



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Innovative decision-making serious gaming to enhance the role of water as a source of peace and cooperation

Wednesday March 22 from 09:00 –11:00 hrs EST / 15:00-17:00 hrs CET

Organized by: [The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies \(HCSS\)](#) & [The Weather Makers](#)

Background on the event

The online Water Security Serious Game explored the nexus between climate change and security in the Sinai Peninsula, with the ultimate aim to stimulate a conversation around innovative ideas for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Vulnerable communities in the Sinai are facing increasing challenges related to land degradation, biodiversity loss and soil erosion, which threaten the availability of freshwater resources and their livelihoods.

Our serious game simulated a situation whereby participants are the decision makers tasked with the challenge of increasing the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities in the Sinai Peninsula and mitigating the impact of climate-induced water scarcity. The approach proposed by The Weather Makers to stabilize the climate and restore the water cycle in the Sinai Peninsula formed the basis for discussion.

Water Action Agenda

The online serious game was based on The Weather Makers approach for stabilizing the climate and restoring the water cycle in the Sinai. The project is committing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals with specific focus on the restoration and promotion of biodiversity in the Mediterranean Basin with the second order effect of social and political stability and security for the local people. The Weather Makers initiative could be the first large-scale intervention that embodies the concept of Earth stewardship – “the proactive shaping of physical, biological, and social conditions to sustain, rather than disrupt, critical earth-system processes in support of nature and human wellbeing at local-to-planetary scales”. By focussing on finding the right cross-scale alignment and positive synergies between important leverage points – e.g., vision, social norms and human agency – it could

open up novel pathways towards restoring the relationship between society and nature as part of the biosphere.

Link to the Weather Makers' Water Action Agenda commitment:

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/bardawil-sinai-initiative>

Key Issues discussed

- Restoring the water cycle and regenerating the Bardawil & Sinai region can be achieved through nature-based solutions, such as land regeneration, water cycle restoration, flushing the lagoons, sustainable fisheries and securing biodiversity.
- The Weather Making approach will be incorporated with traditional knowledge and local communities must be involved throughout the process.
- A wide range of financial structures is available for such crucial projects (subsidiaries or donations from private institutions, governments or individuals) and each brings a unique set of advantages and disadvantages.
- Climate-related measures can lead to unintended consequences, which must be holistically addressed and mitigated. An example is the careful implementation of salt farming in the agricultural sector, which can lead to both positive and negative effects.
- Plotting the implementation framework in a well-defined timeline shows that the project could yield results within a relatively short time frame, in addition to long term benefits.
- The use/empowering of indigenous knowledge to boost the success and cultural and social embedding of the ecosystem regeneration.

Key recommendations for action

- Taking immediate and concrete action is crucial. Vulnerable populations in the Sinai Peninsula are suffering from the consequences of climate change. The international community must find ways to support local groups to strengthen their adaptive capacity and mitigate the impact of climate change.
- The Weather Making approach has enormous potential of improving the natural environment and alleviate social pressures in the Bardawil and Sinai region, and it can yield positive effects in both the short and longer terms.
- Fostering entrepreneurship can bring forth innovation and support socio-economic development and transformation.
- Regenerative practices are necessary to create resilient and equitable systems that sustain the integrity of nature in order to respond to the needs of society.