



World Summit on Sustainable Development



Key FAO messages

AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE INTIMATELY LINKED

The Rio Summit has challenged the agriculture sector to resolve environmental problems such as land degradation, chemical pollution and erosion of genetic resources. Real progress has been made through approaches such as conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, agro-biodiversity conservation, effective water and fertilizer management and other concepts.

The future of many world ecosystems depends on further development of sustainable natural resource management practices. Such practices can actually make an important contribution to environmental conservation. Agriculture, forestry and fisheries must therefore be an integral part of any environmental management proposals emerging from WSSD.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES ARE KEY TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Agriculture, including livestock, forestry and fisheries, plays a vital role in poverty alleviation, food security, rural development and sustainable livelihoods, especially in developing countries.

Without sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the eradication of poverty and hunger will not be possible. A major challenge of the

next few decades is to ensure production of and access to sufficient and good quality food to meet the needs of the world's 2 billion additional inhabitants by 2030. This needs to be achieved while preserving the livelihood of rural societies and the natural resource base upon which the present and future generations depend.



NEED FOR POLITICAL WILL TO REDIRECT FLOWS OF INVESTMENT

Accelerating the fight against hunger depends on strong political will to mobilize and allocate more financial and human resources to sustainable agriculture and rural development, with a particular focus on the poor. Political actions need the participation not only of world leaders, politicians and concerned citizens in developed and developing countries, but also of the people directly affected by hunger. Especially countries with the highest prevalence of hunger need to allocate a significantly higher share of their public expenditure and national investment to agriculture and rural areas, the source of livelihood for more than two-thirds of these countries' poor.

However, even with such reorientation of national resource flows, fighting hunger and promoting rural development need more capital and human resources than low-income developing countries can afford. They lack the means to maintain the public services required to develop new technologies, provide advice to farmers on sustainable production systems, and ensure food and drinking water safety. The WSSD must help to reverse the decline of official development assistance to sustainable agriculture and rural development, forestry and fisheries. Events such as the World Food Summit: five years later and the Johannesburg Summit itself provide unprecedented opportunities for refocusing the political will, at all levels, on the fight against hunger.



RATIFICATION OF MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS IMPORTANT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Johannesburg Summit should give new impetus to the ratification and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements that provide a normative and regulatory framework for sustainable development in the environment, agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries sectors. Agreements include the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the

Conventions on Chemicals (Prior Informed Consent Procedure and Persistent Organic Pollutants). An important milestone towards sustainable development and the equitable sharing of resources and benefits will also be the ratification and implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. To assist with the implementation of the Treaty, an important initiative foresees a Global Conservation Trust to support conservation of plant genetic resources essential for world food security.

STANDARDS SETTING AND CODES

In the management of capture fisheries, ecosystem-based fishery management should be implemented, including thorough follow-ups to the Reykjavik Declaration as well as the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its International Plans of Action (IPOA), and in particular the IPOA on Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing.

MESSAGE OF WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: FIVE YEARS LATER

FAO believes the World Food Summit Plan of Action provides an appropriate framework for many WSSD initiatives. Their implementation needs to be encouraged and accelerated by working closely with a full range of stakeholders in strategic alliances.

CONTACTS

For further information, contact:
Research, Extension and Training
Division
Sustainable Development
Department
Tel. (+39) 06 57056196
Fax (+39) 06 57055246
Dietrich.Leihner@fao.org

Media Relations Branch
Tel. (+39) 06 57053625
Fax (+39) 06 57053729
media-relations@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
www.fao.org