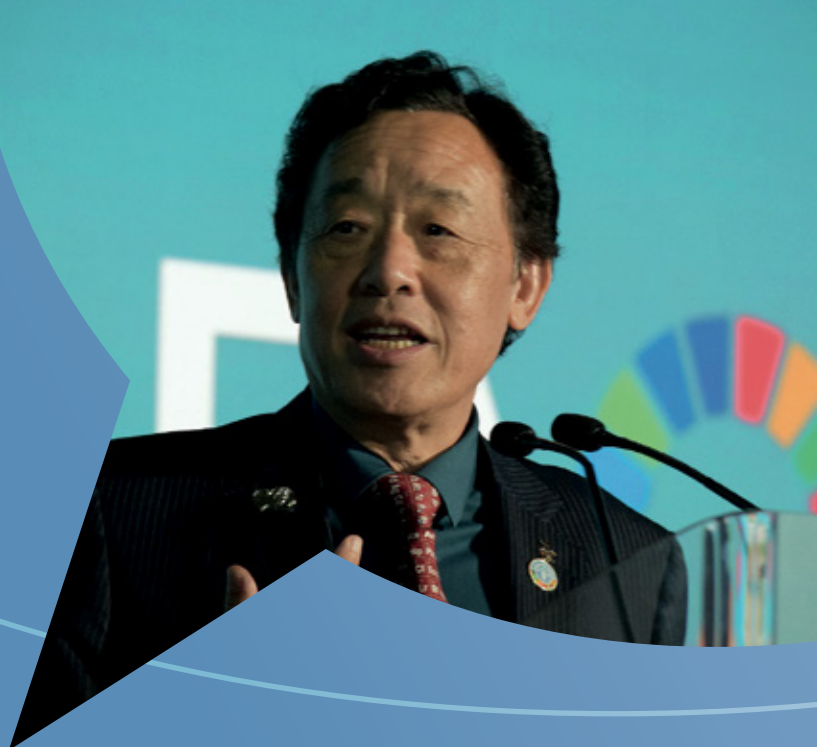




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Report of the **High-Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG**

THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK ON WATER SCARCITY
IN AGRICULTURE



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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Opening Ceremony | 4 |
| Establishment of the Member-led WASAG Steering Committee | 7 |
| The Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture | 11 |
| WASAG Strategy for 2025–2031 | 18 |
| Dates and venues of next meetings | 22 |
| Closing Ceremony | 24 |
| Conclusions and way forward | 26 |
| Annex 1: Detailed programme of the event | 27 |
| Annex 2: Speeches from the countries delivered during the opening ceremony | 29 |
| Annex 3: Organizational chart | 35 |
| Annex 4: Youth Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture | 36 |
| Annex 5: Recording and photos of the event | 38 |



INTRODUCTION

Water scarcity is one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century and affects the agricultural sector more than any other. Droughts are already a major cause of crop failures in many areas of the world and cause acute food insecurity crisis in vulnerable countries. With the world population reaching around 10 billion in 2050, we need to produce 50 percent more agrifood products than in 2012, which will require at least 20 percent more water (SOLAW, 2021). The changing rainfall patterns and warming climate put at risk the food security and the livelihoods of farmers and people worldwide.

In response to these challenges, the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), a partnership hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), was officially launched at the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in November 2016 in Marrakech, Morocco, and subsequently endorsed by 83 ministers in charge of agriculture during the 9th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in January 2017 in Germany.

At the Second WASAG International Forum held in February 2023 in Praia, Cabo Verde, participants, through the Praia Call for Action, recommended that:

i) all Member Countries are invited to become partners of WASAG; ii) a Member Country will be designated to Chair WASAG, starting with Cabo Verde; iii) FAO convenes, every two years in its headquarters in Rome, a Dialogue on WASAG with all Member Countries; and iv) the WASAG Forum is convened in Praia every other second year to provide space to partners and stakeholders for sharing solutions and progress towards tackling water scarcity in agriculture.

In response to these recommendations, FAO included WASAG as one of its eight commitments to the Global Water Action Agenda at the United Nations (UN) 2023 Water Conference, brought water scarcity and WASAG to the Rome Water Dialogues



and the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference, set up the inter-Regional Technical Networks on Water Scarcity, mobilized resources and implemented regional water scarcity initiatives such as the Water Scarcity Programme for Asia and the Pacific region and the Water Scarcity Initiative for the Near East and North Africa region.

The event, *Towards a High-Level Dialogue on WASAG – Technical Preparatory Meeting*, took place from 29 to 30 April 2024 with approximately 600 people attending both in-person and virtually, with 82 countries represented. The event discussed priorities for WASAG for the period 2025–2031, reviewed the proposed new WASAG operating mechanisms, especially establishing a Member-led steering committee and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), shared knowledge and experiences on addressing water scarcity in agriculture, and provided inputs to a draft Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture for further consultation with Members.

FAO is strongly advocating for the integrated management of land, soil and water resources. The first edition of the Rome Water Dialogue (RWD) in November 2022 and the second edition of the RWD which took place in October 2023, hosted by FAO, provided a milestone on such an integrated approach and holistic actions towards the UN Resolution, *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) and launched the new FAO Water Journey. At its 43rd Session, the FAO Conference approved the biennial theme, 2024–25 – *Water resources management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, to achieve the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*, highlighting the crucial importance of water to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and FAO's organizational commitments towards a food and water secure world. In this context, it was decided that the third edition of the RWD would be part of the 2024 World Food Forum from 14 to 18 October 2024.

Building on the outcomes of the WASAG Technical Preparatory Meeting of April 2024, the event, *High-Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG – The Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture*, took place on 17 October 2024 and attracted around 400 participants, both in-person and virtually, consolidating and scaling-up the WASAG partnership onto a greater level of visibility, commitment and impact.



OPENING CEREMONY

The event, moderated by Lifeng Li, Director of the Land and Water Division (NSL) of FAO, started with a cultural performance by the children's choir Piccolo Coro di Piazza Vittorio from the Donato School in Rome. The moderator introduced WASAG and its calls for more collaboration to find solutions to the challenges of water scarcity in agriculture.

The high-level speakers were then invited to join the moderator on stage.

In his opening remarks, FAO Director-General QU Dongyu welcomed the audience to the High-Level Rome Water Dialogue, reminding of the challenges caused by water scarcity and the importance of water. He stated that the dialogue was an important step and opportunity to reflect on the progress made and “map the road ahead”. He reaffirmed the value of WASAG for FAO’s work, since WASAG was an inclusive component of the FAO Water Journey, being one of the eight commitments that FAO made to the Water Action Agenda at the UN Water Conference in New York in March 2023 and part of FAO’s contribution to the UN wide strategy for water and sanitation. He called for the transformation of the water scarcity challenge into an opportunity that would contribute to the four betters (better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life), while “leaving no one behind”.

A video message by H.E. José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva, the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde, was then presented to the audience. During his video, the Prime Minister congratulated FAO for its continuous leadership and for the strategic vision it had shown on promoting global dialogues on one of humanity’s greatest

challenges: water scarcity. The Prime Minister stated that the Praia Call for Action, adopted during the Second WASAG International Forum in February 2023 reinforced Cabo Verde's conviction in the importance of collective and effective action. Cabo Verde would continue to be at the forefront of promoting innovative and sustainable solutions to address the challenges of water and energy, adapted to the country's climatic conditions.

