

FAO AT WORK 2006–2007

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ADAPTING TO CHANGE
ON OUR HUNGRY PLANET





A NEW AGE DAWNS

Humanity is crossing an important threshold this **year**: for the first time in history more people will live in cities than in the countryside. From now on, population growth will be almost entirely urban. Will we be able to ensure a supply of safe, nutritious food for everyone – the challenge set forth in UN Millennium Development Goal number one?

Going to a supermarket or convenience store to **buy food** has become a universal urban experience. We trust these foods are safe. Normally, our trust is well founded because to safeguard consumer health, the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, using science-based analysis of foodborne risks, has laid down a comprehensive set of international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice. ➤



Yet the picture is still more complicated. We need to consider the environmental dimension of what we do to feed ourselves.

A new age dawn

➤ GLOBAL MARKET chains offer new and interesting opportunities for rural producers who can participate in them. But the more links in the food chain, the more opportunities for contamination, and once pests or disease enter the global food supply the effects can be catastrophic – for human health, for national economies, for rural producers, for everyone. As recent outbreaks of avian influenza and bovine spongiform encephalopathy or “mad cow” disease attest, the safety of the global market is always under threat.

Access to export markets and international supermarket chains can be profitable for producers in developing countries. But the investments needed to meet quality standards are high, the stability of the market uncertain and, with World Trade Organization talks still without an agreement, trade practices remain manifestly unfair for developing countries.

The nutritional value of many of the foods sold in supermarkets today is not high. Many products, though cheap or convenient, are too rich in sugar and fats, particularly saturated fats and cholesterol. These “junk foods” have contributed to a worldwide obesity epidemic.



Jacques Diouf, Director-General, FAO.

Together with partners, FAO is working with its member countries on all these issues: ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for people everywhere, coping with transboundary pests and diseases that threaten food supply chains, nutrition education, training and advice on meeting food safety standards for international trade, and advice on participation in global trade negotiations.

Yet the picture is still more complicated. We need to consider the environmental dimension of what we do to feed ourselves.

Agriculture may be a source of greenhouse gases but it also offers hope for understanding, curbing and coping with global warming. Grown sustainably, biomass fuel has the potential to be a clean, renewable source of energy. There is also the possibility of many profitable and sustainable micro-industries. Agriculture, fisheries and forestry provide us with our meals, clothes, drugs, cosmetics, furniture, toys and games, artwork, paper, housing and hundreds of other things. The diversity of options for rural producers is matched by the diversity of urban markets with their food stalls, florists, boutiques, restaurants, street vendors, theatres, festivals and tourists. If we can establish strong links between rural communities and urban consumers, sustainable rural economies could bloom. ➤



- › MARKET FORCES by themselves will not be enough to build these chains. To produce and prepare food that is safe to eat, whether for market or for the family, rural producers need access to safe water and proper sanitation. One billion people, most of them living in rural areas of developing countries, lack access to clean water and more than twice that number have no adequate sanitation. Public investments in this area are urgently needed to create the conditions where food and agricultural markets can flourish.

A new age dawns

Sustainable agriculture is good not only for the long-term health of the environment and the economy. It's good for people right now. Creatively integrated into national health and education policies, it can bring immediate and direct benefits to those most in need – the world's poor and hungry. Home, school and community gardens can provide sources of safe, nutritious food for pregnant women, nursing mothers, infants, children and people living with HIV/AIDS. Field and workplace schools can be used to teach boys and girls about nutrition, sustainable agriculture principles and small business practices.

To do all this we need to do more than attract funding. We need to build trust.



Knowledge, in fact,
has now moved centre stage ...

Rural communities are often remote and culturally distinct from urban “consumer society”. They may consist of a single tightly knit ethnic group or be a mosaic of peoples with differing religions, customs and traditions.

We need to take the time to understand cultural and other differences among all the players: urban officials, local leaders, young people, the elderly and the disabled, community groups, women's associations, unions, cooperatives and business interests. The process of determining access and management rights to natural resources like land and water, for example, can be complex and sensitive. It is essential that we listen to and learn from everyone involved, tapping the knowledge and experience they possess.

