10 Reasons why – for Israelis - Water and Environment Solutions Can No Longer Wait:
Failing to resolve them NOW threatens our Nature, Water and Public Health:
A New Israeli-Palestinian Agreement is needed NOW
on Water and Environmental Issues

Because….

1. The water issue can be resolved today at a low political cost to Israel. The Israeli water sector has undergone dramatic transformation over the course of the last decade. Israeli leadership and investment in waste water reuse and desalination has turned Israel into a country that no longer suffers from acute water scarcity. No sector in Israel would have its water allocation reduced by reaching a new agreement on water sharing with the Palestinians.

2. A thirsty neighbor is not a good neighbor. The existing allocation of natural water resources with the Palestinians was decided upon 20 years ago and was supposed to be renegotiated after 5 years. More than perhaps any other final status issue, changes in demographics, living standards and technology make the interim agreement obsolete.

3. Nature knows no borders. Managing the environment and shared waters through the incongruous divisions of Areas A, B and C and a secondary level of approval from the Israeli Civil Administration has proven unworkable, preventing essential water and environmental solutions from moving forward.

4. The Israeli Palestinian Joint Water Committee is broken beyond repair. The structure established by Oslo II 20 years ago to manage shared water resources in the West Bank has collapsed. The failed management structure has resulted in a collapse of trust. The Committee has not officially met for over two years, resulting in a situation where most projects, including those that Israel has a strong interest to advance, are stuck.

5. Transboundary streams can’t be rehabilitated without wastewater solutions in the West Bank. Streams that flow in the vicinity of Haifa, Hadera, Netanya, Tel Aviv, Ashdod and Bersheva are polluted by sewage flowing from the West Bank.

6. Shared groundwater resources require a shared solution. Groundwater is being polluted by an estimated 65 million cubic meters of untreated or poorly treated sewage annually being released from both Palestinian and Israeli controlled areas in the West Bank.

7. Industrial pollution havens directly threaten our public health. Where environmental regulations are nonexistent or not enforced, industrial pollution havens spring up, such as the Hebron industrial area or the Mesilot Tulkarem Settlement industrial area.

8. Unilateral environmental measures have failed. Despite Israeli citizen action to implement ‘end of pipe’ environmental solutions, sewage treatment facilities built to treat waste water flowing across the Green Line have consistently broken down and failed. No treatment plant can stop pollution without managing the different types of domestic and industrial sewage disposed of upstream.

9. National environmental treasures such as the Dead Sea and the Jordan River cannot be managed unilaterally. The lack of regional environmental cooperation is leading to their further demise every day.

10. Our shared waters and environment can also serve as a catalyst for regional trust building. As demonstrated by Friends of the Earth Middle East’s Good Water Neighbors project, winner of the TIME Magazine Environmental Heroes award, involving tens of thousands of Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian residents, our shared environment can be a strong source for trust building, advancing the self-interest of each side to deal with their environmental priorities and advancing cross border mutual gains.