

Alliance for International Drought Resilience

written by Ezba Walayat | November 16, 2022



Almost every country is impacted by drought, including its implications on energy, food and water security as well as forced migration and resource based conflicts. In addition to the loss of life and human suffering between 1998 and 2017, drought resulted in economic losses of almost 124 billion US dollars. These extreme droughts have a big influence on human health, agriculture, energy, transportation, and tourism. The 2022 droughts in Europe, United States, Australia, Chile and southern Africa, showed that no country or region is immune to their impacts. While considering the drought situation, leaders from around the world agreed that there is need for an international platform for cooperation with the highest degree of political engagement, and a network to deal with the challenges associated to drought. It is projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) droughts are expected to occur more frequently and last longer in the near future as a result of climate change. By 2050, according to the IPCC, three out of every four people on earth would be residing in drier, water-scarce environments. Worldwide, 2.7 billion people were affected by droughts between 1900 and 2019, and 11.7 million people died as a result. By 2050, up to 216 million people may be compelled to migrate, mostly as a result of drought combined with other issues like water scarcity, declining food production, sea-level rise and overpopulation.

United Nations Climate Change



Drought is a typical element of the climate, despite the perception that it occurs infrequently and without warning. Drought has a substantial impact on both developed and developing countries, while the effects vary greatly depending on the circumstances of each situation. In response to drought, Spain was the first country to announce the International Drought Resilience Alliance during the 77th UN General Assembly in September 2022, and it was decided to present formally in November 2022 at the 27th session of the Conference of Parties. For COP27, world leaders, delegates and policymakers gathered in Egypt. The International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA) was established on November 7, 2022 at the 27th COP to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by Spain and Senegal led 30 countries and 20 organizations. The alliance is meant to serve as a forum for collaboration that will aid in igniting political action and momentum in support of countries, towns, and communities. By promoting effective and efficient preparation and adaptive measures, it attempts to go beyond disaster response to minimize the countries and the communities' vulnerability to drought. According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification's executive secretary "Drought is a natural hazard but does not have to lead to human disaster. The solutions are available, and we can create a drought-resilient world by increasing our ambition, harnessing the political will, and joining forces to act together." The Alliance will get benefit from the recent political pledges, such as the seed funding of 5 million euros made by Spain to support the alliance's activities and launch a process to gather more resources for this objective. One of the alliance's key objectives is to assist the integration of the regional initiatives so that technology can be transferred, innovations can be shared, and resources can be mobilized swiftly. The International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA) urges decision makers to give drought resilience the highest priority in national cooperation and development, particularly through strengthening participation of concerned stakeholders.



Drought

In order to control the risk of a drought and gain political support, effective policies and proper governance is of utmost importance. The role of policy makers is significant regarding this situation, they should consider drought risk assessments which can help to develop coping mechanisms and management strategies. There is a need of strong political commitment, community participation, and consideration of local realities and indigenous knowledge. The coordination of efforts, the dissemination of knowledge, the support for implementation of the projects and the facilitation of efficient and affordable practices are all key roles that the regional and international communities are required to play. All the countries should work to increase awareness of the drought and manage knowledge to lay the groundwork for a society that reduces the danger of drought and builds resilient communities. As a result of climate change, droughts are becoming a greater threat to societies. They have enormous impact on a significant population and a large territory. In addition to resulting in financial losses, droughts have the potential to damage ecosystems and jeopardize food security in countries that are most vulnerable. Additionally, in order to lessen the potential negative consequences of drought, it is essential to develop efficient drought mitigation and preparedness strategies and shift from policies to practices.