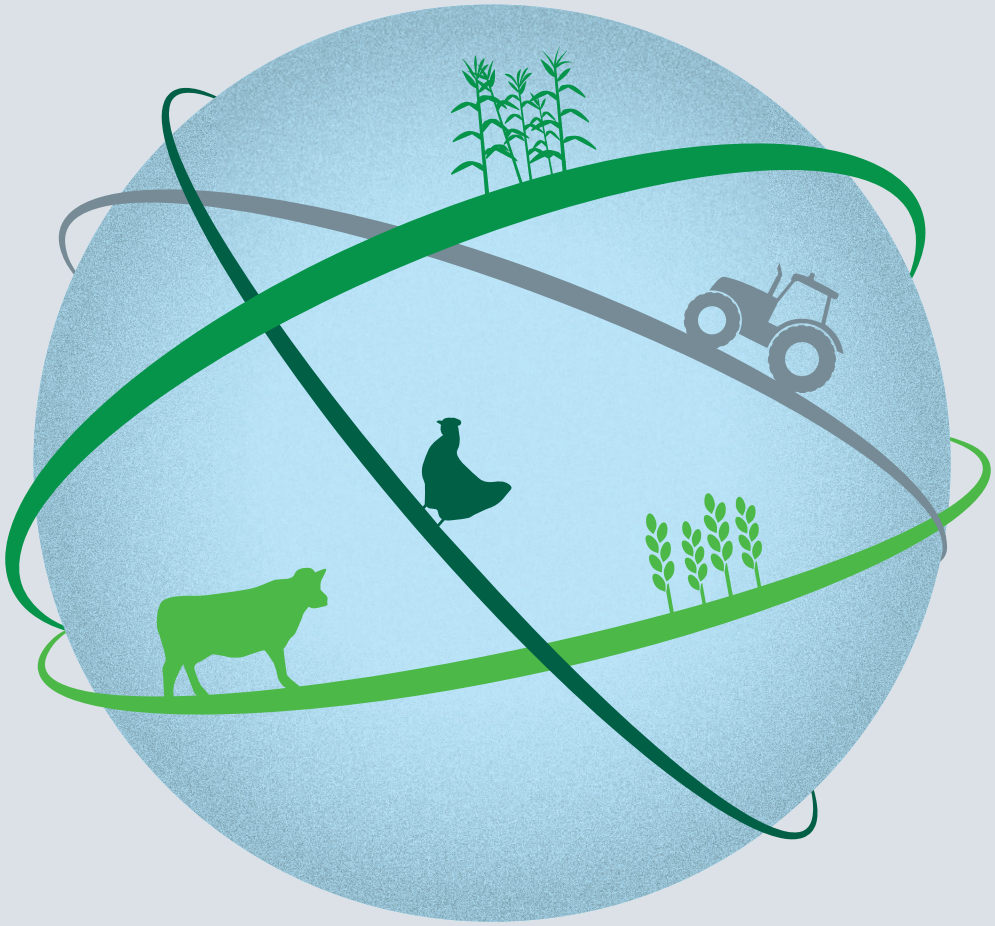
Federal Ministry
of Agriculture, Food
and Regional Identity

GLOBAL FORUM FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

18th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference

2026 Final Communiqué
Water. Harvests. Our Future.



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Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA)

Water. Harvests. Our Future.

2026 Final Communiqué

17 January 2026 - the English version is authentic

1. We, the agriculture ministers of 59 nations, have assembled on 17 January 2026 for the 18th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference on the occasion of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) to take action for greater water and food security.

2. We underline that water is crucial for all life on Earth, for our economies and for our food systems. Our farmers and fishers depend on water to ensure food security. However, water stress is one of the greatest threats of the 21st century, with more than two billion people suffering from it. At the same time, many regions are affected by heavy rainfall and flooding. These challenges are further aggravated by climate change, biodiversity loss and a growing world population, accompanied by pollution of water resources and unsustainable water consumption and management. Agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture are strongly affected worldwide by increased competition for water use, making it ever more challenging to fulfil their role of ensuring food security and nutrition and the progressive realisation to the right to adequate food. Despite large regional differences, agriculture is the largest user of water worldwide, while also playing a key role in the water cycle, including with diverse ecosystem services. For this reason, agriculture should be at the core of the sustainable management of the world's water resources. We therefore stress the urgent need to ensure that agriculture is recognised as a key actor in shaping international water policy.

