

# Water For Food, Water For Life\*

Since this lecture is part of a series dedicated to water, I will try to give a complete flavour of this natural resource.

Water has also been called *amrit* in Indian mythology and is seen in many cultures as the nectar, or elixir of life. Earlier, when there were few large cities or industries, people were poor and their requirements were modest. Yet while the demand for water has risen in the recent past, it is important to bear in mind that since the time the earth was created, the total amount of water has remained almost the same except during the last few years when climate change has brought about certain variations, but little perceptible change, in the total amount of water available for human and ecological use.

We all know that sufficient water is not available for producing enough and quality food for all of humankind. Presently, there are about 6.5 billion people on the planet and we grew by almost twice during the last fifty years. The present world population is expected to further double in the next fifty years. The big question, therefore, is whether there shall be sufficient water to grow enough food for all of us in the future.

To answer this important question, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), along with a consortium of about 700 top researchers in the world in

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\* Lecture delivered at the IIC on June 11 by Dr. Bharat Sharma as part of the series WATER: THE STUFF OF LIFE.