

# GIDON BROMBERG

Cofounder of EcoPeace Middle East

## **Gérard Mestrallet, Special Envoy of the French President for IMEC**

Gidon, with EcoPeace, your NGO, your baby, you are working with people from Jordan, Israel and Palestine, even now, on concrete projects that could help for the day after. Could you tell us how you are succeeding in doing that and what the Peace Triangle is?

## **Gidon Bromberg, Cofounder of EcoPeace Middle East**

Thank you very much. It is a real honor to be here, and I think it is a real credit to the organizers for also inviting a civil society organization to speak on this stage because we want to contribute, and we want to speak about the elephant in the room. The elephant in the room in moving so many of the discussions that have been held today, and certainly in succeeding in IMEC, is seeing how we can help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian, the Israeli-Arab conflict, and IMEC can play a critical role in doing that. We propose to do that as Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians because that is what EcoPeace is. I have a Palestinian co-director in Ramallah, a Jordanian co-director in Amman with 60 staff, 20 in Israel, 20 in Palestine, 20 in Jordan, focusing on how we can use the environment, but not only the environment, the economy and security in order to build peace.

Hence the concept of the Peace Triangle is transformative because it is coming and saying that Palestinians need to see how they can live with dignity in their own state. It is coming and saying that Israelis need to see how they can live in security in the Jewish state, and Jordanians need to see how they can live in prosperity with the rest of the region. The Peace Triangle concept helps each of our peoples see the future. Unfortunately, our leaders at present are not providing us with the vision of the day after that enables our peoples to see themselves living in dignity, security and economic prosperity. IMEC, with the Peace Triangle addition, presents that opportunity, but not only in concept, but in a real project.

We are proposing three catalytic projects. Two of them are not our ideas. They are part of the IMEC idea, they are part of other ideas. One, of course, as Gérard mentioned, is the railway. The railway is already largely built from the Saudi border with the Emirates all the way to the Saudi border with Jordan. It is built there. Clearly, there is nothing on the Saudi-Jordan border. It is built to head to the Mediterranean. We say extending that railway through Jordan to Haifa is brilliant, but it is not good enough. We need to see and we propose that Jordan be a hub and, as the enlarged map shows, a second line also going to Gaza so that the Gaza port, like the Haifa port, can enjoy the type of prosperity that is envisioned for dignity for Israelis and Palestinians. There we welcome Adani to build the port or the Saudis or the Emiratis.

By doing so, the project becomes catalytic because it does not just meet the Palestinian dignity needs of prosperity in their own state, but it also helps meet Israel's security needs of living in its Jewish state. Because as soon as the economies of India, the Gulf, Saudi and Europe become dependent on the railway, on the corridor through Haifa, but also on the corridor through Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza, then it is no longer just an Israeli-Palestinian interest for stability and security. It is in the interest of all our neighbors, of all our partners in this IMEC corridor. Therefore, the corridor becomes transformative when we see how Palestinians, Israelis and Jordanians benefit.

Similarly, another transformative idea, not our idea, is of the Middle East, particularly the Neom area of Saudi Arabia, the southern Jordanian deserts and the Sinai of Egypt, producing large-scale renewables through sun, through wind, and through production of green hydrogen. A study that we were involved with, including Tel Aviv University, shows that this area can supply 30% of the energy, of the electricity needs of the eastern side of Europe from Greece to Germany. Therefore, it clearly also meets Europe's needs of meeting its European green targets, but it also helps Europe to remove itself from the dependency on Russian gas.

In this concept, again, we see in the red lines (showing energy export routes) important developments. Europe is already connecting its electricity grid from Greece to Crete, on to Cyprus and on to Haifa, and there are plans from Cyprus or Crete also to Egypt. We say great, but not good enough. We need to see the infrastructure that Adani is talking about, that Gérard is talking about, also to go through the West Bank and Gaza. To go through Palestine, again, so that we can show Palestinians how their state can live in dignity. How the rebuilding of Gaza in the day after will not be dependent just on donor funds but will be led by public-private partnership because of the prosperity that a railway with a port, and export and provision of cheap energy through our three countries, can provide our region. Again, through that investment, and it is billions of dollars of investment that also go through Gaza, which mean that there is increased security for Israel because again the stability of the situation in Gaza, in the Palestinian territories, with Israel becomes a corridor priority. Therefore, it is a transformative change in interest.

Then finally, on water, and this is indeed EcoPeace's project of project prosperity, we see an agreement signed in 2022 between Israel, Jordan and the UAE in a water-energy exchange where Jordan's renewables powers desalination in Israel and then sells desalinated water back to Jordan. In our original plan, we also saw desalination in Palestine, in Gaza. And on the day after we can see large desalination facilities being built in Gaza that not only supply water to the Palestinian population in Gaza and the West Bank, but also sell water to Jordan, making the project a potential public-private initiative, transforming again the interests so that stability in Gaza is not only an Israeli-Palestinian issue, it becomes part of Jordan's water security. In that way, we are really learning from the experience of Europe of regional integration.

This is the coal and steel that brought Europe together after World War II, that brought Europe to the longest period of shared prosperity. Therefore, harnessing the sun and the sea and building the IMEC corridor that invites Israel, Palestine and Jordan together to join IMEC can be the impetus for the day after to really bring the type of economic, but not only economic, security and climate resilience and a two-state regional integration solution.



**Gérard Mestrallet**

Thank you. Thank you very much, Gidon.