The Prime Minister nominated the Minister of Agriculture and Environment, H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva to represent the Government of Cabo Verde and made opening remarks on his behalf. The Minister greeted everyone and congratulated FAO for organizing the high-level event. He mentioned that the increasing water scarcity in agriculture, exacerbated by climate change, called upon all to accelerate the implementation of solutions that allowed us to overcome its harmful effects and favour the sustainability of agrifood systems. He highlighted that WASAG, under the leadership of FAO and in partnership with countries and specialized organizations, offered a great opportunity to address water scarcity and put solutions in place. The Minister reaffirmed Cabo Verde's commitment and support to WASAG. A few solutions implemented to manage water scarcity in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) were presented, including the circular water economy approach, through the safe reuse of treated wastewater in agriculture, the desalination of seawater for agricultural production, and the drip irrigation systems and hydroponics. Some other objectives and areas of focus were also mentioned, such as increasing the country's investments in renewable energy, reinforcing the water–energy–food–environment nexus, improving agrifood systems, and reinforcing the food and nutritional security, while including nature conservation, especially biodiversity, and productive inclusion policies associated with poverty elimination and increased opportunities for women and youth. Cabo Verde called on other Member States and partner organizations to join and ensure greater political support to WASAG, through mobilizing more financing, more knowledge sharing, greater innovation and technology transfer. This would reinforce fruitful cooperation and achieve global and country objectives in terms of increased agricultural production in a more effective and supportive way, that guaranteed food and nutritional security. The Minister stated that policies were only effective if integrated with the strengthening of water governance, technical training, and the promotion of innovative, efficient and intelligent production practices. He presented WASAG as an opportunity to accelerate the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda.



Following the interventions of QU Dongyu, the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde and the Minister of Agriculture and Environment of Cabo Verde, along with representatives of several countries and UN agencies, were invited to give some remarks. The remarks were delivered by:

- H.E. LI Guoying, Minister for Water Resources, China;
- H.E. Meike van Ginneken, Special Envoy for Water, Kingdom of the Netherlands;
- Andreas A. Gregoriou, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus;
- H.E. Youssef Balla, Permanent representative of Morocco to the UN organizations in Rome, Morocco;
- H.E. Krisztina Bende, Ambassador, Permanent representative of Switzerland to the UN organizations in Rome, Switzerland;
- Andrea Rocchi, President of CREA on behalf of H.E. Francesco Lollobrigida, Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty and Forest, Italy; and
- Alvaro Lario, Chair of UN-Water, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (by video message).

The speeches delivered by the country representatives can be found in Annex 2.





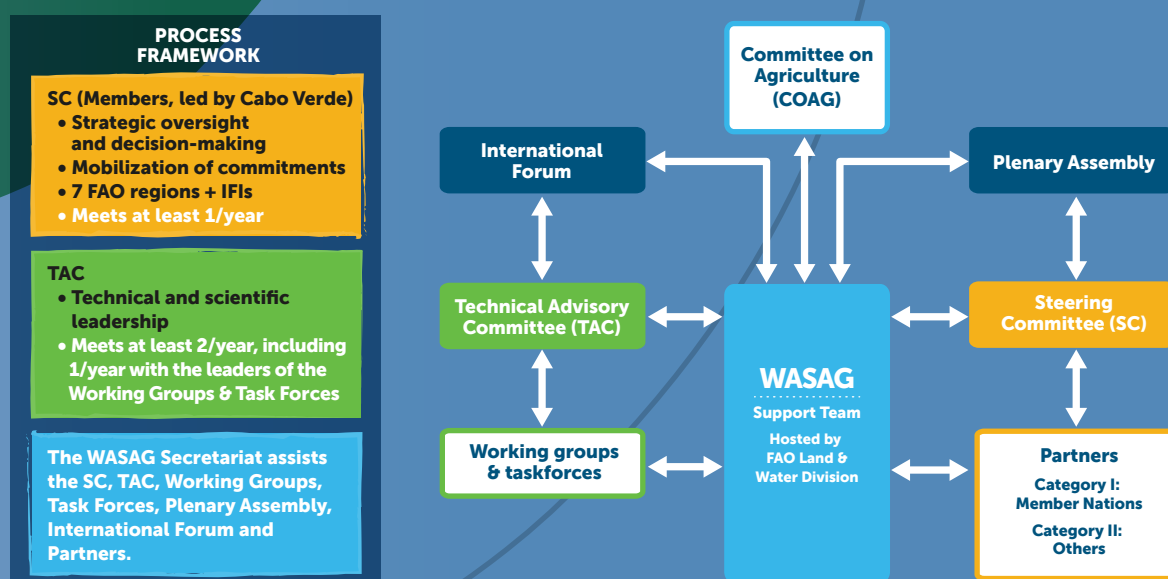
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MEMBER-LED WASAG STEERING COMMITTEE

Following the projection of the [WASAG video on water scarcity in agriculture](#), H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment, Cabo Verde was invited to moderate the Establishment of the new WASAG Steering Committee session, representing the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde, H.E. José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva, the new Chair of the WASAG Steering Committee.

Lifeng Li, Director of NSL, FAO, made a presentation explaining the outcome and results of the nomination process of the members of the steering committee.

The WASAG preparatory meeting held in April 2024 presented the idea of the establishment of the new WASAG Steering Committee. FAO posted the call for expression of interest to join the WASAG Steering Committee with its draft terms of reference (ToR) on the FAO Members' Gateway. Consultative meetings were organized with FAO regional groups, during which the role and the nomination criteria of the WASAG Steering Committee were explained. As a background, the organizational chart in Figure 1 was used to present the new proposed operating mechanism of WASAG under which a Member-led Steering Committee would be established, along with other operating organs.

FIGURE 1. Organizational chart presenting the proposed operating mechanisms of WASAG



Source: WASAG, FAO (2024).

Note: WASAG's Plenary Assembly, Steering Committee and partners on the left side of the chart are WASAG decision-making bodies, while the International Forum, the TAC, working groups and taskforces on the right side of the chart are technical arms that provide technical suggestions and produce knowledge products to the WASAG Partnership.

The WASAG Secretariat, hosted by FAO NSL, had the responsibility to report the activities of WASAG to the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and seek guidance from COAG. The purpose of the new WASAG Steering Committee was to ensure ownership by countries, strategic oversight and mobilization of commitment. Once established, the steering committee would meet at least once a year. Steering committee members, including the Chair and Vice-Chairs, could serve for one term of two years, renewable for a second term of two years, and should not serve for more than two consecutive terms. The steering committee was composed of 17 members ("the steering committee members"), as follows:

- twelve FAO Member Nations representing seven geographical regions (two seats each for Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East; and one seat each for North America and the Southwest Pacific);
- two seats representing international financial institutions (IFIs);
- a Chair; and
- FAO and the Chair of the TAC as permanent *ex officio* steering committee members.

Two Vice-Chairs representing gender and geographical balance were also elected from among the members by the steering committee members.

The new steering committee members shown in Table 1 had been nominated by respective FAO regional groups since 20 August 2024. Six of the seven regional groups nominated members of the new WASAG Steering Committee, with H.E. José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva, Prime Minister of Cabo Verde as the Chair, and H.E. Meike van Ginneken, the Special Water Envoy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as the Vice-Chair. A member from the Southwest Pacific would be nominated and a second Vice-Chair would be designated at a later stage. The steering committee members would decide on which IFIs to invite to join the steering committee. The TAC would then be established, along with the TAC Chair, who, when elected, would join the steering committee as *ex officio*.



