

GFFA-Expert Panel: “CFS: Water and Climate Recommendations to Feed the World”, January 18, 2021, 17:00-18:00 (CET)
Eva Müller, BMEL

Honorable Minister **Goldsmith**,
Your Excellency, Mister **Tiensen**,
Dear participants,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with a country perspective on the topic of today’s event.

In Germany, the last three years have been the **driest since the beginning of weather records**. On the average, 25 % less rainfall was recorded in the spring and summer during this period, as compared to the reference period of 1961-1990.

And this has already affected agricultural production and the livelihoods of farmers. In 2018, the quantity of harvested cereals was 19% lower than the average of the previous 3-years, and grasslands had to be re-established due to severe drought damages.

In these past years, we have also experienced increased **conflicts of interest in water use**.

In some regions, **restrictions** had to be imposed, for example on irrigation in private gardens, in order to ensure enough drinking water for everyone. At the same time, the **need for irrigation in agriculture** is increasing, while in the past, agriculture in Germany has been mostly rainfed.

So we are feeling the effects of climate change and the **need for adaptation** to keep our agricultural production alive. The wise use of water resources plays a key role here.

For this reason, in 2018 the Ministry, together with the Federal States and other stakeholder groups has developed a comprehensive **set of measures** to address the challenges.

These include water management and use, breeding and genetic selection and promotion of resilient and sustainable cropping systems, improved animal welfare and health and protection of fish populations.

We have also intensified **research activities** on climate change adaptation in agriculture. **Emphasis in research** is placed on water storage capacity of agricultural soils,

reduction of water loss through agroforestry systems, crop rotation and soil treatments.

And we have a programme that links the research projects. The so-called KLIM-AGRAR Programme **serves as a nexus between science, economy and politics**, promotes networking and carries out impact assessments of policy measures related to agriculture and climate change.

Of course, research alone is not enough and **research findings need to be applied** in order to achieve climate resilient agricultural production systems.

For this reason, we closely **cooperate with our Federal States**. Because they are responsible for extension services and implementation on the ground.

They also facilitate the **dialogue with farmers and stakeholders** in the regions, including on issues of water management.

In closing, allow me one more observation: Compared to many other countries, Germany is still in a relatively “comfortable” situation as regards water availability. The problem is certainly much more severe in more vulnerable regions of the world.

But it is important to exchange experiences in this area, especially on the measures taken to ensure food security in the face of a changing climate and increased water scarcity. The CFS can play an important role here.

Thank you for your attention.

I. Moderator to ask a specific question: How does the work and products of CFS stimulate and impact the work of policy makers?

Answer:

Availability of and access to a stable supply of healthy and nutritious food for the whole population is a basic requirement in all countries.

In Germany, we have long taken this for granted, but the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a renewed awareness of the importance of food security and of our agricultural

sector. In other countries, the pandemic has exacerbated already existing problems with food security.

In a globalized world, we are all in this together and we need to ensure that food security is achieved everywhere because otherwise, the consequences will be felt even in food-secure countries like Germany. One example of this is migration caused by poverty and hunger, a problem that is expected to increase with climate change. And water shortages and scarcity is one factor contributing to this.

Therefore, we need to address food security and the impacts of climate change not only in our own countries but also at the global level.

For the German Government and in particular my Ministry, the CFS is an extremely important and useful mechanism to address global food security issues in a participatory way as it involves not only governments, but also civil society and the private sector.

It provides an important **platform for multi-stakeholder fora** to help solve cross-cutting challenges, such as climate change adaptation and the impact of water shortages and scarcity on food security.

In this context, the reports by the **CFS High Level Panels of Experts** have an important role to play. They provide **in-depth expert knowledge** to countries on key issues such as how to achieve food security in a changing climate or the role of water for Food Security and Nutrition.

They bring such issues to the attention of the CFS, make recommendations on how to address them and often form the basis for policy recommendations of the CFS.

Germany fully supports the CFS and the High Level Panels of Experts, and has also provided financial support on several occasions.

A current example is the development of the **Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems for Nutrition**, which we are supporting with 500,000 Euro .

The development of the guidelines is also the result of a HLPE report. These guidelines are particularly important to us because we believe that we need to consider **the food system as a whole – also in relation to climate resilience**. CFS has and should have a leading global role in sustainable nutrition and the achievement of SDG2.

Key themes of the guidelines are very much in line with priorities of our own national food and nutrition policy, including nutrition education and the improvement of the food environment towards more healthy and sustainable diets.