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Report of the

**FIFTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
FOR LATIN AMERICA**

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Montevideo, 15-19 August 1978



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

*FAO Member Nations Serviced by the Latin American Regional Office (at 19 August 1978)*

Argentina	Dominican Republic	Mexico
Bahamas	Ecuador	Nicaragua
Barbados	El Salvador	Panama
Bolivia	Grenada	Paraguay
Brazil	Guatemala	Peru
Chile	Guyana	Suriname
Colombia	Haiti	Trinidad and Tobago
Costa Rica	Honduras	Uruguay
Cuba	Jamaica	Venezuela

*Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Latin America*

First	— Quito, Ecuador, 18-25 September 1949
Second	— Montevideo, Uruguay, 1-12 December 1950
Third	— Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1-10 September 1954
Fourth	— Santiago, Chile, 19-30 November 1956
Fifth	— San José, Costa Rica, 12-21 November 1958
Sixth	— Mexico City, Mexico, 9-20 August 1960
Seventh	— Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 17-27 November 1962
Eighth	— Viña del Mar, Chile, 13-29 March 1965
Ninth	— Punta del Este, Uruguay, 5-16 December 1966
Tenth	— Kingston, Jamaica, 2-13 December 1968
Eleventh	— Caracas, Venezuela, 12-20 October 1970
Twelfth	— Cali, Colombia, 21 August – 2 September 1972
Thirteenth	— Panama City, Panama, 12-23 August 1974
Fourteenth	— Lima, Peru, 21-29 April 1976
Fifteenth	— Montevideo, Uruguay, 15-19 August 1978

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America was held in the Town Hall of the city of Montevideo, Uruguay, from 15 to 19 August 1978, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

### Inaugural Ceremony

2. The inaugural ceremony was attended by His Excellency Dr. Aparicio Méndez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, and by the Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces: Lieutenant-General Gregorio Alvarez, Commander-in-Chief of the Army; Vice-Admiral Hugo Márquez, Commander-in-Chief of the Navy; and Brigadier-General José D. Cardozo, acting Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force.

3. The Director-General of FAO, Mr. Edouard Saouma, took the floor to thank the President of the Republic for attending the ceremony and to express appreciation for the hospitality of the Government and people of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay; he also stressed the important contribution being made by the country to agricultural production on a regional and world level.

4. The President of the Republic then addressed those present at the meeting and bade them welcome, stating that this was the third time that the country had hosted an FAO Regional Conference. He added that this Conference was of particular importance, since it was taking place in the context of FAO's new policy trend, characterized by the decentralization accorded to the Regional Offices and to FAO Country Representatives and by a pragmatic approach towards solving the problems of the rural areas in the Region.

5. The President emphasized the efforts being made by the country in connexion with rural development, based on a humanization of work in order to attain a greater wealth of food supplies for the country and the rest of the world. He stressed the efforts which were being made to diversify production, pointing out, in particular, the rapid progress in the development of the fishing industry. He also referred to the new measures taken to stimulate the growth of the country's agricultural sector.

6. The President added that this Conference was being held at a critical period in the history of food supplies and he made special mention of the great sums being spent on armaments as compared with the limited investments for resolving the problems of under-nutrition; he also mentioned the negative effects of tariff barriers on the Region's external trade of its products, and the social aims which should inspire capital investments.

7. The Director-General thanked the President of the Republic for his statement and underlined FAO's readiness to go on providing the technical support for which it was requested for the development of agriculture, forestry and fishery in Uruguay and in the other countries of the Region; on behalf of the President and on his own behalf, he then declared the Conference inaugurated.

### Opening of the Conference

8. The Director-General, Mr. Edouard Saouma, opened the proceedings of the Conference.

### Election of Officers

9. The Conference elected by acclamation: as Chairman, Mr. Luis H. Meyer, Minister of Industry and Energy and Acting Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay; as First Vice-Chairman, Mr. Rutilio Aguilera, Minister of Agriculture of El Salvador; as second Vice-Chairman, Mr. Alysson Paulinelli, Minister of Agriculture of Brazil; and as Rapporteur, Major Paco Moncayo, Coordinator General of the Ministry of Agriculture of Ecuador.

10. The Drafting Committee consisted of the Rapporteur and representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Haiti, Mexico and Venezuela. It was indicated that other countries were free to participate in the work of the Committee.

#### Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

11. The Conference approved the Agenda and Timetable; the former is attached as Appendix A to this Report.

#### Statement by the Director-General of FAO

12. The Director-General, in his statement, analysed the situation of food and agriculture in a regional and world perspective.

13. He stressed the need for a world food security system to meet situations arising from poor harvests, which constituted a latent threat. He said that the developing countries would have to give due priority to agriculture, mobilize their own funds and obtain financing from the rich countries in order to make the large investments necessary to intensify the rate of agricultural production.

14. He referred to the growth of food production in the Region, stating that although this had been higher between 1970 and 1977 than the average for the developing countries, it was not sufficient to improve nutritional levels rapidly and substantially; he added that, according to the Fourth FAO World Food Survey, in 1972-1974, the diet of 15 percent of the population of Latin America was below the critical minimum limit, which meant that more than 46 million people suffered from malnutrition.

15. He emphasized that, given the average level of their food resources, more than ten countries of the Region had food deficits, which accentuated their problems of poverty; he urged that a frontal attack be made on poverty and want by systematic rural development policies, and pointed out the need to ensure mobilization of the rural masses and their integration into the development process. He stated that the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development was being convened in 1979 for this purpose and he hoped that its results would be geared to action.

16. He then referred to the low level of investments in the agricultural sector, deriving from the inadequacy of financial resources and the scarcity of well-prepared projects. He stressed the increase recorded in loans for agriculture made by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank and voiced the hope that the investments would benefit the poorest sectors of the rural population.

17. He mentioned the subject of regional agricultural cooperation, underlining the work being carried out in this respect by FAO in collaboration with ECLA, through the Joint FAO/ECLA Agriculture Division. He made special reference to the work which the Latin American Economic System (SELA) was doing in this field and added that FAO was ready to cooperate closely with this Organization in its efforts to achieve regional economic integration.

18. He then referred to the solidarity which should prevail on a world scale in order to crystallize the efforts which countries were making to find a lasting solution to their problems. He voiced his concern at the situation of Latin American commodities in international agricultural trade, pointing out that between 1960 and 1976 Latin America's relative share in world exports of agricultural commodities had dropped in volume from 23 to 13 percent. He expressed the hope that the GATT multilateral trade negotiations would lead to a greater opening of agricultural markets and defeat re nascent protectionism; and that the negotiations started in Geneva under the integrated UNCTAD programme would shortly lead to greater stability of prices and markets for the principal commodities.

PLENARY SESSION ITEMS

General debate on situation and prospects of food and agriculture in Latin America

19. Most of the delegations spoke on this item of the agenda, referring to the situation of food and agriculture in their respective countries, regarding which they furnished valuable and up-to-date information. They also made various references to matters connected with specific items on the Agenda of the Regional Conference, which have been included in the summary of the discussions on these items in this report.
20. Delegations participating in the general debate underlined the great importance assigned by their governments to agriculture as the key factor in the economic and social development of their respective countries. They also mentioned that when this activity had stagnated or grown but little, there had been serious repercussions on the whole economy and on its rate of expansion. They also recognized that even when it had attained satisfactory rates of growth, as shown by some indicators mentioned by various countries, it had not led to a substantial alleviation of the serious nutritional, employment, migratory and social problems which still confronted a large part of the population of Latin America.
21. Some delegations pointed out that economic policies of an overall nature should take due account of aspects essential for agricultural development, such as: the adoption of realistic exchange systems which gave national currencies proper equality; not burdening with taxes the exportation of primary commodities; not giving excessive protection to national input industries at the expense of agricultural production costs; the abandonment of development models based on closed economies, so as to make better use of the comparative advantages of a production-oriented approach.
22. For the first time in a regional conference on food and agriculture, the delegations referred to the enormous sums spent on armaments, a subject which had been discussed in other fora. The Conference echoed the statement made by the President of the Republic of Uruguay in his inaugural address regarding the magnitude of national expenditures on armaments, emphasizing that an end must be put to this process and that the funds set aside for armaments must be reassigned to increasing food production and to agricultural development.
23. There was emphasis on the desirability of promoting and supporting the socio-economic organization of the peasant sector as a way of increasing overall efficiency in the agricultural sector, and of guaranteeing production so that rural workers could raise their levels of social, economic and political participation.
24. Attention was drawn to the urgent necessity of correcting the inefficiency of internal trade in agricultural commodities and to the priority that should be given to improvements aimed at reducing post-harvest losses. Stress was also put on the advisability of introducing mass-marketing techniques and of making the investments necessary to improve storage, transport and distribution.
25. Emphasis was put on the participation of the public sector in the marketing of agricultural commodities in order to ensure prices remunerative for the producers and within reach of the consumers. There was insistence on the need to reduce trading profits, to improve marketing organization and to develop efficient systems of supplying food and other agricultural commodities.
26. With reference to the food aid projects to which the Director-General had referred in his introductory statement, it was remarked that it was important that such aid be made available with maximum flexibility and efficiency, and that the multilateral channelling of resources offered greater possibilities for achieving such efficiency than did bilateral arrangements. It was pointed out that, although it was logical for priority to be given to the countries most in need, this criterion should be flexible, in the sense of not underrating the importance of aid to countries which, although not at the lowest levels of development, had pressing emergency problems and requirements. Similarly, countries which had an administrative organization and an infrastructure relatively well equipped to use the food in development programmes, and were therefore in a position to take more advantage of the resources, should not be excluded from food aid.

27. The delegations pointed out that regional cooperation had its roots in the geography and history, and in the political, socio-economic, scientific and technical conditions of the continent.

28. Integration and cooperation schemes, besides being founded on solidarity, were also based, in practice, on established cooperative structures, on the vitality of regional institutions and on the dynamism of cooperative programmes. In this connection attention was drawn to the importance that member countries of the Cartagena Agreement attached to the efforts being made to stimulate Andean sub-regional agricultural integration through the implementation of specific projects, the harmonization of agricultural health policies and coordinated marketing.

29. Special mention was made of the work being done by the Latin American Economic System in its function as adviser and coordinator with regard to economic and social problems, particularly in the agricultural sector, in which various Action Committees had been set up to combine efforts aimed at increasing regional production of grains, livestock products, oilseeds, marine products, supplementary foods, fertilizers, etc.

30. Emphasis was placed on the advisability of FAO continuing to cooperate as closely as possible with SELA and its Action Committees.

31. Several delegations said that, in order to speed up the balanced development of agriculture in the Latin American countries, it was necessary to adopt technologies suited to the conditions prevailing in each one. In this connexion, reference was made to the need to apply selective criteria in adopting foreign technologies and to give vigorous encouragement to countries' efforts to devise their own technologies.

32. Reference was also made to the need for the State to guide and induce technological improvements, even by compulsory means, in the endeavour to attain economic and social objectives which went beyond the interests and motivations of individual farmers.

33. The development of agricultural technology, by means of both pure and applied research and by training and extension work, was a basic prerequisite for an increase in production and, in general, for the development of the sector. The average productivity levels prevailing in Latin America were comparatively low; introduction of appropriate technologies, through both its economic and its social effects, would lead to substantial increases in the production of the most important agricultural commodities in various countries of the Region.

34. Concern was expressed at the existence of large numbers of poor peasants and unorganized, unemployed workers, whose precarious situation had persisted for decades.

35. It was recognized that rural poverty had increased between 1950 and 1975, in spite of the growth achieved by the economies. World Bank studies estimated that in 1969 poverty affected 38 percent of the Latin American rural population; according to other surveys, the figure was even higher.

36. Most of the delegations emphasized the need to adopt national strategies and policies to fight against this serious problem, and to conduct in this context agrarian reform and integrated rural development efforts. Stress was laid on the need to ensure the participation of the rural masses in these efforts, as well as their integration in the overall development process.

37. The Chairman of the Latin American Group of Representatives to FAO said that he was pleased with the new orientation given to FAO by the Director-General, with emphasis on action. He also remarked that Latin America's representation within the Organization should be more in accordance with the real position of the region and with the efforts which it was making to increase its agricultural production. He stressed the fact that the interest of Latin American countries in FAO was shown by, among other things, the presence at this Regional Conference of many Permanent Representatives of Latin American countries to FAO, in compliance with a request made by the Director-General.



38. The Director-General replied that he was pleased to inform the Regional Conference that he had recently appointed two Latin American personalities to high-level posts in FAO: Mr. Marcos Flores Rodas (Honduras) as Assistant Director-General for the Forestry Department, and Mr. Rafael Moreno (Chile) as Director of the Division of Human Resources, Rural Institutions and Agrarian Reform. The Region now had the highest number of Assistant Directors-General in FAO.

39. The Conference endorsed the proposal presented beforehand to the FAO Latin American Group, to the effect that FAO, in cooperation with governments, should provide for an efficient flow of information on its activities in the Region and enable governments to know the results of evaluation, control and monitoring, and follow-up, so that they could measure the effectiveness of FAO's action and, if need be, modify the strategy and methods used, so as to obtain the maximum benefits in relation to their priorities and to the efforts and investments made. It was proposed that this should start as from 1979, and that the Agenda for the Sixteenth Regional Conference include an item and a report relating to this subject.

40. The Vice-President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) illustrated the objectives of the Fund, which could, in cooperation with other institutions use its resources to help alleviate hunger and poverty in the developing world. He emphasized the necessity of increasing production and improving the distribution of food in the developing countries. He explained the conditions for granting loans, pointing out that the majority of them were directed towards combating rural poverty. He reported the favourable welcome given by the Fund's Executive Committee to a loan request for a country in the Latin American region. He added that six more countries were already included in the Fund's programme of work. He underlined FAO's support for IFAD's work.

41. The representative of the World Food Council reported on the results of the Council's Fourth Meeting, held in Mexico in June 1978. The implementation of the Action Programme for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, adopted the previous year at Manila, had been revised. Agreement had been reached on concrete actions to increase food production, improve nutrition and reduce hunger, and for food security and international trade. He expressed the concern of the Council at the slowness of the negotiations for a new international agreement on grains, the establishment of an international reserve system and a new convention on food aid, urging prompt action in these fields.

42. The representative of SELA underlined the activities carried out by this body since its creation as regards cooperation in the production and marketing of food and agricultural inputs. He reported on the work started in this body's various action Committees and underlined the collaboration received from FAO, in particular the Regional Office, in aspects connected with its regular tasks and with those carried out by these action Committees. He indicated that SELA hoped to be able to continue to count on FAO assistance in the future, to help clarify the problems affecting the region in the fields of agricultural trade and cooperation.

Agrarian reform and rural development in the region, with reference to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

43. This item was introduced by the special Representative of the Director-General of FAO for the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, who referred to the extensive discussions held on this matter during the CEPAL/FAO Technical Meeting on Rural Social Development in Latin America. He stated that for the purposes of the Conference the concepts of agrarian reform and reform of the land tenure system were not synonymous, the latter being confined to a change in land tenure or ownership, while the first concept covered transformations in production structures and rural institutions as well as in land tenure. He added that the Conference was seeking more rapid economic, social, cultural and technological development of the neglected rural areas of the developing world, and that in

order to achieve this objective, transformations must be wrought not only in the land tenure structures but also in all the socio-economic, technical and cultural fields which might be necessary.

44. The Chairman of the CAPAL/FAO Technical Meeting submitted to the delegates the report of this meeting and requested the Conference to adopt its conclusions in a resolution. The delegations expressed their approval of the report.

