

Pressemitteilung

Leibniz-Institut für Agrarentwicklung in Transformatio

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11.07.2024

<http://idw-online.de/de/news836860>

Forschungs- / Wissenstransfer, Wissenschaftliche Tagungen
Politik, Tier / Land / Forst, Umwelt / Ökologie, Wirtschaft
überregional



Conclusion of the IAMO Forum 2024: Land as a Key Resource for a Sustainable Future

The IAMO Forum 2024 focused on the challenges and opportunities of land use in a changing world. From June 26 to 28, more than 200 participants from science, practice and politics with diverse disciplinary backgrounds gathered at the IAMO in Halle (Saale) to discuss the crucial importance of agricultural land for ecological sustainability, social justice, food security, and economic prosperity.

Numerous presentations and discussions emphasized the need for diverse perspectives, the use of innovative technologies, and equitable land distribution to achieve a sustainable future.

Land Conflicts and Inequality

Wendy Wolford (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, USA) highlighted that land use is deeply rooted in political and social contexts. Historical inequalities and current land concentrations exacerbate wealth disparities and hinder long-term opportunities. Inclusive research, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, is necessary to better understand these complex dynamics and find equitable solutions. Klaus Deininger (Lead Economist, World Bank, USA) emphasized the critical role of digital infrastructures for fair and resilient agricultural development. By documenting rights and using administrative and satellite data, combined with innovative research approaches, tailored policy and administrative solutions can be developed. The integration of satellite data with artificial intelligence allows for timely assessment of the impacts of conflicts, such as the Russian war against Ukraine, on agriculture and the environment.

Transformation of Food Systems

Hermann Lotze-Campen from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) emphasized the importance of transforming food systems to achieve both ecological and health benefits. Despite impressive productivity increases and a reduction in undernourishment from over 35% in the 1960s to about 10% today, there are significant hidden costs of over USD 10 trillion per year. Measures include promoting healthy diets, shifting to plant-based diets, realigning government support, investing in new technologies, and ensuring the social justice of this transformation.

Diversified Agriculture

The experts Laura Vang Rasmussen (University of Copenhagen) and Katharina Waha (Center for Climate Resilience at the University of Augsburg) highlighted the ecological and social benefits of diversified agricultural practices. These practices often improve both biodiversity and food security but require overcoming barriers such as knowledge gaps and financing issues.

Digital Technologies and Innovations

Maryna Kovalova (SmartFarming Group, Ukraine) and Laurens Klerkx (University of Talca, Chile and Wageningen University, Netherlands) emphasized the importance of digital technologies and mission-oriented innovation systems (MAIS) for sustainable land use. Particularly in conflict-affected regions like Ukraine, these technologies contribute to efficiency and transparency.

Role of Land Markets

In the panel discussion on land markets and institutions, moderated by Martin Odening (Thaer-Institute for Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences at Humboldt University of Berlin), Silke Hüttel (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen), Alex Lissitsa (IMC, Ukraine), Andrii Martyn (National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine), Emmanuelle Mikosz (European Landowners' Organization, Belgium), and Johan Swinnen (International Food Policy Research Institute, USA) discussed how land markets and institutions can contribute to sustainability. Key topics included recognizing the specificity and heterogeneity of land markets and considering political interests that influence land reform implementation. The panel highlighted the essential role of investments and new technologies in promoting climate-smart agricultural systems and addressed the challenges of market failures, emphasizing the need for creative solutions to improve market transparency and efficiency.

The IAMO Forum 2024 highlighted that land plays a central role in a sustainable future, providing important impulses for future research and policy development. The conference focused on the need to transform food systems, resolve land conflicts, promote innovative agricultural practices, and integrate digital technologies. These themes underscore significant challenges but also offer considerable opportunities for positive change. Diversification, the use of innovative technologies, and equitable land distribution are crucial for future global food security. Institutional support and political will are essential to successfully and equitably implement these changes.

The IAMO Forum is an annual conference organized by the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO) in Halle (Saale). The event brings together science, practice, and policy to discuss current issues of agricultural development and policy. The 2024 conference was jointly organized by IAMO, the Ukrainian Agribusiness Club (UCAB), and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The conference was financially supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Rentenbank, the state of Saxony-Anhalt and the city of Halle.

URL zur Pressemitteilung: <https://www.iamo.de/en/press/press-releases/article/abschluss-des-iamo-forums-2024-landschlüsselressource-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-zukunft>



IAMO Director Alfons Balmann opens the IAMO Forum 2024
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