



**Expert Group and Inception Meeting on
Strengthening National Capacities to Manage Water Scarcity and
Drought in West Asia and North Africa**

**Drought management-related
activities and achievements in the
Near East and North Africa Region:
*Lessons Learned***



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Presentation Outline

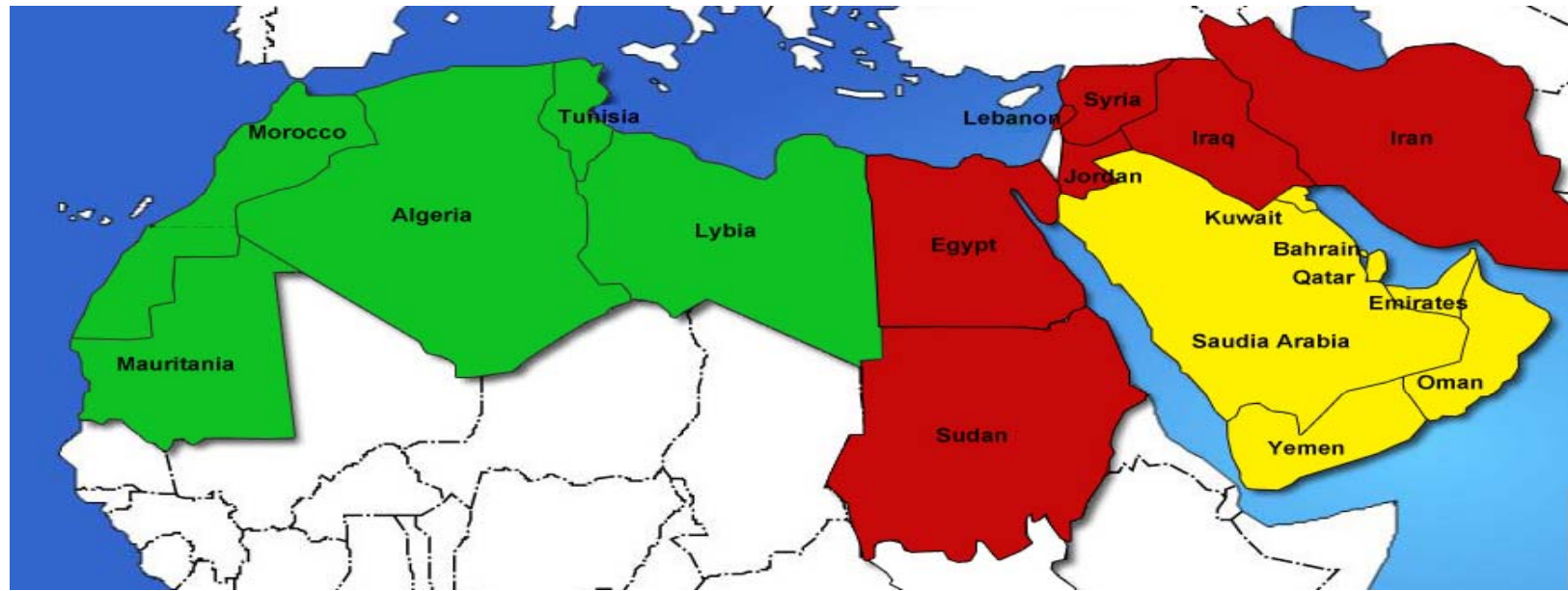
Regional context

Drought concerns in NENA region

FAO responses

Lessons Learned

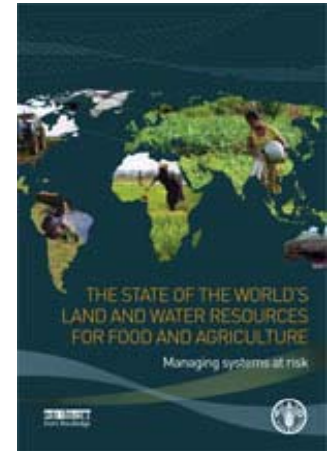
Conclusion and recommendations



The 19 countries of the NENA region have been grouped in three sub-regions based on geographic and hydro-climatic similarities:

