Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture

Felix Reinders
Agricultural Research Council-Institute for Agricultural Engineering

The global framework for action to cope with water scarcity in agriculture in the context of climate change—in short, the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG)—is a Partnership established in April 2017 and hosted by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Land and Water Division in Rome, Italy, consisting of government agencies, international organizations, research institutions, advocacy groups and professional/membership organisations to support measurable, significant and sustainable progress on improving and adapting agricultural systems in conditions of increasing water scarcity and a changing climate, using the combined expertise and resources of the Partners.

WASAG is designed to bring together key players across the globe and across sectors to tackle the collective challenge of using water better in agriculture to ensure food security for all. It is an initiative for partners from all fields and backgrounds to collaborate in supporting countries and stakeholders in their commitments and plans related to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and other plans and programmes related to agriculture and water.

It furthermore fosters collaboration among partners for the development and deployment of policies, strategies, and programmes, enhancing field capacity for the adaptation of agriculture to water scarcity. WASAG uses context-specific approaches and processes tailored to specific circumstances and needs, including support for the formulation of transformational projects. WASAG is a fast-growing network that has more than 65 partners engaged in implementing projects and formulating new ideas to jointly address the increasing pressure of global change on water scarcity in agriculture.

WASAG's vision is “A world whose food systems are secure and resilient to increasing water scarcity in a changing climate” with the objective to urgently address the following important and relevant work areas at international and country levels: Advocating for political prioritization. Cooperating on work programmes. Sharing and disseminating knowledge and experience. Developing new or improved solutions. Promoting sustainable and integrated water resources management. Building capacity of Partners and countries and other Stakeholders. Contributing to consistent monitoring systems.

Newly appointed chair of WASAG Felix Reinders from the ARC-Institute for Agricultural Engineering, South Africa, has
been elected as the new Chair of WASAG for a period of two years (2020-2022). Felix Reinders is the President of the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage and served as President of the South African Irrigation Institute, the President of the South African Institute of Agricultural Engineers and the South African National Committee on Irrigation and Drainage.

He is a Professional Engineer, registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa and completed his Engineering studies in 1979 at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

He specialises in Water resources management and Irrigation engineering in the Agricultural and Civil Engineering field, including research, design, training, and mentoring.

WASAG major role player

In reflection of the creation and achievements of the WASAG it can be said that since WASAG’s launch in 2017, it has been established and grown into an excellent Framework and partnership that has been endorsed and supported at various international fora. WASAG has played and continues to play a role in many global and regional events, bringing partners together, advocating and giving greater visibility and political attention to water scarcity and agriculture.

More can be read about WASAG on: http://www.fao.org/land-water/overview/wasag/en/

AgriAbout would like to congratulate Felix on his appointment and thank him for making time in his busy schedule to write for us on a regular basis. - Editor