



Demand briefing: Water

The issue

Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families across the world. Drought afflicts some of the world's poorest countries, increasing the prevalence of hunger and malnutrition. By 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of fresh water.

The food and beverage industry

However, progress is uneven; water scarcity and pollution continue to plague the food and agriculture industry globally. The food industry has a major impact on water issues; both through the use of water (management) and the impact on quality (contamination).

Worldwide, agriculture accounts for 70% of water consumption.

Solutions

Effective management of water resources has lasting impacts on both the environment and the livelihoods of vulnerable people. Various commitments have been made in both the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the Johannesburg 2002 Earth Summit to improve the delivery of water services to the poor and improve sustainable management of water resources.

Our demands

Companies should:

- Make a serious commitment to improving irrigation and water services related to agriculture; especially in Sub Saharan Africa where less than 5% of agricultural land is irrigated (Para 18.68).
- Protect water resources, water quality and aquatic ecosystems throughout their supply chains (Agenda 21 Para 18.39).
- Invest directly in integrated water resource management programmes (Agenda 21 Para 18.11; Johannesburg Plan of Implementation) to ensure fair and sustainable access to the resource.

Note for the editor:

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Fairfood International is a vital part of the global movement of people who are passionate about creating change towards a sustainable food and beverage industry. www.fairfood.org