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Desertification in the Mediterranean Region. A Security Issue

Proceedings of the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue Workshop, held in Valencia, Spain, 2-5 December 2003

This book focuses on two basic concepts: security and desertification in the Mediterranean Region and their linkages. It emerged from a single meeting of the "Workshop on Desertification in the Mediterranean Region. A Security Issue" held in Valencia, Spain on 2-5 December 2003, which was sponsored by the NATO Science Committee and NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society. Desertification is recognized as a process of land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas of the world that is the result of natural phenomena (e.g. climate variation) and anthropogenic factors. The outcome of this type of degradation has typically been considered to be either a reduction or a loss of both biological and economic productivity. The scope of the book includes the identification of the physical processes of desertification specific to both the north and south Mediterranean Region. Additionally, it specifically questions how changing environmental conditions may potentially reduce stability and peace in the world and thus affect "environmental security." During the workshop an array of government diplomats, security specialists, and social and physical scientists from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and North America reviewed the actions of past and current Mediterranean land use practices, especially in regard to environmental security, environmental consequences, and challenges for the future. The book is divided into six special topical areas dealing with Linking Environmental Condition to Security; Assessing Regional Conditions; Assessing Land Use Change Relative to Human-induced and Natural Cause; Opportunities for Regional Cooperation and Information Sharing; Soil and Vegetation Monitoring; and Development of Regional Desertification Indicators and Forecasting Techniques. This book provides a multi-lateral forum for cooperation, information exchange, and dialogue among the environmental, development, foreign and security policy communities within the Mediterranean Region and thus may provide a precedent for further cooperation and partnership, including other more advanced conferences and publications, on assessing the condition of the entire region and the subsequent impacts and linkages to environmental security.

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