



National Consultations on Water, Food Security and Nutrition

Final report of National Consultation on Water, Food  
Security and Nutrition

*Ethiopia*  
*August 2015*

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*Group members discussing the HLPE Report*

## Highlights of the Ethiopia report

The Ethiopian national consultation group workshop was held on 11 August 2015 to discuss, interpret and assess the HLPE's recommendation from the Ethiopia's standpoint and give forward directions. The recommendations were evaluated as robust and timely; considering the available land and water resources for the envisaged targets and the challenges faced due to uneven spatial and temporal availability of water and multi-faceted accessibility problems.

The HLPE report and its recommendations are believed to address Ethiopia's national position on water and food security in the broader context of Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus. The consultation group members were selected from different agencies, which could represent water for food security and nutrition at national level. Participants were provided with the relevant materials and documentation including the HLPE's recommendations and guiding questions prepared by the facilitator.

Opening remarks were given by Dr. Tena Alamirew, Deputy Director General for Water and Land Resources Center (WLRC) of Ethiopia and Secretary of the Secretariat of Ethiopia Water Partnership (EWP). Keynote address was given by Mr Patrick Safari, Regional Coordinator of GWPEA; who gave a brief background about the SDG's and UN post 2015 Development Agenda Process. The official opening was made by Mr Abiti Getaneh, Chairman of Ethiopia Country Water Partnership (ECWP). He also gave an overview and country background on water for food security and nutrition, as well as MDG achievements.

The facilitator presented the HLPE's report and participants were requested to reflect and comment on the report. After discussion in the plenary, participants were then organized into four groups, where each group was focusing on recommendations by the HLPE Report, by assessing their relevance to the national context, taking into considerations Ethiopia's priorities and needs. Each group was also requested to assess relevance/opportunities and implication related to the implementation of each recommendation. The workshop was conducted in a participatory approach by looking at the opportunities and relevance of HLPE's recommendations in the context of Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus in Ethiopia. For each recommendation guiding questions were provided to the groups. Finally, each group made presentations on its findings, relevance/opportunities and implication, during the plenary for further discussion.

The participants were grouped into four groups to discuss recommendations and their implications as proposed by HLPE. The four groups were requested to review and comment on the report focusing on 1) Water, ecosystem and food: management and conservation, 2) integrated development and gender in water for FSN, 3) Technology and cross-cutting issues in water for FSN, 4) Water governance in water for FSN.

All groups found the HLPE recommendations to be relevant to the country and assessed the good opportunities that the recommendations can offer and contribute to the sustainable management of water resources in Ethiopia, its strong alignment with the envisaged green growth economy and Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II).

## Implications for the implementation of recommendations

The implications for implementing eight recommendations areas are summarized as follows:

**Recommendation 1: Ensure sustainable management and conservation of ecosystem for the continued availability, quality and stability of water for FSN**

- Improved coordination among sectors
- Better enforcement of laws and awareness
- Improved synergy between ecosystem and water policies
- Implementation of systematic monitoring and regulatory systems

**Recommendation 2: Ensure an integrated approach to water for FSN**

- Help to make multi-sectoral and inclusive strategies and promote multiple water uses
- Possibility of integration of irrigation water management in the broader water management activities
- Better interpretation and enforcement of laws and regulations
- Stable and working policies and strategies
- Clarity of mandates, and institutional re-arrangement

**Recommendation 3: Prioritize the most vulnerable and marginalized, including mainstreaming gender and addressing the specific needs of women**

- Help to address different cultures and traditions
- Will enhance participation of stakeholders
- More commitment by administrative organs
- More targeted strategies

**Recommendation 4: Improve water management in agriculture and adapt agricultural systems to improve their overall water efficiency and productivity, and their resilience to water stresses**

- Strengthen research and development
- Improved technology options in adaptation will be generated
- Mainstreaming climate change adaptation
- Improved water use efficiency

**Recommendation 5: Improve the contribution of trade to “water for FSN”**

- Strengthen integrated institutional and policy framework for collaborative engagement of trade, water, agriculture, investment, industry...
- Water allocation and utilization of water for food production in trade agreement will be integrated
- Sustaining water and food security
- Attracting commercial investment

**Recommendation 6: Devise and share enhanced knowledge, technologies and management tools related to water for FSN**

- Strengthen capacity of research for development
- Computing capacity in water resource management will be developed
- Accurate and enhanced quality of data and data-processing
- Improved linkage between technology, research, development agents, development users

**Recommendation 7: Foster, inclusive and effective governance of water for FSN**

- Translation of policies in to practice and resource mobilization
- Capacity improvement for river basin and watershed authorities
- Development of conflict management system
- Harmonization of management of multiple water use
- Integrated management between upstream and downstream communities

