

# Preface

In recent years, a greater level of integration of the world economy and an opening of national markets to trade has impacted virtually all areas of society. The process of globalization has the potential to generate long-term benefits for developing countries, including enhanced technology and knowledge transfers and new financing options supporting agricultural and economic development. However, risks of political and economic instability, increased inequality, and losses in agricultural income and production for countries that subsidize their agricultural and other economic sectors threaten to offset potential benefits. Globalization can also have a profound impact on the water sector – in terms of allocation and use of water – and thus on food security as well. Other global change processes, particularly climate change, are also likely to have far-reaching impacts on water and food security, and societies around the world.

To discuss these issues in-depth, the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Third World Centre for Water Management, Mexico, and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), Costa Rica, held a three-day International Conference on “Globalization and Trade: Implications for Water and Food Security,” at CATIE’s Turrialba, Costa Rica, headquarters under the auspices of the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food in 2005. The workshop set out to identify the major risks and emerging issues facing developing countries related to global economic and environmental change impacts on water and food security. It aimed at identifying research gaps in this area and avenues for collaboration among disciplines; and to develop options for policy reform. Participants presented research covering a wide variety of topics and disciplines. In addition to discussing the legal aspects of trade, investments, and financing of the water sector, experts examined and discussed water-related global change topics ranging from globalization and fisheries to transboundary water pollution. The papers and discussions from this conference have been updated thereafter, and some new chapters have been added. We are grateful for the helpful critique by anonymous reviewers through IFPRI’s Publication Review Committee. We also appreciate the able support of Betsy Pereira from IFPRI who formatted the chapters and the Springer production team who added the finishing touches to the book.

The conference was very timely given the increasing influence of global change on local access to water and food, and livelihoods, in developing countries. The recent food and financial crises have further increased the urgency of understanding the impact of global change to ensure that measures can be taken so that access to water and food by the poor is enhanced or at least safeguarded. While these crises might slow globalization processes in the short term, the fundamental drivers of change will further strengthen links among countries and people, both economically and socially, through trade, investments and governance. These linkages, spurred by market liberalization and information, communication and transportation technologies, will fundamentally affect future progress in both water and food security around the world.

We hope that this volume helps provide a better understanding of the impact of global and national policies, institutions and investments on water resources and food systems to facilitate adjustment processes and avoid long-term harm to the poor and the environment, and ultimately contributes to better policy-making and improved investments for water and food security of the poor.

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