

28th Session of the Committee on Agriculture

Item 3.2: State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOLAW21)

Land resources – soil, water and biodiversity – supply humanity with essential goods and services, producing more than 95 percent of the food consumed globally. They are under enormous pressure, reaching the point where productivity of key agricultural systems is compromised and livelihoods are threatened.

Ensuring food security and livelihoods of a growing world population increasingly needs the provision of ecosystem services. This process is placing further pressure on the world's water, land and soil resources. Current agrifood systems fail to make safe, affordable and healthy diets accessible to everyone; contribute to substantial biodiversity loss, increased land degradation and water scarcity; and are linked directly to 37 percent of human greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions.

Estimates indicate that human-induced land degradation occurs in almost 2 billion hectares worldwide, affecting 34 percent of the world's agricultural lands and 40 percent of the world's population.

Sustainable agricultural practices can lead to direct improvements in the state of land, soil and water, generate ecosystem benefits and reduce emissions from land, contributing positively to climate and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Accomplishing all these requires accurate information and a major change in how resources are managed. It also requires complementing efforts from outside the natural resources management domain to maximize synergies and manage trade-offs.

This document presents the key findings of the *State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture – Systems at a breaking point (SOLAW21)* report launched in May 2022. The report provides new information on the status of land, soil and water resources, as well as evidence of the changing and alarming trends in resource use, highlighting the risks, listing the identified hotspots, and informing on related opportunities and challenges. The report reveals a situation that has much deteriorated in the last decade, when the first SOLAW 2011 report highlighted that many of the productive land and water ecosystems were at risk. Land and water ecosystems are currently under intense pressure, and many are stressed to a critical point.

The Committee is invited to:

- *recognize* the importance of the much-needed paradigm shift towards sustainable agrifood systems to meet the growing demand for food, while conserving biodiversity and safeguarding land, soil and water resources for food security and achievement of the SDGs;
- *commend* FAO's efforts to provide updates on the state of land and water resources, in particular, through the *State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture (SOLAW21)*, and *recommend* FAO to consider the report as a FAO flagship publication; and
- *encourage* Members to widely disseminate *SOLAW21*, and to strengthen cooperation to use *SOLAW21* assessments to enhance the sustainable management of land and water resources for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment* and a *better life*, leaving no one behind.

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