**Recommendation 8: Promote rights-based approach to governance of water for FSN**

- Prioritizing water use right among stakeholders
- Integrating conventional and customary laws on water use right
- Recognizing trans-regional nature of most of the rivers and differences on constitutional right among countries
- Addressing gender and water governance and use right
- Incorporating water use right in river basin authorities, water user associations and watershed management

### Comments specific to the country

The HLPE's recommendations for water for FSN are believed to be relevant for Ethiopia with strong and positive implications. There are lots of opportunities to adopt the recommendations that can be nurtured for successful achievement. Existence of policies and strategies and regulatory tools with regard to water resources management, river basin and watershed management, climate change adaptation, green development, agricultural management, food investment, and existence of international and regional supporting institutions are few of the opportunities in implementation of the recommendations. Meanwhile, there are challenges that may slowdown the progress of attaining SDG goals. These include: lack of integration between institutions, lack of capacity, trans-boundary nature of many of the rivers, fragmentation of water use systems.

Ethiopia's economy is one of the fast growing economies in the world. This national growth stage can be considered as best opportunity for integrating water for FSN in different respective institutions. The national consultation group on Water and Food Security in the Broader Context of Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus in Ethiopia confirmed the applicability of HLPE's recommendation in Ethiopia's context. The emerging institutions and strategies; like capacity building institution in water management, nutrition, irrigation management, REDD+, trans-boundary negotiation, and GTPII, all can serve as means for implementation of HLPE's recommendations.

## About the overall initiative

**2015 is a milestone with the new UN Sustainable Development Goals and the COP 21 on Climate Change in Paris. Building on the recent report on Water produced by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, Global Water Partnership Africa (GWP) partners are joining forces to contribute to sustainable development in the face of climate change. This initiative, planned for five years, will, in an inclusive manner, identify challenges and implement relevant concrete activities at all levels.**



Country Water Partnerships (CWPs) in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe decided to seize the opportunity created by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to engage further with Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) to make a tangible contribution at country level.

As a first step, these CWPs took the May 2015 HLPE report, explained it to country water and FSN stakeholders and facilitated a national dialog on HLPE recommendations against country priorities. The second step was to convene national workshops with interested stakeholders for more than 200 concerned ministers, farmers organizations, CSOs, and development partners on urgent needs and priority actions to be taken to impact the functioning of the Water Energy Food Ecosystems nexus for better livelihoods.

### **Next steps: elaboration and implementation of the program**

With its “SDGs preparedness facility”, its Water and Climate Development Program, and with partners, GWP will coordinate the elaboration in 2016 and then the implementation of a 3 years program addressing technical and institutional country-identified priorities in the context of CFS resolutions and the COP 21 agenda for solutions.

**Contents**

Acronyms .....vi

1. Introduction ..... 1

2. HLPE’s recommendations in Ethiopian context ..... 2

3. Means of implementation for achieving the recommendations in Ethiopia ..... 8

Annexes ..... 10

    Annex 1. List of Participants ..... 10

## Acronyms

AGOA	The African Growth and Opportunity Act
AU	African Union
CFS	Committee for Food Security
COMESA	The Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy
CWP	Country Water Partnership
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
DAG	Development Assistance Group
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EA	Eastern Africa
EIWR	Ethiopian Institute of Water Resources
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
EWP	Ethiopia Water Partnership
EWTI	Ethiopian Water Technology Institute
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
GERD	Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
GWP	Global Water Partnership
GWPEA	Global Water Partnership for Eastern Africa
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IDRRISI	IGAD Drought Risk Reduction Strategy Initiative
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoFE	Ministry of Forestry and Environment
MoWIE	Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WLRC	Water and Land Resources Center

## **Status of Water and Food security in the broader context of Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus in Ethiopia: National Consultation on Water for Food Security and Nutrition**

### **1. Introduction**

The coverage of potable drinking water has been improved from 17% to 77% between 1990 and 2015 in Ethiopia. However, the coverage of protected terrestrial and marine environment has improved only from 17.7% to 18.4% in the years between 1990 and 2012. Such achievement will be hurdles for the sustainability of future water management with regard to water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus in the country. On the other hand, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which are targeting sustaining and filling the gaps of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) will be an opportunity for the country to build upon.

