



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-ninth Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

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**CFS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON WATER FOR FOOD
SECURITY AND NUTRITION, ENDORSED AT CFS 42 IN 2015**

WATER FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Policy recommendations



with a core focus on:



Contributes to SDG 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, & 15

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS), 42nd Session, 2015, endorsed the following recommendations on Water for Food Security and Nutrition¹:

The Committee:

Acknowledged with appreciation the HLPE report on water for food security and nutrition (FSN); and recalled that: water, food security and nutrition are intrinsically linked; water is essential for the progressive realization of both the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, and the right to safe drinking water and sanitation; and that mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in relation to water is fundamental to improving 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: water

scarcity, producing enough 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 and rights of all users, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Stressed the key role of water in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the importance of sound

¹ Excerpt from the **CFS 42 Final Report**



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management 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

- Promote an ecosystem approach and participatory mechanisms for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems, involving actors at the appropriate scales;

- Encourage the collection of water related information in all sectors and, where appropriate, undertake evidence-based assessments of the current status and projections for water resources demand and supply,

to plan and invest effectively to maximise long-term benefits for FSN;

- Prevent and significantly reduce pollution, restore, depollute and protect water bodies from contamination and ensure water quality is preserved for domestic, agricultural and food-related uses, including through targeted incentives and disincentives.

2 Improve coherence between water and FSN related policies, strategies and plans

- Review and implement water policies and strategies, as appropriate, so that they are comprehensive and incorporate FSN concerns across sectors, and promote transparency and accountability by all actors for their impact on water for FSN, thus contributing to the progressive realization of both the right to safe drinking water and sanitation and the right to adequate food in the context of national food security;

- Consider water explicitly in developing and reviewing national FSN strategies;

- Enhance the coherence of relevant sectoral policies concerning water for FSN;

- Coordinate the policies of all major sectors related to water use including agriculture, land, energy and mining for enhanced FSN.

3 Achieve equal access to water for all, prioritise the most vulnerable and marginalised at all ages and empower women and youth

- Implement policies for equal opportunities and security in access to water and land for food producers - both women and men - and promote responsible investments in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems so that they can use water effectively to improve their livelihoods and meet their FSN needs;

- Respect the rights and address the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised individuals and communities





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through measures which may include legislation, policies and programs;

➤ Put in place mechanisms to ensure that any water related policies, reforms, investments or actions by any actor take into account the FSN of affected populations, with particular attention to the most vulnerable and marginalized;

➤ Refrain from using water as an instrument for political or economic pressure;

➤ Address the specific needs of women and girls in relation to water for FSN and mainstream gender equality through women's empowerment at all levels and stages of national and local water governance and through targeted interventions, taking into account their specific roles and responsibilities;

➤ Develop and promote investments to: improve household availability of and access to safe water for drinking and sanitation; reduce the drudgery and burden of water collection and disposal for all, in particular women and girls; reduce the incidence of water-

related health risks; improve conditions for hygiene and food safety; enhance nutritional status; and provide access to safe drinking water to all workers at the workplace.

4 Improve the efficiency and diversity of water use and the productivity of agricultural systems for FSN

➤ Incorporate rainwater, runoff water, groundwater,

appropriately treated wastewater and soil moisture in strategies aiming at enhancing the efficiency of agricultural water use for FSN.

➤ Invest in the modernization, improvement and sustainable extension of rainfed and irrigated agricultural systems, and technologies adapted to local contexts with special attention to those used by smallholder food



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producers, in order to enhance the productivity of water considering, where appropriate, public-private partnerships with appropriate regulations to safeguard the public interest;

- 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;

- Strengthen the capacity of communities and water user organizations to adopt water-saving practices and technologies for water storage, re-use and safe disposal of wastewater and rainwater and to facilitate multiple water uses.

5 Manage risk and increase resilience to water variability for FSN

- Enhance the resilience of agriculture, notably rainfed

and pastoral systems, for the benefit of all food producers, especially smallholders, in light of climate change and water variability, through integrated water resources and ecosystems management, sustainable agricultural practices and risk management instruments;

- Prevent and minimize significant food price volatility risks to FSN in affected countries, in particular water stressed net food importing countries,



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through strategies that encompass all sources of water, instruments including inter alia through, risk insurance, social protection mechanisms, early warning systems, and emergency food reserves, and assistance, in accordance with international obligations;

- Respect, and preserve traditional knowledge on sustainable water management and adaptation to shocks and stressors in order to strengthen the resilience of livelihoods.

6 Develop and share knowledge, technologies and tools related to water for FSN

- Support cross-sectoral and multistakeholder participatory and independent platforms and processes for research, knowledge exchange and voluntary technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, involving local communities and farmer organizations to improve water management for FSN;

- Invest in technological and institutional innovations in agricultural practices and products for sustainable and efficient water use and management for FSN;

- Strengthen national capacities on water for FSN related activities and programmes in order to facilitate innovation, use of technologies and adoption of locally adapted water use practices by stakeholders, thereby upgrading community based knowledge;

- Invest in and institutionalize water information systems and national and local monitoring mechanisms to support decision making at appropriate national and local level including , gender-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators;

- Consider initiating cost effective awareness raising and advocacy campaigns amongst all stakeholders to develop consensus on the magnitude of water challenges, especially for FSN.

7 Foster inclusive and effective collaboration and national and local governance on water for FSN

- Develop inclusive and transparent national and local governance mechanisms to address trade-offs and synergies in water use and allocation, with due consideration for the importance in domestic use and impacts on FSN, and apply the principles of integrated water resource management;

- Promote effective participation of all relevant actors in the development of policies and national and local governance mechanisms for the management of water for FSN and empower water users' organizations and local communities, in particular indigenous peoples, to effectively participate in decisions affecting them on the planning, management, use and conservation of water;

- Work to ensure the sustainable management of groundwater, taking into account



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renewal rates, and establish national and community-based systems to monitor and control individual water withdrawals;

➤ Promote collaborative water management and best practices for the sustainable use of transboundary water basins, lakes, rivers and aquifers, recognizing the economic and social needs of countries, taking into consideration implications for FSN with full respect for national sovereignty and as applicable, existing bilateral, regional and multilateral agreements.

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

➤ Fully observe the international human rights obligations as they relate to water for FSN and acknowledge the linkages between the right to safe drinking water and sanitation and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security;

➤ Assess the direct and indirect effects of water and land related policies and

actions, including large-scale land acquisitions, on the progressive realization of both the right to safe drinking water and sanitation and the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. 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, in line with the VGGT;

➤ Take water into account when applying CFS policy instruments, as appropriate.



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THE COMMITTEE

Expressed interest in duly taking into account water for FSN in its future deliberations. The CFS should raise awareness of the importance of water for FSN and disseminate the HLPE report on Water for FSN and the CFS recommendations to international organizations and bodies, including towards the follow up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



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Report**

CFS is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together in a coordinated way to ensure food security and nutrition for all.



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The policy recommendations are part of the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)



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