



A National Study Shows the Impact of Population Growth on Natural Resources and the Environment

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AMMAN, Jordan--The Higher Population Council prepared a study in collaboration with the technical team representing concerned agriculture organizations and the projection team, with the technical assistance of the Health Policy Project. The study emphasized the importance of increasing the proportion of self-sufficiency in food, protecting the environment, proposing policies and legislation, and direct agricultural production to meet the needs of the local and regional market and achieve global competitiveness in quality and price.

The secretary-general of the Higher Population Council, Dr. Sawsan Majali, presented the study during a meeting in the technical departments of the Ministry of Agriculture in the presence of the Secretary General of the Ministry, Dr. Radi Tarawneh .

She referred to the most prominent challenges and implications related to agriculture and land use in the event population growth continues to grow at the same unchanged rate.

Dr. Majali said that Jordan has limited natural resources, especially those related to arable land, which constitute 11 percent of the area of the Kingdom, while cultivated land represents 1.6 percent, forests 1.1 percent, and pastures 8.3 percent of the total area of the Kingdom.

She pointed out that the growing population and the effects of immigration formed pressure and burden on the services and the available natural resources and land uses due to the increased need for food, housing, facilities, utilities, schools and roads.

For his part, Mr. Tarawneh said that the increase in population, whether as a result of natural increase or immigration, increases the pressure on the natural resources of the kingdom.

He stressed the importance of the compatibility of population policies with economic, agricultural, educational, and health policies, and the need to make a balance between the population growth rate and the rate of economic and social development, and coordinate work among stakeholders.

The study showed that if the fertility rate and the current per capita consumption of wheat remain constant, total wheat consumption would increase from about 900,000 MTs in 2012 to 1.6 million MTs by 2040. The study also showed that with reduced fertility, the savings will reach to 600 million dinars between 2012 and 2040 in the import of wheat to cover the needs of the population. With current fertility rates continued, the number of global hectares required to support Jordan's population would increase from 11.3 million in 2010 to 23.1 million by 2040.

It also showed the over-exploitation and the decrease of agricultural land, the increasing demand for land required for the housing units of three million square meters in 2012 would be expected to reach 3.7 million square meters in 2030 and 4.4 million square meters in 2040, i.e., the number of new housing units that will be required between now and 2040 will be approximately 1 million with current fertility continued.

The study included threats related to economic and food security, and as an example the increase dependence on imports of food due to declining agricultural land, and increased air and water pollution and land degradation.

The study complements previous studies prepared by the Council on the impact of population growth on the level of sectors such as education, energy, water, and health, which has been discussed with those responsible for these sectors, as well as studies at the governorates level. This work is part of the Council's role on population and development issues at the national level and the level of governorates, and with different sectors, building on challenges and impacts, and advocating for proposed policies to solve these issues.