

## **UN CSD 13 INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING**

**New York, 2 March 2005**

### **POLICY OPTIONS FROM THE FARMERS GROUP**

**by the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)**

#### **Farmers are proactive and aware of the challenges ahead**

Agriculture is called upon to double its production capacity over the next 25 years, from essentially a deteriorating resource base, to feed an additional 1.5 billion people by 2025. Farmers will have to use the best practices available to produce "more food crop per drop". This represents a huge challenge and farmers are willing to move towards such action. Investments in suitable and appropriate technologies are needed especially, to meet such a huge demand.

#### **Need to balance rural agricultural and urban strategies**

There is an urgent need to develop both rural and urban agriculture strategies, at the same time. In particular, setting objectives for rural water use planning including agricultural water needs are badly needed.

#### **Develop incentive measures for farmers to demonstrate the benefit of adopting water efficiency practices**

There is an urgent need to convince farmers, as stewards of water and land, on the benefits of water use efficiency strategies in their daily activities. Farmers should be considered as and remain the key players and given the opportunity and the right to be involved in policy formulation and decision making processes through water boards and other participation frameworks related to the management of water (e. g water boards in the Netherlands, water user associations in Tunisia). Farmers will therefore have the sense of ownership and responsible on the ability to change the way they deal with the management of the water resources.

Indeed, stewardship programs aiming at rewarding farmers for the services they provide for a more efficient and priority use of the water resources are essential e. g Applying water audits to agricultural operations in the UK, which shows how and why water is being used and how to increase water efficiency without compromising water quality. Farmers have to be given a preferential treatment to be able to do it. Right mechanisms ought to be put in place and adapt to different local conditions e.g public support to the farmers to upgrade traditional technologies for well restoration and control of water quality in Finland.

#### **Developing transferable technology mechanisms and the role of action research**

The issue of meeting the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals is closely linked to the question of transferability of appropriate technologies without using the same model every where.

The real issue is how to find appropriate ways to scale up existing experiences and apply them in countries facing various local conditions. Therefore, extension services play an important role in this regard. The role of the research and scientific community is important in the sense that more applied research should be developed in collaboration with farming communities to meet their

particular needs. Therefore, on-farm research should be developed in collaboration with farmer individuals (e. g Swedish success story on catchment pesticide management in Sweden). This kind of experience should be applied in developing countries too. The international donor community has an important role to play in terms of building the financial capacities of national authorities to overcome this challenge.

**All stakeholders must be included** in water management processes, should include farmers and other stakeholders. Awareness programs are therefore important, in particular directed to women in agriculture given their crucial role in food production and family health e.g installation of water supply points and their maintenance management by women in India as an example.

**Key role of agriculture and farmers in water quality enhancement and control** One of the key tools to managing the water resources more effectively is enhancing water quality. There is a need to highlight the key role of agriculture in the use of safe drinking water, which is not exclusive to urban areas. Quality of water is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Its protection has thus to be shared by all stakeholders. It is important to build voluntary agreements between public authorities, regional and local water utilities or stations on the one hand and farmers on the other hand to protect the quality of water.

Farmers already play an important role in water harvesting, reuse of waste water, water harvesting methods. . e.g the development of farmers water quality management groups: a voluntary farmers initiative in Sweden, Drip irrigation in Kenya: a cost effective method for small farmers, The Zai system: a traditional system of water conservation.

**Need for an integrated approach and better coordination between international and national donors** should be adopted to deal with water issues. National and regional water resource policies should be linked with other initiatives with similar approaches, and they should be linked to international agreements and processes related to environment, development, finance and trade. For instance, IFAD, FAO, the World Bank and so forth, for more efficiency in project development implementation as well as in resource mobilisation.

**Innovative partnerships does not mean total privatisation of the water resources, Farmers recognise the usefulness of private public partnerships. Partnerships** between the farmers, the private sector and water rights authorities: example of farmers of "Zirking" (Upper Austria) and the water supply company "Fern was servorsorgung Miih1viertel"

They should finance the working and maintenance of distribution systems. However, particular attention should be given to meet the particular needs of the rural poor who are unable to pay for accessing the water resource. Therefore, public authorities ought to assume the responsibility of ensuring equitable access to water to marginalised populations. Also, the role of the international donor community is crucial in this regard. Therefore, water issues and in particular access to this resource should be systematically included in Poverty reduction strategies and programs.