3. The global community has taken the first steps towards placing water at the very top of the political agenda. This includes the historic UN Water Conference in 2023, the UN Water Action Decade (2018–2028) and the 2024-2025 FAO biennial theme on water resources management. Likewise, we welcome both the African Union's choice of water as the theme for the year 2026 and the decision to hold the Euro-Mediterranean Water Forum in 2026. We, as agriculture ministers, want to build upon the current momentum for water in the run-up to and at the 2026 UN Water Conference. In this context, we advocate for the sustainable provision and management of water for food production and nutrition and aim to strengthen the voice of the agricultural sector. We will ensure that agriculture, as the backbone of global food security, is given the necessary visibility, in line with its importance.

Call for action

Using Water Sustainably

4. We acknowledge that the sustainable management of water and agriculture is crucial for water and food security and for resilience to the growing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and to slow onset events. We therefore commit to foster water resilience and reaffirm the commitments made under key **international agreements and**

instruments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 6, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement[1], the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

5. In line with demands on water and water scarcity, we will promote the **efficient use** of water, which is key for sustainable water management, water resilience and the long-term sustainability of the use of water in agriculture, and which also contributes to maximising sustainable productivity. We will therefore support context-appropriate approaches, including smart and precise irrigation in conjunction with sustainable water management policies, water-saving technologies, sustainable soil management, alternate wetting and drying (AWD) and water reuse, including treated wastewater. At the same time, we reaffirm that water efficiency measures must fully ensure food safety and public health in line with regional and global standards and the One Health approach. We therefore encourage the use of internationally agreed guidance, including the Codex Alimentarius Guidelines for the Safe Use and Reuse of Water in Food Production and Processing (CXG 100-2023). We also commit to reduce food losses and halve waste in line with SDG 12.3, thus further improving the water footprint of global food systems.

6. We will foster sustainable water **harvesting**, **retention** and **storage** for food production, including using water infrastructure for sustainable blue biomass production. We therefore underline the importance of sustainably managing water in the soil through regenerative and conservation agriculture, agroecology and other innovative approaches, agroforestry, sustainable land management, and practices that prevent compaction and degradation and improve infiltration and soil health. We will use groundwater sustainably, giving due regard to the replenishing rates of aquifers. We underscore the relevance of nature-based solutions and climate-resilient practices, and of wetlands and other natural ecosystems in the water cycle, in buffering water availability. We see the need for investment in sustainable infrastructure, such as reservoirs, dams, pipelines, pumping stations, canals and seawater desalination and wastewater treatment plants, in line with SDG 9 to build resilient infrastructure.

7. We underscore that agriculture is also threatened by **excess water**. We recognise the importance of flood risk management and commit to take measures to counteract the negative impact of such adverse weather events. We commit to promote retention and storage facilities, such as retention basins, and to make excess rain and floodwater available for use in agriculture in a stable and sustainable manner. We acknowledge the potential of nature-based solutions, such as wetland restoration, floodplains, paddy water storage and rewilding of rivers, to prevent agricultural land and communities from flooding.

8. We underline the vital role that sustainable **forest** management and forest conservation and restoration play in the overall stability of the water cycle, with their direct influence on water quality, availability and accessibility for agricultural production and aquatic ecosystems. We remain deeply concerned about past and current high global deforestation rates, including in the context of agriculture, with their impacts on natural

[1] Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.

filtration, soil erosion, water runoff and the entire water cycle, undermining agricultural productivity.

9. At the same time, agriculture and aquaculture must contribute to further preventing and reducing **water pollution**, including from excess nutrient and chemical losses and from seawater intrusion, in order to preserve ecosystems and water resources. We strongly encourage all stakeholders to make use of existing best practices to preserve and enhance water quality, such as precision fertilisation, low-input cultures, covercropping, buffer strips and improved drainage management.