1. **North Africa:** Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Mauritania
2. **Arabian Peninsula:** Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, KSA, Qatar, UAE and Yemen
3. **Middle East:** Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Sudan

The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture, SOLAW (2011)



focused on key dimensions of analysis and highlighted the main following **Warning Signs**:

- ✓ Food production has been associated with inappropriate management practices that have degraded the land and water systems;
- ✓ The greatest threat is the loss of soil quality, followed by biodiversity loss and water resources depletion;



Drought events

1998-2000: Worst drought in 30 years affects the NENA Region.



Significant social, environmental, and economic impacts.

Regional Context

- ❑ **Land and water degradation constitutes an important threat;**
- ❑ The region is characterized by intense scarcity of L&WR;
- ❑ **70% of the total area is under desert and arid conditions;**
- ❑ 75% of MC will suffer absolute water scarcity;
- ❑ **Water management problems;**
- ❑ Rapid depletion of fossil water.....



Water Resources in the region

The Near East is one of the most water-scarce regions in the world.

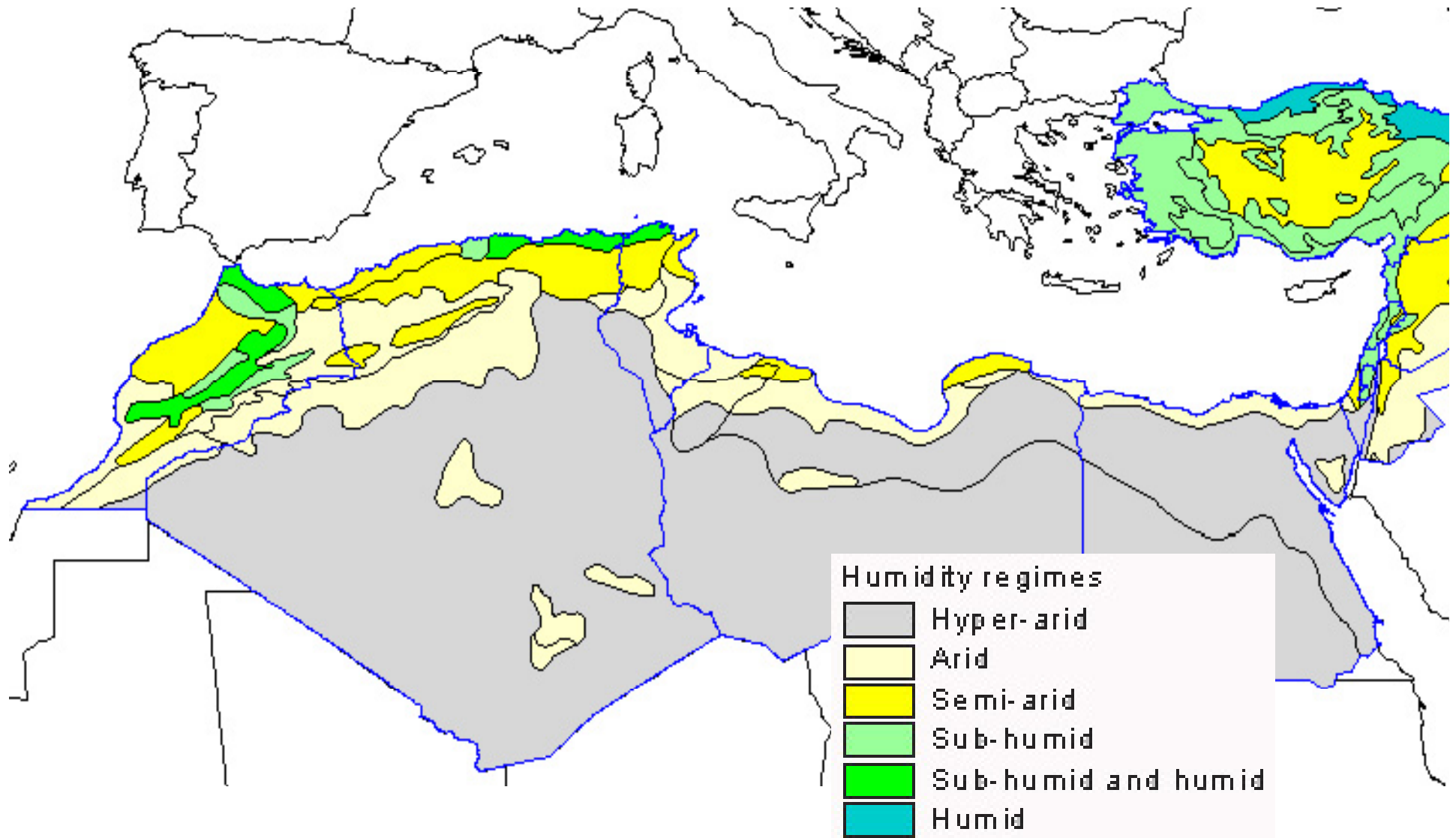
The average annual precipitation is estimated at **150 mm**.

