



Climate Change in MENA:

Challenges and Opportunities for the World's most water stressed region

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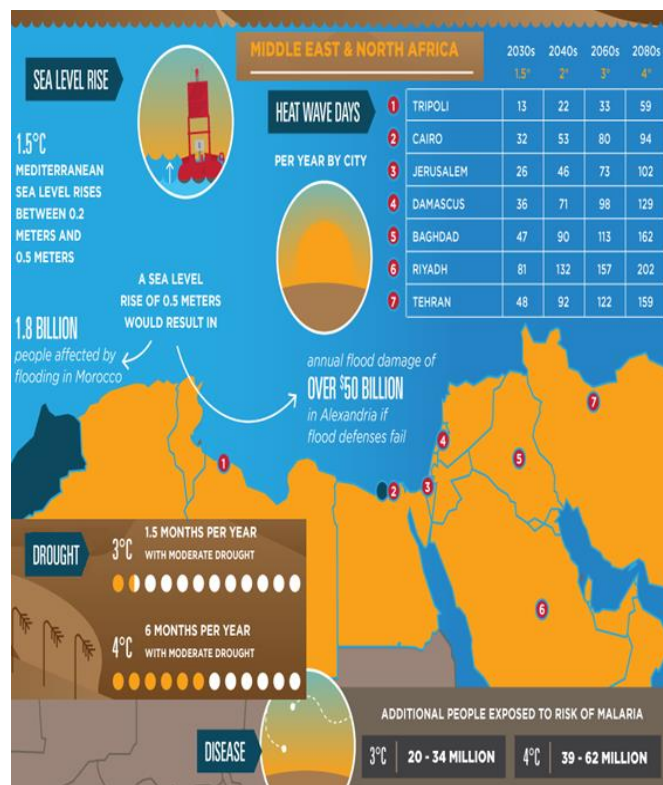
Introduction: The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is no stranger to extreme temperatures. It is predicted that these extremes will worsen in the coming decades. Compounded by changing precipitation patterns, water insecurity and projected sea level rise, the region is set to experience significant challenges to its development, particularly in agriculture, livelihoods and food securityⁱ. However, there are also significant opportunities and several countries in MENA are already taking steps towards advancing their global climate commitments and transitioning to a low-carbon, climate resilient economy.

Recognizing that climate change poses an acute threat to its mission, the World Bank Group has made strong commitments to tackle the climate challenge and to work with countries to meet their climate goals. With the adoption of a Climate Change Action Planⁱⁱ, the Bank has laid out concrete actions for how it intends to scale up climate action, integrate climate change across its operations, and work more closely with others, through collective action and partnerships, to implement new and innovative solutions.

In the MENA region, climate change is expected to result in sea level rise and an increase in heat extremes, which will put intense pressure on

already scarce water resources. These will then have severe implications for regional food security, livelihoods, public health and large coastal cities (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Climate Change impacts in the MENA region. (Source: Infographic developed for the World Bank 2014, Turn Down the Heat: Confronting the New Climate Normal)



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According to the WB's *Turn Down the Heat*ⁱⁱⁱ, crop yields could decrease up to 30 percent at 1.5–2°C and by almost 60 percent at 3–4°C. Migration and climate-related pressure on resources might increase the risk of conflict.

MENA Countries Respond: MENA countries are aware of their vulnerabilities. Almost every country in the region has submitted a plan for their contribution towards the global framework under the Paris Agreement that drives collective action toward a zero-carbon, climate-resilient future^{iv}. To help countries with these national plans, the MENA Climate Action Plan was launched to increase financing dedicated to climate action with a focus on protecting the poorest who are the most vulnerable. The plan sets out five commitments:

1. By 2020, 30% of WBG finance to MENA will go towards climate action (this is above the Bank's institutional target of 28%)
2. Significantly increase the share of adaptation financing (up to 50%)
3. Support policy reforms that lay the foundations for a green future
4. Crowd in private finance by leveraging the whole WBG, including IFC and MIGA
5. Enable collective action to increase security in key cross-border challenges

In Baghdad, Iraq the Bank supports a US\$210 million project to improve the quality of drinking water supply and wastewater services. Leakage of untreated wastewater and improper sewage disposal contributes to waterborne diseases, aggravating health and environmental problems. Climate change compounds these issues. The Baghdad Water Supply and Sewerage Improvement Project will tackle these issues via

institutional strengthening for urban water and utility management and investments in drinking water supply and wastewater infrastructure, including the construction of a service reservoir of 135,000 cubic meters to ensure improved water supply quality and reliability for over 550,000 people.

In Tunisia, the Bank is supporting a US\$ 100 million project to improve landscape management and provides economic opportunities for targeted rural communities in the Northwest and Center West regions. The project, targeting poorer rural communities, aims to promote sustainable management of natural resources currently being threatened by climate change, overgrazing and, deforestation. The integrated landscape development approach has the potential of raising the value of the regions output nearly five-fold from the current US\$16 million to US\$75 million, with the potential to create around 25,000 jobs

Next Steps: Looking forward, the Bank's MENA region will focus on achieving all their ambitious targets. The examples from Iraq and Tunisia demonstrate how the Bank actively works with countries to help them deliver and exceed their Paris ambitions, highlighting the tremendous potential in MENA for increasing resilience to climate impacts and reducing emissions, while advancing development goals.

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ⁱ WBG Climate Action Plan, 2016

ⁱⁱ *ibid*

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<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/31730>

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http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9444.php