

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Day 2: Farmer participation through WUAs – Dr. Mei Xie and Dr. Shawky**

Q (Najafi) In Iran we have similar experiences. We have established farmer cooperatives. For Alborz, we want to have WUAs but no institutions are planned at the intermediate level. What should we do? We have to ask the farmers what they want. It is good to learn lessons from others but hydraulic boundaries are not appropriate in Iran. Sometimes we have to use a combination of hydraulic and societal boundaries

A. WUA should not be mixed with other farmer organisations. WUAs should focus on water affairs. But we have also learnt that some WUAs, when they have become stronger and more capable, they take on other responsibilities, such as giving their members credit or loans, purchasing of post-harvest equipment for the WUAs, etc.

Q (Najafi) You did not say anything about the intermediate level.

A. You mean between a basin agency and WUA. This intermediate level should be handled by a water supply entity/agency. You are right, if there is only a basin council and WUAs, an institutional layer missing. In the Tarim, they have set up water resources coordination committees at prefecture levels and set up irrigation district committees at county levels. The committees, together with water supply companies or supply stations (could not be public or semi-private), serve the intermediate levels between the basin entity and WUAs.

Q/Comment (Shiati) I agree with Dr Najafi that a hydraulic boundary may not be effective in Iran and that we should use village boundaries. If we want to be successful, leave out water user groups at the lower level and establish WUAs at the secondary canal level.

A. WUA is about water, and should be organized along hydraulic boundaries. This is a world wide experience. But if a system is already within an administrative boundary, say a village, then the existing administrative arrangement may be used with election.

WUAs at the secondary level should be based on farmer representative groups on the tertiary levels, without which the WUA may have problems as it would be seen as being run by only a small group of WUA committee members.