



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-second Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 12-15 October 2015

**HIGH-LEVEL PANEL OF EXPERTS REPORT ON
WATER FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION (FSN)**

DRAFT DECISION BOX

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Committee

The Committee:

Acknowledged with appreciation the HLPE report on water for FSN;

Recalled that: water, food security and good nutrition are intrinsically linked; the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation and the right to adequate food are essential to achieve FSN; water is the lifeblood of ecosystems on which the food security and nutrition of present and future generations depend; water of appropriate quality and quantity is essential for food production (fisheries, crops and livestock), processing, transformation and preparation; the quality of drinking water affects the effective absorption of nutrients by the human body; water supports economic growth, jobs and income generation, and contributes to economic access to food for billions of people;

Acknowledged that different regions face context-specific challenges associated with: producing enough nutritious food for a growing population; increasing competition for water between people and sectors; climate change; increasing degradation of water resources and ecosystems; and the lack of fair and transparent allocation mechanisms that recognise and protect the interests of all users.

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Stressed the key role of water in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the importance of sound governance of water to achieve FSN.

Encouraged States and other relevant stakeholders to join forces, within their mandate, competencies and responsibilities, to address the challenges related to water's contribution to FSN through both an ecosystem approach and a people-centred approach. Specifically, the Committee offered the following recommendations:

- 1) Promote sustainable management and conservation of ecosystems for the continued availability, quality and reliability of water for FSN**
 - a) Adopt an ecosystem approach and promote participatory mechanisms for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of landscapes and ecosystems, involving stakeholders at the appropriate scales.
 - b) Encourage the collection of information in all sectors to plan and invest effectively to maximise long-term benefits for FSN and undertake evidence-based assessments of the current status and projections of water resources and demand.
 - c) Reduce pollution, restore, depollute and protect water bodies from contamination and ensure water quality is preserved for domestic and food-related uses, through targeted incentives and disincentives.

- 2) Improve coherence between water and FSN related policies, strategies and plans**
 - a) Review and implement water policies and strategies so that they are comprehensive and incorporate FSN concerns across sectors, and promote accountability by all actors for their impact on water for FSN.
 - b) Consider water explicitly in developing national FSN strategies.
 - c) Review national policies regarding rural development, industrialization and trade of agricultural and food products, as appropriate, to promote water for FSN.
 - d) Coordinate agriculture, land, energy and water policies and programmes for sustainable, integrated and effective management of these common resources.

- 3) Ensure equitable access to water for all, prioritise the most vulnerable and marginalised, empower women and youth and address the specific needs of women**
 - a) Implement policies for equal opportunities and security in access to water and production factors for male and female food producers, and promote responsible investments so that they can use water effectively to improve their livelihoods and meet their FSN needs.
 - b) Respect the rights and address the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities who rely on water for their livelihoods, through measures which may include legislation, policies and programs. Put in place mechanisms to ensure that any water-related reforms, investments or actions by any actor do not impact negatively on their interests considering that water should never be used as an instrument for political or economic pressure.
 - c) Address the specific needs of women, youth and girls in relation to water for FSN through their empowerment at all levels and stages of water governance and through targeted interventions, taking into account their productive and reproductive roles.
 - d) Develop and promote responsible investments in infrastructure and technologies to improve household availability of, and access to, clean water for drinking and sanitation to reduce the drudgery and burden of water collection and disposal for women and girls and agricultural workers, reduce the incidence of water-related health risks, improve conditions for hygiene and food safety and enhance nutritional status.

- 4) Improve the efficiency and diversity of water use and the productivity of agricultural systems for FSN**
 - a) Incorporate rainwater, runoff water, groundwater and soil moisture in strategies aiming at enhancing the efficiency of agricultural water use for FSN.
 - b) Invest in the modernization and improvement of irrigation systems and technologies, with special attention to those used by smallholder food producers, to enhance the productivity of water and the overall performance of food systems considering, where appropriate, public-private partnerships.
 - c) Increase efficiency in the use of water at basin level and minimise adverse effects of water use on land use options, water availability and water quality for downstream activities, people and the environment.
 - d) Strengthen the capacity of communities to adopt water-saving practices and technologies for water storage, re-use and safe disposal of wastewater, and facilitate multiple water uses.

- 5) Manage risk and increase resilience for food security stability**
 - a) Enhance the resilience of agricultural systems for the benefit of farmers and pastoralists and make rain-fed agriculture systems more reliable by reducing risks associated with climate variability through sound landscapes management, appropriate agricultural practices (including agro-ecological practices) and risk management mechanisms like weather forecasting, index-based insurances, rural finance or community solidarity.
 - b) Mitigate staple food price fluctuation risks in water stressed food deficit countries through strategies that encompass all sources of water and instruments like food reserves, risk insurance and social protection mechanisms.
 - c) Respect, protect and enhance traditional indigenous knowledge to manage water and adapt to shocks, stressors and system-level changes to strengthen the resilience of small scale, local food systems.

- 6) Develop and share knowledge, technologies and tools related to water for FSN**
 - a) Support cross-sectoral and cross-organizational participatory research and knowledge sharing involving local communities, and increase investments in technological and institutional innovations for improved water use and management for FSN.
 - b) Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to facilitate innovation and adopt best water use practices, with special emphasis on technology transfer and upgrading community-based knowledge.
 - c) Invest in, and institutionalise water information systems, by establishing and managing open data systems and monitoring programmes on all water and FSN aspects to ensure decision making is supported by evidence, including gender-disaggregated data.

- 7) Foster inclusive and effective national and local governance of water for FSN**
 - a) Develop inclusive and equitable governance mechanisms to address trade-offs and synergies in water use and allocation and apply the principles of integrated water resource management.
 - b) Promote effective participation of all relevant actors in the development of policies and governance mechanisms for the management of water for FSN and empower local communities to effectively participate as relevant in decisions affecting them on the planning, management, use and conservation of water.
 - c) Work to ensure the sustainable governance of groundwater, taking into account renewal rates, and establish community-based systems to monitor and control individual water withdrawals, including where appropriate, economic instruments like water pricing.

- d) Promote collaborative water management of international water basins, transboundary lakes, rivers and aquifers taking into consideration implications for FSN with full respect for national sovereignty.

8) Promote the full and meaningful implementation of human rights obligations and instruments as they relate to water for FSN

- a) Comply with human rights obligations and acknowledge the linkages between the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation and the right to adequate food in the context of FSN and between water, land, fisheries and forests and associated tenure arrangements.
- b) Assess the direct and indirect effects of water and land related policies and actions, including large-scale land acquisitions, on the realization of the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation and the right to adequate food. Pay particular attention to the needs, use and tenure rights of marginalized and vulnerable users, those of indigenous peoples and of those whose rights are reflected in customary arrangements.
- c) Take water into account when applying CFS policy instruments as appropriate.

The CFS should include and mainstream water for food security and nutrition in its future work.