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TABLE 1. Composition of the WASAG Steering Committee members

| Region | Country | Name | Comment |
|---|---|--|-------------------|
| Africa | Cabo Verde | Prime Minister J. U. de Pina Correia e Silva | Chair |
| | Morocco | | |
| | Zimbabwe | | |
| Asia | India | | |
| | Indonesia | | |
| Europe | Switzerland | Ambassador, K. Bende | |
| | Kingdom of the Netherlands | Water Envoy, M. van Ginneken | Vice-Chair |
| Latin America & the Caribbean | Honduras | | |
| | Mexico | | |
| Near East | Egypt | | |
| | Jordan | | |
| North America | United States of America | | |
| Southwest Pacific | To be nominated | | |
| International financial institutions (IFIs) | IFI 1 (To be nominated by FAO Member Nations) | | |
| | IFI 2 (To be nominated by FAO Member Nations) | | |
| FAO (Land and Water Division) | NSL Director | | <i>ex officio</i> |
| Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) | Chair to be elected by TAC | | <i>ex officio</i> |

The moderator, H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, invited all the participants to congratulate the members of the WASAG Steering Committee with applause, as well as applaud H.E. Meike van Ginneken, Special Envoy for Water of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in accepting to serve as the Vice-Chair of WASAG.

The moderator also expressed gratitude to the outgoing steering committee for the outstanding work that they carried out on a voluntary basis, exemplifying the spirit of WASAG. The WASAG Secretariat had prepared certificates that would be given to each one of the outgoing steering committee.



THE ROME DECLARATION ON WATER SCARCITY IN AGRICULTURE

This segment of the event was moderated by H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment of Cabo Verde, during which the draft Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture was presented to the attendees.

The Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture is a non-binding text that highlights the urgency to address water scarcity and water stress, particularly in the agriculture and food sectors. It commits to strengthening collaboration at all levels and mobilizing greater political support and resources to address the effects of water scarcity on global food security. It also recognizes FAO's key role in continuing to lead and host WASAG and in providing day-to-day support for its effective functioning and operational management.


Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture

Adopted during the High Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG | the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture, 17 October 2024

We, the Ministers, Heads of Delegation and partners of the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) assembled in Rome on the occasion of the High Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG on 17 October 2024,

Acknowledging that water scarcity and water stress, exacerbated by climate change, are one of the challenges of the twenty-first century, especially for the agriculture and food systems, and that droughts and some drought responses are contributing to crop failures





in parts of the world and an acute food insecurity crisis in vulnerable countries; moreover, changing rainfall patterns, including resulting droughts, floods, increasing water pollution and deteriorating water quality, and a warming climate put at risk the food security, water security, and the livelihoods of farmers and people worldwide,

Further acknowledging that, to satisfy the increasing demands of the world population reaching around 10 billion in 2050, more water and improved water efficiency will be required to build inclusive, resilient, climate-smart and sustainable agrifood systems,

Highlighting that integrated water resources management should be the core process to address both quality and quantity aspects of sustainable water management,

Stressing the vital importance of maintaining and restoring healthy ecosystems and natural resources for the multiple goods and services that they provide to support livelihoods and water security, and that more sectors – in addition to agriculture – are equally affected by water scarcity and climate change and competing for more water in the future,

Recognizing that forests and trees are vital elements of the water cycle and contribute to better quality, quantity, and timing of water provision, while reducing water-related risks, such as flooding, soil erosion, and drought,

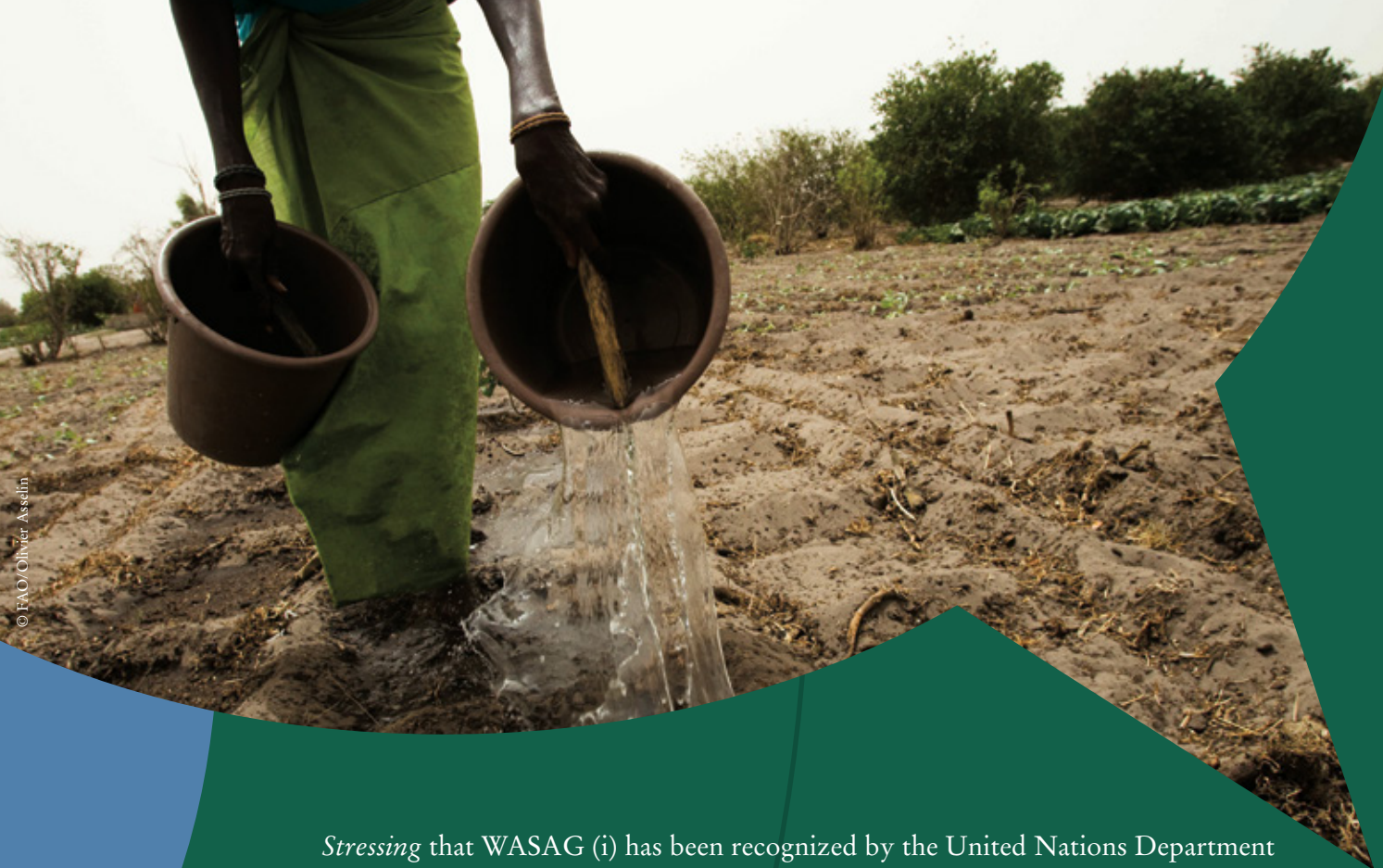
Highlighting the importance of aligning FAO's contribution with efforts to address water scarcity in agriculture and with broader international frameworks and commitments, including the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the achievement of the SDGs, and the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation,



Recognizing that, in response to the above challenges, the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), a partnership hosted by FAO, was officially launched on the margins of the twenty-second Conference of the Parties (COP22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in November 2016 in Marrakech, Morocco, and subsequently endorsed by 83 ministers in charge of agriculture in January 2017 during the ninth Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA),

Recognizing that the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP13) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in September 2017 in Ordos, China, invited Parties to UNCCD to consider WASAG as a knowledge-sharing partnership to help countries develop their drought preparedness plans,

