



International Symposium on Drylands Ecology and Human Security

*Water and the Future of the Gulf Region:
What is NOW and what TOMORROW may mean*

Dubai, December 4-7, 2006

Roundtable 1, Date: December 4, 2006, Time: 17:45

Organized and moderated by:

Dr. Zamir Libohova

ISDEHS 2006 Co-Chair

Natural Resources Conservation Service

United States Department of Agriculture, United States

Can the current trends in land and water use resources guarantee a long term sustainable society in the Gulf Region?



In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, the tremendous economic advancement that has taken place in the past years has not been matched by a similar process of human development and institutional reform.

The region is reaching critical limits on natural resources, especially water resources, and is now facing challenges to sustain water quantity and quality and meet the rapidly growing demand for water resources. New sources of water such as deep ground water and sea water are being exploited to meet this growing demand. While the exploration of new water resources may help in short term, issues related to policies and institutions and their influence and role on water management and development strategy need to be addressed in order to achieve the goal of a long term sustainable water use and management.

The main objective of this roundtable discussion is to bring together various stakeholders and provide the forum for an open discussion among all the parties on how to best approach the water issues in the region before they become problems with difficult solutions often requiring drastic measures and great sacrifices.

➤ Roundtable Objectives

The roundtable aims at addressing the following issues:

- Provide an overview of the current water use and management status for the Gulf Region and identify the current trends and their likely impacts on water resources;
- Identify and prioritize some of the aspects and their role in water use and management such as:

- (1) Economic growth and water demands;
 - (2) Policies and rules guiding the water use and management to meet the current and foreseeable demands;
 - (3) Environmental impacts of the current water use and water policies; Potential transboundary water issues that could lead to conflicts
 - (4) Future integrated research projects that could provide the base data for formulating policies on national and regional levels.
- The integration and participation of locals and underrepresented segments of the society in water solutions;
 - Current International, regional, national, and local platforms and mechanisms that protect the over exploitation of water resources and prevents environmental degradation.

➡ **Roundtable Format**

The roundtable will be an open debate providing the opportunity to all participants to discuss the issues and identify the constrains, challenges, and opportunities.

The proposed roundtable structure will be as follows:

- Presenting relevant economic, social, and environmental facts and data from the region and providing insights about the current trends and future ones;
- Posing a question or questions;
- Moderating the debate;
- Providing specific suggestions and/or recommendations as well as steps to be undertaken that would yield short and especially long term solutions.
- In order to facilitate the discussion the participants may provide short handouts (1-2 pages), if they chose, to all the other roundtable members.

➡ **Roundtable Expected Output**

The roundtable is expected to provide:

- (2) A working group that would act as a facilitator for exchanging information on the topics discussed and follow up at ISDEHS 2007;
- (3) A document reflecting discussions and recommendations for short and long term solutions to some of the water issues and problems identified during the roundtable session;
- (4) A list of current and potential stakeholders that would receive the final document of the roundtable discussion.

For further information please contact:

Dr. Zamir Libohova

(Co-Chair, ISDEHS Organizing Committee)

c/o GCC Network for Drylands Research and Development (NDRD)

Address:

120 East Glen Iris, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35405

phone & fax: +1 205 553-3177

e-mail: Zamir@ndrd.org