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Note from our UAE Coordinator From Buildings to Climate change

Dear friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the May's edition of our monthly newsletter. The past month was special for us at Carboun. It started out with a flattering coverage of our efforts and the Road to Doha project in the BuildGreen magazine, which referred to us as “climate change warriors”.

April also saw Carboun participating in the World EcoConstruct conference in Abu Dhabi which was held alongside Cityscape Abu Dhabi I. I was personally delighted to present on the first day of the conference, which appropriately coincided with Earth day, and to discuss the important role buildings can play in the process of mitigating climate change. Not only is this topic the subject of our Energy use in Buildings project and one that we feel passionately about, but it is also aligned with the assessment of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change, which suggests that the buildings sector has the largest and most cost-effective potential to reduce GHG emissions by 2030. In fact, the IPCC estimates that 30% of projected emissions from buildings by 2030 can be avoided at a net economic benefit.

April also witnessed a continued momentum on Carboun's projects such as Road to Doha and LebanON 24/7, and Storytelling Sustainability. As the COP 18 negotiations draw closer, we hope that our efforts will help increase interest in climate change issues across the region. We would also like to take this opportunity to invite you all to take part in discussing the region's future by engaging with Carboun through our social media outlets on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Kind regards,

Wissam Yassine

Carboun Newswire

Review of Sustainability News

Regional Developments:

Energy subsidies in the Arab world costly and inefficient – Report

A recent research paper by UNDP on energy subsidies in the Arab world has demonstrated that 6 of the world's 10 largest energy subsidizers belong to the Arab world. It also shows that subsidies in the top three countries, namely Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, are so heavy that consumers are in effect charged less than a third of international prices for fuel and electricity. Yet, while energy subsidies may be achieving some of their objectives, the report argues that they are a costly and inefficient way of doing so.

[More information](#)

Refugees and expatriates to stretch Jordan's water supply this summer

Jordan's water supply is expected to face severe strains over the next few months despite a relatively good rainy season. This strain is expected to be driven by the arrival of thousands of Syrian refugees and the return of expatriates in summer. The water deficit is planned to be met by rehabilitating water resources, exploring new sources, purchasing water from private wells, establishing new pipelines to improve the water supply process, and linking water pumps to the electricity grid.

Under Jordan's water distribution program - introduced in the early 1980s - households receive water once during a set period, on a rotating basis to conserve limited resources and ensure a sustainable water supply.

[More information](#)

Kuwait abandons nuclear program after Fukushima fallout

Kuwait is one of several Middle Eastern countries that previously announced its intentions to press ahead with a nuclear program, and to build four nuclear reactors by 2022 in the hopes of meeting its soaring energy demands and protecting its existing oil reserves. However, just four months after the nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima power plant, Kuwaiti government has decided to scrap its nuclear plans.

[More information](#)

World's largest solar thermal plant to be executed in the KSA

The world's largest solar thermal plant has gone into operation in Riyadh after a six-month trial period. The \$4.7 million solar heating plant, which was designed and manufactured in Austria, features special solar glass and an improved mounting system to protect the system from sandstorms. The plant is planned to feed a district-heating grid that provides heat and hot water for 40,000 students and faculty at the newly built Princess Noura Bint Abdulraman University.

[More information](#)

Environmental Agency of Abu Dhabi collecting data on UAE terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems

The Environmental Agency of Abu Dhabi (EAD) has embarked on a comprehensive survey of the UAE's terrestrial biodiversity and ecosystems that will begin in the Western Region of the Abu Dhabi Emirate. The survey which is carried out by the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI), will enable the agency to assess and monitor the health of local habitats and terrestrial biodiversity and to ensure effective regulations are employed.

[More information](#)

Environmental concerns for Red Sea-Dead Sea project

As the Red Sea - Dead Sea canal project finally received the green light to go into its implementation phase, fears are being raised about its far-ranging negative effects. These impacts include changes to salinity levels in the Dead Sea, possibly encouraging bacterial and algal growth, and mineral build-up that could affect the area's appearance, ultimately impacting the unique health benefits attributed to the Dead Sea's mineral composition. Environmental groups also fear the project could increase the likelihood of earthquakes in the region.