Appreciating that (i) in 2018, the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) supported WASAG as a key coordination mechanism to adapt water scarcity in agriculture due to climate change both at national and global levels, in a sustainable and inclusive manner, and requested FAO to report to COAG periodically on the progress of the partnership, (ii) in 2020, COAG further requested that WASAG continue to support countries facing water scarcity challenges in agriculture, (iii) in 2021, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) acknowledged WASAG as one of the examples of initiatives disseminating its policy recommendations, (iv) in 2022, COAG recommended FAO, in close collaboration with relevant UN agencies, to initiate a “Global Dialogue on Water Tenure”, and (v) in 2023, CFS requested FAO to establish guiding principles for the responsible governance of water tenure,



Stressing that WASAG (i) has been recognized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) as a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Accelerator, (ii) is one of the 18 programmatic initiatives in document C 2023/30 of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference – water resources management for the four betters being the biennium theme for 2024–2025 –, (iii) has been included in the Rome Water Dialogues, and (4) has been included as one of FAO’s eight commitments to the Global Water Action Agenda at the UN Water Conference in New York in March 2023,

Appreciating the support for WASAG by many countries, partners, the increasing membership and the valuable contributions as illustrated by the achievements of WASAG,

Recognizing the importance of a science–policy interface and the opportunity offered by WASAG to connect technical experts and policymakers a for a greater impact at all levels,

Recognizing that FAO set up an Inter-regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity, mobilized resources and implemented regional water scarcity initiatives such as the Water Scarcity Programme for Asia and the Pacific region and the Water Scarcity Initiative for the Near East and North Africa region,

Welcoming FAO’s Value-Added Impact Area (VAIA) initiative on Addressing Water Scarcity in Agriculture and the environment (AWSAMe) – in support of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31 – promoting indigenous, drought-resilient and nutritious crops¹, as well as saline agriculture, efficient water-saving agriculture and application of water -saving irrigation technology to cope with water scarcity,

Considering capacity building, technology development and deployment, and financing as cross-cutting enablers for addressing water scarcity issues worldwide,

Recognizing the need to ensure the effective participation of youth, women, Indigenous Peoples and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in WASAG,

Recalling that, during the Second International Forum of WASAG held in February 2023 in Praia, Cabo Verde, the Praia Call for Action recommended that: “i) all Member Countries are invited to become partners of WASAG; ii) a Member Country will be designated to Chair WASAG, starting with Cabo Verde; iii) FAO convenes, every two years in its headquarters in Rome, a Dialogue on WASAG with all Member Countries; and iv) the WASAG Forum is convened in Praia every other second year to provide space to partners and stakeholders for sharing solutions and progress towards tackling water scarcity in agriculture”²,

Noting that these recommendations need to be effectuated in concrete modalities of work and decision-making of WASAG,

Recognizing the discussions during the event “Towards a High-level Dialogue on the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) – Technical Preparatory Meeting” organized on 29–30 April 2024 at FAO headquarters in Rome, and the inputs received from FAO Member Nations,

We intend to translate our policy commitments into policy approaches, plans and actions by:

1. **Confirming** that WASAG is available for partnership with all FAO Member Nations to engage in and collaborate on identified priorities and solutions to address water scarcity in agriculture,
2. **Committing** to mobilize greater political support for an enabling environment (policies, legal and institutional frameworks, access to financing) and responsible water governance to address the effects of water scarcity and climate change, including both floods and droughts, on global food security, to create sustainable, resilient and inclusive agrifood systems, and to position agriculture at the core of international climate change discussions,
3. **Transforming** the current WASAG coordination mechanism into a FAO Member-led Steering Committee to provide strategic guidance on the work of WASAG,



4. **Establishing** a Technical Advisory Committee, representing the different groups of WASAG partners to provide technical advice to the FAO Member-led Steering Committee, the WASAG Secretariat and the WASAG partners, and promote collaboration among partners,
5. **Requesting** FAO to convene a WASAG Plenary Assembly every second year in its headquarters in Rome, starting from 2026,
6. **Inviting** a FAO Member Nation to host every second year a WASAG International Forum – preferably on a rotating basis among regions – for WASAG partners to share experiences and advance the knowledge base,
7. **Strengthening** collaboration among FAO Member Nations and partners on addressing water scarcity in agriculture, including on policy approaches, legal and institutional frameworks, investments, data, information and knowledge-sharing, and in collaboration with water, environment, or other ministries with connection to water resources,
8. **Supporting** greater collaboration at global, regional and national levels, including through ongoing mechanisms, such as the Regional Water Scarcity Programmes/Initiatives, the Inter-Regional Technical Platform on Water Scarcity (iRTP-WS), and other initiatives by partners, to better support countries,
9. **Calling** resource partners to provide voluntary resources to support the work of WASAG for greater impact at all levels,
10. **Welcoming** FAO's key role in continuing to host WASAG and providing day-to-day support for its effective functioning and operational management, including periodical reporting to FAO governing bodies.





After presenting the declaration, a brief discussion on the proposal took place, starting with a statement from a representative from the United States of America, who highlighted the importance of water for life and thanked FAO for its leadership and vision throughout the development of the Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture. The representative stated that the United States of America believed that the Rome Declaration would serve as a solid foundation for WASAG and work going forward to collaborate further with FAO and other countries on WASAG. An intervention from a representative from Paraguay followed, mentioning that the Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture referred to the concept of water tenure, which was a terminology that had not been integrated in international treaties, nor in the domestic legislation of some of the Member States, including Paraguay. The representative therefore stated that Paraguay could not adopt the current Rome Declaration.

The Rome Declaration was then adopted by the ministers, heads of delegations and partners of WASAG that were gathered in the Plenary Hall.

WASAG STRATEGY FOR 2025–2031

After the presentation and adoption of the Rome Declaration of Water Scarcity on Agriculture, the Minister of Agriculture and Environment of Cabo Verde invited the newly elected Vice-Chair of the WASAG Steering Committee, H.E. Meike van Ginneken, Special Envoy for Water of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to moderate the sessions that followed, starting with the presentation of the WASAG Strategy for 2025–2031.

WASAG team leader and Senior Land and Water Officer Ruhiza Jean Boroto introduced the roadmap of the WASAG Strategy for 2025–2031, starting with the WASAG vision, “A world whose food systems are secure and resilient to increasing water scarcity in a changing climate” and WASAG’s mission, which was:

To support measurable, significant and sustainable progress on improving and adapting to sustainable agricultural systems in conditions of increasing water scarcity and a changing climate, using the combined expertise and resources of the partners.

He also presented the four WASAG pillars:

1. Catalysing policy development;
2. Expanding research and technical innovation;
3. Supporting capacity building at country level; and
4. Mobilizing increased investment.



The current delivery mechanisms of WASAG were also presented, through the six WASAG working groups and the taskforces. The working groups are as follows:

1. drought preparedness;
2. financing mechanisms;
3. saline agriculture;
4. sustainable agricultural water use;
5. water and nutrition; and
6. water and migration.

The new taskforces (first introduced during the Second WASAG International Forum) were also presented, including ecosystem-based solutions, dryland agriculture, drought-resilient crops, unconventional sources of water, and farmer-led irrigation development were led by WASAG partners.

The important cross-cutting themes that would need to be considered in the new WASAG Strategy were communication, gender, youth, and governance. In the past steering committees, the youth and gender themes were reflected by both Vice-Chairs.

To show the role of the working groups in WASAG's operations, the organizational chart with the proposed operating mechanisms of WASAG was presented again (Figure 1). The linkages between the FAO Strategic Framework for 2022–2031 and the WASAG Strategy for 2025–2031 were also presented (see Figure 2 in Annex 3), demonstrating that the four betters were critical to the work of WASAG.

