

International Federation of Agricultural Producers

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IFAP concerns on Water and desertification

Some facts and concerns ...

- Currently, about 70% of the world's freshwater supplies are used for agriculture, 85% of which are used by developed countries and the remaining 15% are used by the developing world where most of the population is rural and lives from family agriculture.
- Over 1 billion people – one sixth of the world's population - still lack safe domestic water supplies; 2.4 billion people still lack adequate sanitation.
- FAO predicts that it will be necessary to double world food production over the next 25 years, using essentially the same land area.
- By 2025, more than 3 billion people will face water scarcity. The world water situation is thus alarming, and we must react to reverse this trend.
- Demand for freshwater is increasing from industry and the needs of expanding urban areas as well as from agriculture.
- Many farms and thousands of farm families are disappearing because of water issues. And yet Farmers are the main safe guardians of the natural resources.
- Currently, rural people have to rely on their own means to access this vital resource. They must walk long distances to collect water for domestic use, and they rely on the weather for water for their crops and farm activities.
- Farmers are the main victims of desertification and yet, their participation as key players to solve this problem is poorly reflected in the UN Convention on the Fight Against Desertification (UNCCD). Farmers are important actors in the implementation of the UNCCD.
- For IFAP, the fight against desertification is an important component to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable agriculture. Without water, there is no agriculture and therefore no food security. Securing water access is crucial to poverty alleviation in rural areas in order to provide full water security to approximately eight billion people by 2025.

Recommendations and actions ...

Water for agriculture as a priority on the global and national agenda

- Recognise that water security is a key to poverty alleviation. Particular attention should be given to water access in sufficient quantity and in good quality for farmers and the rural population because they are the first victims of water problems in terms of quantity and quality.
- Special development programs related to access and management of water are needed.
- Developing a UN Convention on Water and Poverty.
- National governments must give priority to water issues in their national budgets. They must set clear priorities concerning water use.

Transparent legal frameworks

- Water is a public concern. Farmers need secure water supply rights taking into account local socio- economic, cultural and hydrological context.

Developing partnerships on water as a follow up to the WSSD and Millennium Development Goals

- Promotion of innovative public-private partnerships.
- Strengthening of water research and extension services through partnerships between the research and farming communities using appropriate technologies that respect socio-economic and political aspects. Scientists must learn from farmers and the rural population and benefit from their traditional and indigenous knowledge.

For an integrated water management approach

- Promotion of international river basin cooperation.
- Involve farmers in decision-making processes through consultation frameworks as equal partners.
- Farmers need support –in particular public support- to build their capacities and gain the skills to participate in these decision-making processes.
- Involve women in agriculture at all levels of decision making because they are responsible for the major part of food production in many developing countries.

Using all sources of funding

- Mobilisation of all sources of funding e.g. public- private, investment assistance;
- Increase of development assistance as a complement to domestic sources of funding. Call for the achievement of the 0.7% target of GDP for ODA (Official Development Aid).
- Increased coordination of donors and international financial institutions to avoid duplication of resources.
- Creation of an international solidarity fund in each country to support sustainable water management initiatives.