

IWMI Statement to the CoP 28 High Level Segment

Delivered by Dr Mark Smith, Director General, International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Picture a world where everyone — regardless of where they live — has enough to eat and access to clean water. Imagine farmers working smarter, not harder, and using less water to grow more food.

Imagine a future — in a decarbonizing world — where conserving nature reinforces how communities withstand floods and droughts.

Everyone gathered here at COP wants to create such a safe, just and sustainable world.

And by **building water-resilient food systems** we can do precisely that: take care of our planet — while making sure all people thrive.

This is how we help economies withstand a future of intensifying water shocks — and also protect our precious water resources.

The Earth's water and food systems are inextricably linked. Agriculture uses over 70% of water withdrawals globally — yet water risks can break food systems. Currently, global hunger impacts over 820 million people — and every increment of warming puts more people at risk of hunger because of water insecurity.

Representing the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) today — the CGIAR's water research center, working across Asia and Africa — I urge us to put water and food at the center of climate plans, strategies and finance.

All of us — no matter our role — are part of keeping water flowing and food growing.

IWMI puts water system science to work for climate action. At COP28, we are working with Parties to the Convention, providing data, evidence and trusted advice to guide their decisions, and building partnerships for impact.

Let's continue working together, so food and water are part of climate resilience.

Because a food-secure future is only possible in a water-secure world.

Thank you.