

## 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on Agriculture

### **Item 3.2: Towards a Global Programme on Sustainable Dryland Agriculture in collaboration with the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) in a Changing Climate**

#### **Introduction notes**

Drylands cover over 43 percent of total global land area and are characterised by limited water availability with high temperature fluctuations.

Dryland agriculture is characterised by small-scale producers, including pastoralists, who face the concomitant challenges of low productivity, low income and a growing competition for water, food and land resources, further exacerbated by climate change.

Around two billion people live in dryland zones, of which 90 percent are located in developing countries, primarily in rural areas and dependant on agriculture for their livelihoods.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Drylands it is a priority to optimise the sustainability of agricultural production systems and to minimize unnecessary inputs of fertilizers and pesticides to protect natural resources, to build resilience and economic recovery.

The proposed Global Programme on Sustainable Dryland Agriculture will support countries to empower small-scale producers, by strengthening agricultural systems and building technical capacities, in order to protect natural resources, under a changing climate.

The programme will form an operational mechanism to implement FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), by promoting data management and analytics; integrated policy services; partnerships, finance and investment for accelerating agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development.

The Dryland Agriculture Global Programme consists of four complementary operational pillars:

- Data platform and technology toolbox for comprehensive assessments and integrated decision-making;
- Promotion of enabling environment for policies, innovations, investments and partnerships;
- Capacity development and strengthening of infrastructure and institutions;
- Knowledge-sharing hubs for information exchange, awareness and advocacy.

The programme will build on and strengthen partnerships and networking developed by the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and forge partnerships with CGIAR, academia, and relevant inter-regional, regional and international entities.

Governments, resource partners and the private sector will be linked through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), to ensure that innovations and investments are leveraged and scaled to drive transformation across the Dryland areas of the globe, that are so heavily dependent on agriculture for sustainable development.

Key partners include the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), launched in 2016, as a coordination mechanism for advocacy, knowledge dissemination and actions for addressing water scarcity in agriculture in a changing climate in support of the SDGs.

The expertise of WASAG partners to accelerate global efforts will be relevant for water use, drought preparedness, agriculture in marginal lands, saline agriculture, promotion of underutilised crops, forages and will build on current member support and networks.

The Committee is invited to:

- Call upon Members to endorse the ‘Global Programme on Sustainable Dryland Agriculture’ and support the transformation of agriculture in dryland regions within the framework of the *Hand-in-Hand Initiative* as a key to advance the 2030 Agenda and achieve SDGs;
- Recommend Members to strengthen their cooperation for the implementation of the Global Programme and urge them to support it through targeted policies, innovations and investments;
- Call upon Members to join and continue to actively support WASAG and its linkage with the Global Programme; and
- Request the Organization to report on the progress of the Global Programme on a periodic but regular basis.

*Jingyuan Xia, Director, Plant Production and Protection Division, NSP*