



Delta-Eko

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UN meeting in İzmir, but on a smaller scale

Young people from around the world have come together in İzmir to discuss pressing global matters as part of a five-day Model United Nations Conference that began Monday.

Model United Nations is a simulation of the U.N. General Assembly and other multilateral bodies with youth participants. The topics they will discuss at the conference at Yaşar University include the Middle East, global warming, the security of the North Pole, illegal weapon sales to minorities and HIV prevention.

In the conference's opening speech, Yaşar University Rector Murat Barkan said the young people coming together would discuss world matters that have to be solved. "Young people do not want to complain about the future," Barkan said. "They are seeking solutions. 'If the future does not seem bright, we should do something today' is their motto."

Alper Erdem, the Model United Nations Association President for Turkey, said: "We believe we have to return the energy of the world back to itself. We are taking a step toward a better world. We are raising our voice here to matters of injustice. We do not want to have today's problems in the future, too."

Congress building ready, waiting for guests

The Sütlüce Culture and Congress Center opened its doors for a reception Tuesday. The ceremony was far from ostentatiousness even though it hosted many well-known people such as ministers, artists and leading names in the water sector. The center will be home to the 5th World Water Forum, between March 16 and 22, and open its doors for thousands of attendants for the first time.

Environment Minister Veysel Eroğlu was present at the opening with all his anxiety. Saying that the international forum is very important for Istanbul and Turkey's promotion, Eroğlu stood proudly on stage during the reception. "We are proud to make Istanbul a pearl for the world," he said.

The 4th World Water Forum was organized in Mexico City and gathered approximately 20,000 participants. For the 5th World Water Forum the attendees' number is expected to be about the same.

The forum, organized under the theme of "Bridging Divides for Water," will feature the World Water Expo and Water Fair and be a place for hundreds of exhibitors. During the forum week there will also be a poster and photo exhibition, international "Water and Film" events, a Global Water Education Village, a learning center, networking spaces, water-related performances and ethnic manifestations on water themes.

Invitations to ministers

Eroğlu said Istanbul will open its doors to the world during the forum. "We invited 25 state ministers of various countries and sent invitations to 185 country's environment and water ministers. The important names working on water issues and academics will also take part at the forum," he said.



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According to Erođlu, with Istanbul at host for the event Turkey will be able to transfer its knowledge on water technologies. "We want to turn Istanbul to a congress center because the congress tourism is more profitable compared to touristy tourism. The foreign currency left by congress tourists is five times more than sightseeing tourism. We want business people to attend the 5th World Water Forum," Erođlu said.

The forum will include 100 sessions on 23 broad topics. State ministers and local administrations from 123 countries will meet and discuss water issues.

Istanbul Governor Muammer Güler said opening the Sütlüce Culture and Congress Center is a big step for Istanbul to be a world congress center.

According to Güler, the forum expects attention not only from water related sectors but from all the people of Istanbul.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Kadir Topbař was also present at the ceremony. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was expected to attend but wasn't there and Topbař said he will be attending the official opening March 14. "Istanbul has experiences and knowledge coming from Ottoman times. Istanbul, as a host for many events, activities and conferences, is now a city where very important decisions are made," Topbař said, adding that Istanbul's water problem is now history.

Differing views at the Alternative Water Forum

Organized to coincide with the 5th World Water Forum, the Alternative Water Forum presents different opinions on water policy. The alternative forum will take place March 20 to 22 at Bilgi Univeristy's Santralistanbul Campus

"Another water management is possible," read the poster at the Alternative Water Forum on Thursday. Organized to coincide with the 5th World Water Forum, the Alternative Water Forum creates a counterview for all the policies on water.

Organized by various non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, and political parties, the alternative forum claims that water cannot be privatized and that it is everyone's right to access water.

The alternative forum will take place March 20 to 22 at Bilgi Univeristy's Santralistanbul Campus, on the opposite shore from the Sütlüce Culture and Congress Center, which will host the World Water Forum.

To judge the many incorrect politics on water there will be an "Istanbul Water Court" during the alternative forum. The court will be held by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation and Latin America Water Court Organization. The jury will be seven people and the "court" will investigate the dams that are to be built in Yusufeli, Hasankeyf and Munzur. The court will also examine the social and environmental corruption in Mexico and the planned dam project on Brazil's Madeira River.



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Talking on behalf of all the participants, musician Birol Topaloğlu said the 5th World Water Forum is far from including the NGO's within the forum and there were a few NGO's picked and invited. Topaloğlu said many of the foreign NGOs participating in the 5th World Water Forum have already been declared.

