

Concept Note

Roundtable: Integrated Flood Risk Management

At the 43rd Session of FAO Conference

Date & timing: 09:30-12:00, 4 July

Venue: The Plenary Hall, FAO Headquarters

Format: in-person and live stream

Background

Water is the lifeblood of the earth, underpins all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and is central to the entire 2030 Agenda. Addressing the global water crisis – water scarcity, drought, floods and water pollution – is essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for which urgent action, strong political will and enhanced financing are needed to value and manage freshwater in an integrated manner.

Flooding is an integral part of the natural rhythm of healthy rivers. Through seasonal floods, materials (e.g. rocks, sediment and nutrients) are transported to the downstream areas, flood plains, river deltas and coastal areas, which form the most fertile lands of the planet for agriculture. Such natural flooding processes are crucial for freshwater biodiversity, in particular the fish species, both purely freshwater fish species and those migrating to the oceans, which provide about 20 percent of global catching.

However, flood disasters are among the most frequent, widespread and catastrophic hazards, with global flood losses of around USD 20 billion in 2021. Behind these economic losses lies a human story, with an estimated 1.8 billion people exposed to significant flood hazards. Those who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods are often the worst affected, potentially putting their livelihoods, food security and nutrition at serious risk. Between 2008 and 2018, floods caused declines in crop and livestock production worth USD 21 billion in least developed countries (LDCs) and Lower-middle-income countries (LMICs).

Good agricultural flood risk management, taking into full consideration food security, can play a pivotal role in promoting desired societal, environmental and economic outcomes. As such, and in contrast to the often narrowly defined single objective of the flood control paradigm, strategic flood risk management places an emphasis on reducing risk (to people, economies and the environment) and on building resilience, seeking opportunities to work with natural processes and promote multiple benefits across a range of sectors (e.g. crops and livestock, energy, fisheries, societal wellbeing and environment).

With the Biennial theme of 2024-25 “Integrated Water Resources management for the *four betters*: better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals”, the FAO 43rd Conference in July 2023 provides an excellent opportunity to discuss integrated flood risk management for resilient agrifood systems and rural development. In this context, it is proposed to organize during the FAO 43rd Conference a roundtable on “Integrated Flood Risk Management”.

Objectives

This event will provide FAO Members an opportunity for:

- (i) Building a shared understanding of flood risks and impacts on agrifood systems;
- (ii) Sharing lessons learned, strategies, and solutions to flood risk management in agrifood systems; and
- (iii) Discussing the recommendations and need of potential works by FAO on integrated flood risk management for resilient agrifood systems and rural development.

Draft Programme

A 2.5-hour roundtable is proposed with a high-level opening followed by a technical presentation and panel discussions by Members.

Moderator: Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO

Time	Intervention
5 mins	Welcome and Introduction by Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO
10 mins	Opening Remarks by FAO Director-General
10 mins	Technical Presentation to set the scene: Integrated Flood Risk Management, by Mr LI Lifeng, Director, Land and Water Division (NSL), FAO
75 mins	<p>National perspectives and strategies on flood management, solutions to flood risk management and utilization of flood water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her Excellency Angela Thoko Didiza, Minister for Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, South Africa • The Honourable, Anxious Jongwe Masuka, Minister for Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, Zimbabwe • His Excellency Salem Abdullah Eissa Salem Al-Socatri, Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Fish Wealth, Yemen • The Honourable, Christian Alfredo Barrantes Bravo, Vice Minister, Development of Family Farming and Agrarian Infrastructure and Irrigation, Peru • Ms Jaana Husu-Kallio, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland • Mr Sedthakiat KRAJANGWONGS, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand • Ms Magda Kopczynska, Deputy Director-General, Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission
15 mins	<p>Perspectives from farmers, the youth, women and Indigenous Peoples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Sophie Erfurth, Water Youth Network • Ms Cristina Chirico, Head of Internationalization Office, Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori • Ms Tania Eulalia Martinez-Cruz, Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems and Water Indicators Expert, Indigenous Peoples Unit, FAO • Ms Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President of Women for Water Partnership
30 mins	Discussion
5 mins	Wrap up & Closing: by Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO