Managing Drought Risk in a Changing Climate: The Role of National Drought Policy

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Drought Risk in the Context of Change
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Presentation Outline

• The **MANY FACES OF DROUGHT**
  - Drought as hazard, definitions, characteristics

• Breaking the **HYDRO-ILLOGICAL CYCLE**
  - Crisis management → Risk management

• Our **CHANGING VULNERABILITY—CHANGING CLIMATE**

• Building **SOCIETAL RESILIENCE—**
  **What are the ‘pillars’ for change?**
  - Drought monitoring and prediction, early warning and information systems
  - Vulnerability/risk and impact assessment
  - Mitigation AND response measures

• Moving towards a **POLICY FRAMEWORK** that enhances preparedness and risk reduction
Two Phrases to Remember

• If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always got!

• Who and what is at risk and why?
The Many Faces of Drought
Defining Drought

Hundreds of definitions—application and region specific

Drought is a deficiency of precipitation (intensity) from expected or “normal” that extends over a season or longer period of time (duration) . . . . .

Meteorological Drought

and is insufficient to meet the demands of human activities and the environment (impacts).

Agricultural, Hydrological and Socio-economic Drought
Drought is a normal part of climate!

DROUGHTS ARE "WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY" for CHANGE!

Percent Area of the United States in Moderate to Extreme Drought

January 1895–December 2013

Based on data from the National Climatic Data Center/NOAA
USDM Animation
January 2011 to March 2014

U.S. Drought Monitor
January 4, 2011
(Released Thursday, Jan. 6, 2011)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Drought Impact Types:
- Delineates dominant impacts
  - A = Agricultural (crops, pastures, grasslands)
  - H = Hydrological (water)

Intensity:
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/
Breaking the Hydro-illogical Cycle: An Institutional Challenge for Drought Management

If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always got.

We MUST adopt a new paradigm for drought management!
Types of Policy Responses

- Post-impact government interventions—relief measures (i.e., *crisis management*)
- Pre-impact government programs—mitigation measures to reduce vulnerability and impacts, including insurance programs
- Risk-based drought policies and preparedness plans, organizational frameworks and operational arrangements
Crisis Management Characteristics

- Ineffective, treats symptoms of drought
- Untimely, response actions
- Increases reliance on government/donors
- Poorly coordinated, within and between levels of government—national to local
- Expensive, large expenditures from numerous government agencies
- Does drought relief/assistance reduce or increase vulnerability?
Crisis management treats the symptoms, not the causes.

Risk management increases coping capacity, builds resilience.

The Cycle of Disaster Management

Risk management:
- Preparedness
- Prediction and Early Warning
- Mitigation

Crisis management:
- Impact Assessment
- Response
- Recovery
- Reconstruction

Proactive vs. Reactive:
- Risk management (proactive)
- Crisis management (reactive)
Changes in Societal Vulnerability

Drought impacts are more complex today as more economic sectors are affected, creating more conflicts between water users, i.e., societal vulnerability is dramatically different and changing.

- Agricultural production
- Food security
- Energy
- Transportation
- Tourism/Recreation
- Forest/rangeland fires
- Municipal water
- Water quality/quantity
- Environment
- Ecosystem services
- Health
There is a close correlation between CO₂ and temperature that has been verified through many lines of research. This graph shows the relationship of temperature and CO₂ over the last 130 years.
The Climate Change Challenge for Drought Management

- Increasing mean temperature
- High temp. stress and increased heat waves/longer growing seasons
- Increased evapotranspiration
- Changes in precipitation amount, distribution and intensity
- Reduced soil moisture
- Changes in groundwater recharge
- Reduced runoff/stream flow resulting from reduced snowpack/sublimation
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Incentives for Changing the Drought Management Paradigm

• Addresses spiraling impacts → multiple sectors
• Reduces conflicts between water users
• Promotes wise stewardship of natural resources—sustainable development
• Reduces need for governmental assistance—allows for resources to be invested more wisely
• More frequent and severe droughts (increased duration?) in association with climate change.
• What is the **cost of inaction**?
HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON NATIONAL DROUGHT POLICY
(HMNDP)
TOWARDS MORE DROUGHT RESILIENT SOCIETIES

11-15 March 2013
CICG, Geneva

Final Report
Drought differs from one region to another in terms of its physical characteristics, impacts and coping capacity (level of preparedness, mitigation and response/recovery capability).

Drought policies cannot be **PRESCRIPTIVE** since each country is unique in institutional structure, legal framework, etc.
A series of regional workshops sponsored by WMO, FAO, UNCCD, UN-Water and the Convention on Biological Diversity (Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa & Near East)
Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP)

http://www.droughtmanagement.info
http://www.droughtmanagement.info/about-idmp/guidelines/
Necessary Ingredients for National Drought Policy Development

• Political will and leadership!
• Initial investment in building greater institutional capacity
• Collaborative environment that supports and encourages coordination within and between levels of government/private sector — an integrated approach
• Engaged and supportive stakeholders
• Engaged research community
• Strong outreach and media program
National Drought Policy

Preparedness Plans based on the principles of risk reduction
A drought policy should be broadly stated and...

- Establish a clear set of risk-based principles or guidelines to govern drought management.
- Policy could be part of a disaster risk reduction or climate change adaptation framework.
- Consistent and equitable for all regions, population groups, and economic/social sectors.
- Consistent with the goals of sustainable development.
- Reflect regional differences in drought characteristics, vulnerability and impacts.
A drought policy should (continued)

- Promote the principles of risk management by encouraging development of
  - **Early warning and delivery systems**;
    - Reliable seasonal forecasts;
  - **Preparedness plans** at all levels of government, within river basins, and the private sector;
  - **Risk/Vulnerability assessments** —
    - Who and what is at risk and why?
  - **Mitigation actions** that reduce drought impacts and the need for government intervention;
  - **Coordinated emergency response** that ensures targeted and timely relief, consistent with drought policy goals, during drought emergencies.
Key Elements/Pillars of a Drought Preparedness Plan

• Monitoring/early warning, prediction and information delivery systems
  – Integrated monitoring of key indicators
    • Precipitation, temperature, soil moisture, streamflow, snowpack, groundwater, etc.
  – Use of appropriate indices
  – Reliable seasonal forecasts
  – Development/delivery of information and decision-support tools
Key Elements/Pillars of a Drought Preparedness Plan

• Risk and impact assessment
  – Conduct of risk/vulnerability assessments
  – Who and What is at Risk and Why?
  – Monitoring/archiving of impacts/losses

• Mitigation and response
  – Proactive measures to increase coping capacity
  – Response measures that support the principles of drought risk reduction
Takeaway Messages

• Climate is changing—climate state/variability.
• Extreme climate events are increasing in frequency globally and locally, managing impacts is critically important—we must increase our resilience to drought.
• Past drought management has been reactive—ineffective, poorly coordinated & poorly targeted.
• Time is **NOW** to change the paradigm from crisis to drought risk management.
• Time is **NOW** for all drought-prone nations to adopt appropriate drought policies to reduce the impacts of future drought episodes through risk-based management.
• The ‘**cost of inaction**’!
Thanks for your attention!

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