

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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I believe due consideration should be given to the political significance of the problem of water management and to the willingness to collaborate expressed by the presence of qualified delegations of different countries.

In a time when elsewhere other basic themes for the life of men are debated and cause misunderstanding and divisions, it is important to feel the need to meet for discussing the problems of water management not only in pure technical terms.

It is an appreciable sign of confidence which should not be underestimated.

The Mediterranean basin is a region of the world which, due to the diversity of its peoples, their history, their economic and environmental situations, is among the areas of the highest strategic significance for the choices of the states of the world.

The presence, on the same basin, of EEC countries (France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece), Balkan countries (Yugoslavia, Albania, Turkey), Arab countries (Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, etc.) and the many and quite often rather big differences in the organization and the state of economies and of agricultural and food systems, call for a huge general effort and a strong will to give up defensive and simply protectionist policies.

The need to progressively reach a global re-equilibrium of international agricultural and food systems in countries having a different development rate and, also, the need to guarantee the environmental equilibrium of eco-systems and the preservation of natural resources and heritage, impose the adoption of choices aimed at the organization of *Water resources - Land* relationships, at orienting the agricultural production and defining possible production models.

The primary need to meet the domestic demand, especially in the poorly developed countries, will have to envisage proposals for relaunching and reorganizing domestic agriculture and defining policies capable of reducing the weight, a too heavy one sometimes, of food-stuff import.

In the evolution of agricultural and food systems of the Mediterranean countries, the presence of traditional production should be preserved and, if needed, increased by an increasingly better and well organized sound use of water resources.

The design of hydraulic systems for the diversion, storage and distribution of water for agriculture and its correct use will be the tool to win the challenge of development and conservation of environment.

This is the objective to be pursued by international cooperation agreements aimed at the construction of works, at the introduction of new technologies (biotechnologies as well) and at strengthening the areas suitable for farm holidays and fauna activities.

It is a need for the Mediterranean peoples to trust each other and work together for a joint solution to their problems; as from experience, there is no acceptable solution other than the one accepted by the parties.

A great responsibility lies upon the EEC countries which are called to play the major role for cooperation and orientation.

Favouring a general recovery of development is essential to reach a balanced *import-export* ratio of agricultural products and to strengthen the agro-industrial sector designed to withstand the international market; it is also essential to follow a full environmental-friendly policy.



The use of resources for the common interest of peoples and their development, is then a primary endeavour. But political matters are strictly interlaced with technical ones.

Water-land resources have to be preserved while meeting the food needs of an increasing population: to favour development without triggering unforeseeable social phenomena.

In each country of the Mediterranean region agriculture should be assigned its traditional role in society; it should not only play a role in the economy but also have the symbolic value of food-stuff producer and defender of environment.

Technology and politics have to join to defend and develop the agricultural sector, to prevent social degeneration and favour the permanence of populations on their land of origin.

Agriculture in the Mediterranean area has developed two basic characteristics on which the future proposals should be based: it favoured the setting up and stabilization of millions medium and average size farms, thus contributing to the production of unique products and crops; it favoured the development of cultivation techniques, in the presence of limited water resources which have preserved and modelled the land.

Italy can be a model and give evidence of this; the acquired capabilities and performance are a resource to be used and the active resumption of exchanges will be the fly-wheel for the consolidation of technological cooperation.

The policy of water resource management is the core of the future in the Mediterranean and the test bench of the will of the countries to pursue a policy of prosperity and well-being.

Future confrontation will be focussed on some major themes:

- the need for an integrated use of water and land and the possible presence of an international organization to provide adequate protection to all the concerned parties. The experience acquired through the GATT agreements and the application methodologies envisaged for the next years, are a good start to materialize the increasing need of an authority;
- the need to integrate development and exchange policies to reach a satisfactory collaboration between the Countries of the regions;
- the need to train cadres capable of planning and managing the future of the area, by preparing adequate extension projects. ●

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