Statement of intention

"Organizing the 'Alternative Water Forum,' we first aim to show that another water policy is possible. By offering a different perspective we will gather corporations, establishments, NGO's, political parties and public who fights for the water issues," Topaloğlu said.

During his speech Topaloğlu revealed plans showing that General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, or DSI, plans to build 600 dams in Turkey. "Although it is going to create 10,000 megawatts of energy annually, they don't take notice of the damage it will cause to nature," said Topaloğlu. "There are plans to build 50 damn on just one river near the Black Sea. The Ilisu Dam Project will leave 313 square kilometers of settlement underwater, which will also destroy the 10,000-year-old city, Hasankeyf."

"We will stand side by side with people for their benefit," said Akın Birdal, mayoral candidate for Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality from the Pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party, or DTP.

Birdal said that people should take note that the organizers of the 5th World Water Forum have called on each parliamentary to be a part of the water commoditizing international powers. "But water is a right and that's why we are organizing the 'Alternative Water Forum.'"

Ufuk Uras, a deputy of the Freedom and Solidarity Party, or ÖDP, called on people to unite and defend their rights and save the future for the children. "Water is life and cannot be a part of trade life, that's why policies should favor humans and their needs," Uras said, adding that people should participate in water related events. He said there shouldn't be a management for some things in this world.

According to the organizers of the alternative forum, water has become just another commodity for international trade. "In Turkey people pay to buy drinking water and this is unbelievable," said Ulrike Dufner, a representative of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation.

The foundation has organized two meetings for the alternative water forum. One will be on global warming, water and drought and the other on cooperation with the River Network organization about preserving clean water.

Dufner said they invited the governments of Turkey, France and Germany to the "water court" but none responded. She said she would prefer a gathering of all sides after both forums are over. "I believe that the result might be more concrete if the two sides would discuss all the water issues. I don't believe NGOs attending the 5th World Water Forum will change anything," Dufner said.

Ömer Madra, executive editor of independent radio station Açık Radyo, attended a pre-meeting of the Water Forum and talked about global warming and incorrect government policies on water. He said it



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was good to be there on the opposing side. Madra is not assisting in preparations for the Alternative Water Forum but he said he is definitely on their side. "We can make a progress if we want," he said.

Business body inks deal with academy

Aiming to enhance the level of integration between universities and the business world, the Young Businessmen Association of Turkey, or TÜGİAD, and Istanbul Technical University, or ITÜ, signed a protocol to cooperate on renewable energy projects.

Within the framework of the protocol, signed Tuesday, TÜGİAD and ITÜ plan to conduct projects concerning renewable energy production and storage technologies, including wind turbines, solar cells, accumulators and fuel cells.

The partnership also plans to establish an "Energy Base," which includes a New and Renewable Energy Technologies Research Center, to design and develop local products as well as create a research and development center to improve the working conditions of students and academic personnel.

New synergy for growth

Speaking at a press meeting in Istanbul on Tuesday, TÜGİAD Board Chairman Lütfü Küçük said the cooperation between Turkey's private sector and universities would create a synergy for the economic growth of the country.

"As Turkey's private sector representatives, we are looking forward to launching a new era through integrating the knowledge of the universities with our own sources. We believe that this partnership would prevent the waste of new possibilities and capital loss," said Küçük. "Creating an energy base requires the cooperation of different institutions, those which represent different knowledge in different areas. We now launch the first investment as a first step within the context of such cooperation. We believe that the outcome of this partnership would create added value as well as provide the efficient use of sources and capital," he told journalists. "As TÜGİAD, we represent a \$35 billion-worth of economic value with our 650 members and also 300,000 employees. With such potential, we are happy to present it to Turkey's service," Küçük said.

"As we are ready to contribute to the economy in renewable energy, the government should complete the legal framework concerning renewable energy as soon as possible," he said.

Speaking at the same meeting, ITÜ Chairman Muhammet Şahin said ITÜ had the largest research and development budget among Turkey's universities and there would be a source worth 100 million Turkish Liras coming in three or four years for new projects for the university. "No university in Turkey owns such a large budget for projects. Planning to increase the capacity of our technocity with a \$17 million investment, we are looking forward to enhancing our contributions to Turkey's technological development via generating more added values," he said.



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No to tree-cutting plan

Environmentalists' bid to stop the erection of a power line in Muğla proves fruitful. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry stops the project and forces the electric company to find a new route. 'Thousands of trees are saved with now,' said a local administrator, hailing the decision

A total of 95 pine trees were cut down along a power line without permission from the Turkey Electricity Transmission, Inc, or TEİAŞ, in the Muğla region city of Marmaris last December.

