

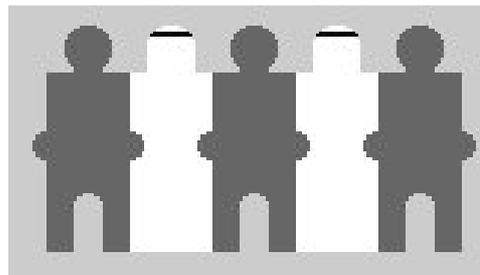
International Symposium on Drylands Ecology and Human Security (ISDEHS)

*Regional Perspectives, Policy Responses and Sustainable Development in the Arab Region -
Challenges and Opportunities*

Dubai, December 4-7, 2006

Thematic Session:

Drought Management: Strategies and their Policy Implications



Session Convenor:

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Droughts of varying extent are a regular occurrence in many countries. A sense of urgency must therefore be created to ensure that both farmers and public servants are prepared for the next drought event. The traditional approach to drought management has been reactive, relying largely on crisis management. This approach has been ineffective because response is untimely, poorly coordinated, and poorly targeted to drought stricken groups or areas. In addition, drought response is post-impact and relief tends to reinforce existing resource management methods. It is precisely these existing resource management practices that have often increased societal vulnerability to drought (i.e., exacerbated drought impacts). The provision of drought relief only serves to reinforce the status quo in terms of resource management. Many governments and others now understand the fallacy of crisis management and are striving to learn how to employ proper risk management techniques to reduce societal vulnerability to drought and, therefore, lessen the impacts associated with future drought events. This change in emphasis is long overdue. Mitigating the effects of drought requires the use of all components of the cycle of disaster management (i.e., crisis and risk management), rather than only the crisis management portion of this cycle. In the past, when a natural hazard event and resultant disaster has occurred, governments and donors have followed with impact assessment, response, recovery, and reconstruction activities to return the region or locality to a pre-disaster state.

Two important trends in drought management are: (1) improved drought monitoring tools and early warning systems and (2) an increased emphasis on drought policy, preparedness, and mitigation. Recent trends in each of these areas will be discussed in this session.

Possible area of discussions:

- ⇒ Crisis management vs. risk management approach to drought management
- ⇒ Attitudes towards drought
- ⇒ Management of drought
- ⇒ Farmer's drought coping strategies
- ⇒ The role of government and drought policy
- ⇒ Drought mitigation techniques
- ⇒ Long term versus short term strategies in dealing with drought
- ⇒ Women and drought

Please note that the deadline for submitting your abstract is October 15, 2006.