

**Ms Julienne Roux, GWP, to speak about GWP efforts to implement CFS recommendations on water, its relevance for food systems transformation, and their contribution for meeting commitments of the 2017 GFFA where water issues were addressed.**

Thank you chair.

Your Excellency, dear panelists, dear audience members

I'll first share a few words about our organization: GWP is a global action network advocating, facilitating, and supporting change processes for the sustainable management of water resources for sustainable and equitable development. We gather more than 3000 partners and are active in more than 65 countries.

Water, food security and nutrition are intrinsically linked. Further, these linkages are critical for achieving the SDG and climate resilience agenda. Unfortunately, the governance and socio-economic systems around water, climate and food are still very poorly coordinated. It is urgent to act, and even more as our systems are under stress, both in the short term with the Covid 19 pandemic and in the longer term through climate change impacts... but unfortunately, there is too little focus and critically insufficient action on those linkages.

We strongly welcome attention brought at the global level on those topics, and two landmarks in this regard have clearly been the work of World Committee on Food security in 2015 and by the GFFA in 2017.

Claudia Ringler already presented key points from the work of the CFS. Let me emphasize here that the CFS approach is very important in its uniqueness as a global multi-stakeholder platform in the UN system, basing its recommendations on state of the art knowledge through the high level panel of experts reports.

The communique of the Agricultural Ministers at GFFA 2017 has been a landmark call for action Enhancing access to water, Improving water quality, Reducing water scarcity risks, and Managing surplus water. This is exactly the sort of mobilization of key leaders that we need to see more of, recognizing that water is a precious resource for agriculture, that it also needs to be protected and preserved, and that we can do better towards both food security and nutrition and water security.

Now of course, a key question with global dialogues is how to take those to the ground and make change happen, in line with the global thinking and commitments.

For implementation of the recommendations, it is critical to take the conversations to the country level and dedicate time and energy to engaging the actors at that level. In this regard, from 2015 to 2017, GWP organized multi stakeholder dialogues in 9 sub-saharan countries as well as regional exchanges on water and food security, directly building on the CFS recommendations. The approach helped actors identify challenges and solutions related to managing water and food security as well as fostered cross-country exchange of experiences.

Another key point is to adapt to the different country contexts and seize and accompany dynamics that emerge with the actors. It has led us to tackle the water – food and climate nexus around different important entry points such as basin management, climate adaptation, drought management, support needed for water investments, water – energy – food nexus, or on-the-ground demos...

I'd like to illustrate this point through examples from our work in Africa. I'll start with action at ground level with communities. It is very important both for direct impact, but also to help catalyze action at broader scale by supporting & contributing to discussions with country & regional actors. I've put here an example from pilots we're implementing in West Africa focusing on youth empowerment and local development around agroecology and agroforestry.

I've also put examples of change processes that we are accompanying and catalyzing at country and regional level: advancing plans, strategies, and governance mechanisms, and dialogues and mobilization

of actors, both at political level and with stakeholders. are all critical facets of the work needed to bring about change.

Finally, I'd like to emphasize that, more and more, our partners in Africa are expressing the need for support in increasing water-related investments. There are huge capacity gaps at country level and missed opportunities there – even when financial aid mechanisms might exist, it can be difficult to mobilize them. This is why our more recent major continental programme in Africa, the Africa Water Investment Programme, is focusing on transforming the investment outlook for water in the continent. The water – food – climate dimension will be particularly tackled in it through a key programme to catalyze implementation of coordinated SDGs on water & sanitation – health – energy – food – ecosystems.

With this, I look forward to continuing the discussions with the panelists and with the audience

### **How can the implementation of CFS and GFFA policy recommendations be accelerated from your perspective as an action network?**

I'll start with perspectives on the global to country dynamic before highlighting key topics of focus for action on water and food security and nutrition

- We need to continue and amplify water conversations in global agricultural and climate agendas, including CFS, GFFA, World Food Summit, climate COP, and maintain them over time. The water – climate – food security nexus should be tackled more systematically and by all, not just through discrete initiatives or at crises points. It is great in this regard that the CFS will carry out a consultation on its recommendations on climate and water this coming year
- It is very important to increase global to national linkages, by having more mechanisms to support policy discussions and stakeholders dialogues around key global processes. For example, in 2020 we supported more than 60 countries in reporting on SDG 6.5.1 on the degree of IWRM implementation, including through stakeholder consultations : this is key to ensure that global agendas are appropriated and taken up at country level
- Mobilizing leadership is key to making change happen: global processes have an important role to play for this, as well as having actors in countries mobilized to keep political attention up
- I'd like to emphasis then key areas of work, from my perspective, on the water - food and climate nexus:
  - o We need to develop a stronger shared understanding and acculturation between the water and agriculture spheres: Agricultural stakeholders, Ministries of economy and planning should pay more attention to the water cycle, not just in terms of water scarcity or water shocks. Conversely the water sector also needs to learn how to think agriculture and food systems ; agriculture and food systems are integrators of economic, natural resources, social systems and water actors need to understand better what drives them
  - o In relation to this: it is critical to take a systems approach and to look both at the food systems and water systems – this is a must to understand drivers and levers of change and to be able to make change happen
  - o Knowledge of water resources available, water accounting and monitoring of use, is very key; we cannot manage adequately and sustainably the resource otherwise and there are still major gaps in this regard
  - o The transformation needed is not only about water, and it'd be a mistake to only look at water. We, the water actors, need to look more broadly at pathways to make

agriculture economically, socially, and environmentally performant, and how we can contribute to this – that is why for example we're highlighting agroecological approaches in several of our pilots on the ground

- We should recognize more that, as much we emphasize synergies and win win solutions, there will be trade-offs in managing the water – food linkages. These trade-offs should be recognized and decision making should be transparent and inclusive
- Finally, I'd like to emphasize that attention to the poor and most vulnerable, including women – they are those who suffer the most and are the most impacted when we're not taking proper decision making.

### **How much is Covid impacting the water – food security and nutrition landscape and directions to take going forward for your organization?**

The Covid crisis is having major impacts on food security and nutrition. Economies have been brought to a standstill, food supply chains have been disrupted, and it's been very difficult to reach populations in need. The most vulnerable are suffering the most.

Our work has been very impacted. We're lucky to have a good network in countries but, still, we've had to put on pause our work with communities on the ground in many cases, and it's been very difficult also to maintain our country level and governance work as government counterparts have had to focus on emergency responses. Also, a key backbone of our work is stakeholders engagement; we've worked hard to develop online engagement and have made great strides there, but we grapple with technological limitations in many contexts and, further,, physical meetings are still needed to make multi-stakeholder engagement processes fully effective.

One benefit though of the crisis is how it's brought more to the fore the importance of public health and of WASH services, and of how all these key issues of human health, planetary health and our economies and well being are interconnected.

Over the longer term: we see question marks, opportunities and also risks. How will the covid crisis influence pre-existing geopolitical and socio-economic dynamics that were at play? Will governments come out with stronger or weaker roles? Will the global political order be strengthened or will bilateral relations become more paramount? The crisis creates opportunities for building back better and for positive change, - but there is a risk that a strong focus on short term back to business and alleviation of suffering will result in short term choices, that are not the smartest in terms of sustainable use of the natural resources base and dealing with catastrophic climate change.

Concretely, two dimensions that we see emerging very strongly already, and that we have been working to incorporating in our work are increased focus on health and on increasing investments for economic development and job creation. These are important directions of our flagship program in Africa that I mentioned previously.