Upon demands from environmentalists and village people to cancel the project, the protocol was reshaped to "pass the power line through the burnt forest areas." The environmentalists and Çetibeli village residents welcomed the cancelation of the project.

The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources decided to renew the old high-voltage lines, which supply energy to Marmaris, and signed a protocol with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. TEİAŞ planned to install the high-voltage wires through a new route instead of following the first protocol in order to decrease the total costs of the power line between Gökova and Marmaris.

The TEİAŞ teams started the work for land identification last December because it was necessary to set up the power line in a 50-meter treeless area in a forest region.

The Forest Management teams took the case to court on the grounds that the TEİAŞ teams cut 95 pine trees without permission. The environmentalists and the villagers petitioned by demanding the power line be passed through the treeless area, and appealed to the Prime Ministry and the Presidency.

Back to former project

The resistance by the villagers and environmentalists proved fruitful. The teams from and the Ministry for Environment and Forestry decided to pass the power line through the treeless area.

"The Ministry of Environment and Forestry heard the voice of the village in the end. The application of the new project would mean the culling of thousands of trees. The new decision saved all these trees," said Özgür Özden, headman of Çetibeli Village.

"We will resist those people or organizations that intend to harm the environment in every possible way. It is rather wrong to cut the existing trees instead of using the already treeless area for the power line project. We could not permit that. On the other hand, the investigation regarding the trees already cut without any permission is still going on. It is very satisfactory to decide for the right step in the end," said Filiz Eran, group leader of Marmaris Environment Volunteers.

The authorities from the Forest Management also said they were against the cutting of the trees and voted for the application of the former project.



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Rains fill up Aegean dams

İZMİR - Recent rainfall has helped İzmir fight drought, as the lakes are filling up. The water behind the Tahtalı Dam, which provides water for the city in the Aegean region, has reached 98 million cubic meters, up from 76 million last year, said State Water Affairs regional authorities.

Balçova Dam, which provides drinking water for the city has reached a capacity of 6 million cubic meters, which is double last year's levels.

Ürkmez Dam, which had only 1.3 million cubic meters last March, has reached 4.8 million cubic meters of water this year, while Alaçatı Dam reached 9.4 million cubic meters. Alaçatı Dam had 4.4 million cubic meters of water last year.

The water board also said other reserves around the city, including Kestelli, Seferihisar and Kavaklıdere, had risen by between 21 and 86 percent.

Environmentalists: No to port expansion

An environmental group in Marmaris has filed suit to overturn a government decision in favor of a plan to expand the city's port, and is prepared to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights if necessary to stop the project.

Speaking to journalists at a press conference, Marmaris Environment Volunteers Group leader Filiz Ersan announced the legal move, saying the Environmental Effect Evaluation and Planning Administration had made a wrong decision in approving the port-expansion plan.

"We applied to the Muğla Administration Court to cancel the decision of the Environmental Effect Evaluation and Planning Administration approving the plan to expand the port," said Ersan, whose group has been working to protect Marmaris's natural environment for 19 years. "We certainly object to this decision and we have doubts about how they granted this permission. We will be very persistent in stopping the expansion of the port."

'Huge protest'

Promising to mount a huge protest if the port-expansion plans go forward, Ersan said: "Environmentalists are universal people. We, as a group, have no fear of anyone. We already have a protest plan in case of the expansion of the port."

"We will never let anyone distort and damage the natural tissue of Marmaris," she concluded.

Companies argue new boat trip policy

Tourism companies have responded harshly to recent warnings against overcrowded boat tours, saying it will severely damage lakes and channels.

Last week Muğla Governor Ahmet Altıparmak said boat tours on Lake Köyceğiz and the Dalyan channels will be more strictly controlled against overcrowding and other problems. Altıparmak said companies should not pack "35 tourists on a 25-person boat."



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Following those remarks, the Dalyan Channel Administration Committee backed the governor and held a meeting to limit the number of tourists on boats.

Boat owners and the Dalyan Water Products Cooperative, however, reacted to the decision by claiming it would double the number of boats cruising the channel and this would also damage the environment.

"If this decision is implemented, the number of boats cruising in the channel will double," owner of Kardak Tourism Özyay Akdoğan told the Doğan news agency. "This also means termination of the channel." Akdoğan also complained that nobody asked for the cooperative's input. "We represent 360 boat owners but they did not ask our opinion," he said. "According to our license, these boats can carry 32 people legally. However the committee limited this number to 25 for the comfort of tourists," he said. "What about the channel and the surrounding nature? With this decision the number of boats cruising the channels will increase and will likewise damage the channels because they cannot bear this many boats."

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