIN Former Mayor of Ashkelon, Member of the Board of Governors, Ben Gurion Univ., Israel bennyvaknin5@gmail.com		On-Line
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