The proposed roadmap for the WASAG strategy 2025–2031 was started in February 2023 during the Second WASAG International Forum, followed by the technical preparatory meeting of the High Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG, which permitted the presenting of the preliminary outline of the strategy. The adoption of the Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture was also part of the roadmap of the new strategy – although the declaration might need to be refined in the future to be aligned with the strategy – as well as the review of vision, mission, theory of change, priorities, hybrid model, working groups and taskforces through targeted consultations between October 2024 and February 2025. Consultations would take place in February 2025 before a review of the first



draft of the WASAG Strategy by the TAC for quality control in April 2025, which would then be submitted to the WASAG Steering Committee in June 2025, aiming for its adoption during the second half of 2025.

Comments from WASAG partners followed, starting with former members of the WASAG Steering Committee. The former Chair of WASAG, Felix Reinders, congratulated the new WASAG Steering Committee and the outgoing members of the steering committee, wishing the best to FAO and WASAG on this new chapter. WASAG partner and executive director of the Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute (DWFI) at the University of Nebraska, the United States, Peter McCornick, thanked Land and Water Director, Lifeng Li, and the WASAG Secretariat for their support in allowing WASAG to evolve through challenges such as the COVID 19 pandemic. He stated that WASAG partners remained committed to the WASAG process and its support. Outgoing WASAG Vice-Chair for gender, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, also thanked the WASAG Secretariat for their work, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the outgoing steering committee, hoping that gender would be high on the agenda in the new Member-led Steering Committee. Outgoing WASAG Vice-Chair for youth, Stephane Lako, thanked FAO for supporting WASAG, as well as all committed partners engaged in the framework. He also thanked the outgoing steering committee for its collaboration and inclusion of youth.

Youth representatives also intervened on behalf of the World Food Forum's Youth Assembly to share their perspectives following the consultations regarding the Youth Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture. They stated that they were committed to co-creating urgently needed solutions in the domain of sustainable agricultural water use. The youth called for immediate concrete action considering the ongoing water crisis, to ensure that future generations could inherit a world where water and land resources were managed sustainably and the agrifood systems were safeguarded. The youth representatives presented the Youth Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (see Annex 4).

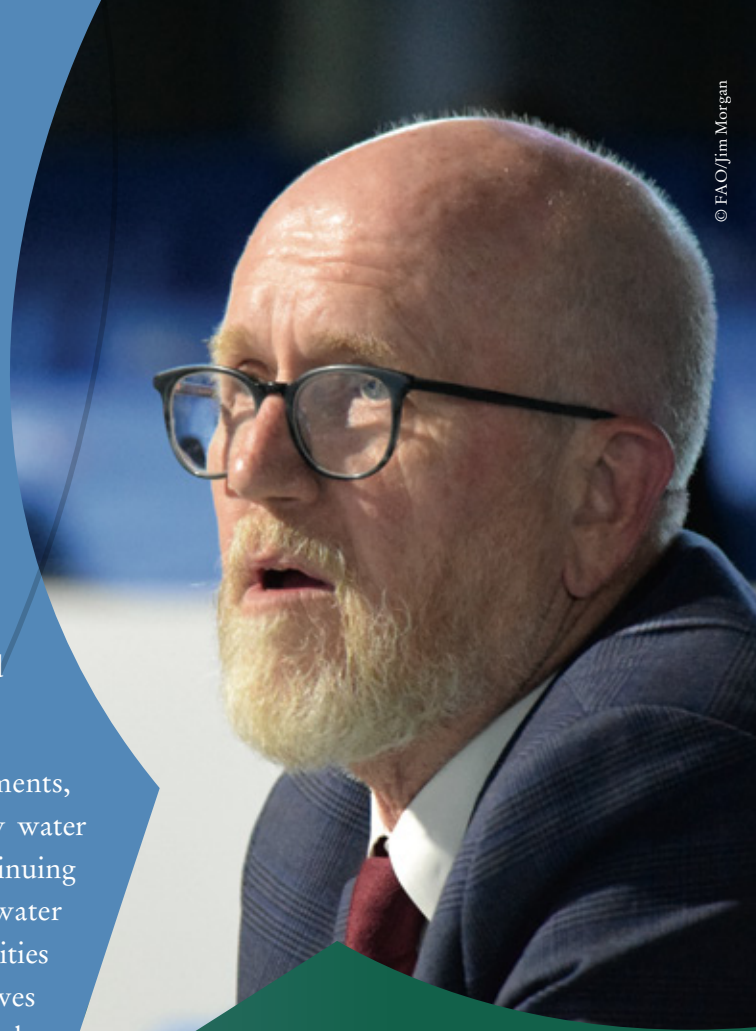
The Dutch UN youth representatives on biodiversity and food closed the session with a powerful intervention on the political role of water as the center of our food-systems. The youth representatives reminded the audience that through agroecological practices, water-savings could be achieved, using practices that improved water retention in soils, helped communities withstand climate shocks, conserve water, protect water quality and support biodiversity, such as drought-resilient plants, smart irrigation, agroforestry, and rainwater catchments. They stressed that youth should be active contributors and would inherit the consequences of today's decisions. Giving youth a seat at the table empowered them to co-create solutions that were resilient, innovative and just. The Dutch youth representatives congratulated



the work done so far by the Water Youth Network and echoed their message for more youth participation through collaboration across all conventions. They stressed that youth perspectives on water scarcity should be fully integrated into knowledge sharing, policy and decision-making processes, and called for more integrative approaches that addressed interconnections between water, food, biodiversity and climate, which dictated the survival and death of ecosystems and communities.

However, they also highlighted that governments, corporations and international institutions “carry water in one hand and fire in the other”. By continuing subsidies for, and investments in industrial water intensive agricultural models, vulnerable communities were being abandoned. The youth representatives stressed that water scarcity would not be addressed unless food systems and power structures that controlled them were fundamentally changed.

They reminded the audience that water was a common good and not just a resource. It needed to be shared equitably between all beings and future generations as a fundamental human right and not wielded as a weapon of war by governments, or extracted from communities and ecosystems by powerful, global corporations. The youth representatives gave the example of France, where mass protests against mega water reservoir projects took place, and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where water had been used as a mean to control the population for decades, stating that “today, a safe drop of water that can be drunk is barely left in Gaza”. They concluded their intervention by stating that the High Level Water Dialogue was a stark reminder that “water isn't just technical, it is political”, and that it was everyone’s responsibility to ensure that water was accessible for all, especially the most vulnerable.





DATES AND VENUES OF NEXT MEETINGS

As the moderator of this session, H.E. Meike van Ginneken, the Vice-Chair of the WASAG Steering Committee, invited Jean Ruhiza Boroto, Senior Land and Water Officer and the Leader of WASAG Secretariat, FAO NSL to give the presentation of the dates and venues of the next meetings, including the WASAG International Forum and the WASAG Plenary Assembly. The first and second WASAG International Forums took place in Praia, Cabo Verde in 2019 and 2023, hosted by the Government of Cabo Verde and other partners (Switzerland, Italy). Cabo Verde had offered Praia as the capital city of WASAG. The forums would be hosted on a rotational basis by other Members with Cabo Verde as co-host and host by default if no other Member offered to host the forum. The participants in the room applauded Cabo Verde for its offer.

The Third WASAG International Forum would be in 2025. Members were welcome to submit the expression of interest in hosting the Third International Forum to the WASAG Secretariat (NSL-Director@fao.org and Water-Scarcity@fao.org). Decisions on the host of the future WASAG International Forum would be taken at the Plenary Assembly of the previous year at the latest. The WASAG Plenary Assembly of WASAG was organized for Members and partners to convene, take stock of WASAG progress and agree on priorities for the next two years. It would take place every second year, starting from 2026, in FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy. The Rome Water Dialogue of that year would consist of the WASAG



Plenary Assembly. The date of the First Plenary Assembly would be decided by the WASAG Steering Committee during its first meeting, considering the calendar of the three Rome based UN agencies.