Knowledge, in fact, has now moved centre stage in the drive to secure long-term access to food for everyone while conserving natural resources for the future. Member countries appreciate FAO's evolving role as a “knowledge organization”, which goes beyond dissemination of the latest data, methodologies and statistics into fostering dialogue and sharing of experiences and best practices. Unfortunately, access to knowledge remains problematic for many – especially in rural areas of developing countries. Bridging this rural digital divide has become a core focus for FAO.

We are entering the new urban era, and we must change the way we feed ourselves. If we can harness new technologies, capture and share knowledge, use sustainable production practices and build alliances based on trust, the future can be vibrant and flavourful in town and country.

Jacques Diouf
Director-General

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations





FAO MOBILIZES AS BIRD FLU SPREADS

FAO's contribution to the fight against crop pests and animal diseases that cross national borders expanded dramatically in 2006-2007 as bird flu spread from Asia to Europe and Africa.

The Organization was inundated with requests for technical assistance from the 45 countries in which bird flu was confirmed and the disease-free countries concerned by the risk of an outbreak.

It deployed technical experts to give advice in such areas as policy and strategy, trained local experts and provided lab equipment, vaccines and protective clothing.

In order to better understand how the disease broke out of Asia, FAO teamed up with the World Organisation for Animal Health to hold an international scientific conference on bird flu and wild birds in Rome in May 2006.

FAO continued to promote regional cooperation and coordinate donor contributions. Donors attending a FAO-sponsored conference in Bamako, Mali in December 2006 pledged US\$475 million for the fight against the disease.

In the research field, FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency coordinated trials of hand-held testing kits, which experts say could revolutionize the fight against bird flu through faster detection and better containment.

Targeting rinderpest and foot-and-mouth

FAO's Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES) plays a key role in monitoring regions, preventing disease outbreaks and containing insect infestations. EMPRES continued its campaign against the deadly livestock disease rinderpest. ➤



FAO continued to promote regional cooperation and coordinate donor contributions.

In combating diseases and pests that move quickly across borders, rapid detection and reaction are crucial.

FAO mobilizes as bird flu spreads

▶ THANKS TO the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme, hosted and funded by FAO, there is growing confidence that the whole of Asia and most of Africa are now free from the disease. While monitoring efforts continued in 2006-2007 so countries can be declared officially rinderpest free, virus hunters worked to confirm eradication of the last pocket of the disease in the border area between Somalia and Kenya.

The target remains global elimination by 2010, which would make rinderpest only the second disease eradicated in history, after smallpox.

Foot-and-mouth disease is another infection with potential to devastate herds. In Southeast Asia, a pivotal area in the fight against foot-and-mouth, FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health are encouraging regional cooperation and offering technical support in areas such as diagnosis and surveillance.

Better control of desert locust

A major area of FAO's work focuses on combating the desert locust, which periodically multiplies, swarms and can devour crops and fodder across North and West Africa, the Red Sea basin and Southwest Asia.

In 2006-2007, FAO developed, in collaboration with the French Space Agency, the eLocust2, a hand-held device that enables locust control officers in remote desert to instantly transmit locust and environmental data via satellite to analysts far away in locust control centres. Such precise tracking of the insects assists in rapid control and accurate forecasting of locust movement.

During the same period, FAO held field trials in Mauritania of a biopesticide that uses a natural fungus to kill locust, as part of efforts to reduce the need for chemical pesticides during locust upsurges.

Faster reaction

In combating diseases and pests that move quickly across borders, rapid detection and reaction are crucial. To enhance this capability, the Organization set up a Global Early Warning System in 2006, enabling FAO and partner organizations to pool information and issue swift regional alerts. The opening of the FAO Crisis Management Centre in Rome in December 2006 means experts can be dispatched anywhere in the world within 48 hours. ■





NEW INITIATIVES IN KNOWLEDGE SHARING

FAO made its wealth of information and expertise more accessible than ever with major technical and conceptual innovations introduced in 2006-2007.

Prompt on-demand access to advice from FAO technical experts via an online "Ask FAO" feature proved a popular new service. Over 3 000 questions were answered – many from developing countries, including a significant number from Africa. A "Best Practices" feature pulls together in one place more than 50 of the Organization's most successful and time-tested approaches and programmes, to help those looking for solutions to their food and agriculture problems.

