

WATER FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION (FSN)

The Committee:

Welcomed the comprehensive HLPE report on water for FSN;

Recalled that: water, food security and good nutrition are intrinsically linked, as illustrated in Figure 1; water is the lifeblood of ecosystems on which the food security and nutrition of present and future generations depend; water of appropriate quality and quantity is essential for drinking and sanitation, for food production (fisheries, crops and livestock), processing, transformation and preparation; the quality of drinking water affects the effective absorption of nutrients by the human body; and that water is important for all economic sectors, supports economic growth, jobs and income generation, and contributes to economic access to food for millions of people, particularly in rural areas;

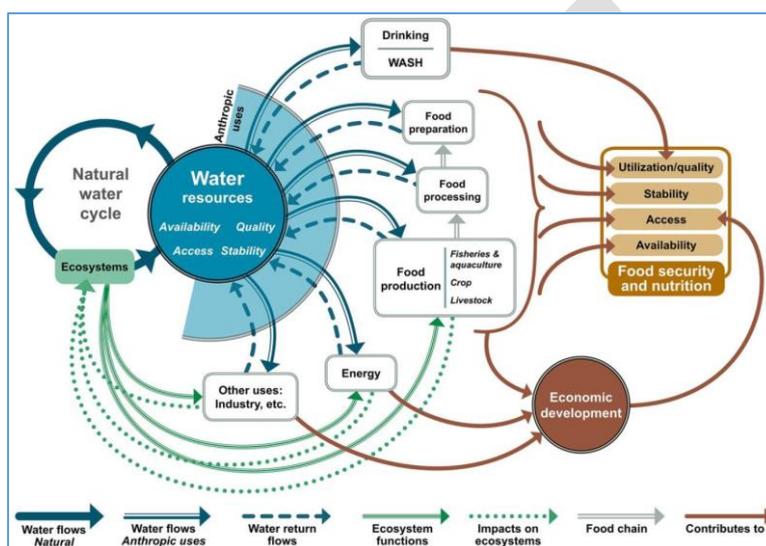


Figure 1: The multiple interfaces between water, food security and nutrition

Acknowledged the many challenges associated with the difficulty in many regions of: producing enough food for a growing population; increasing competition for water between people and sectors; increasing degradation of water resources and ecosystems; and the lack of fair and transparent allocation mechanisms that recognise and protect the interests of the users.

The Committee encouraged States, together with other relevant stakeholders, to address the challenges related to water's contribution to FSN and underscored the importance of adopting both an ecosystem approach to ensure sustainability of water resources, and a people-centred approach that addresses issues of access, entitlements and rights. Specifically, the Committee issued the following recommendations:

1. **Ensure sustainable management and conservation of ecosystems for the continued availability, quality and stability of water for FSN**
 - a- Adopt an ecosystem approach and promote participatory mechanisms for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of landscapes and ecosystems. Such mechanisms may include decentralized governance, local adaptive management and co-management approaches to water resources involving all stakeholders at the appropriate scales.
 - b- Undertake evidence-based assessments of current trends and future orientations of water resources and demand in all sectors to provide information on the long-term availability of water for planning and investments and maximise long-term benefits for FSN.

- c- Reduce pollution, protect water bodies from contamination and ensure water quality is preserved for the provision of water for domestic and food-related uses, through targeted incentives and disincentives.

2. Ensure coherence between water and FSN related policies, strategies and plans

- a- Coordinate the development and implementation of comprehensive water policies and strategies that incorporate FSN concerns across sectors and promote accountability by all actors for their impact on water for FSN.
- b- Integrate water into national FSN strategies and review national policies related to trade, rural development, and industrialization to ensure they promote water for FSN.

3. Prioritise the most vulnerable and marginalised and address the specific needs of women in water for FSN

- a- Address the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities who rely on water for their FSN through legislation, policies and programs that enable them to improve their livelihoods. Put in place mechanisms to avoid negative effects on FSN of the most vulnerable communities from any water-related reforms, investments or actions by any actor, including on availability and access to water.
- b- Ensure policies give women and men equal access to water and that the perspectives of women and youth who rely on water for their livelihoods are taken into account through their empowerment at all levels of water governance.
- c- Ensure that women and men food producers have equitable and secure access to water, and to food production factors that will allow them to use water effectively.
- d- Invest in infrastructure and technologies to improve household availability of, and access to, clean water for drinking and sanitation to reduce the drudgery and burden for women and girls of water collection and disposal, reduce the incidence of water-related health risks, improve conditions for hygiene and food safety and enhance nutritional status.

4. Improve the overall water efficiency and productivity of agricultural systems for FSN

- a- Consider rainwater, runoff water, ground water and soil moisture in strategies aiming at enhancing the contribution of agriculture to FSN.
- b- Invest in the modernization and improvement of irrigation systems and technologies to increase efficiency in the use of water at catchment level, enhance water productivity by increasing yields and the overall performance of food systems, and minimise adverse effects on land, water quality, energy consumption, and availability of water for downstream activities.
- c- Strengthen the capacity of communities to adopt water-saving practices and technologies for water storage, re-use and safe disposal of wastewater, and facilitate multiple water uses.

5. Manage risk and increase resilience for food security stability

- a- Enhance the resilience of agro-ecological systems for the benefit of farmers and pastoralists and make rain-fed agriculture systems more reliable by reducing risks associated with climate variability and land degradation through sound water and landscapes management, appropriate agricultural practices and risk management mechanisms like weather forecasting, weather index-based insurances, rural finance or community solidarity.
- b- Strengthen confidence of water stressed food deficit countries by contributing to Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and mitigate staple food price fluctuation risks, through instruments like food reserves, risk insurance and social protection mechanisms.

6. Enhance and share knowledge, technologies and tools related to water for FSN

- a- Support cross-sectoral and participatory research, and increase investments in technical, methodological and institutional innovations for improved water use and management for FSN.
- b- Enhance capacities of stakeholders to promote innovation and adopt best practices, including through technology transfer and community-based knowledge exchanges.
- c- Close the data gap, including gender-disaggregated data, by establishing and managing open data systems and monitoring programmes on all water and FSN aspects, to ensure decision making is supported by evidence.

7. Foster inclusive and effective governance of water for FSN

- a- Develop inclusive and equitable governance mechanisms to address trade-offs and synergies in water use and allocation and coordinate agriculture, land and water governance processes in an inclusive way to ensure sustainable and effective management of these common resources.
- b- Promote effective participation of all actors in the development of policies and governance mechanisms for the management of water for FSN and empower local communities to effectively participate in decisions affecting them on the planning, management and conservation of water.
- c- Ensure the sustainable management of groundwater, taking into account renewal rates, and setting up community-based systems to monitor and control individual water withdrawals.
- d- Promote cooperation on the management of transboundary lakes, rivers and aquifers taking into consideration implications for FSN.

8. Promote the full and meaningful implementation of existing obligations and instruments as they relate to water for FSN

- a- Comply with human rights obligations and acknowledge the linkages between the right to water and the right to food and between water, land, fisheries and forests and associated tenure arrangements in the context of FSN.
- b- Assess the direct and indirect effects of water and land related interventions, including large-scale land acquisitions, on the realization of the right to water, and on the right to food. Pay particular attention to the needs, use and tenure rights of marginalized and vulnerable users, those of indigenous peoples and of those whose rights are enshrined in customary arrangements.
- c- Take water into account explicitly when applying CFS policy instruments, including the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests, the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems and the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises; and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

In development of its future work programs, the CFS should consider whether water issues have been sufficiently addressed in its existing policy instruments and take action accordingly.