10. We commit to promote genetic diversity, plant variety protection and plant and animal **breeding** in order to enhance drought and salinity tolerance and to foster water-use efficiency. We acknowledge the importance of breeding innovations and national, regional and global breeding systems, as well as farmers' seed systems. We will foster the conservation, sustainable use, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of such resources under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture[2], the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, in accordance with the international commitments undertaken by each country, as well as other relevant instruments and institutions, such as the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

11. We emphasise the crucial role of agricultural research, innovation, artificial intelligence, digital tools, technologies and enhanced **water-related information systems** as key elements for improving the sustainability and efficiency of agricultural water use. We underscore that one of the key challenges is the lack of interoperable, decision-grade information that links water availability, agricultural performance, climate risk, and investment choices. We will strive to improve accounting and monitoring of water needs, availability and use, as well as the development of effective early warning systems, data sharing frameworks and information platforms. We also highlight the need to strengthen international cooperation in research, capacity-building and voluntary technology transfer on mutually agreed terms.

12. Recognising the scale of **investment** needed, we aim to strengthen cross-sector partnerships and mobilise and optimise public and private investments in research, development, innovation and infrastructure and to scale proven solutions. Renewable energy solutions should be explicitly recognised as key enablers of effective water management. We, as agriculture ministers, call for an adequate share of water-related investments from all sources to be allocated to food systems. We stress the important role of international organisations in mobilising innovations and finance for improved markets, employment, and resilience.

Strengthening the Blue Bioeconomy

13. In accordance with the 2025 GFFA communiqué on bioeconomy, we stress the vital role of a sustainable blue bioeconomy for all industries and sectors related to oceans, seas, coasts and lakes and their living resources. We also recognise the potential of the blue bioeconomy to enhance food security while also strengthening **income diversification** for local communities in coastal and rural areas and safeguarding traditional knowledge. We

[2] Home | International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture | FAO

commit to effectively conserve, manage, restore and sustainably use living aquatic resources and water. This includes promoting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, and improving the utilisation, processing, and value addition of products from aquatic resources in line with the FAO Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture.

14. We acknowledge that the sustainable blue bioeconomy, including improving the utilisation and valorisation of aquatic resources, may contribute to reducing the pressure on land resources and promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation and ecosystem restoration. We further acknowledge the potential of such a blue bioeconomy to safeguard environmental sustainability, conserve aquatic genetic resources, enhance aquatic biodiversity and **ecosystems** and foster sustainable water management.

15. We commit to strengthen international **dialogue** and cooperation on the sustainable blue bioeconomy through the exchange of best practices, capacity building and voluntary technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, and by addressing gaps in data, knowledge, research, innovation and technology. We stress the need to foster sustainable and inclusive blue bioeconomy value chains by harmonising governance and legal frameworks in participatory approaches in order to improve business environments.

16. We see the need to support **innovation**, development and inclusive market integration with regard to sustainably produced aquatic biomass, in particular promising but currently underutilised resources such as algae and residual raw materials from fisheries and aquaculture. We highlight the need to increase social awareness and acceptance of new blue bioeconomy products.

17. We will strive to unlock the potential of sustainable **algae** production and use for a variety of products and processes, ranging from food, food ingredients and feed to proteins, lipids, dyes, biofuels, active pharmaceutical ingredients, cosmetics, textiles, bioplastics, environmental technologies, wastewater treatment and applications in the chemical industry. We can also capitalise on the vast amount of drifted algae to create business opportunities for coastal communities, thus contributing to the circular economy. We aim to foster global cooperation and knowledge exchange to promote the sustainable use of algae.

Finding Constructive Solutions to Competing Uses

18. We underline that effective cross-sectoral and transboundary cooperation, robust legislative frameworks, strong institutions and sound strategic planning and implementation are of utmost importance to promote water resilience, sustainability and security. In this respect, we recognise the importance of integrated water resources management (IWRM)[3] at all levels. We stress that water resilience is promoted by establishing robust, transparent and participatory water allocation regimes. Coordinated actions are required between water users in order to find solutions to **competing uses** among different sectors and at the basin level. We highlight the importance of private stakeholders contributing to the sustainable stewardship of water. We will facilitate equal participation and access to water for vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples and youth,

[3] C 2023/2 - The State of Food and Agriculture: Integrated Water Resources Management, para 42

paying particular attention to the challenges faced by agricultural communities in areas of instability or climate vulnerability.

19. We stress that sustainable **water management** presents a great challenge for governments and particularly for water authorities responsible for regional and local water supply systems. In this respect, we highlight the need to establish pro-active drought strategies and clear drought contingency rules. We will strive to address cross-sectoral issues, opportunities and approaches, such as the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus[4], that help to use water resources more sustainably by identifying and reconciling competing demands on water resources. We highlight the importance of locally adapted and inclusive participatory solutions.

