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PRESS RELEASE

Towards efficient agricultural water use in Libya

AICS and FAO in cooperation with the Ministry of Water Resources launch the project for monitoring, evaluation and rationalization of water use for the agriculture sector

Tripoli, 31st January 2022

The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in cooperation with Ministry of Water Resources in Libya, are launching the project “Monitoring, evaluation and rationalization of water use for the agriculture sector in Libya” following the approval on 15th March 2021 of a 830.000 Euro-grant by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI). In the presence of the Minister of Water Resources, Mr. Tariq Abdel, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr Mohamed Bashir Al Turki, the Italian Embassy in Tripoli and key stakeholders in the water management sector - at institutional, academic, scientific and civil society levels - meet today around a virtual table to discuss the next steps of the project and the methodology to be followed.

Through the results of this project, an assessment of the water use for the agricultural sector will be undertaken to support monitoring, evaluation, and rationalization of this use of water, and to enhance agricultural water management performance, particularly water consumption and productivity. As a result, a strategic plan for water resources management that reviews the water, food and energy needs will be formulated.

In this respect, in his opening speech, H.E Mr. **Tariq Abdel Salam Abu Falika** - Minister of Water Resources said: “we look forward to the contribution of this project in building a cooperative framework between the Ministry of Water Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and all partners at the national and local levels”.

Overall, the expected impact of the project is that food security in Libya, particularly in the Fezzan region, will be strengthened through more efficient use of agricultural water, while preventing acute water shortages, environmental degradation, and mass population displacement.

To materialize this impact, H.E Mr. **Mohamed Bashir Al Turki** - Deputy Minister of Agriculture Reclamation Affairs said: “there is a need for coordination, communication and exchange of information and experiences between national sectors to build a cooperative framework between the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Water Resources and all national partners to share data, systems and experiences”.

Through this two-year initiative, AICS, FAO and the Libyan authorities are strengthening their partnership in order to build national capacities for a performant use of agriculture water in the country in general and in the Fezzan region in particular, considering that Libya is characterized by an absolute water scarcity with its annual per capita Internal Renewable Water Resources (IRWR) around 106 m³/capita/yr.

“This is a project of pivotal importance for the Italian Cooperation in Libya since it is crucial for the survival and improvement of essential living conditions, such as food security, agriculture and water. At the same time, it aims at strengthening capacity, knowledge, and sector coordination”, said Mr. Andrea Senatori, Director of AICS Tunis Regional Office.

Moreover, this project falls under the umbrella of the FAO Regional Water Scarcity Initiative and aims to strengthen the capacities of national institutions for the monitoring, evaluation and rationalization of water use for agriculture sector using geospatial technologies. “With this project, FAO is responding to three



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national strategic priorities: firstly, sustainable increase in crop productivity and raising levels of food safety standards; secondly, expansion of the use and sustainable management of natural agricultural resources; and thirdly, capacity building and improvement in services to support the agricultural sectors”, said Mr. Philippe Ankers, Libya FAO Representative ad interim.

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