Improved access to knowledge is only theoretical for many in poor countries especially in rural areas. FAO is working in dozens of countries worldwide to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

Egypt is one country that is narrowing the digital divide, helped by modest but well targeted FAO assistance. For example, 5 000 agricultural researchers across dozens of centres can now coordinate their activities better through the Web-based National Agricultural Research Information Management System. Operational since mid-2006, the system was built on existing FAO tools and methodologies. Another FAO project helped the Egyptian Government create an electronic network linking the researchers with rural extension offices and farmers. Not only can researchers share their latest findings, but farmers can also give feedback and steer research towards what they see as the most pressing problems.

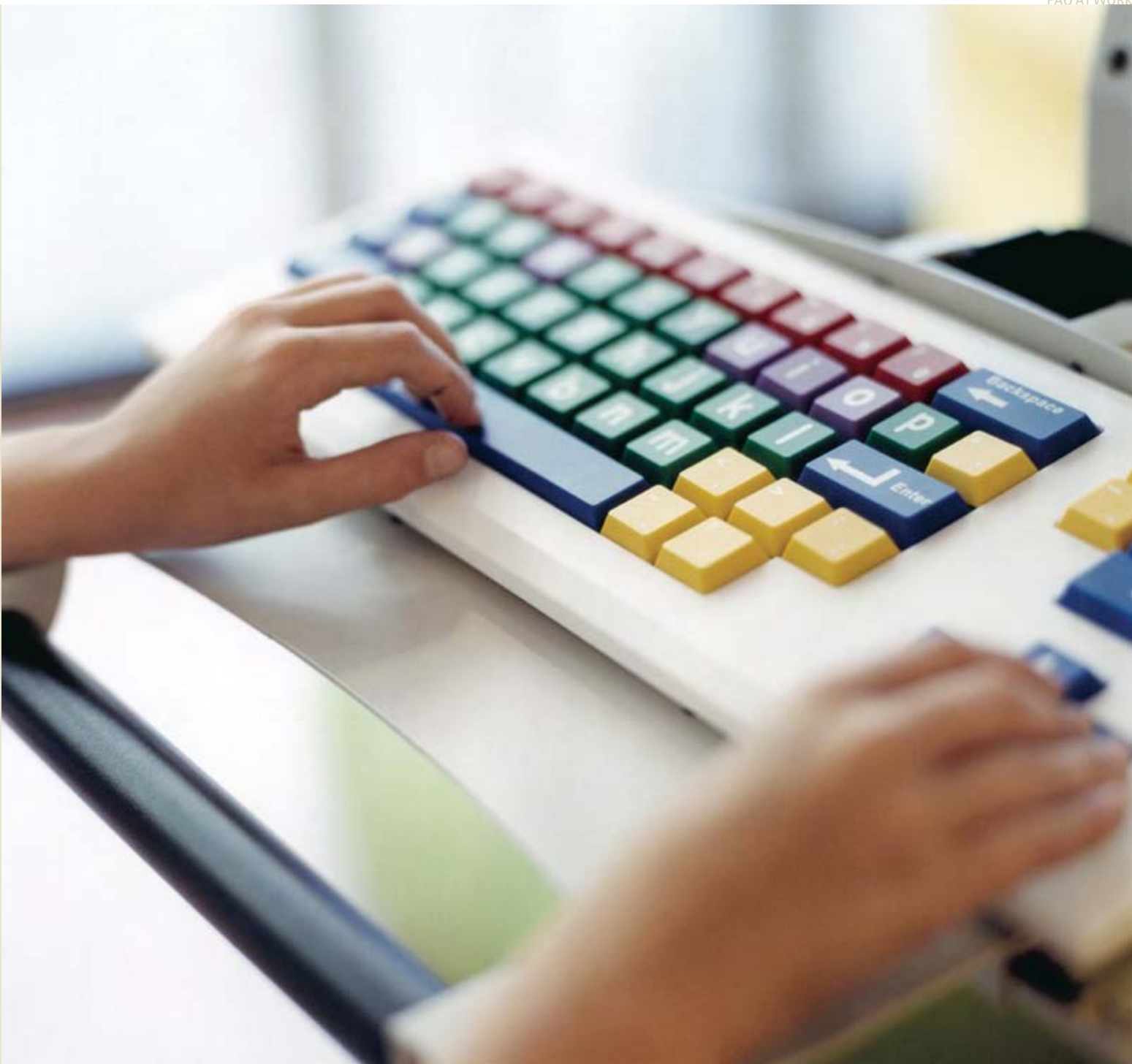


FAO's online World Agricultural Information Centre was busier than ever in 2006-2007 with approximately four million visits a month. Users downloaded data from hundreds of databases, statistics vital in agricultural research and policy-making.

