



Theme 1:

Water Security and Climate Change

Topic 1.5

Availing Water for Food Security

SCALING-UP WATER
ACTION FOR FOOD AND
CLIMATE SECURITY



Date: 16 October 2022



Time: 11:30 – 13:00

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Conveners

Lead convener: FAO *Inter-Regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity (iRTP-WS)*

Co-Convener: The League of Arab States (LAS), UFMS-Union of the Mediterranean, Australia Water Partnership

Keynote Speakers

Chair: JeanMarc Faures, Regional Programme Leader, FAO-RNE

Rapporteur: Hichem Charieg, (FAORNE)

| Duration | Presentation/Topic | Speaker/Moderator |
|----------|--|--|
| 10 min | Opening Remarks: Ways to accelerate collective efforts and scale up water-related action to align with climate change adaptation and food security goals | Jean-Marc Faures Regional Programme Leader, FAO-RNE |
| 10 min | <i>Inter-Regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity: A Roadmap to Water Resilience</i> | Heba Al-Hariry Technical Advisor - Water Scarcity, FAO-RNE |
| 5 min | Panel Discussion: Introduction to Panelists | Jean-Marc Faures Regional Programme Leader, FAO-RNE |
| 10 min | Policy Coherence across Water, Climate and the Agricultural Sector for Sustainable Development | Ambassador Shahira Wahbi Chief of Natural Resources Sustainability, Partnerships, & Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) at the League of Arab States LAS (The Arab Region) |
| 10 min | Advancing Finance for Water Action: Tracking barriers, Trends, Opportunities, and Commitments. | Roberto Martin Hurtado Water Economics Advisor, Union of the Mediterranean (UFM) |
| 10 min | Multi-level Inclusive Governance and Participation for Sustainable Systems. | Oumar Ndiaye Head of the land and water section at the FAO sub-regional office in Central Africa. |
| 10 min | Valuing localised nature-based solutions in South East Asia. | Lucia Gamarra Senior Partnerships and Impact Officer, Australia Water Partnership AWP |
| 15 min | Q/A with the Audience | Jean-Marc Faures Chair |
| 10 Min | Commitments, Summing up, and way forward | Jean-Marc Faures Chair |

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The interlinked actions and coalitions resulting from the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit call for revisiting national and global priorities to advance the transformation of Agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. It also calls for more environmentally responsible and climate-smart agricultural production to reverse trends in the deterioration of land and water resources and promote inclusive growth.

Considering the scale of challenge due to climate change and the complex feedback loops between climate, water, and land, in 2021, The State of Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture Report: Systems at Breaking Point¹, took stock of the implications for agriculture. Shocks, including severe floods, droughts, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, and social unrest was revealed to divert attention away from development priorities and building resilience.

The impacts from these accumulating global and national shocks combined with limited land and water resources are felt widely, particularly in rural communities, where dependency is high, and where alternative sources of food are limited. Hence, on the top of the revised global priority list, should come the meaningful engagement with key stakeholders – farmers and smallholders who are at most risk and are the best agents of change. Recommend solutions for transforming the combined role of land and water in global food systems should also include Embracing innovation and technology being a fundamental element in enhancing management options and in increasing productivity and production levels. The transition can't also be achieved without proper planning and management of land, soil, and water resources through effective governance that promotes sustainable management for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life for all, leaving no one behind.

The North East and North Africa (NENA) Region, where most of the Arab World located, is the most land- and water-scarce region of the world, with 0.16 ha of cropland per capita, against a global average of 0.20 ha per capita in 2018 and per capita water availability at 9 percent of the global average. The agriculture sector is an important pillar of the economy in the region, contributing 14 percent of regional GDP (excluding the oil-rich countries) and providing employment to 38 percent of the economically active population. NENA is also one of the world's regions predicted to be most affected by climate change, which is already altering crop productivity and growth cycles (SOLAW-NENA, 2022). To address these challenges, future agricultural production will need to be transformative,

becoming more productive and sustainable, focused on farming systems and crops that most efficiently use water resources. An increase in innovative approaches in response to the impacts of climate change is urgently required, and climate-smart practices must be scaled up and out.

In light of the above, in June 2022, FAO launched its newly *Inter-Regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity (iRTP-WS): A Gate Way to Coping with Water Scarcity*, to advance water-related action by fostering the interoperability of interventions and by synergizing initiatives, sectors, and approaches at all levels and scales. The iRTP-WS aims towards identifying current gaps in innovation that can facilitate a real transformative change in water and agriculture management under the unprecedented impacts of climate change by specifying clear-sighted trade-offs. It also aims to pinpoint possible means for enhancing systems preparedness for water and climate-related challenges through effective governance, capacity building, and E-learning.

This proposed session aims to discuss actionable, replicable, and scalable integrated, Water, Agriculture, and Climate Nexus approaches that will contribute to FAO newly established *Inter-Regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity (iRTP-WS) Work Programme*, by adopting interconnected systems thinking that embraces Complexity, Innovation, and Partnerships. A whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is the hallmark of this Platform that will be a key highlight of the event in addressing the following guiding questions:

1. Exploring ways to advance the work of the regional and national actors in the Water, agriculture, and climate Communities to fortify the security of our water resource with a clear notion of how and where to intervene?
2. Flagging the main water, food, and climate-related issues at the ground level that need further attention in research and innovation.
3. Suggesting proper advocacy mechanisms to advance multi-level inclusive governance and participation. (i.e., national and local government, rural communities, the private sector, and governance that empowers women, youth, and communities in decision making.
4. Identifying entry points to support regional and global efforts concerning standardization of methods, identification of gaps, upscaling of investments, and mobilization to funding resources.

