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EACH  *FOR*

The Impact of Environmental Problems on Migration: The Case of Egypt

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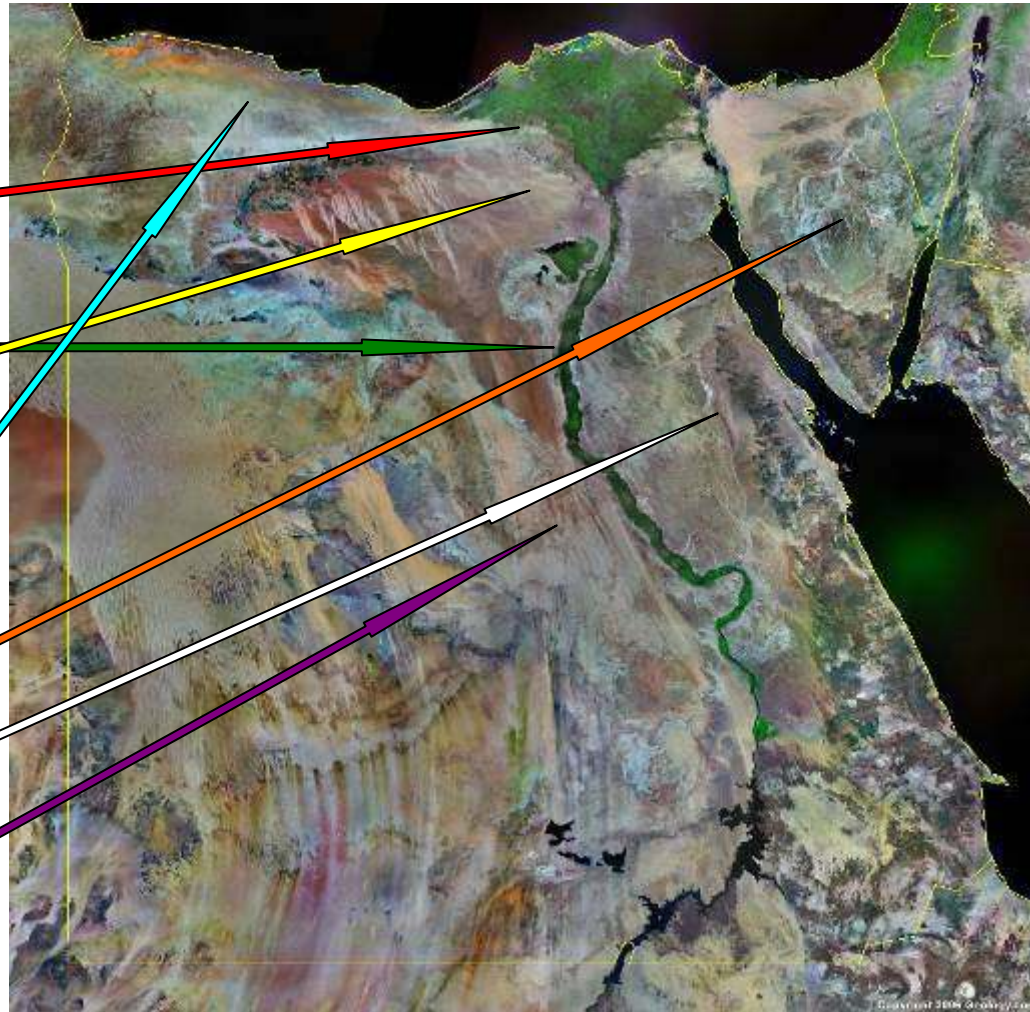
The Arab Republic of Egypt

- **Population: 74 Millions**
- **Total area: one million km²,**
- **mostly arid and hyper-arid climate.**
- **Only 3 percent of the land area (mainly the Nile Delta and Nile Valley) is agriculturally productive.**
- **People live on around 4-5 percent of total area**
- **agriculture: 32 percent**
industry: 17 percent
services: 51 percent

The Arab Republic of Egypt

Agro-
Ecological
zones in
Egypt:

1. Nile
Delta
2. Nile
Valley
3. Newly
Reclaime
d Desert
Lands
4. North
Coastal
Zone
5. Inland
Sinai
6. Eastern
Desert
7. Western
Desert



10/22/2008

Field trip

- **8 weeks (10th Aug. – 10th Oct. 2008)**
- **Main partner (IOM Cairo)**
- **20 expert interviews (University professors, NGOs, International and UN Organizations, Government officials)**
- **30 questionnaires (only migrants)**
on site (Nile Delta, Nile Valley, Upper Egypt, Cairo Slums, Newly Reclaimed Desert Lands)

Environmental “hot spots“ in Egypt covered in the field

- **Current problems**

- Land degradation
- Water shortage
- Water salinity
- Water pollution



- **Historical problems**

- Soil scrapping
- Development project (Aswan High Dam)



Desertification and water shortage in Egypt

- **Exposition of the land surface to climate factors**
- **Sand dunes (Eastern and Western Deserts)**
- **Water and soil salinity (partly man-made factor)**
- **Water shortage (partly man-made factor)**

Desertification and water shortage in Egypt (cont.)

- **Spreading of urban areas into the fertile land.**
- **Poor water management due to inefficiency of the traditional flood irrigation systems**
- **Unsustainable agricultural practices**

Link to migration?

- Due to water shortage and soil degradation in the Nile Valley and Delta (and sand dunes in Sinai and Western Desert), yields decrease, and people leave 'voluntarily' for the capital – Cairo slums and new projects in the Nile Delta (faced by other 'environmental' problems).
- Some who insist on keeping the same farming activities move to the newly reclaimed desert lands (faced by the problem of water salinity).
- Some leave the whole country (mainly Gulf countries) – *importance of pull factors in the countries of destination.*
- Internal rather than international environment induced migration

Link to migration? (cont.)

- **Historical factors**

- **Development project: Construction of Aswan High Dam (Late 1960s): Official displacement of citizens from Lake Nasser Region (Nubia) to Kawm Umbo in Upper Egypt.**
- **Soil scrapping in the Nile Delta and Valley (till early 1980s). Farmers had to leave**

Loss of livelihood

Link to migration? (cont.)

- **Water shortage due to the increasing population as well as soil degradation in the Nile Valley is a cause for migration, ONLY IF the migrants are hired in the land.**
- **People would be leaving their home and moving to another place, ONLY IF there is absolutely no more livelihood possibilities for them.**
- **People would move, ONLY IF they can financially afford migrating to another region/country, and/or if there are other social and economic reasons that would motivate them other than environmental factors.**

General conclusions

- **Even if there is a debate about ‘Environmental migration’ , the phenomenon should not be ignored.**
- **Importance of re-considering the factors that lead to environmental migration, which in turn could lead to further environmental problems (vicious circle).**
- **Importance of recognizing the ‘Environmental migrants’ (no longer a matter of choice)**

**Thank you for your kind
attention**

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