Nestlé Good food, Good life

Press Release

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World Water Day: *'Technology offers hope to conserve water in the agriculture sector'*

LAHORE: To commemorate the World Water Day 2022, Center for Water Informatics and Technology, LUMS organized a session in collaboration with Nestlé Pakistan under this year's theme 'Ground Water: Making the invisible, visible'. The session focused on the use of modern technology to improve water efficiency in the agriculture sector and Nestlé Pakistan pledged to continue playing its role as a water steward.

Asad Rehman Gillani, Secretary Agriculture, Government of Punjab, stressed the urgency of putting water at the heart of action plans and policy in his keynote address. "Our government is focused on a policy, on usage and distribution of water, including irrigation, agriculture and industrial use, as there are water inefficiencies in the agriculture sector which is consuming more than 90% of the country's water resources", he said.

He added, "about a decade ago, we introduced drip irrigation in Thal Desert which now produces the highest number and finest quality of citrus in Punjab."

"There is an urgent need for communities, companies and governments to come up with innovative solutions to secure water that can help maintain the balance between people and nature," said Hammad Naqi, DG, WWF-Pakistan while stressing on the importance of collective action approach.

Adding on, Waqar Ahmad, Head of Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, Nestlé Pakistan while highlighting Nestlé's landmark Caring for Water (C4W) initiative, said, "Under Nestlé's broader sustainability roadmap and in its efforts to contribute to the UN SDGs, we have been working with a wide range of partners to promote technologies that help conserve shared water resources." He also mentioned that until 2021, the Company has helped install drip irrigation on 198 acres and sensors on 455 acres. He also mentioned how LUMS's partnership with Nestlé led to developing and scaling up of low-cost soil moisture sensors.

Dr Mahmood Ahmad, Professor of Practice at Water Informatics & Technology, LUMS stressed the need to deploy modern technologies to farmers. "It is important to integrate technologies such as moisture sensors and drip irrigation with good practices of sustainable agriculture such as mulching and raised beds. These technologies and practices must be indigenized and supported for wide adoption by supporting local industry."

Similarly, Haseeb Malik, Head of Agro, PepsiCo Pakistan shared their experience of using drip irrigation in growing potatoes which resulted in reduced water usage with improved productivity.

Panelists, including Dr Mohsin Hafeez, International Water Management Institute; Zakir Sial, Punjab Irrigation Department; and environmental journalist Afia Salam emphasized the importance of collective action and water stewardship to enhance the capacity of other businesses and sectors. They reiterated that water resources, if managed properly, by all the key players collectively, would not only sustain, but also reinforce the agricultural sector of Pakistan which is using outdated technology and consuming more than 90% of the available water resources.