The moderator thanked the Secretariat for the clear presentation and highlighted that Members who wished to offer to host the Third WASAG International Forum in 2025 were welcome to contact the WASAG Secretariat. The WASAG Steering Committee, with the support of the Secretariat, would keep Members and partners updated on the date of the First Plenary Assembly in 2026.



CLOSING CEREMONY

The closing ceremony was moderated by Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director General. She congratulated H.E. José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva, the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde for agreeing to serve as the new Chair of the WASAG Steering Committee and invited the Minister of Agriculture and Environment of Cabo Verde to deliver closing remarks on behalf of the Prime Minister.

H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment of Cabo Verde reviewed the efforts and collaborations in the past on addressing water scarcity in agriculture and expected a bright future with tremendous opportunity. He congratulated the steering committee members for their election and thanked them for their commitment. He thanked all WASAG partners for their dedication and thanked QU Dongyu for his leadership and the Director of FAO NSL with the WASAG Secretariat for organizing the event. He expressed the honour of the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde in chairing the WASAG Steering Committee and looked forward to the collaboration with Members and partners to make the WASAG water journey impactful, leaving no one behind.

In his final address, QU Dongyu congratulated the audience on the adoption of the Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture, which confirmed that WASAG was a partnership for all FAO Members and partners. He thanked the members who would serve on the new WASAG Steering Committee, which would ensure the highest level of political will and leadership, sufficient resources and country ownership towards an impactful WASAG in the future. QU Dongyu also expressed his gratitude to all WASAG partners for their dedication and engagement, emphasizing the importance of their contributions in making WASAG a more strategic and inclusive partnership. He called for continued contributions through the working groups, the task forces and the new TAC and assured the participants that FAO would provide continuous, dedicated and professional support to WASAG. He praised the collective efforts to transform WASAG into a country led initiative, capable of addressing one of the most pressing challenges of our time – water scarcity in agriculture.



CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The High-Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG marks a significant step forward in global efforts to address water scarcity, which is increasingly recognized as a key factor influencing food security and agricultural sustainability.

The next important steps for WASAG in 2025 are:

- the first meeting of the new Member-led Steering Committee;
- the establishment of the new TAC;
- the review of vision, mission, theory of change, priorities, hybrid model, working groups and task forces between October 2024 and February;
- the consultations that will take place in February;
- the review of a first draft of the WASAG Strategy 2025–2031 by the TAC in April;
- the submission of the drafted WASAG Strategy 2025–2031 to the WASAG Steering Committee in June; and
- the adoption of the WASAG Strategy 2025–2031 during the second half of year.

Annex 1: Detailed programme of the event

| Time (CEST [UTC+2.00]) | Draft agenda |
|------------------------|--|
| 14.00–15.00 | <p>Opening ceremony Moderator, Lifeng Li, Director Land and Water, FAO Introduction by the moderator Cultural performance Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening remarks by QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General • Video message by H.E. José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva, the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde and remarks by H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment <p>Remarks by countries and UN agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. LI Guoying, Minister for Water Resources, China • H.E. Meike van Ginneken, Special Envoy for Water, Kingdom of the Netherlands • Andreas A. Gregoriou, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus • H.E. Youssef Balla, Permanent representative of Morocco to the UN organizations in Rome, Morocco • H.E. Krisztina Bende, Ambassador, Permanent representative of Switzerland to the UN organizations in Rome, Switzerland • Andrea Rocchi, President of CREA on behalf of H.E. Francesco Lollobrigida, Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty and Forest, Italy • Alvaro Lario, Chair of UN-Water, President of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (video message) |
| 15.00–15.05 | Video on water scarcity in agriculture |
| 15.05–15.30 | <p>Establishment of the Member led WASAG Steering Committee Moderator, H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment, Cabo Verde</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the new WASAG Steering Committee • Nomination of the steering committee Vice-Chair • Dialogue and discussion on the proposals • Conclusion by the Chair |
| 15.30–15.55 | <p>The Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture Moderator, H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment, Cabo Verde</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the draft declaration • Dialogue and discussion on the proposal • Adoption of the declaration |

(Continued)

| Time (CEST [UTC+2.00]) | Draft agenda |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 15.55–16.20 | <p>WASAG Strategy for 2025–2031 Moderator, WASAG Steering Committee Vice Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction, Ruhiza Boroto, Senior Land and Water Officer, WASAG Coordinator, FAO• Dialogue and discussion• Conclusion by moderator |
| 16.20–16.40 | <p>Dates and venues of next meetings Moderator, WASAG Steering Committee Vice Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposal of the date and venue of the Third WASAG International Forum (2025)• Date of the First Plenary Assembly of WASAG (2026) at FAO headquarters• Discussion and conclusion |
| 16.40–17.00 | <p>Closing ceremony Moderator, Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Gilberto Correia Carvalho Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment on behalf of H.E. José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva, the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde by the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde• QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General |

Annex 2: Speeches from the countries delivered during the opening ceremony

The Minister for Water Resources of China, H.E. Li Guoying emphasized that, in the face of the increasingly acute situation of global grain and water security in agriculture, the FAO's initiative in hosting this dialogue was highly significant. It played a crucial role in enhancing integrated water resources management within the agricultural food system. China had undertaken a range of vigorous measures to continuously enhance water security for grain production in agriculture, including developing modern irrigation areas, promoting water conservation and higher efficiency in agriculture, strengthening science and technology in irrigation areas, and enhancing disaster prevention and reduction capabilities in agriculture. To effectively respond to the complex and profound changes in the global water resources situation, and in line with China's practice and experience, the minister advocated for building a robust scientific irrigation system, developing a robust water metering and monitoring system, establishing a robust agricultural water tariff policy framework, constructing a system of robust market mechanisms for water conservation, and enhancing technology and service systems for water conservation. The minister concluded by stressing that China supported the WASAG partnership and sought to build collaboration with other FAO Member Nations and international organizations on water resource management to share experiences and best practices in achieving agriculture and water-related targets under the UN's 2030 Agenda.

H.E. Meike van Ginneken, Special Envoy for Water of the Kingdom of the Netherlands delivered the next remark. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was a founding member of WASAG and had served on its first interim steering committee in 2017 and 2018. She stressed that the Kingdom of the Netherlands was aware that the challenges of addressing water scarcity in agriculture required collaboration for food security, nutrition, nature as well as for peace. Agriculture in the Kingdom of the Netherlands was being affected by climate change in the form of seasonal water-related issues such as water scarcity and salinization. For this reason, the country was working on developing appropriate responses together with the private sector, such as farmers, the financial sector and seed companies, as well as with research institutes and civil society. H.E. Meike van Ginneken pointed out that as rivers and ecosystems extended beyond national borders, the impacts of agriculture, biodiversity loss and water scarcity presented complex, transboundary challenges that required collective integrated action. It was necessary to break down the silos that separated

policies and approaches and embrace a holistic, international strategy. She expressed the Kingdom of the Netherlands' willingness to share knowledge and experiences as well as learn from others working on similar issues. The Kingdom of the Netherlands appreciated, and actively used, the work done by the different working groups of WASAG, focusing on capacity building and training. The Netherlands Food Partnership and the Netherlands Water Partnership, both funded by the Dutch government, collaborated with WASAG as partners. Wageningen University was looking into how the FAO's Farmers guidelines on soil and water management in salt-affected areas (prepared by the WASAG working group on saline agriculture) were applicable in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and to see how Dutch farmers might benefit from them. She highlighted that the Kingdom of the Netherlands had also collaborated with WASAG and other institutions to promote saline agriculture at three consecutive COPs of the UNFCCC and published Sustainable saline agriculture for climate adaptation and mitigation: A call for action. The Kingdom of the Netherlands supported FAO initiatives like WaPOR, which played a crucial role in measuring sustainable water management in agriculture. At the end of her remarks, H.E. Meike van Ginneken stated that the Kingdom of the Netherlands reaffirmed its commitment to support WASAG and it was time for all countries to be actively involved in WASAG through the Member-led WASAG Steering Committee, to further the multilateral actions on saline agriculture at several levels and strengthen the international collaboration towards a more impactful WASAG.

