
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON DROUGHT AND AGRICULTURE

PREDICT, PLAN, PREPARE: STOP DROUGHT BECOMING A FAMINE

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In the Name of God

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am so glad that I participated in the International Seminar on Drought and Agriculture with emphasis on “stop drought becoming famine” which is hosted by Kingdom of the Netherlands and Islamic Republic of Iran and with cooperation of FAO. As a representative of Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to welcome all participants and I hope that the outcomes of this seminar will be beneficial for international societies and countries facing drought problems.

Drought is a natural disaster that causes many damages and has always been a recurring climatological cycle in the human history. This phenomenon has occurred in 65 countries of the arid-belt with higher intensity, longer duration, and more frequency than in other countries.

The decision-makers, intellectuals and scientists have always been concerned about the drought consequences and have tried to mitigate its damages.

It is depicted in the inscription of Dariush the great in 500 B.C.: "May God protect this land (Iran) from foes, from falsehood and from drought”

Drought can cause shortage of food, famine, health and sanitation issues, death, mental, social and economic problems.

Fortunately, due to scientific, economic, social, and fundamental developments in the world, some of the negative impacts of drought have been reduced in recent years; for instance:

Development of an efficient transport system at regional and international level together with responsibility of the governments and international societies are used to improve crisis management in involved countries.

Abundance of technology that can be used for effective drought risk management to mitigate its harmful effects.

Moreover, 3 key factors for an effective drought risk management are as follows:

- Drought prediction: its time, intensity, and extend;
- Planning and Preparedness for urgent effective response to drought;
- Coordination and cooperation of responsible people and institutes.

Successful experience of some countries to cope with drought is very promising. It seems that if the involved countries have enough willing for coping with drought risks, they can get enough experience, science, and technology for effective drought risk management.

I hope this seminar will succeed in achieving its objectives in helping to reduce drought harmful effects and famine caused by drought.