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JORDAN

PROJECT TO HALT DESERTIFICATION BEGUN

Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 11 Mar 85 p 3

[Article by Muhammad al-Khatabiyah: "Implementation of al-Lajjun Project in al-Karak To Fight against Desertification To Begin Early Next Month"]

[Text] Implementation of al-Lajjun Project in al-Karak Governorate, one of the trailblazing projects for fighting desertification, is to begin early next month. The board of directors of the UN Program on the Environment had decided to implement such projects in a number of countries to counter desert encroachment there.

Sources at the Ministry of Planning stated that costs for implementing this project amount to 1,680,000 U.S. dollars. The Jordanian government will contribute 800,000 dollars to this project; the Arabian Gulf Program, which supports UN development organizations, and the U.S. Agency for International Development will contribute 400,000 dollars each; and the UN Program on the Environment will contribute 80,000 dollars.

Ministry sources indicated that the project will be carried out over an area of 50,000 donums and that that area can be expanded to cover 1 million donums in the next 2 years.

The aim of the project is to develop pastures in the area by drilling wells and increasing the density of grazing bushes. Grazing is to be regulated and animal resources, consequently, developed. This would encourage the raising of sheep; it would increase sheep farmers' income; it would develop local communities in the area; and it would curb migration from rural to urban areas.

The project will also be helpful in coordinating efforts that are currently being made to fight desertification. It will help coordinate future anti-desertification efforts in Jordan which are carried out by government and private organizations, such as the Royal Society for Protecting the Environment. These efforts are being made to preserve limited natural resources, to regulate their use and to integrate the usage of natural resources with development plans by studying the possibility of devising a national plan to protect the environment.

It is worth noting that Jordan was selected to be one of the countries in West

As a where a trailblazing anti-desertification project would be implemented. Al-Lajjun was chosen in the light of studies conducted by specialized technical teams from the UN Program for the Environment. These teams have been involved in those studies since 1982, and they've been assisted by officials in the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Municipal, Rural and Environmental Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Water Authority and the Geographical Center of Jordan.

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