Andreas A. Gregoriou, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus, stated that the Rome Declaration emphasized the need for efficient and sustainable agrifood systems. It was crucial to adopt innovative water management practices. WASAG fostered cooperation among diverse stakeholders, encouraging the development of concrete solutions to tackle water scarcity. Cyprus recognized the importance of collective action and had made water resources management a national priority. Cyprus had hosted the European Mediterranean group MED9 (Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Spain, and Portugal) at the Agriculture Ministers' Meeting, which focused on water scarcity. During the meeting, the joint declaration had been signed by nine Mediterranean ministers and outlined five key priorities, which included sustainable water management, strengthened Mediterranean cooperation, integrated legislative approaches, and provided support for the European water resilience strategy and a water conservation culture. He stressed the importance of global collaboration and called for everyone to commit to robust and transformative actions to address the pressing water challenges in our agrifood systems.

The next remarks were given by H.E. Youssef Balla, Permanent representative of Morocco to the UN organizations in Rome. The Ambassador stated that WASAG was holding the High Level Rome Water Dialogue at a crucial time for the future of water resources and global food security in this context of climate uncertainty. He

thanked FAO for its leadership and the important role it played at the global level in ensuring the food security of populations and the efforts made to find solutions for resilience and adaptation to situations of water shortage, particularly in arid and semi arid zones. He mentioned that Morocco, like many others, was affected by water scarcity, and faced increased pressure on its water resources due to climate change, population growth and the growing water needs of various sectors, particularly agriculture, which remained a major pillar of the country's national economy. This was reflected by a downward trend in rainfall and below average cumulative rainfall, resulting in a chronic water deficit that was unprecedented compared with past periods of drought. This induced an excessive exploitation of aquifers, far exceeding the volume of water renewable annually for agricultural, commercial and domestic purposes, leading to a significant drop in the water level in these aquifers and a reduction in their water reserves.

The Ambassador added that, in some cases, this overexploitation had led to a reduction in the flow of springs, the drying up of some springs and natural lakes, and a deterioration in the quality of groundwater, as in the case of coastal aquifers. To help face this water situation, The National Drinking Water Supply and Irrigation Plan 2020-27 had been adopted, aiming to accelerate investment in the water sector to tackle the problem of water scarcity. His Excellency highlighted that the strategic direction of the country, which aimed to ensure water and food security for the population, would be put into practice through the construction of dams in the most heavily irrigated basins, as well as through a major seawater desalination programme with a target of 1.7 billion m³ of desalinated water by 2030, the implementation of major water transfer projects between water basins, and the increased reuse of treated wastewater to irrigate green spaces and golf courses.

He presented some national water and agricultural strategies and policies that Morocco had put in place to improve water management in agriculture, in particular through the conversion to efficient irrigation of farmland (2 million hectares currently irrigated and 800 000 hectares under localized irrigation), the use of renewable energy and raising farmers' awareness of water saving techniques. He stated that Morocco still faced a number of challenges when it came to implementing its structural projects, including brine management, energy costs, overexploitation of groundwater, leachate treatment, silting up of dams and reduction of evaporation. These were challenges that research and development could help resolve, through innovative solutions tailored to different national and regional contexts. He stressed that national efforts needed to be supported by greater international cooperation to disseminate best practice, transfer technologies and build countries' capacities in this field, hence the important role played by FAO and the High Level Rome Water Dialogue. He highlighted that it was imperative to recognize that the sustainable management of water resources in agriculture was not only a question of survival for many rural communities, but also a necessary condition for ensuring the resilience of food systems. This would come through

the collective commitment of adopting the Rome Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture, and a roadmap that included actions to be taken in the coming years. The Ambassador concluded by calling for ambitious proposals and commitments, and partnerships between the different institutions present during the event. He stated that “The future of water, agriculture and food security depends on it”.

The following intervention by H.E. Krisztina Bende, Ambassador, Permanent representative of Switzerland to the UN organizations in Rome, emphasized that fact that water was becoming an increasingly scarce resource. The Ambassador highlighted COAG, during which Member countries reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable water management including irrigation practices to support sustainable development, calling for more action to be taken. She mentioned the establishment of the new WASAG Steering Committee, reiterating Switzerland's commitment and candidacy. Switzerland was dedicated to promoting constructive dialogue between countries. Through the country's extensive experience in multistakeholder collaboration and recognized expertise in the water sector, Switzerland was well positioned to contribute to these important discussions and the developments of WASAG. The country attached great importance to citizen participation, making their active involvement a central pillar of the country's democracy.

She highlighted that the event provided a unique opportunity to link the two themes of youth and governance, as it was held as part of the World Food Forum 2024. She stressed the necessity to reform legal and administrative frameworks and ensure that decision making processes were more inclusive, encouraging youth organizations with expertise in water resources management to join the new TAC of WASAG, acknowledging the pioneer role that WASAG had taken in this regard, with Stephane Lako serving as the Vice Chair of the current steering committee. The Ambassador transmitted sincere gratitude on behalf of Switzerland to the Chair of WASAG, Felix Reinders, and the Vice-Chairs, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen and Stephane Lako, as well as to the former committee members for their valuable work and significant contributions to WASAG. She highlighted that "water should play a pivotal role in multilateralism, becoming a key priority in international conferences focused on health, food security, and climate change". She congratulated the new UN Special Envoy for Water, wishing her a successful mission. She ended her intervention by expressing her gratitude to FAO and the organizing team of the High-Level Dialogue on WASAG, by paying tribute to the commitment of Cabo Verde, which had played a key role in recent years, and by calling for accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation and all other relevant SDGs.

On behalf of H.E. Francesco Lollobrigida, Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty and Forest, Italy, Andrea Rocchi, President of CREA delivered his remarks. He stated that Italy, alongside the international community, had

mobilized all necessary resources and efforts to ensure proper water management in agriculture amid water scarcity, as food security and water availability were profoundly interconnected. Andrea Rocchi expressed his gratitude to QU Dongyu, for the outstanding work he had accomplished over the years and for his unwavering commitment to fostering collaboration among countries and institutions. The effort made by FAO and WASAG in helping and adapting to the ongoing challenges faced in combating water scarcity was absolutely remarkable. Italy participated in WASAG through a national coordination group that brought together the country's leading institutions and public research bodies to address water management challenges in a unified way. One key initiative from this collaboration was a project developed in partnership with FAO and Cabo Verde, which led to the creation of a technical document providing an integrated approach to irrigation system design and management, addressing agronomic, economic, engineering, and environmental aspects to enhance water productivity while preserving local ecosystems. Andrea Rocchi extended his gratitude to H.E. José Ulisses de Pina Correia e Silva, Prime Minister of Cabo Verde, as Italy had undertaken many other initiatives with Cabo Verde. He reaffirmed Italy's commitment and invited all those present to continue to strengthen international collaboration and to seize every opportunity to promote innovative and effective actions on water for sustainable development. He concluded by informing the participants that the first Euro Mediterranean Forum on Water would be held in Italy in 2026 to continue the dialogue on water.

