



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

Delegation of the European Union to Egypt

### **PRESS RELEASE**

Cairo, 24 October 2021

The fourth edition of Cairo Water Week, CWW 2021, was inaugurated today, in a hybrid format at the Nile Ritz Carlton under the auspices of H.E President Abdel Fattah El Sisi. In his address to the conference, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Mr. Oliver Varhelyi said “Water is a sector in which the European Union has been the most active for well over a decade. Our partnership covers the strategic, practical and financial perspectives. Since 2007, the EU provided to Egypt in response to water challenges more than €550 million in grants, leveraging funds of nearly €3 billion in the sector. But there is more to come. This spring, the EU offered a New Agenda for the Mediterranean with a dedicated Economic and Investment Plan to stimulate a long-term socio-economic development and recovery in the Southern Neighbourhood. Water is among the top priorities in this Plan. I am glad to announce that the EU is joining efforts with Member States, the EIB and the EBRD to prepare a large intervention on “Integrated Water and Food Security”. With this investment, we will support Egypt’s efforts to combat climate change, protect the environment and ensure sustainable food systems.

This year's event has "Water, Population and Global Change, Challenges and Opportunities" as the overarching themes and brings together policymakers, diplomats, UN agencies, representatives of regional organizations, financial institutions and donors, water experts from public and private institutions, and the media.

CWW 2021 will once again serve as a platform for sharing best practices and exchanging innovative ideas; it also seeks to identify areas for potential partnerships and collaboration.

"Cairo Water Week has become one of the most important and largest events related to water and sustainable development in Egypt and the Middle East," said Mohamed Abdel-Aty, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation. "The event is a culmination of the success achieved by the three previous editions," noted Abdel- Aty.

The European Union Delegation to Egypt is organizing a number of high-level events at Cairo Water Week 2021 including the Third Annual European Union (EU)-Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Water Investment Forum that will take place on October 25, with both national and regional dimensions. The Forum aims to support progress towards achieving water security in the southern Mediterranean region. The Forum serves as a dialogue platform for policymakers and

stakeholders who share expertise in the development and implementation of large water investment plans, and determine regional priorities and how stakeholders can contribute to achieving them.

On the evening of October.25, a Finnish-Egyptian Water Forum Networking event will take place with the aim of discussing possible solutions to global water challenges using Finnish knowledge and technology.

A Team Europe Seminar on Financing Water Projects: Challenges and Opportunities will be held on October.26 with two roundtable discussions. The first is on sustainable financing of water and wastewater and the second is dedicated to the circular economy, water and wastewater.

The First EU-Africa-Egypt Water Investment forum will introduce the concept of " Sustainable Green Finance and support to Professional Development Systems " as a pilot in the water sector. The forum will consult potential water sector operators and international financial institutions (IFIs) to determine their appetite to participate in innovative means of finance water sector to contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to water security and sanitation by 2030. The Forum is organized on October 27<sup>th</sup> with the collaboration of the African Development Bank (AFDB) Group focusing on current challenges and the way forward.

Furthermore, the EU Delegation to Egypt is organizing a number of competitions for youth participants to display their water-related science projects and dissertations. Those include the Best Graduation Project (for university graduates 2020-2021), the Three-Minute Thesis Competition (for Masters and PhD students), and the Young Water Inventors Competition (for high school students), to mention but a few. Winning farmers who participated in the Fourth National Water Conservation Competition for Farmers organized by the EU Water STARS project will be honoured at a special ceremony in recognition of their exemplary water-saving efforts including the adoption of modern irrigation techniques.

The EU has contributed Euros 550 million in grants to water projects in Egypt over the period of the last ten years with additional funds provided by European financial institutions raising the total amount to Euros 3 billion. The long-running EU-Egypt cooperation in the water sector is based mainly on investment in labour-intensive infrastructure projects that create job opportunities and help reduce poverty in line with the government's Sustainable Development Strategy- Vision 2030.

"We are committed to continuing to work with the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation and other partners to secure water as a valuable, sustainable resource for Egypt and to support Egypt as a regional hub for the transfer of knowledge on water management," said Christian Berger, the EU Ambassador to Egypt.

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