



المنتدى العربي للبيئة والتنمية
ARAB FORUM FOR
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AFED Conference on Arab Food Security

Recommendations for Transition to New Production and Consumption Patterns

Amman, 27 November 2014

The Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) concluded its seventh annual conference on Arab food security. Held in Amman under the patronage of his majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, the conference brought together 750 delegates from 54 countries, representing 170 institutions from the private and public sectors, international and regional organizations, agricultural investment bodies, research centers, universities, civil society and media.

AFED secretary general Najib Saab cited draft recommendations which endorsed AFED report on *Food Security*, advocating that Arab countries can significantly close the alarming food gap that reaches 50 percent, through efficient management of the agriculture and water sectors, combined with regional cooperation based on comparative advantage in agricultural resources and investable capital.

The conference called for implementing available options to enhance the self-sufficiency aspect of food security, including boosting crop and water productivity and reducing post-harvest and other losses. It urged for more investments in agricultural scientific research and sustainable development of the livestock and fisheries sectors, with a view to increase production to meet local demand and promote the potential for exports. Enabling women to play their role in development, and especially in agriculture, was considered of high importance.

Emphasized also was the need to implement an awareness campaign to change consumption patterns, especially through more dependence on commodities with similar nutritional value but less water requirements. The conference also called for adaptation strategies to cope with climate change, adopting improved agricultural and water management practices, conservation agriculture and selection of crops best suited to predicted climate conditions.

The conference called for supporting the Palestinian people's right in its land and water to invest in its food security. It also emphasized the importance of political stability and security to enable investment in agriculture, adoption of reform policies and promoting the contribution of the private sector in boosting food security.

Second day sessions

A session was held about food value chains, shortages and implications of price volatility. Another session discussed food security options in GCC countries.

Arab initiatives to enhance food security were presented, namely the water and agriculture strategy in Abu Dhabi, FAO regional initiative on resilience for food security and nutrition, IFRI initiative, ICARDA project to enhance food security in Arab countries, and improving marginal land productivity in Badia of Jordan.

ESCWA introduced its draft report on pathways towards food security in the Arab region. Civil society initiatives in food security were presented by APNature in Palestine, AFDC in Lebanon, KEPS in Kuwait and HIMA in Jordan. The Future Environment Leaders Forum (FELF) supported by AFED gathered students from 14 Arab universities to discuss the right of Arab future generations to food security.

The conference closed with a debate over recommendations.

Photo 1 Najib Saab introducing, from left Eckart Woertz, Khalid Al Rwis, Roula Majdalani, Rob Bailey, Walid Zubari

Photo 2 From left Lucas Simons, Hafez Ghanem, Abdulkarim Sadik, Nadim Khoury, Salah El-Awad