The last intervention of the segment was by UN-Water Chair and President of IFAD, Alvaro Lario, who stated that the focus on water scarcity in agriculture of the High-Level Dialogue “reflects the desperate concerns of billions of people”. He presented some of the latest data from FAO, which showed that around 4 percent of the global population – 3.2 billion people – lived in agricultural areas with water supplies that were severely constrained. Small scale farmers – who were at the frontlines of the climate-driven crisis – produced one-third of the world's food and up to 70 percent of food in developing countries. They faced increasing water challenges, including drought and unpredictable extreme rainfall. He reminded the participants of the impacts on food systems, which were not just hunger and human suffering, but also conflict and migration, along with an increasing demand for the finite resource of water, due to the growing population. He stated that the current food and water nexus management would “underpin or undermine global public health, peace and prosperity for decades to come”. Some examples of IFAD's work were given, as follows:

- In Cambodia, IFAD was backing CAM Science, a tech startup that enabled farmers to control irrigation and track data like soil moisture and air temperature from their phones, leading to better crop yields and less water waste.

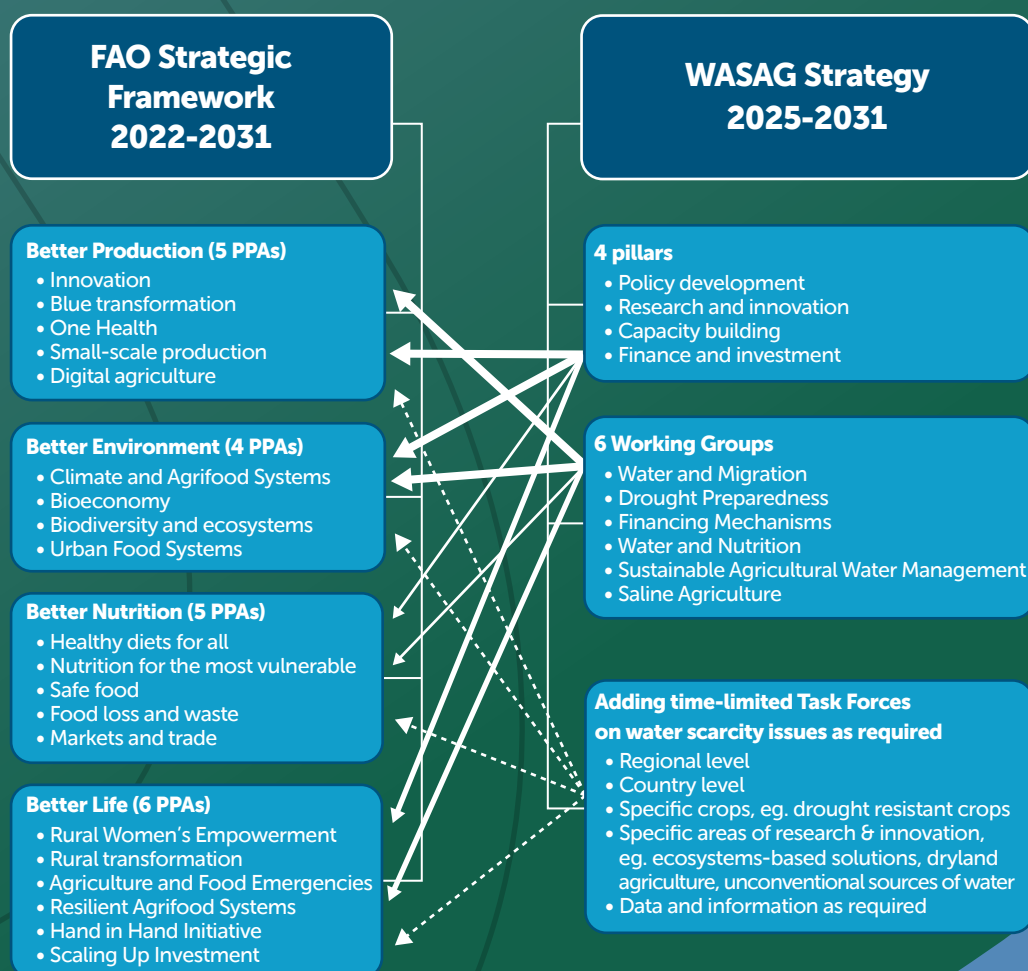
- In Mongolia, IFAD had funded the drilling of deep wells and provided training on better pasture management across six of the provinces of the arid region of the south, where water shortages had hit hard and had been fuelling tensions between pastoralist communities.

The examples illustrated how more predictable water supplies, combined with more sustainable use of that water, had decreased both competition for resources and conflict. The UN-Water Chair stated that a policy coherence was needed at all levels to drive actions that helped the most affected countries to cope with the water and food crisis, which would deteriorate without urgent action. He concluded by calling for collaboration through complementary efforts to accelerate towards a water-secure future.

The full script of the speech delivered by each country can be found [HERE](#).

Annex 3: Organizational chart

FIGURE 2. Organizational chart presenting the linkages between the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 and the WASAG Strategy 2025–2031



Source: WASAG, FAO (2024).

Annex 4: Youth Declaration on Water Scarcity in Agriculture

World Food Forum Youth Assembly

We, the youth, recognize that water is essential to life, our agrifood systems, and the future of our planet. As we are inheriting the challenges of the rapidly changing world, we are committed to ensuring that water and land resources are valued and managed sustainably to safeguard agrifood systems, ecosystems, and communities all of which are dependent on them. The cost of inaction is enormous. It is the future generations who will face even greater water scarcity unless urgent and bold actions are taken now. We are working across sectors and regions to amplify the voice of youth in decision-making, aiming to protect water – blue and green – as a fundamental right and resource for all.

The Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), a partnership hosted by FAO, provides a framework through which youth can engage to ensure that their perspectives are heard and their contribution valued. The High-Level Meeting of the Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG, where the Rome Declaration will be adopted, marks a prime opportunity for we, the Youth, to be able to share the Youth Declaration on WASAG. Taking stock of the open consultation process which involved youth from all regions worldwide through World Food Forum (WFF) Youth Assembly, a survey, and hybrid review at the WFF Flagship event. The WFF Youth Assembly presents the following call to action to FAO Members and WASAG partners:

1. Commit to strengthen the full, meaningful and effective participation of youth, women, Indigenous People and farmers, at all levels of decision-making and operation of WASAG - at local, national, regional and international levels with concrete measures.
2. Support capacity building, mentorship and training in all WASAG working areas including formal and non-formal education settings, in particular sustainable water management and governance, promoting intergenerational learning.
3. Promote outreach and structured engagement of youth representatives across programmes, technical and advisory groups of WASAG under FAO's Strategic Framework.
4. Support awareness campaigns and knowledge sharing programs that leverage digital technologies to engage and empower diverse audiences through accessible language.

5. Ensure equitable access to financial and technical resources needed to support the scaling-up of youth innovations and pilot projects in sustainable agricultural water management.
6. Facilitate platforms for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, collaboration and the sharing of best practices, with consideration of diversities; including but not limited to WFF National Chapters with the support of FAO country and regional offices.
7. Urge to recognize the particular importance of access to justice and accountability, based on a human-rights approach, ensuring youth perspectives are consulted, heard and acted upon.
8. Promote Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and ecosystem-based solutions that address biodiversity conservation/restoration, water preservation into sustainable, climate-smart, blue, green and gray water management practices.
9. Resource youth-led global, regional and local partnerships to enhance their capacity in driving and scaling solutions to address water scarcity in agriculture.
10. Foster collaboration across sectors between water, agriculture and climate communities, considering public and private actors, to address the complexities of water scarcity and agrifood systems.

Annex 5: Recording and photos of the event

The recording of the event can be watched on:

- [UN Web TV](#)
- [FAO webcast](#)

[Photo gallery of the High-Level Rome Water Dialogue on WASAG](#)

