



**League of Arab States**

**Center of Water Studies and Arab Water Security**

**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE  
ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT  
IN THE SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN**

**26 – 27/11/ 2012**

**Rome, Italy**

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**The 22 Arab Countries** , members of the **League of Arab States** , recognizing the essential role of water in sustainable development and the impacts of **water scarcity** at the local , national and regional levels .

Decided to establish **the Arab Ministerial Council for Water** (2008) , this reflects a regional political will to elevate water issues from the traditional technical level to the political and especially regional level .

The Ministerial Council adopted :  
**the Strategy for Water Security in the Arab region in 2011**

One of the main regional priority action plan of the strategy for ensuring water security across the region is to reinforce

**cooperation on transboundary water resources** since the most important challenge in the region is that large surface water resources as well as ground water systems between Arab countries are of transboundary nature .

Arab Countries have also the highest dependency on external water resources more than **80%** of the annually renewable resources originate outside the boundaries of the Arab region .

**The Nile River** is shared between eleven riparian countries .

**The Euphrates and Tigris rivers** are shared between Turkey , Syria , and Iraq

**Somalia and Mauritania** also share international water courses with other countries from outside the Arab region .

This situation creates a complicated **hydro-political problem** facing many Arab countries .

Shared water resources in the region in particular with upstream neighboring countries are usually **a source of political tension** and depend mostly on **the political and economic relationships** between countries .

The Arab Leaders give great importance to **the water rights of the people in the Arab Occupied Territories in Palestine , Syria , and Lebanon .**

Israel, the Occupying Authority is dominating and exploiting all the surface and ground water recourses (Jordan River) in these territories **in violence of International law and Human law .**

The Arab Ministerial Council recognizing all these challenges , and the **lack of human and institutional capacity** to deal with these challenges realized that action is urgently required:

The Arab Leaders urged **the Center of Water Studies and Arab Water Security** to develop programs for **capacity building on water diplomacy and negotiation skills** of Arab officials in cooperation with regional and international organizations .

**The Center** in partnership with **the Arab Water Academy** which was newly established in the Arab region , decided on a program for water diplomacy .



# Water Diplomacy Program

Water diplomacy is at the heart of any successful response to a water scarce future , and provides the ability to maximize the benefits from shared water resources .

Capacity in the region needs to be raised through the development of :

- negotiation and communication skills
- increased knowledge about international water law
- forms of benefit and sharing
- diplomatic instruments .

The Arab Water Academy with the cooperation of the Center of Arab Water Security designed a **capacity building program** that brought together **the world of water** (water Ministries) and **the world of Diplomacy** (Foreign Affairs Ministries) through 3 modules:

# 1. Context of water Diplomacy

The first module was centered on the Analysis of the international trends and the institutional and legal framework in which a diplomat operates participants have learned to :

- Understand water stress in the region
- Use international water law effectively , evaluate how law can stimulate cooperation
- Analyze existing transboundary water sharing mechanisms , internationally and regionally in order to identify possibilities for increased shared benefits .

## **2. Sharing the benefits , development of skills and practices**

The second module did address skills development through pro-active and engaging forms of education , so participants have learned how to :

- Make a strategic analysis of a transboundary water case
- Develop effective negotiation skills focusing on team building
- Identify and apply effective inter-cultural communication skills

### **3. Water Diplomacy beyond water**

The third module has brought together the insights and skills of the first 2 modules , using them in real life situations by developing scenarios for national and regional cases :

- to increase the benefits from shared resources
- Understand and use multi-level decision making on shared water resources
- Develop a long term perspective on regional cases
- Identify and communicate ideas of benefit sharing in the management of shared water resources in the Arab region

The water Diplomacy program was implemented with the famous **Clingendael Institute** (Netherlands) and with the cooperation of politicians (Ministers) , regional and international water and law experts , specialists in diplomacy .

After completing the program we were all satisfied , the Center , the Academy and the participants who became **Water Diplomats** .

The Arab Leaders encourage such training programs with the Academy and with other regional or international organizations

Water Diplomats have acquired the knowledge  
and the training and were prepared :

- To operate in a complex political economy as facilitators of reform , of change and transformation
- To understand the principles of international water law and other legal mechanisms and apply strategies that lead to successful agreements on shared water resources
- To enhance their skills through the mastering of techniques of negotiation , mediation , facilitation and international communication .
- To learn and apply diplomatic methods as a means to transform the potential risk of conflict over water into forms of **cooperation** that will lead to **Peace and Stability in the Region** .



Thank you