Andorra has been an active resource partner since joining FAO in 2007. The country has provided indispensable support to a wide array of activities, most recently including agriculture-based livelihoods following floods in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic; strengthening rainwater harvesting capacity and increasing disaster resilience of drought-affected communities in Nicaragua’s Dry Corridor Region; and rehabilitation of irrigation systems to restart livelihoods severely affected by natural hazards in Guatemala.

Water management to enhanced resilience

The greater frequency of droughts and more erratic nature of rains in many countries, combined with underlying economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities have meant that droughts have an increasingly destructive impact on at-risk populations. FAO helps agricultural communities to mitigate the impact of droughts through a range of activities, such as: rehabilitating or building reservoirs to store water when rain occurs and promoting conservation to increase the efficient use of rainfall and reduce water runoff and evaporation, making better use of limited water.

With US$27 500 in funding from the Principality of Andorra, in 2011 FAO collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture of Nicaragua, to strengthen rainwater harvesting capacity in six drought-affected communities located in the dry corridor in San Juan de Limay. The communities had suffered a shortage of food after losing their crops as a result of insufficient water storage capacity and an inadequate infrastructure. A total of 18 rooftop rainwater harvesting systems using concrete high-capacity tanks were built. Fifty families also benefited from training sessions on best practices for water management and the restoration of irrigation systems to produce food for their own consumption.

Also in 2011, Andorra cooperated in FAO’s emergency response to the drought crisis in the Horn of Africa, where about 80 percent of people rely on agriculture and pastoralism as their primary source of food and income. The Government of Andorra, through the Department of Multilateral Affairs, contributed US$5 000 to FAO activities in the field in order to rehabilitate water sources and establish small-scale irrigation systems.

Multilateral cooperation is one of the most important elements of the Andorran Government’s cooperation policy. Through this channel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes voluntary contributions to FAO multi-donor projects as well as the Telefood Programme.

In order to step up the efficacy, sustainability and visibility of its cooperation activities, in 2012 the Andorran Government established geographical priorities. This has resulted in the bulk of Andorra’s assistance being directed to a total of 14 countries, mainly in:

- Sub-Saharan Africa (with a special focus on Western francophone countries)
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Southeast Asia
- Eastern Europe

With respect to FAO’s mandate, the sectoral priorities of Andorran development cooperation comprise:

- Protection of vulnerable groups, with the aim of reducing child mortality rates, improving maternal health and promoting women’s access to resources.
- Improving access to water resources through building essential infrastructure (wells, irrigation systems); water purification, treatment and sanitation; and recovery of rainwater harvesting systems.
- Sustainable development and resilience to climate change, including reforestation and prevention of deforestation, changing the use of land and forests, and managing agriculture to reduce greenhouse gases.

Andorra’s cooperation strategy is underpinned by the cross-cutting principles of women’s empowerment and natural resources and environmental protection.
Emergency assistance for rapid agricultural recovery

FAO also plays a vital role in helping communities and countries that are at risk of tropical storms to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to and recover from these hazards. Following Cyclone Agatha, which hit Guatemala in May 2010 and caused unprecedented personal and material damages, the Government of Andorra provided US$32 700 to fund an FAO recovery project designed to restore agricultural production capacity through the rehabilitation of irrigation systems (mainly water tanks and drip kits). The objective was to increase food production for consumption as well as distribution in local markets. The activities benefited a total of 125 affected families in the municipalities of Cubulco and Canilla. The financial support granted by Andorra was of vital importance as it enabled the resumption of agricultural activities which had been paralysed by people’s loss of assets.

Andorra also responded to the emergency call to fund an agricultural assistance project for women affected by Hurricane Sandy in Haiti. Hurricane Sandy struck Haiti in 2012 leaving 1.5 million people exposed to serious food insecurity.

Food security policy support

When food prices hit record highs in 2007-2008, leading to unacceptable levels of hunger around the world, FAO launched the global Initiative on Soaring Food Prices (ISFP). The purpose of the initiative was to help member countries to put in place urgent measures for boosting supply response during the following agricultural seasons, as well as to provide policy support aimed at improving access to food in the most affected countries. A grant contribution from the Government of Andorra for a total amount of US$14 987 was channelled through FAO to support countries in more comprehensive monitoring and analysis of food and agricultural policies influencing food security. The project targeted Near East and West African Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries as well as populations that are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and to the food and financial crisis.

Other donors to the ISFP included: Austria, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank. The total funding envelope amounted to US$449 million.

“There is no food security without water security.”
José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General