



AWC

Roula KHADRA

Board of Governors/Executive Committee

*Excellencies,
Esteemed Colleagues,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

On behalf of the Arab Water Council President, H.E. Prof. Mahmoud Abu Zeid, the Board of Governors, and members, it is my great pleasure to share the AWC perspective on the approach to food sovereignty and its profound implications for sustainable food systems in the face of emerging challenges.

First of all, allow me to emphasize that the Arab Water Council (AWC) highly honors and appreciates the long-lasting collaboration with CIHEAM. The great outputs of several collaborative projects have guided and supported the implementation of development goals in many Arab countries.

As an intergovernmental organization, the AWC has been supporting the 22 Arab countries for the last 20 years to promote better understanding and management of water resources. This is achieved through disseminating knowledge, enhancing the sharing of experiences and information for the rational and comprehensive development of water resources in our region, benefiting its people.

The Mediterranean region, with its rich history of agricultural diversity, traditions, and culinary heritage, offers a model for sustainable food systems. However, as we strive for food and water sustainability solutions, we must acknowledge the concerns that accompany our pursuit of food sovereignty. Climate change, population growth, water scarcity, and conflicts are pressing issues that threaten our ability to produce food sustainably.

In this context, the Arab Water Council takes centre stage and champions innovative solutions that intertwine water security, climate change resilience, and sustainability.

During COP28, the Arab Water Council launched three significant initiatives under three key pillars: the climate security, the WEF nexus, and the non-conventional water resources.

These initiatives aim to create common platforms for the Arab region to collaborate on demand-driven research, policy, and capacity development for a sustainable and resilient water future.

- 1. Adaptation and Resilience Technical Platform for Sustainable Development (Climate AdapTech).**
- 2. Water, Energy, Food, and Ecosystems Nexus: A Sustainable Management and Resilience Track for the Arab Region (WEFE-SMaRT).**
- 3. The Future of Non-Conventional Water Resources: New Provisions for Managing Water Scarcity and Climate Adaptation in the Arab Region (PROMiS).**

Each initiative addresses the interconnected challenges faced in the Arab world:

- **Climate AdapTech** focuses on implementing climate resilience measures, such as introducing drought-resistant crops and smart agriculture systems, to enhance agricultural adaptability to climate extremes and alleviate pressure on water resources.
- **WEFE-SMaRT** emphasizes the interdependency of water, energy, food, and ecosystems, highlighting that water security involves both the quantity and quality of water resources, which are crucial for sustaining food production and ecosystem health.
- **PROMiS** promotes the use of non-conventional water resources, such as treated wastewater, treated drainage water, and desalination, to expand water supply and mitigate the impacts of water scarcity. These innovations are essential for a sustainable future as water scarcity becomes an increasing threat.

There is a clear interlinkage between the three initiatives, with a dedicated focus on providing integrated solutions for climate adaptation and resilience to ensure water and food security for all.

These initiatives, in collaboration with the League of Arab States (LAS), were re-launched and endorsed by the partner countries during the 6th Arab Water Forum held in September

in Abu Dhabi under the theme “For a Water Resilient and Prosperous Future.”

Fully in line with the G7 communiqué of the Ministries of Development, they will be at the core of policy engagement activities on the road to the Euro-Med Forum, which will be held in 2026 in Rome.

The Arab Water Council’s initiatives serve as a guiding path towards regional collaboration with all partners to find practical solutions for a sustainable future in our region. We urge all our international and regional partners to join efforts and implement the actions under these initiatives. By coming together as a community, we can build a future that is both water-resilient and prosperous. Together, we can accomplish the transformation we desire, which is a vision and much more beyond.

Thank you.