How can thousands of students, researchers and academics in poorer countries afford to keep abreast of the latest developments in agricultural science? The Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA) programme provides access to more than 900 scientific journals at low or no cost.

Currently supported by 39 of the world's leading science publishers and other key partners, including the World Health Organization and Cornell University in the United States of America, AGORA expanded in 2006 from the initial service, which covered 70 of the poorest countries, to include universities, colleges, research institutes and government ministries as well as non-governmental organizations in an additional 37 lower-middle-income countries.

FAO's distance learning programme continued to grow in 2006-2007. Working with over 30 partners, the Organization's Information Management Resource Kit initiative has more than 6 000 learners online and now has distributed over 30 000 CD-ROMs on information sharing and knowledge management. Additional curricula are being developed in such topical areas as food security, the right to food and food safety standards. ■



FAO is working in dozens of countries worldwide to bridge the digital divide between developed and developing countries.





HIGHLIGHTS

FAO at work 2006–2007

New system unveiled to monitor world fisheries

FAO unveiled a new source of information aimed at improving the monitoring and management of world fish stocks. The Fisheries Resources Monitoring System contains data on catches and stock levels, fishing fleet activities, fishing mortality and biomass trends, management practices and more. Coordinated by FAO, it garners details from regional fisheries management organizations and other agencies. The system was launched amidst mounting concern over the overexploitation or depletion of species such as tuna and oceanic sharks.



May 2006

Bioenergy platform is unveiled

FAO unveiled its new International Bioenergy Platform to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York. FAO will put its broad expertise in sustainable bioenergy practices at the service of governments and other operators in the sector.

May 2006

New FAOSTAT, CountrySTAT launched

The Organization has launched an improved version of the world's largest and most comprehensive online statistical database on food and agriculture. The new FAOSTAT allows data from different categories to work together, features an easy-to-use interface and generates dynamic charts and other outputs. It is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. A national version, CountrySTAT, is being implemented in 20 countries and a regional version, RegionSTAT, in 3 regions.



July 2006

Food Summit goal under threat

In a stark warning on the tenth anniversary of the 1996 World Food Summit, FAO said the race against hunger was at risk of being lost. Releasing its annual report on *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2006*, FAO said that since the Summit, at which world leaders pledged to reduce by half the number of hungry people by 2015, the figure in developing countries had only declined by 3 million – from 823 million in 1990–92 to 820 million in 2001–03. The report added however that the hunger reduction goal, also expressed in Millennium Development Goal number one, could still be achieved by increasing public investment in agriculture and rural development, and promoting policies favouring small-scale farmers especially in poverty "hotspots".

October 2006





HIGHLIGHTS

FAO at work 2006–2007

Congress focuses on development communication

The vital role of communication in promoting development and reducing poverty came under the spotlight at a major conference hosted by FAO in Rome. The World Congress on Communication for Development, the first of its kind, was organized by FAO, the World Bank and the online network The Communication Initiative. It brought together over 1000 policy-makers, media professionals and other experts. One focus of the talks lay in the wider use of modern technology such as Internet and mobile phones, alongside more traditional media such as rural radio, in helping rural people become more integrated and more influential in development initiatives.



October 2006

FAO warns of climate change threats

FAO warned the UN Climate Change Conference in Nairobi that climate change threatened to reduce food supplies and increase world hunger. The Organization's role in countering the risk included impact assessments of extreme weather conditions and guidance on eco-friendly rural policies.

November 2006

Special Forum hears hunger success stories

A Special Forum brought together member governments and non-government activists during the 32nd Session of the Committee on World Food Security meeting to discuss progress and prospects in meeting the goal of cutting world hunger by half. The head of Ghana's National Alliance against Hunger told the forum how 400 000 students now received a daily hot meal as an incentive to school attendance, while in Burkina Faso a similar alliance has worked to support fair trade and promote local markets. The forum discussed how it could assist future initiatives, including promoting investment in agriculture and protecting the interests of farmers, fishers and foresters in an age of global trading.