20. We recognise that **access to water** is crucial for food production. We take note of the FAO "Global Dialogue on Water Tenure"[5] that encourages all FAO Members to join the policy initiative in order to support context-specific, equitable, timely and safe access to water resources.

21. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly recognised the human rights to water and sanitation[6]. The sufficient, safe and reliable availability of water for drinking and other uses is indispensable for human welfare. We underscore that jointly **ensuring water and food security** delivers wider benefits, including preventing social unrest and decreasing migration pressure.

Strengthening International Water Governance

22. International and regional water cooperation and coordination is crucial to effectively combat water stress, while respecting national sovereignty. Therefore, we aim to contribute to greater awareness, coherence and effectiveness of water governance in the UN system and beyond. By doing so, we will empower the **voice of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture** within water policy making. We underscore that these key actors contribute expertise and lead the way towards global solutions.

23. We commend the UN Secretary-General for having appointed a **UN Special Envoy on Water**. We commit to support the UN Special Envoy and invite the Envoy to multiply our efforts for the benefit of global food and water security, to consider SDGs 2 and 6 jointly and to exercise the role as a pivot between sectors.

24. We call upon relevant global and regional organisations to strengthen their coordination and convene stakeholders on water-related issues in light of the **United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation** (SWS)[7]. In particular, we encourage the FAO to continue to contribute to the implementation of SWS and support a strong and coordinated UN Water system. In this regard, we welcome the indispensable role of **UN-Water,** with IFAD's President serving as its chair**,** in strengthening collaboration and coordination among UN agencies.

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[4] https://www.gwp.org/en/sdg6support/iwrm-support/themes/water--energy--food--ecosystems-nexus/what-is-the-wefe-nexus/
[5] Global Dialogue on water tenure
[6] Document Viewer for resolution on human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, page 6 para 5
[7] United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation | United Nations - CEB

25. We thank all relevant international organisations and scientific institutions for their impactful work in the field of sustainable agricultural water management. We highlight the **Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture** (**WASAG**)[8], hosted by FAO, and encourage all FAO Members to join WASAG to collectively advance more efficient water use for food and feed production and nutrition. We acknowledge the *Policy Recommendations on Water for Food Security and Nutrition* endorsed by the UN Committee on World Food Security.

26. We underscore the vital role of sustainable water management in international **trade** and supply chains in addressing water challenges. Therefore we understand the importance of considering comparative advantages with regard to water availability to inform national water resources planning and global policy dialogues around water resilience.

27. We commit to foster gender equality, empower all **women** and promote their full, equal, safe and meaningful participation in decisions on agricultural water management and food value chains, and to increase their control over productive assets. In this regard, we highlight the UN International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026.

28. **In light of the urgent need to enhance water security and water resilience, and ahead of the upcoming 2026 UN Water Conferenceand beyond, we call upon the international community to:**

- involve agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture as **key sectors** in decision-making processes within water policy;
- stress the need for an ambitious, inclusive and action-oriented 2026 UN Water Conference, co-hosted by the United Arab Emirates and Senegal, that addresses the Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystems (**WEFE**) Nexus.
- strengthen inter-governmental cooperation on water and agriculture within the **UN**, with regular UN Water Conferences, negotiated outcomes and a strong role of UN-Water;
- support FAO and IFAD in taking an active role in the implementation of the UN Systemwide Strategy for Water and Sanitation (**SWS**);
- give due regard to the nexus between water, food security and **stability**.

29. We commit to stand united and to continue to cooperate in a spirit of responsibility, trust, compromise and solidarity. We reaffirm our commitment to ensure that our farmers have the right tools to sustainably produce food with ever scarcer water resources - because no food can be produced without water. We look forward to meeting again at the 2027 GFFA.

[8] https://www.fao.org/wasag/en

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List of participants

Albania
Angola
Armenia
Belgium
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burundi
Cambodia
Central African Republic
Croatia
Cyprus
Czechia
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Ecuador
Estonia
Fiji
Finland
France
Germany
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iraq
Ireland
Japan
Kazakhstan
Kosovo
Latvia
Lebanon
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malawi
Malta
Mongolia
Montenegro
Morocco
Netherlands
North Macedonia
Norway
Pakistan
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Sierra Leone
Slovenia
Somalia
South Africa
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