In recognition to SDGs, which are apt to water and food security, UN's Committee for Food Security (CFS) has assigned High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) to produce a report on Water for Food Security and Nutrition (FSN). HLPE report released in May 2015 with multiple action based recommendations, which explore the multiple linkages between improved water management, food, energy and ecosystem. The recommendations are aimed to help concerned actors/nations to improve water management, improve agricultural and food systems, improve water governance, maximizing the contribution of water for food security and nutrition now and in the future. The recommendations are presented to be evaluated by respective country's consultation group before the 42<sup>nd</sup> plenary Session of CFS in October 2015.

In line with this, the Ethiopian national consultation group workshop was held on 11 August 2015 to discuss, interpret and assess the HLPE's recommendation from the Ethiopia's standpoint and give forward directions. The recommendations were evaluated as robust and timely; considering the available land and water resources for the envisaged targets and the challenges faced due to uneven spatial and temporal availability of water and multi-faceted accessibility problems. The HLPE report and its recommendations are believed to address Ethiopia's national position on water and food security in the broader context of Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus. The consultation group members were selected from different agencies, which could represent water for food security and nutrition at national level (see Annex 2 for list of participants and respective agencies).

Participants were provided with the relevant materials and documentation including the HLPE's recommendations and guiding questions prepared by the facilitator.

Opening remarks were given by Dr. Tena Alamirew, Deputy Director General for Water and Land Resources Center (WLRC) of Ethiopia and Secretary of the Secretariat of Ethiopia Water Partnership (EWP).

Key note address was given by Mr Patrick Safari, Regional Coordinator of GWPEA; who gave a brief background about the SDG's and UN post 2015 Development Agenda Process.

The official opening was made by Mr Abiti Getaneh, Chairman of Ethiopia Country Water Partnership (ECWP). He also gave an overview and country back ground on water for food security and nutrition, as well as MDG achievements. The facilitator presented the HLPE's report and participants were requested to reflect and comment on the report. After discussion in the plenary, participants were then organized into four groups, where each group was focusing on recommendations by the HLPE Report, by assessing their relevance to the national context, taking into considerations Ethiopia's priorities and needs. Each group was also requested to assess relevance/opportunities and implication related to the implementation of each recommendation. The workshop was conducted in a participatory approach by looking at the opportunities and relevance of HLPE's recommendations in the context of Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus in Ethiopia. For each recommendation guiding questions were provided to the groups (Annex 1). Finally, each group made presentations on its findings, relevance/opportunities and implication, during the plenary for further discussion.

This report presents the overall assessment of HLPE's recommendation by the consultation group in the following three sections.

## **2. HLPE's recommendations in Ethiopian context**

The participants were grouped into four groups to discuss recommendations and their implications as proposed by HLPE. The four groups were requested to review and comment on the report focusing on 1) Water, ecosystem and food: management and conservation, 2) integrated development and gender in water for FSN, 3) Technology and cross-cutting issues in water for FSN, 4) Water governance in water for FSN (Annex 1). Two recommendations were discussed by each in two-cycles – one on relevance/opportunities, the second on implications.

All groups found the HLPE recommendations to be relevant to the country and assessed the good opportunities that the recommendations can offer and contribute to the sustainable management of water resources in Ethiopia, its strong alignment with the envisaged green growth economy and Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II).

The overall discussion outputs are summarized as follows:

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure sustainable management and conservation of ecosystem for the continued availability, quality and stability of water for FSN**

This recommendation is found to be very much relevant to Ethiopia's context as the demand of the fast growing economy and the effort to reverse the food insecurity situation is requiring increased use of the water resources. The following are main issues raised:

### **Opportunities/Relevance:**

- Help to improve Institutional arrangement and capacity building
- It is in line with existing policies and strategies but demand their enforcement
- It is in harmony with existing nation-wide watershed management activities
- Ethiopia's standard in tourism industry and initiative on ecotourism
- It demands the filling of implementation gaps among different sectors to

### **Implication:**

- Improved coordination among sectors
- Better enforcement of laws and awareness
- Improved synergy between ecosystem and water policies
- Implementation of systematic monitoring and regulatory systems
- Strong linkage between research and development
- Helps to multiple/appropriate technology application
- Enhanced green growth development approach will be

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure an integrated approach to water for FSN**

Integrated approach is believed to be one of the lacking components of water development efforts in the country. For this reason and successful implementation of the SDGs this recommendation that promotes ensuring an integrated approach is found to be vital. In relation to this, the following key issues are raised:

### **Opportunities/relevance:**

- Support the upcoming nutrition related policies and strategies
- Help to effectively implement strategies involving procedures of implementations, approaches and methods
- Can be linked to expansion large scale sugar plantation
- Can be done at different administrative levels

