



INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN

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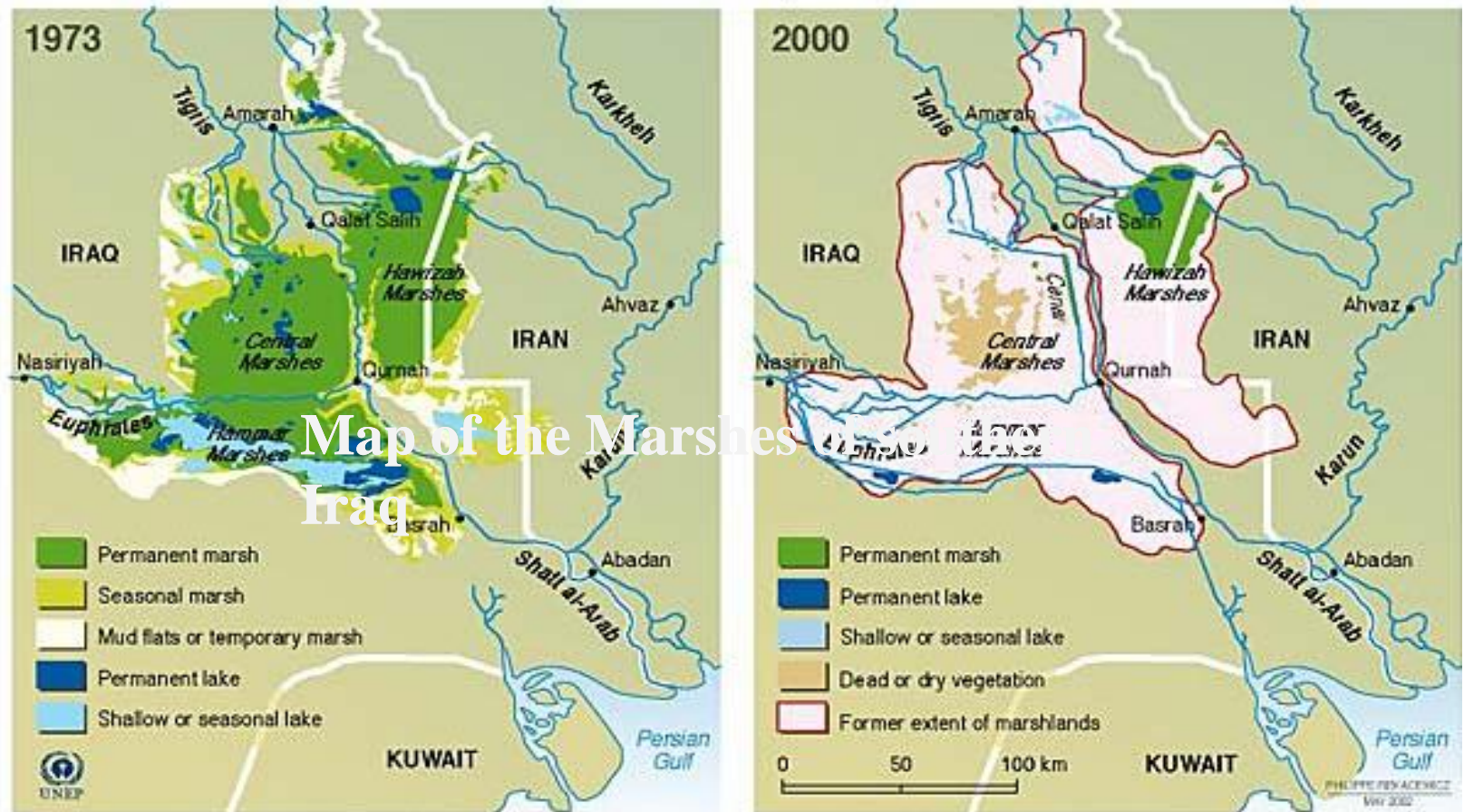
Making use of ecosystem concept in transboundary water negotiations: Iraqi Marshlands case within the Tigris- Euphrates system

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Within the framework of
UNECE Water Convention
Union for the Mediterranean
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Map of the Marshes of Iraq

Note: These two maps are sourced from satellite images and maps originally created by Hassan Partow, GRID-Geneva.
 Source: Hassan Partow, *The Mesopotamian Marshlands: Demise of an Ecosystem*, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA), 2001.











Impacts

- gradual desertification of the river basin that is leading to an environmental disaster due to increasing drought and frequency and severity of dust storms, heavy pollution of the water in the rivers and tributaries, declines in crop production, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, worsening poverty and impacts on people's health and livelihood that is resulting in migration still exist.
- The reduction in freshwater entering the Gulf is, in turn, affecting the marine environment and its commercial fisheries and tourism centres.



Working together

- A side event to Ramsar COP 11, organized by the Ministry of Water Resources (Government of Iraq) in collaboration with the Ramsar Secretariat and UNEP-ROWA, and Ministry of Energy in Iran
- It aimed at hearing from the riparian countries and organizations working in the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin about the impacts that the degradation of the river basin is having in the region and to hear suggestions on how the situation can be resolved.



Outcomes

- General recognition that the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin was facing an acute regional problem
- Need to resolve the problem through a holistic approach, ecosystem management and through regional negotiations.
- Each country needs to play its part in the solution.
- It was recognized that it would not be possible to restore the river basin back to the conditions which existed in the 1970s



Outcomes

- Participants appreciated that it would not be possible to remove the existing dams, weirs and other water holding structures but focus should be placed on how those structures can be managed so as to maintain environmental flows in the basin.
- One example was that of the Italian project to simulate artificial floods



Outcomes

- Suggestions to develop a regional initiative for the river basin which would:
- Promote communication between riparian countries over common problems in the river basin;
- Act as a hub for sharing data and to identify gaps in our knowledge of the river basin, as well as to monitor the condition of the river basin, e.g. the frequency and severity of dust storms, pollution level, floods etc.
- Assist in any initiative to develop an IWRM plan for the sustainable development of the river basin. Water for people as well as the environment in the basin;



Outcomes

- Address any capacity building needs of the riparian countries;
- Promote common protected areas in the river basin;
- Share information on the economic value of wetlands in the river basin;
- Promote tourism at wetlands and other sites in the river basin



Outcomes

- Suggestion that a regional working group for the Mesopotamian Marshes could also be formed.
- Restoration efforts should not only concentrate on bringing water back to the river basin but also the rich human culture that once existed.
- Whilst recognizing that the situation in the Danube River is different to that in the Tigris-Euphrates River Basin, participants appreciated the presentation about the Danube River as an example of how problems in another river basin can be resolved.



Thank you for your attention

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