The **Internal Renewable Water Resources** (IRWR) per capita is one of the lowest in the world and is in decreasing trend due to population growth (**690 m³** in the region **vs 6400 m³/c/y** in the world).

	Area 1000 km ²	Population (1000 Inhab.)	IRWR (km ³)	m ³ /capita/y
North Africa	6784	167184	47	283
Arab. Penin.	3100	60364	6	101
Middle East	2468	134965	196	1455
NENA Total	14858	392513	250	688
World	134433	6755895	43645	6460
NENA as world %	11%	6%	0.60%	11%



Aridity increases vulnerability to drought in the NENA region



FAO responses



- Drought is a recurrent feature in the Near East and North Africa Region (51% of the population are affected by drought);
- FAO serves as one of the main partner organizations for the UNCCD (1994), since many of the activities implemented by FAO are related to **desertification**;
- The **severe and disastrous droughts** that affected many countries of the NENA Region from **1998** to **2001** led FAO to become more directly involved in national drought planning;



FAO responses



- In response to these drought events, the Near East and North Africa countries in **March 2000** requested FAO assistance at national and regional levels in the **formulation of long-term drought management strategies**;



- Since then, drought **preparedness** has constituted one of the focus areas for the FAO Regional Office for the NENA;
- FAO adopted drought as a “**Priority Area for Interdisciplinary Action**” at the global level.

Drought-related activities and achievements



- **December 1998:** A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between FAO and the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention to achieve the objectives of the Convention to Combat Desertification;



- **March 2000:** Based on the recommendation of the first session of ALAWUC, MC requested FAO/RNE to assist them in the formulation of long-term drought action plans;

Drought-related activities and achievements (Contd.)



- **November 2000 – January 2001:** FAO/RNE meeting to discuss collaborative drought mitigation projects. **Agricultural Technical Group** at the Regional Office for the NENA appointed to take a lead role in facilitating projects.



- **May 2001:** FAO/RNE, ICARDA, and EU organized the REC and Workshop on Drought Mitigation Long-term Planning in the NENA in Syria. The MR: **the establishment of a network on drought for West Asia and North Africa and member countries of the EU** and ICARDA as coordinator.

Drought-related activities and achievements (Contd.)



- **May 2001:** FAO/RNE-ICARDA-EU Expert Consultation and Workshop on Drought in the Near East and the Mediterranean (CIHEAM in Morocco). MR: **the establishment of a Mediterranean Drought Network.**



- **November 2001:** ICARDA, FAO/RNE, and CIHEAM agree to launch the Network on Drought Management for the Near East, Mediterranean and Central Asia (NEMEDCA drought network).

Drought-related activities and achievements (Contd.)



