

Background information

The global landscape of agriculture is undergoing unprecedented challenges, with one of the most pressing issues being the recurrent and intensifying droughts in various regions. Drought, exacerbated by climate change, has emerged as a formidable threat to agricultural productivity, food security, and the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. Draught-affected agricultural regions face a complex web of interconnected challenges that transcend borders, necessitating a collective and collaborative global response.

In recent years, these regions have experienced erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged dry spells, and extreme weather events, leading to water scarcity and soil degradation. Such adverse conditions pose a severe risk to traditional farming practices, disrupting crop cycles, diminishing yields, and jeopardizing the sustenance of rural communities. The vulnerability of smallholder farmers, who constitute a significant portion of the agricultural workforce in these regions, is particularly pronounced as they often lack the resources and adaptive capacity to cope with the impacts of prolonged drought.

Beyond the immediate agricultural repercussions, drought-induced challenges extend to broader socio-economic consequences. Rural communities dependent on agriculture face heightened risks of poverty, food insecurity, and displacement. As arable land becomes increasingly unproductive, the threat of migration from rural to urban areas rises, leading to social imbalances and increased pressure on already strained urban infrastructures.

UN Involvement

Recognizing the severity of the challenges posed by drought in agricultural regions and its far-reaching impacts on global food security, the United Nations has been actively engaged in fostering a coordinated response to address this pressing issue. Various UN agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), have played pivotal roles in advancing initiatives aimed at safeguarding livelihoods in drought-affected agricultural regions.

The UN's involvement stems from a commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 2 - Zero Hunger, and Goal 13 - Climate Action. The interconnection between these goals underscores the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to tackle the complex challenges arising from drought-induced agricultural vulnerabilities.

UN agencies have been instrumental in conducting research, providing technical expertise, and disseminating knowledge on climate-resilient agricultural practices. Collaborative efforts, such as the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), have served as platforms for member states to share experiences, best practices, and innovative solutions in combating the adverse impacts of drought on agriculture.

Furthermore, the UN has facilitated the mobilization of financial resources to support initiatives in drought-affected regions. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other financial mechanisms aim to channel resources towards projects that enhance the adaptive capacity of communities, promote sustainable agriculture, and build resilience against the impacts of climate change.

Questions to consider

- Why is it important to assess the impact of drought on these regions?
- How can we promote climate-resilient agricultural practices?
- What are possible strategies of enhancing water management and conservation?
- How do we address the socio-economic impacts on rural communities?
- Is it possible (and how) to ensure access to financial resources to farmers?

Resources and useful links

Official FAO website – Drought:

<https://www.fao.org/land-water/water/drought/en/>

Drought-related topics (FAO website):

<https://www.fao.org/in-action/drought-portal/project-detail/safeguarding-livelihoods-and-increasing-immediate-food-access-for-vulnerable-rural-households-affected-by-drought/en>

<https://www.fao.org/in-action/drought-portal/project-detail/anticipatory-actions-to-mitigate-the-impact-of-drought-on-agricultural-livelihoods-in-acute-food-insecure-rural-areas-of-afghanistan/en>

Agricultural Stress Index System

<https://data.apps.fao.org/catalog/dataset/agricultural-stress-index-system-asis-fao-global-agricultural-drought-monitoring-system>