

To safeguard world food supply is a global challenge

With “Agenda 21” of 1992, 172 states have adopted an overall concept for sustainable development. The need to shape our future responsibly with such an approach is as up-to-date and urgent as it has been in 1992. The follow-up conference in June 2012 (Rio+20) is supposed to give substantial impulses and new momentum to the debate. That goes along with the chance to counter a one-sided ecological understanding which, following the assumed “zeitgeist”, sees the equally important economic and social columns of sustainable development only as second-rate. The “Rio+20” process should be understood and used as an opportunity to successfully continue the chosen path of sustainable development. For that purpose, it is essential to follow along the key messages of chapter 14 of “Agenda 21”:

Agenda 21, chapter 14

14.1.

“By the year 2025, 83 per cent of the expected global population of 8.5 billion will be living in developing countries. Yet the capacity of available resources and technologies to satisfy the demands of this growing population for food and other agricultural commodities remains uncertain. Agriculture has to meet this challenge, mainly by increasing production on land already in use and by avoiding further encroachment on land that is only marginally suitable for cultivation.”

14.2.

(...) “The major objective of SARD is to increase food production in a sustainable way and enhance food security.” (...)

14.3.

“The priority must be on maintaining and improving the capacity of the higher potential agricultural lands to support an expanding population. (...) The main tools of SARD are policy and agrarian reform, participation, income diversification, land conservation and improved management of inputs. The success of SARD will depend largely on the support and participation of rural people, national Governments, the private sector and international cooperation, including technical and scientific cooperation.”