### **Implications:**

- Help to make multi-sectoral and inclusive strategies
- Possibility of integration of irrigation water management in the broader water management activities
- Better interpretation and enforcement of laws and regulations
- Stable and working policies and strategies
- Clarity of mandates- defined responsibility for different levels of irrigation management. (At present the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is responsible for small scale irrigation, while Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE) for large scale irrigation)

- Institutional re-arrangement- federal/regional agencies roles, among sector institutions
- Multiple water use

**Recommendation 3: Prioritize the most vulnerable and marginalized, including mainstreaming gender and addressing the specific needs of women**

**Opportunities/relevance:**

- Government commitment in addressing problems of marginalized communities will be ensured
- Enhancement of women's participation
- Civil societies working at grass root level of different communities
- The role of women in water and other natural resource management will increase

**Implications:**

- Help to address different cultures and traditions
- Will enhance participation of stakeholders
- More commitment by administrative organs
- More targeted strategies
- Development of society

**Recommendation 4: Improve water management in agriculture and adapt agricultural systems to improve their overall water efficiency and productivity, and their resilience to water stresses**

Apart from the wide spread moisture problem, problem associated with agricultural water management is a prevalent and growing problem of the country's agricultural development. In this regard, this recommendation is one of the focus areas at different levels of development. The participants raised the following key opportunities and implications related to this recommendation.

**Opportunities/Relevance:**

- Existing adaptation mechanisms and strategies for climate change
- Emerging research and education institutes; Ethiopian Water Technology Institute (EWTI), WLRC, Ethiopian Institute of Water Resources (EIWR)
- Existence of strategies like; Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM)
- Establishment of national board on irrigation management

**Implications:**

- Strengthen research and development
- Improved technology options in adaptation will be generated

- Mainstreaming climate change adaptation
- Multiple technologies approaches and practices and integrated approach in agricultural water management will be adopted
- Tackling problem of efficiency and productivity in irrigation and hydropower
- Improved water use efficiency

### **Recommendation 5: Improve the contribution of trade to “water for FSN”**

Coupled with other development challenges, poor market linkage, both to local and international markets, and lack of market information system is hampering agricultural growth and diversity. This leads to less productivity of water. Improving the contribution of trade to “water for FSN” is believed to reverse this scenario.

### **Opportunities/relevance:**

- Prevalence of strong commitment to international trade institutions and trade for FSN
- Foreign policy, which gives primacy to economic diplomacy, has enabled Ethiopia to have diverse bilateral and multilateral economic agreements and relationships with several countries and regions that have played a vital role in the rise in its trade relationship with other trading partners
- Consideration of virtual water use and consumption standards of food production and nutrition in trade and investment regulation
- Awareness by different institutions about benefit sharing mechanisms; like Ecosystem Services system, insurance for FSN
- Existence of biodiversity and trade law
- The market potential and opportunity from The Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa (COMESA) and Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU, The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the EU Free Trade
- Growing number of consumer society/middle income category

### **Implications:**

- Strengthen integrated institutional and policy framework for collaborative engagement of trade, water, agriculture, investment, industry...
- Established engagement with regional cooperation
- Water allocation and utilization of water for food production in trade agreement will be integrated
- Sustaining water and food security
- Attracting commercial investment
- Improved capacity to information management and exchange service

**Recommendation 6: Devise and share enhanced knowledge, technologies and management tools related to water for FSN**

**Opportunities/relevance:**

- Strong engagement of commercial enterprises in supporting research funding/financing for development
- Opening of new universities and research institutions

**Implications:**

- Strengthen capacity of research for development
- Computing capacity in water resource management will be developed
- Better monitoring and regulatory database
- Increased research and experimental tests in relation to water-food nexus
- Accurate and enhanced quality of data and data-processing
- Improved linkage between technology, research, development agents, development users

**Recommendation 7: Foster, inclusive and effective governance of water for FSN**

This recommendation is more relevant at present and the future to come than the backward water development level of the past. Unless inclusive and effective governance of water is in place, as per this recommendation, it will be difficult to ensure equity and sustainable growth. Therefore, this recommendation is very much relevant to Ethiopia's situation.