[More information](#)

Carboun Newswire

Review of Sustainability News

Global Developments:

UN Publishes its own emissions figures and highlights progress towards climate neutrality

The United Nations launched its third annual report, detailing its greenhouse gas emissions for 2010 and the international organization's ongoing efforts to measure and reduce them. The report covers the UN's emissions for its 54 entities in hundreds of locations for its 200,000 employees. It shows that the UN's total greenhouse gas emissions were 1.8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, with more than half attributed to air travel, making it the biggest challenge for the organization in reducing its overall emissions.

[More information](#)

EU shows modest growth in renewable energy

Investments in Europe's clean energy sector grew a modest 4 percent in 2011 but it remained the globe's top investment destination, according to a new report by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

The report indicated that, despite modest growth, Europe raked in \$99.3 billion in clean energy investments last year. In addition, Europe's performance was a key component in the world's total clean-tech investment, which is worth \$263 billion and which grew by 6.5 percent.

[More information](#)

BP Energy Outlook 2030

BP released a 2012 report outlining its projection for long-term energy trends for 2030. The report highlights the growing role of developing economies in global energy consumption, and the increasing share of non-fossil fuels in global energy supply. It also includes a special chapter on energy consumption and production in the Middle East.

[More information](#)

22 May 2012 is International Biodiversity Day

The theme for this year's International Day for Biological Diversity is marine biodiversity. Given marine ecosystems are at greater risk than most terrestrial ecosystems due to the sensitivity of processes that function to support such biodiversity; awareness on these issues are extremely important. Spread the word! date: 22 May 2012 location: worldwide

[More Information](#)

New MIT study supports the 40-year old controversial "limits to growth" study

A new study by the MIT estimated that if things didn't change much, and humans continued to consume natural resources, the world would run out at some point. Oil and other resources will peak before dropping down the other side of the bell curve, yet demand for food and services would only continue to rise.

[More information](#)

World Economic Forum releases report on new energy architecture

The World Economic Forum released a report entitled New Energy Architecture: Enabling an Effective Transition. The report, produced in collaboration with Accenture, presents guidance for countries on how to enable an effective transition to a New Energy Architecture.

[More information](#)

Italy plans to fund green energy by introducing a carbon tax

The Italian government has announced in April that it will introduce a carbon tax, the proceeds of which are earmarked for financing renewable energy production in a revamp of the way clean power is funded in Italy.

[More information](#)

Carboun Calendar

Regional Sustainability Events

Events identified with **C** are events in which Carboun is represented

Menasol 2012

16 to 17 May 1 2012

Abu Dhabi, UAE. ([Event link](#))

Energy

Water Resources and Water Security in the Middle East and Mediterranean

13 to 17 May 1 2012

Amman, Jordan. ([Event link](#))

Water

International Conference on Nuclear and Renewable Energy Resources

13 to 17 May 1 2012

Istanbul, Turkey. ([Event link](#))

Energy, Technology, Environment, Low Carbon

Solar Maghreb 2012 Congress: Developing Large Scale North African Solar Markets

22 to 23 May 1 2012

Casablanca, Morocco. ([Event link](#))

Energy

Wind Power Morocco: Scaling up the Moroccan Wind Industry

May 1 2012 (tbc)

Casablanca, Morocco. ([Event link](#))

Energy

C Beirut International Property Fair

25- 27 May 1 2012

Beirut, Lebanon.

Real Estate

Deadline for bird research grants by the Ornithological Society of the Middle East- 31 May and September.

The OSME's Conservation and Research Fund makes grants to support bird research in the Middle East, Caucasus, and Central Asia. Grants average £500.

