

U.S. Statement

CFS42 Decision Box on Water for Food Security and Nutrition

14 October 2015

The United States joins consensus on this Decision Box. Domestically, the United States pursues policies that promote access to food, and supports universal and non-discriminatory access to safe drinking water and sanitation, which are vitally important to human health and well-being. Globally, it is the objective of the United States to achieve a world where everyone has adequate access to food and safe drinking water and sanitation, and where water resources are managed in an integrated and sustainable manner for human health, economic growth and environmental well-being. While the Committee has addressed the nexus between water and food security and nutrition, which is well within its purview, we note that water has many other applications and roles within the context of sustainable development. When considering water for food security and nutrition, we believe these other roles for water must be taken into account as well.

The United States supports the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including food, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States has also joined consensus on a number of resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council affirming that the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation is derived from the rights contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The United States is not a party to this Covenant: accordingly, we interpret this Decision Box's references to rights related to food or safe drinking water and sanitation as with respect to States Parties to that Covenant, in light of its Article 2(1). In joining consensus on this Decision Box, the United States does not recognize any change in the current state of conventional or customary international law or obligations, including but not limited to trade obligations regarding human rights, agricultural incentives, or intellectual property rights. In particular, we underscore that human rights are held and exercised by

individuals, not groups. The United States also understands that this Decision Box does not imply that states must join or implement obligations under human rights instruments to which they are not a party.

References to traditional knowledge do not relate to intellectual property rights and the United States underscores the importance of regulatory and legal environments that do not negatively affect innovation and development.

The United States does not concur with any reading of the Decision Box that suggests states have particular extraterritorial obligations arising from rights related to food or safe drinking water and sanitation. Nor does the United States support policies that suggest that water resources should be managed for the sole purpose of food production or that food production should come at the expense of sound, sustainable, and integrated management of water resources. The United States recognizes that an open trading systems allows for food security through increased food availability without increasing food production.

In conclusion, we'd like to thank both the Rapporteur and CFS Members and Participants for their hard work, collegial cooperation and for the flexibility shown throughout our work on this important topic.

Thank you.