

Statement delivered by
H.E. Voitov Aziz Botirovich, Minister for Agriculture of Rwanda
on occasion of the
43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)
3 July 2023

His Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings, Allow me to first start by thanking FAO leadership for giving me this opportunity to address this respected audience on the topic of the state of food and agriculture seen through the lenses of water resources.

The global food and agriculture sector plays a critical role in ensuring food security, promoting sustainable development, and addressing various socio-economic and environmental challenges. In the same vein, Water is a vital resource that holds immense significance in the context of food and agriculture.

In Rwanda, where agriculture is predominantly rainfed, the management and sustainable use of water resources are key in achieving agricultural productivity and resilience to climate variabilities.

Recognizing the importance of water in agriculture, Rwanda has implemented a series of policies and initiatives to improve water management practices. The government has prioritized investments in irrigation infrastructure, including the construction and rehabilitation of water reservoirs, small-scale irrigation schemes, and water harvesting techniques. These measures aim to enhance water availability, especially during dry seasons, and reduce the vulnerability of farmers to climate variability.

Only 20 percent of irrigable land in Rwanda is irrigated, this accounts to 70 000 hectares. Ongoing irrigation projects in partnership with Exim Bank of India, NETAFIN Company of Israel and the World Bank.

Approximately 30 000 hectares of irrigated land by 2030.

Furthermore, Rwanda has embraced innovative approaches to enhance water efficiency. The promotion of precision irrigation techniques, such as drip irrigation, has helped optimize water use and minimize wastage.

Additionally, the adoption of conservation agriculture practices, such as minimum tillage, mulching and agroforestry, help improve soil moisture retention and minimize water runoff, thereby increasing water efficiency in our farming systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen, three years ago. Rwanda has established the water resources bought with the mission to ensure the availability of enough and well managed water resources for sustainable development.

By adopting a multi-stakeholder approach and promoting dialogue between water users, policymakers, and communities, Rwanda aims to ensure equitable water allocation and sustainable water governance. This inclusive approach contributes to the efficient and equitable distribution of water resources, which also reduces conflict over water use.

However, despite these efforts, water scarcity, inadequate infrastructure in some areas, the impacts of climate change and water-related challenges still persist.

Addressing these challenges requires continued investment in water infrastructure, increased adoption of water-efficient technologies, and the integration of climate-smart practices into agricultural systems.

Our challenges must be similar to those of many countries. For this reason, I advocate for more support to developing countries endeavoring to achieve sustainable water management in agriculture.

Support in the form of financial investment, technical assistance to foster knowledge exchange, and the promotion of partnerships for capacity building would be an apt backing for development in this area of water management.

I believe that if we enhance the existing collaboration with Rwanda and other nations, we can collectively work towards enhancing water security in agriculture, improving food production, and to safeguard our fragile ecosystems.

Thank you very much for your attention.