

Institute's new director praises strong foundation

The Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Institute has a strong foundation on which to build an organization that will help the world produce more food with limited water. That's the assessment of the water expert named to lead the institute.

Roberto Lenton, one of the world's foremost experts in water management and development, was named founding director in August. His appointment begins in February 2012 after his responsibilities end as chair of the independent World Bank Inspection Panel. He will remain a panel member until August 2012.

Lenton said the institute has much to build on. Assets include "its base at a leading land grant university with a strong tradition of practical application of scientific knowledge; its location in the state of Nebraska, known as an innovator of good policies and practices in agricultural water management; the enormous talent of its faculty and research staff who have a long track record of addressing water and food security issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives; its strong convening power, as illustrated by the annual Water for Food Conferences that have begun to shape the debate on this critical issue of our time; and the very generous founding gift from the Robert B. Daugherty Foundation that will enable the institute to get off to a rapid start."



Roberto Lenton

"I am very excited by the opportunity to build on these strong foundations and enable the institute to fulfill its commitment to help the world use its limited freshwater resources effectively and ensure food security for current and future generations," Lenton said.

Lenton helped establish the [International Water Management Institute](#) in Sri Lanka and served as director general from 1987 to 1994. Under his leadership, IWMI grew from a small project-based organization to a major institute employing more than 300 people in 10 countries with an annual budget of over \$10 million.

"Dr. Lenton is an ideal choice for the founding director of the institute," said Prem S. Paul, vice chancellor for research and economic development. "His vast knowledge, global experience and international stature will serve Nebraska well as we strive to make this institute a world leader in the field of water for food. We look forward to working with him to build an internationally renowned institute."

A citizen of Argentina with degrees from the University of Buenos Aires and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lenton also was director of the United Nations Development Programme's Sustainable Energy and Environment Division, program officer in the Rural Poverty and Resources program with the Ford Foundation, and an assistant professor at MIT. He also was senior adviser on water at Columbia University's Earth Institute.

Ronnie Green, Harlan Vice Chancellor of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said Lenton brings a wealth of global experience to the Water for Food Institute. "Meeting the grand challenge of feeding a growing world population with more efficient use of scarce water resources requires great vision and we are tremendously excited to have someone of Roberto's caliber coming to lead us in this highly important initiative for Nebraska and the world."

Jeff Raikes, CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and a member of the Water for Food Institute board of directors, said, "Dr. Lenton is one of the most widely recognized leaders in the world in water circles. I don't believe we could have found a more qualified and respected founding director."