



Message on behalf of Minister Valeriu TABĂRĂ, addressed to participants to the 6th Scientific and Technical Partnership Forum, organized within the framework of the 'Transnational integrated management of water resources in agriculture for the European WATER emergency control' – Bucharest – January 2012

**Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished guests,
Dear partners,**

As representative of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development I am honoured to be able to address a warm welcoming to all participants to the 6th Technical and Scientific Forum organized within the frame of the 'Transnational integrated management of water resources in agriculture for the European WATER emergency control' project.

This project had initially the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development as partner and later the ministry has been replaced as partner by I.N.C.D.I.F –'ISPIF' Bucharest; the project can be rallied to the national strategy that promotes a sustainable agriculture for the purpose of adapting the Romanian rural economy to the European agricultural policy, by using the national research potential and by capitalizing on the European expertise in this field – this strategy has been fully endorsed and promoted by M.A.R.D.

Given the on-going situation concerning the pollution of waters with nitrates coming from agricultural sources, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development together with the Ministry of Environment and Water Management have issued Order no. 1182/22.11.2005 and Order no. 1270/30.11.2005 on approval of the Code of Good Agricultural Practices for the protection of waters against nitrates pollution from agricultural sources.

In the 20 localities where social surveys were carried out as part of the project activities the Action Programme for the Nitrates Pollution Vulnerable Zones is currently under implementation at administrative territorial unit level; this programme is based on the joint Order no.425/105591/2001 of both the Minister of Waters and Environment Protection and of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forests which in turn constituted the basis for the Decision no.21130/DC/14.10.2010 which refers to this action programme that is designed to translate into practice the provisions of Nitrate Directive 91/676/EEC.

Our objective is therefore the reaching of a good state of the water bodies until December 2015, as Romania has committed to achieve when joining the EU.

Presently, several projects on constructing water supply and sewerage network infrastructure components are underway in different stages of execution and others are already finalized.

The construction of adequate commune level animal wastes storage platforms has also been the subject of preoccupation.

Another point of real interest has been the finding of the best ways to exert control of the way in which provisions of the Code of Good Agricultural Practices are observed at individual agricultural exploitation level.

Specialized institutions under coordination of both M.A.R.D and M.W.F.E.P also dealt with issues such as the continuous monitoring of soils, surface and underground waters.

Policies adopted so far at the level of M.A.R.D focus on a reduction of water consumption as a way to stimulate a reasonable and sustainable utilization of water resources on categories of sources and on groups of users and of course depending on the loads of pollutants that are evacuated into surface waters.

Enforcement of penalties has been envisaged for those water users which were proved to infringe applicable norms and regulations regarding both the volumes of consumed water (over-consumption) and the amounts of pollutants discharged into watercourses.

Such penalties and related fines cashed by commune/locality level water supply and sewage collection service operators are in fact revenues obtained by these operators and can be subsequently used for funding investments in the modernization and rehabilitation of water supply component installations and of sewage treatment stations in compliance with applicable legislation.

As stipulated by Law no.107/1996 (Water Law) and by its subsequent amendments brought by Law no.310/2004 and by Law no.112/2006, "Apele Române" National Administration is the sole operator providing specific services in the field of surface and underground water resources.

In compliance with provisions of Law no. 310/2004 the water boards have been established, which were organized at territorial level into Water Directorates of the "Apele Române" National Administration, with responsibilities of involvement in decision making of the beneficiaries and also in the efficient collaboration of water management territorial units with public local administration bodies, for the purpose of maintaining a balance between conservation and sustainable development of water resources.

Participation of different groups of stakeholders in the decision making process offers enhanced responsibility to each activity of this water sector.

The water related economic mechanism is applied to all categories of water users (including those involved in agricultural activities and in the provision of irrigation and water supply services for rural areas).

The system of payments is based upon the 'polluter pays' principle, the corresponding amounts being established depending on the impact induced by the pollutant upon the water source (degree of pollution).

The bonus system applies to situations when the relevant water user manages to achieve savings of water compared to the volumes approved for his consumption provided the extent of pollution is maintained within limits stipulated by applicable legal provisions.

The system of penalties is intended to be enforced when the approved water consumption has been exceeded resulting in an increase of the water source's degree of pollution.

We fully acknowledge that only through a large scale approach to a rational management of water resources is possible to ensure their long term protection.

The worsening of the current situation of globally available water resources may also be generated by significant weather and climate changes which are becoming more and more obvious every day.

The situation in our country is similar to the one from other rural communities in the South-Eastern European region where agriculture is the major sector that consumes natural resources and at the same time it represents one of the most important polluters of the environment.

Measures suggested within the project will have to be able to support public institutions in the sustainable use of rural land surfaces and in promoting an environmentally-friendly type of agricultural practices which should also ensure the efficient management of available water resources.

We are preoccupied to elaborate certain normative acts which should provide that within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones thus designated on the basis of sensitivity and vulnerability maps, the farmers can receive/benefit from financial incentives; these incentives will be granted depending on a series of performance indicators on efficient fertilisers application, on observing favourable/recommended application periods, on saving water by employing alternative irrigation application methods or on a mixture of these practices.

Outputs of this project will contribute to the solving of a series of water related issues which rural communities are facing today and will also help the setting up of measures needed for the reduction of water consumption and for an alleviation of the current levels of pollution induced by nitrates coming from agricultural sources, in line with major EU Directives and seen as pre-requisites to the sustainable development of rural communities within designated Nitrate Vulnerable Zones.

I hereby congratulate you all for the results of your partnership work so far and let us hope for future successful collaboration within other projects of common interest that will be capable of addressing current problems faced by rural communities in our countries, at today's level of research and development in this field.

I hope that together we will be able to get convincing outstanding results that can guarantee conservation and saving of natural resources, so that the next generations are left with a competitive agriculture that can be practiced under environment - friendly conditions.

Success to the Forum presentations.

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development,

Mr. Valeriu TABĂRĂ