

Humboldt Forum for Food and Agriculture The Berlin Declaration on Water and World Food Security

1. Food and Water First: Call a global summit on water and world food security

The efficient use of the ever scarcer natural resource water and world food security both need to become national and global political priorities. The problems are large and to be addressed urgently. HFFA therefore calls for a global summit on water and world food security.

2. Food and Water First: Establish an international A25 country group

HFFA proposes to establish an A25 group of countries whose mission should be analogous to the G20 group. It should consist of the agricultural ministers of the G20 group, plus five of the least developed food importing countries. The A25 should meet regularly to analyze the state of world food and agriculture and to develop, implement and coordinate international efforts aimed at a sustainable reduction of hunger around the globe.

3. Food and Water First: Place agricultural innovation on the international policy agenda as a priority

Empirical evidence suggests that it can take several decades between the initial research investment and productivity gains showing up on the farm. This time lag needs to be shortened and agricultural research investments increased by establishing an institutional, legal and political environment which encourages agricultural innovation and its swift dissemination to farmers around the globe.

4. Food and Water First: Price water at its value to society

In all too many parts of the world water is available to users below its value to society. For an increase in the efficiency of water usage it is imperative that the price of water reflects its value to society. Subsidies on the use of water lead to waste.

5. Food and Water First: Aim water policies at increasing the efficiency of water use

Agricultural production should occur predominantly in areas in which water is abundant and not where it is scarce. A liberal agricultural trade system is essential so food can flow freely across international borders from where water is abundant and production cost is low to where it is needed.

6. Food and Water First: Increase R & D investments in water saving technologies

Water saving new technologies will also act to increase the efficiency of water use. This includes plant breeding as well as minimum tillage, hydroponic and vertical farming. The future of farming is hi-tech. Only hi-tech agriculture will be capable of overcoming the increasing water scarcity, make available a sufficient supply of food for the rapidly growing needs of the world, at the same time reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and preserving the environment and natural resources.