- **March 2002:** Meeting of the 2nd Session of ALAWUC and the 26th FAO Regional Conference for the NENA Region in Iran. Participants endorsed placing the drought mitigation issue as a '**priority activity**' on the national agendas of member countries, as well as for FAO;



- **June 2002:** The constitutional framework for the NEMEDCA network was endorsed by the main partners and ICARDA was assigned as the “network focal point”;

Drought-related activities and achievements (Contd.)



- **2002:** “Drought mitigation” was adopted by FAO as a Priority Area for Interdisciplinary Action. FAO support contributed to holding the “Regional FAO Workshop on National Capacity Building in Drought Mitigation in the NENA”, in November 2002, in Rabat, Morocco. MR: the **creation of national drought strategies**, **early warning systems**, and a **network for drought preparedness**;



- **October 2003:** High-Level Technical Workshop “Regional Programmes for Food Security in the Near East Towards Sustainable Food Security and Poverty Alleviation”, held in Jeddah. **Participants continued to push for work on drought mitigation**;

Drought-related activities and achievements (Contd.)



- **March 2004:** Third Session of ALAWUC, Doha, Qatar. Participants continue recommendations for drought risk reduction activities among member countries and their participation in NEMEDCA;



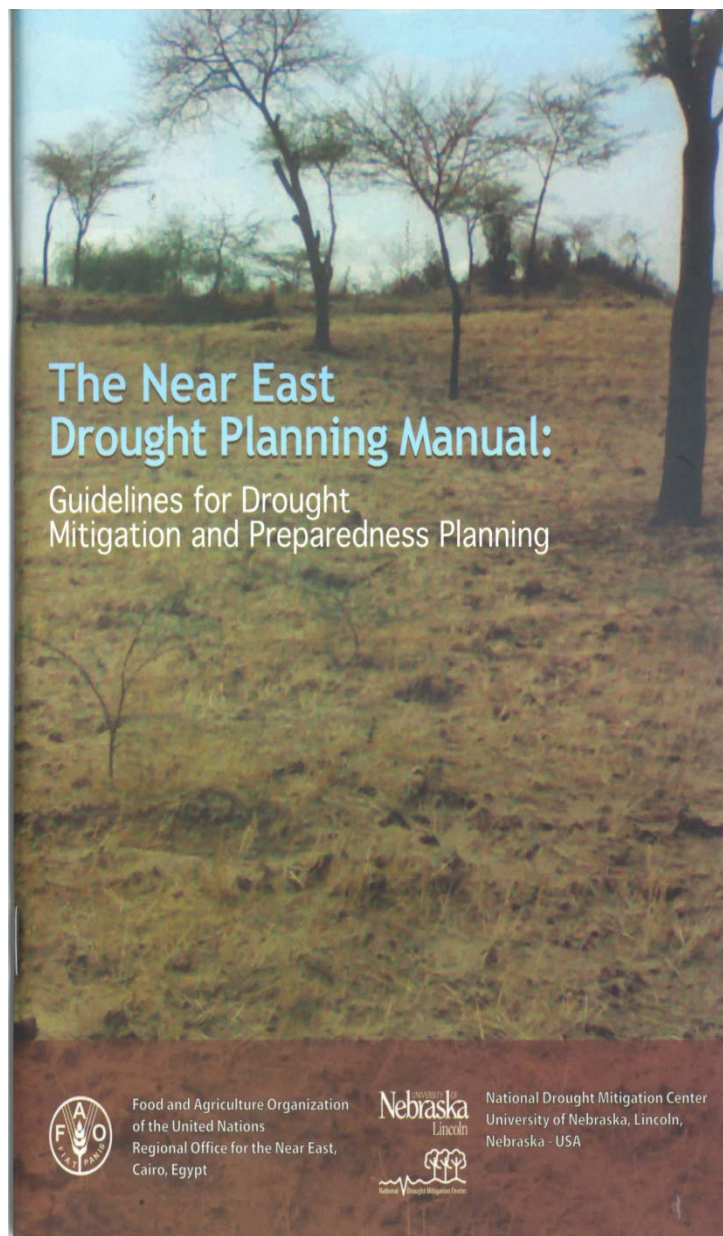
- **July 2004:** The Economic Cooperation Organization Senior Official's Meeting on Agriculture, held in Tehran, Iran. Participants support Iran's proposal for establishment of a Regional Sub-Center for Risk Management of Natural Disasters;

Drought-related activities and achievements (Contd.)



