

## Impact of Collaboration in the Euphrates Tigris Region

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The aim of the presentation is to give an overview on the Euphrates Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC) and its work in the region. Scholars from Iraq, Syria, Turkey and the United States convened meetings, workshops and seminars in the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 to work out a new approach for sustainable cooperation on regional development. These activities resulted in founding an initiative in May 2005 known as the Euphrates Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC). The modality of the work of ETIC has been autonomy and Track II Diplomacy, which use a concept to characterize unofficial initiative aimed at fixing a conflict situation. Formal government diplomacy and politics have limitations and are subject to constraints. During the years 2005, 2006 and 2007 ETIC founders participated in international meetings in India, Italy, Sweden, Japan and Mexico and organized special events where the Initiative invited riparian high ranking officials to meet. The World Water Forum in Istanbul March 16-22, 2009 retained ETIC as a Reacting Speaker in Session 3.1.1 "Success Stories and Failures of Hydro-Solidarity: Hydro-solidarity versus Hydro-sovereignty" and Panelist in Session 6.2.3 "Using the Assets of Professional Associations and Networks to Strengthen the Water Sector". ETIC participated actively in a seminar on August 16 entitled "River Jordan Initiative for Cooperation" and organized a seminar on "Impact of Collaboration in the Euphrates Tigris Region" on August 20 in collaboration with AUB, ABRI and UNDP during the World Water Week 2009 in Stockholm.

Climate change in the Euphrates Tigris region has been felt strongly through many indications. Several years of drought have exacerbated water stress and insecurity in the Euphrates Tigris region. What is striking now is how narrow and shallow the Euphrates has become as it winds its path through Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Wheat and barley production from dry farming in Turkey, Syria and Iraq has dropped considerably so are palm and citrus orchards facing real danger. Low precipitation and shift in rainy season and the damage caused by flash flood rain run-off flows over land are new in the region. The dust storms, which have become more frequent sending thick clouds that engulf the region for days may be evidence of increased desertification combined with industrial pollution. Health hazard as a direct result of climate change raises new challenges. Lack of accurate historical data in the region makes identifying the climate change scientifically difficult through comparisons over long periods. This fact makes current projections inevitably dependent upon largely unproven models, both scientific and non-scientific. The result is the ambiguity of understanding the impact of climate change on the environment. Climate change and the resulting environmental disasters transcend boundaries and have broader potential impacts. There is growing recognition of the need for regional collaboration that integrates activities among the riparian countries to enhance regional response for mitigating the impacts across wider areas. Data sets related to water and development are almost always at the heart of any issue, misunderstanding, or conflict. ETIC ongoing activity, which comprises collaborative planning and knowledge development, is carried out jointly by experts from Iraq, Syria and Turkey. This activity directly confronts one of the most critical issues in the TE region: the management and use of data. The collection of data will help in assessing more accurately climate change and its impact. Our focus is on developing an inventory of available data from all sources so that experts from the riparian countries may know what is readily available to them and may use them. There are five tasks which form the core of the activity:

- Advancement and Outreach
- Data Inventory
- Data Harmonization
- Capacity Building
- Clearinghouse