October 2006

Reform programme gathers pace

Recent reforms approved by the Organization's governing bodies bring expertise closer to member countries and streamline administrative and financial processes and the management structure. As part of ongoing decentralization plans, the Regional Office for Europe is moving from Rome to Budapest and becoming the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. Four new subregional offices have opened – in Ethiopia covering East Africa; in Gabon for Central Africa; in Ghana for West Africa; and in Turkey for Central Asia. (For details on new headquarters' structure and decentralized offices, see page 24)

November 2006

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FAO at work 2006–2007

Soccer star visits Senegal

In his role as an FAO Goodwill Ambassador, Spanish soccer star Raúl González visited Senegal to rally support for efforts to combat hunger across Africa. His visits included a Dakar hospital which, thanks to a FAO TeleFood project, runs a vegetable garden to improve the nutrition of AIDS patients. Africa is the continent most seriously affected by poverty and hunger, and in Senegal almost a quarter of the 12 million population suffers from malnutrition.



November 2006

African ministers meet on food security

FAO worked with the African Union to organize a meeting of Ministers for Agriculture where they discussed measures to improve food security and agricultural development under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The meeting, held in Libreville, Gabon, addressed issues including investment in water control and infrastructure development management and improvement of trade among African countries.

November–December 2006

Rome-based agency heads visit Ghana

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf travelled to Ghana with the heads of the other Rome-based UN food and agriculture agencies, highlighting their determination to strengthen joint efforts to reduce hunger and poverty. Dr Diouf was joined by James Morris, at the time Executive Director of the World Food Programme, and Lennart Båge, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development. They viewed rural development activities including FAO's Special Programme for Food Security and farmer field schools. Although Ghana has cut the number of undernourished people by more than half since 1996, pockets of food insecurity remain in certain areas, including in the Northern Region visited by the three leaders.

December 2006

World marks Water Day

Events across the globe to mark World Water Day on 22 March included the launching of a water literacy campaign in India, school field trips in Brazil and marches through Zimbabwe to raise awareness. "Coping with Water Scarcity" was the theme of this year's event, and government ministers were joined at FAO headquarters in Rome by His Royal Highness Willem-Alexander, Prince of Orange and Chair, UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, to discuss the growing threat of water shortages to food production. This year FAO coordinated the event as lead UN agency, highlighting schemes that included innovative irrigation systems in countries such as Bolivia, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania.

March 2007





HIGHLIGHTS

FAO at work 2006–2007

Regions reverse decades of deforestation

A number of regions have halted over half a century of deforestation and are instead showing an increase in forest area, according to FAO's *State of the World's Forests 2007*. Forest area increases are taking place across Asia and the Pacific, Europe, North America, the Caribbean and northern Africa. However, the net forest loss remains at 7.3 million hectares per year or 200 km² per day, the latter equivalent to an area twice the size of Paris. FAO is assisting efforts to redress this trend in high-loss areas across sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America, helping shape national policies and giving technical support to protected area and watershed management.



March 2007

Countries push ahead on fishing agreement

All 119 countries attending FAO's Committee on Fisheries in Rome agreed on a proposal to develop a new legally binding instrument to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The agreement will cover document and cargo checks, training of inspectors and improvement of international information sharing. Such fishing practices cause severe economic, social, biological and environmental damage and undermine the effectiveness of international conservation and management measures. The draft agreement will be presented to the next committee meeting in 2009 for approval.

March 2007

National Programmes for Food Security multiply

The number of countries running National Programmes for Food Security is growing rapidly. Such programmes are designed to reach large numbers of food insecure people with targeted actions that promote community development, increase household incomes and assist those in immediate need. FAO led the way in the village-based approach to rural development through its Special Programme for Food Security. Now national authorities provide the leadership, although the Organization still assists with advice and other specialized technical services. In 2006 and early 2007, Algeria, Chad, El Salvador, Gabon, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Madagascar, Mali, Pakistan, South Africa and United Republic of Tanzania (mainland) joined six other countries with programmes that are already operational; over 30 more are under formulation. By 2010, the number of beneficiaries could reach 80 million.

