

# Webinar on: Climate Change Effects on the Euphrates-Tigris Basin

Organized by Hydropolitics Academy, Ankara, Turkey, on 23-24 February 2021

## SUMMARY & PROPOSALS

The webinar was organized by the Ankara-based Hydropolitics Academy, to seek a joint understanding of the main symptoms of Climate Change and how they are affecting are in question, the Euphrates-Tigris basin, and its lateral states, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. The webinar was organized in two, two-hour sessions, and attended by experts representing the region, Europe, and International organizations.

Participating speakers gave an overall picture of Climate Change, and how the countries, their water resources, and related infrastructure, agriculture and urban centers are affected by the phenomenon. The speaker also gave a general framework of actions that need to be taken by the stakeholders, governments and international organizations, research and consultancy formations and the concerned individuals of the issues at stake.

### **the Webinar has come up with the following results:**

1. Governments and their related political formations are overwhelmed by on-going security turmoil and resulting conditions, and little is being done of bilateral and multilateral readiness to confront the threats resulting from Climate Change and how it is affecting the environment, agricultural production, and resource technological needs to confront the resulting situation.
2. The private sector, consulting firms and research institutions, who have done research and assessment on the situation of Climate Change, are not in a better situation due to the region's governments' lack of work opportunities that will provide finance to their work. For that reason little is being done on technological advancement on tools. Programs and projects that, could be handed over to political circles for action, especially on multistate cooperation and joint projects.
3. This situation of two of the main stakeholders of the water resources management situation, namely politicians and technical people are lacking an effective institutional framework for work progress that may lead to joint, and country-level, programs and projects needed to remedy the situation resulting from Climate Change.
4. The institutional framework needed may include and is not limited to, a joint high-level meeting of representatives of regional governments, international organizations, research institutes, and technology firms to draw an **immediate joint action plan** at the level of the region.
5. Participating experts reiterated the importance of agricultural production and food security in the region, and how it is affected by interruptions in water supply, and the

need for a remake of the ways and methods of water usage in agriculture, and the immediate need for bilateral, institutional cooperation in this field.

6. The participating experts also mentioned the region is highly dependent on imported food, which may reach catastrophic dimensions due to climate change conditions. Which brings country-wide and region-wide cooperation to the table. This makes cooperation a major necessity on regional development projects to achieve food security
7. Migration due to security and political turbulences may also become difficult to solve problems for the region's governments as well as the international community and aid organizations, especially if the security of food and agricultural reforms were not implemented.
8. Joint teams, scientific teams from riparian countries within NGOs and universities are to be encouraged to work together to solve ongoing and expected problems in this context.
9. Projected warming and decrease in precipitation might powerfully affect the mostly drylands (arid and semi-arid environments) of the study area including the Middle East and make most of the large Asian continent vulnerable to climate change.
10. Some studies also focused on the demand for irrigation applications showed that water demands from irrigated agriculture tend to increase as a consequence of the simulated changes in temperature and precipitation.
11. Consequently, farmers need to adapt their production systems, switching crops, changing cultivars and sowing dates, increasing irrigation, etc.
12. The participants as well as the panelists agree that there are technical solutions possible that would lead to changing the situation from a threat to security to an opportunity for economic cooperation and co-dependence that will lead to stability in the region.
13. What is missing is mutual trust and having a common understanding of the positions of each of the stakeholders. But the most important missing ingredient is lack of political will by the decision-makers.
14. To that end, the participants agreed that there is a need for more frequent discussions on zoom or other means to further flesh out the ideas presented and to discuss the important issue of trust-building through a step-wise set of projects of mutual benefits.
15. . Groundwater is an indicator of climate variability and human impacts on the environment. Combining GRACE data with hydrologic modeling enables water managers to observe dynamic changes in groundwater over the region where well data are sparse.
16. There is a need to build political will & this requires building trust & the right incentive structures so that governments (and other stakeholders) feel they will be rewarded for good results rather than national grandstanding. And a regular exchange (perhaps with just one or two people asked for short ideas to present & discuss) would be great, especially if we could also bring in some policy-makers



Session 1

## Projecting of Global Climate Change Effects on the Middle East, Euphrates-Tigris River Basin

Speakers include



MA.Kamal Jalousa  
Jordan



Prof.Dr. Al-Ansari  
Iraq



Prof.Dr. M Türkes  
Turkey



Dr.Gholamreza Joodaki  
Iran

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## WEBINAR

### Will Climate Change lead to conflict or cooperation in the Middle East



Dr. Azzam Alwash  
Iraq



Dr. Benjamin Pohl  
Germany



MA Kamal Jalousa  
Jordan



CE Dursun Yildiz  
Turkey

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