- **2004-2006:** FAO approved three technical cooperation projects (TCPs) to assist in further developing the Drought Mitigation Strategies and Action Plans in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, and Syria;
- **July 2006:** Advanced Seminar on Drought Mitigation Methodologies, Tools, and Management Options, Organized by CIHEAM-Zaragoza, ICARDA, and FAO in Syria;
- **June-December 2007:** FAO Regional Office for the Near East and NDMC (USA) develop summary of drought-related activities in the Near East;

Drought-related activities and achievements (Contd.)



- **September 2008:** FAO Regional Office for the Near East and NDMC (USA) developed guidelines to assist countries in the preparation and implementation of national action programs for managing drought risk (FAO/NDMC, 2008)
- **March 2013:** FAO collaborated with WMO, UNCCD and other organizations for the organization of High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP);
- **2013:** FAO launched the **Regional Water Scarcity Initiative** with the two major outcomes : (i) a Regional Collaborative Strategy on sustainable agriculture water management for increasing the level of food security, and (ii) a Regional Partnership to support countries in the implementation of the collaborative strategy.

Lessons Learned



- ✓ Both the occurrence and impacts of drought could change in the near future because of climatic shifts and changing vulnerabilities brought on by growing populations and user groups competing over limited water resources;



- ✓ In order to reduce the threats associated with current and future drought in the region, it is essential to gain a better understanding of the drought hazard and implement risk reduction actions at the local, national, and regional levels;

Lessons Learned (Contd.)



- ✓ The high added value of individuals and communities that typically implement a range of traditional measures to anticipate and respond to drought conditions;



- ✓ The crucial role of governmental and non-governmental organizations that they are playing in assisting local groups to better prepare for and respond to drought;

Lessons Learned (Contd.)



- ✓ Some governments and organizations are beginning to focus more attention on drought mitigation and preparedness planning;
- ✓ After the occurrence of the severe drought conditions from 1998 to 2001, natural hazard planners and policy makers witnessed the effects of drought firsthand and many of them have been motivated to seek better strategies to reduce drought risk.



Conclusion and recommendations



❑ Efforts must continue to maintain the momentum achieved in drought mitigation and preparedness planning in recent years.



❑ Progress achieved in developing strategies for drought mitigation and preparedness planning in the Near East Region needs the following recommendations for future actions to enhance drought risk reduction efforts:

Conclusion and recommendations (Contd.)



1. Need to adopt a risk management approach in developing national strategies for drought mitigation;
2. Need for strengthening governments' drought mitigation and preparedness efforts;
3. Need for harmonization of national drought mitigation plans among neighboring countries;

Conclusion and recommendations (Contd.)



4. Supporting and participating in regional networks and mechanisms (such as NEMEDCA) to exchange information and lessons learned;



5. Need for updating the existing guidelines for the preparation and implementation of national action programs for combating drought;

Conclusion and recommendations (Contd.)



6. Involving and mobilizing all community sectors (including NGOs and women and youth) for launching awareness and education campaigns to sensitize all stakeholders to drought impacts and ramifications, as well as identifying each sector's role;



7. The establishment of drought early warning systems as essential components of drought preparedness and mitigation plans;

Conclusion and recommendations (Contd.)



8. Giving due attention to the social and economic dimensions of drought within the framework of the preparedness and mitigation plans;
9. Improve research and technology transfer related to drought mitigation activities;



Many of these recommendations have been initiated to some degree. The key is to continue building on the previous successes and overcoming barriers to further change.



Merci

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Thank you