New farm schools for vulnerable children

FAO expanded its AIDS programme to 10 African countries in 2006–2007, teaching farming and life skills to almost 7 000 vulnerable children, many orphaned as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Uganda opened the first of a planned 14 Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools, Swaziland launched 6 schools and Kenya opened another 6 schools at Kakuma refugee camp. Run in partnership with the World Food Programme and UNICEF, the success of the schools was demonstrated in Namibia where village chiefs granted land rights to a group of newly trained young people.

Emergency response amidst conflict

Helping Iraqis to restart farming and rebuild their lives in the midst of ongoing conflict was among the priorities for FAO's Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation Programme. The Organization spent US\$25 million between January 2006 and February 2007 on projects in Iraq that created new drainage and pumping systems, distributed seed and gave training in food safety testing. Worldwide, the programme worked chiefly in 35 countries, spending US\$241 million on relief and rehabilitation between January 2006 and February 2007. Other major country programmes assisted Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in such areas as training local workers in animal health care and teaching farmers new agricultural techniques.







FAO IN FIGURES

Members

An intergovernmental organization, FAO has 189 member countries plus one member organization, the European Community.

Governance

Every two years, representatives from all member countries meet at the FAO Conference to review work carried out and to approve a new budget. The Conference elects a smaller group of 49 member countries, known as the Council, to serve three-year rotating terms to govern the Organization's activities. The Conference also elects a Director-General to a six-year term. Dr Jacques Diouf, of Senegal, is currently serving his third term, which began in January 2006.

Departments

FAO is composed of eight departments: Agriculture and Consumer Protection; Economic and Social Development; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Forestry; Human, Financial and Physical Resources; Knowledge and Communication; Natural Resources Management and Environment; and Technical Cooperation.

Offices

FAO has five regional offices, nine subregional offices, five liaison offices and 74 country offices (excluding those hosted in regional and subregional offices), in addition to its headquarters in Rome.

Staff

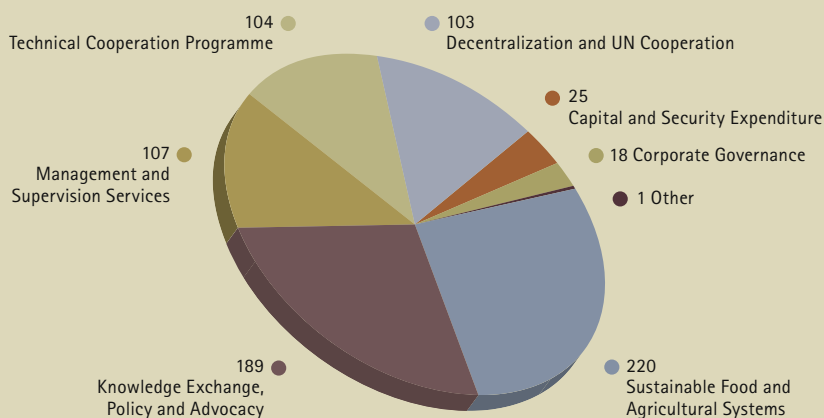
As of 1 May 2007, FAO employed 1 586 professional staff and 2 048 support staff. Two thirds are based at headquarters in Rome, while the remainder work in its offices worldwide.

Field Programme

In 2006, FAO spent US\$450.7 million for agricultural and rural development projects and emergencies. About 92 percent came from voluntary donations from member countries. During the same year, FAO itself contributed eight percent provided by the Regular Programme budget (seven percent through its Technical Cooperation Programme and one percent from its Special Programme for Food Security).

Regular Programme

The budget for 2006-2007 is US\$765.7 million, divided as follows (numbers have been rounded):



- ★ Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems
Programmes incorporating management of forests, fisheries and natural resources, rural infrastructure and agro-industry development.
- Knowledge Exchange, Policy and Advocacy
Includes support of information and early-warning systems, international alliances and activities including World Food Day.
- Management and Supervision Services
Includes human resources management, procurement and management of premises.
- Technical Cooperation Programme
Includes revising training modules and information tools, and increased role in Special Programme for Food Security.
- Decentralization and UN Cooperation
Coordinating decentralization of offices and their management; promoting UN cooperation including participation in UN Country Team.
- Capital and Security Expenditure
Information technology support systems; headquarters and field-site security.
- Corporate Governance
Main governing bodies, regional conferences and further activities of the Office of the Director-General and Legal Office.
- Other
Contingency plans.





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