**Opportunities/Relevance:**

- Existence of water and water related policies and strategies at national level
- Trans-boundary water policy
- Existence of The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)'s initiative regarding trans-boundary water governance
- Ecosystem conservation initiatives for the purpose of water resource management
- Establishment of river basin and watershed authorities
- Experience on restructuring of institutions and revision of policies
- Awareness and initiatives on water governance training

**Implications:**

- Translation of policies in to practice and resource mobilization
- Ownership of ecosystem conservation
- Capacity improvement for river basin and watershed authorities
- Development of conflict management system
- Harmonization of management of multiple water use
- Integrated management between upstream and downstream communities

- Lack of policies at regional level
- Fragmented management of irrigation and hydropower
- Lack of professionals in trans-boundary negotiations

**Recommendation 8: Promote rights-based approach to governance of water for FSN**

**Opportunities/Relevance:**

- Land tenure system in the country is contentious, “recommendation 8” is relevant to clarify this
- Existence of gender based and traditional water use system
- Political commitment towards fostering people’s right
- Existing water policies and strategies

**Implication:**

- Clarifying the relation between land security and land tenure
- Prioritizing water use right among stakeholders
- Integrating conventional and customary laws on water use right
- Recognizing trans-regional nature of most of the rivers and differences on constitutional right among countries
- Addressing gender and water governance and use right
- Incorporating water use right in river basin authorities, water user associations and watershed management
- Improved media coverage on water for FSN



*Photo: Participants discussing the HLPE recommendations during the break out session and presenting their view on plenary*

### 3. Means of implementation for achieving the recommendations in Ethiopia

The inter-institutional coordination is the basic means for implementation of the recommendations. However, the existence of institutions, policies and strategies by itself is a first step. Best experiences from implementation of the Millennium Development Goals can also be used as spring board. Apart from existence of institutions and experiences to scale up from the MDG, the following initiatives and collaborations are believed to serve as means of implementation of HLPE recommendations in Ethiopia.

- Experiences gained from the implementation of the completed programs and plans such as Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) (2005-2010) Growth and Transformation Plan I (GTP I) (2011\_2015) and the beginning of GTP II (2016\_2020) facilitates the implementation the HLPE recommendations.
- The provision from African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the EU Free Trade (Everything but Arms) also create an opportunity to enhance the contribution of trade to “water for FSN”
- Presence of African Union (AU), United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and coordinated effort from The Development Assistance Group (DAG) comprising 28 bilateral and multilateral development agencies
- Relatively increasing donor financing and government budget allocation
- Nationwide trainings and workshops have been undertaking on integration of climate change adaptation and green development in every sector. There are also established projects like Sustainable Land Management (SLM) under Ministry of Agriculture, Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) under Ministry of Forestry and Environment (MoFE), which can be exploited for mainstreaming water and ecosystem.
- Government’s initiative towards landscape integrated policy framework. Once this framework is established, it can be used to integrate water-energy-food-ecosystem applications
- Initiative to implement Land and water based development approaches for agricultural production systems and the drought prone lowland parts of the country will give a means for application of integrated water-food approach. The nationwide annual voluntary watershed development initiative, which is involving millions, is also a focus area to be scaled up.
- Collaboration with international and regional research institutions which have offices in Addis Ababa; like International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)... can help the facilitation of implementation of the recommendations

- The iconic role of Grand Renaissance Dam (GERD) for the water development sector to be emphasized and completion of large and green power generating plants will boost the Water-Energy-Ecosystem-Food Security nexus and boost the rural economy, leading to diverse livelihood

Although there are the above mentioned conducive means of achieving objectives of the HLPE recommendations, there are still the following major bottlenecks that need to be addressed starting from the onset of the SDG period:

- Limited implementation capacity; manifested in the form of limited skilled manpower, funding and material resources
- Fragmented efforts and lack of coordination and integrated approach
- Inadequate institutional arrangement and duplication of mandates
- Inadequate enforcement level of policies and strategies, especially in areas of water resources and environment
- Lack cross-sectoral and integrated use and management of water resources development;
- Climate variability and drought, and poor forecasting and prediction system

## Conclusion

The HLPE's recommendations for water for FSN are believed to be relevant for Ethiopia with strong and positive implications. There are lots of opportunities to adopt the recommendations that can be nurtured for successful achievement. Existence of policies and strategies and regulatory tools with regard to water resources management, river basin and watershed management, climate change adaptation, green development, agricultural management, food investment, and existence of international and regional supporting institutions are few of the opportunities in implementation of the recommendations. Meanwhile, there are challenges that may slowdown the progress of attaining SDG goals. These include: lack of integration between institutions, lack of capacity, trans-boundary nature of many of the rivers, fragmentation of water use systems.

Ethiopia's economy is one of the fast growing economies in the world. This national growth stage can be considered as best opportunity for integrating water for FSN in different respective institutions. The national consultation group on Water and Food Security in the Broader Context of Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem nexus in Ethiopia confirmed the applicability of HLPE's recommendation in Ethiopia's context. The emerging institutions and strategies; like capacity building institution in water management, nutrition, irrigation management, REDD+, trans-boundary negotiation, and GTPII, all can serve as means for implementation of HLPE's recommendations.

## Annexes

### Annex 1. List of Participants

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