[More Information](#)

Middle East Smart Electricity Conference

4 to 6 June 2012

Dubai, United Arab Emirates. ([Event link](#))

Smart and Sustainable Communities

Smart Cities World MENA

4 to 6 June 2012

Dubai, United Arab Emirates. ([Event link](#))

Energy, Electricity

Deadline for environment and conservation grants by Ford Motor Company in the Middle East - 10 July 2012

Ford Middle East announces grants for non-profit conservation initiatives in the Middle East. Categories are conservation engineering; protection of the natural environment; and environmental education. Eligibility extends to ongoing not-for-profit projects in the following countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

[More Information](#)

Carboun Journal

Summary of Carboun's Recent Articles



Subsidizing Electricity in Lebanon: Burning Oil and Government Resources

By Marie Tyl

Electricite du Liban (EDL), the state's electric utility, operates seven thermal plants fueled by gasoil, fuel oil, and natural gas. It also runs six hydro-electric power plants. The national utility enjoys a quasi-monopoly over the power sector in Lebanon. However, for reasons ranging from inefficient operation and management to a freeze-of-tariffs government policy, the electricity company has to rely on significant subsidies from the Ministry of Finance to cover its deficit. During 2011, for example, approximately USD 1.57 billion were transferred from the state treasury to EDL, 93% of which was allocated to purchase oil. This subsidy constitutes one fifth of total public expenses, and according to a 2009 social impact analysis by the World Bank "is putting macroeconomic stability at risk".

Yet, government transfers to EDL are not a new phenomenon. At the end of

the civil war, EDL faced significant investment requirements to rebuild the severely damaged electricity infrastructure and continue expanding production capacity as demand rose with economic recovery. The Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR – in charge of post-war reconstruction efforts in Lebanon) allocated approximately USD 1.14 billion to the electricity sector between 1992 and 2009, which corresponded to 15% of the total value of contracts signed by the CDR during that period of time.

“Electricity is the mother of all problems in Lebanon ... the size of the problem is beginning to pose a danger to public finances”

**- M. Chatah,
Lebanese former
Finance Minister.**

However, results did not match financial commitment due to political and institutional friction slowing necessary reforms in the sector. EDL could not maintain a sound financial balance mainly due to insufficient revenues, which remained largely inferior to required investments. In 1994, for example, electricity was sold at one sixteenth of its production cost. And while electricity tariff saw one increase in the mid-nineties in an effort to provide EDL with additional revenues, no other tariff adjustments were approved by government as any increase in the electricity cost could not be easily justified when power supply remained highly unreliable. This left EDL with tariffs based on a price of crude oil of around 25 USD/barrel while Brent Crude was exchanged at an average of 111 USD/bbl in 2011. With tariffs unable to cover the fuel source bill, let alone infrastructure depreciation and other operating costs, government subsidies to cover the gap between expenditures and revenues appeared to be the only way to ensure continued power generation.

To continue reading, please visit the [original article](#) on Carboun's website.

Outreach Joining Carboun

Carboun has announced new openings for [Carboun National Coordinator](#), [Carboun Ambassador](#), and [Carboun Student Ambassador](#) roles around the Middle East and North Africa region.

If interested in taking part and helping shape the future of the region in a more sustainable direction, please submit your application before 15 may 2012.

Staying in touch

If you would like to propose/discuss a local project, propose an article, or suggest news for this publication, please email us at enquiries@carboun.com or contact your national coordinator directly.

To join this newsletter please sign up at Carboun's homepage at www.carboun.com

You can also stay in touch with us via our social network groups and outlets.

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For up to date sustainability news and development, please join our [Facebook](#) page and follow our [Twitter](#) feed.

 /carboun group

You can also join Carboun's vibrant group on [LinkedIn](#) for more in-depth discussions of sustainability in the region.

Carboun Letters Contributors

General Coordinator
Karim Elgendy
karim@carboun.com

Jordan National Coordinator
Rashed Al Nasa'a
rashed@carboun.com

Lebanon National Coordinator
Guy El Khoury
guy@carboun.com

UAE National Coordinator:
Wissam Yassine
wissam@carboun.com

Carboun Ambassador
Amr Elesawy

Carboun Ambassador
Linda Pappagallo

Carboun Ambassador
Mounir Kabbara