45. The Argentine delegation felt it would be advisable to include in the report of the Conference some concepts which had been formulated by some delegations after the CAPAL/FAO Technical Meeting and which, in its opinion, defined the scope of the recommendations proposed.

46. Support for the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development was reiterated.

47. The delegations agreed with the emphasis placed by the report of the CEPAL/FAO Technical Meeting on the fact that "each State has the sovereign right to legislate, plan, regulate and adopt the measures and implement the actions required to restructure the tenure, ownership and use of its natural resources so as to ensure a fair distribution of the resources and of the benefits derived from their utilization".

48. The delegations referred to the necessity of incorporating all peasants and rural workers into development through their full and effective participation in this process. This would benefit above all those in unfavourable economic, social and cultural conditions as was the case, particularly, for indigenous communities.

49. It was stressed that agrarian reform and rural development processes should be comprehensive, affecting not only the land tenure system but also all those economic and social aspects which had a bearing on the success of such processes.

50. Various delegations pointed out that the main obstacles to the implementation of agrarian reform and rural development were: the inadequacy of juridical concepts and instruments and of the bodies responsible for carrying out the process; the power possessed by the sectors or interests affected to oppose their introduction or to distort them during implementation; the inexistence or ineffectiveness of a representative and autonomous peasant organization; and the lack of an exact awareness of peasant problems.

51. Attention was drawn to the necessity of giving greater attention to the problem of the "minifundistas", who in some cases were affected by poverty as much as or more than were the wage-earning agricultural workers.

52. The importance was indicated of the countries carrying out an exhaustive examination of the social and economic conditions prevailing in each and then formulating the most suitable policies and strategies to be followed.

53. Some countries indicated the necessity of extending their agricultural frontier on the basis of land settlement projects. In this respect emphasis was laid on the large investments necessary for the construction of the economic and social infrastructure.

54. Some delegations considered it pertinent to deal with the subject of land expropriation for agrarian purposes and ways of compensating for this, indicating the need to pay a fair price.

55. It was recognized that rural development required the mobilization of all available resources, and particularly full use of the efforts and devotion of women and the young to the daily activities of rural life. It was therefore necessary to give appropriate value and adequate remuneration to the work carried out by these sectors of the population and to encourage the diversification and broadening of their occupations both inside and outside the home, multiplying their economic, social and cultural opportunities.

56. Consideration was given to the need for training plans for rural families to be conceived as part of agrarian reform and rural development programmes - within the overall context of general and technical education - and not as mere projects for the transference of knowledge on specific aspects; comprehensive training would make it possible to guide people and increase their possibilities of being able to follow their own aspirations, bearing in mind their national characteristics and guaranteeing dynamic socio-cultural change and their full and active participation in the development process.

57. Emphasis was put on the importance of fiscal policy as an instrument of development, in the sense that it could assist in a more rational distribution of income and land and also promote efficient and intensive use of the land.

58. Various delegations stated that the tool of taxation had been underemployed in the region as a lever for economic and social development, pointing out that in combination with other policies it could make an effective contribution to this process. They emphasized the interest in adapting taxation policies to sectoral development plans and stressed that some experience had been acquired which, if made known throughout the region, would help to make possible an improved and fairer rural taxation system.

59. It was recommended that at the next Regional Conference FAO submit an analysis of taxation in the region as an instrument of rural development; it was also recommended that exchange of experiences on this matter among the Latin American countries be encouraged and promoted.

60. The Conference endorsed the conclusions of the CEPAL/FAO Technical Meeting on Rural Social Development in Latin America and approved the following Resolution in this connection:

RESOLUTION 1/78

The Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America,

Considering:

1. That rural development in Latin America depends on a multiplicity of institutional, political, economic, cultural and technical factors which are affected by the progress achieved in other sectors of the economy and by the way in which this economy is inserted into the international economy; and that it should therefore be conceived, examined, interpreted and promoted in terms of its complex relations with other economic activities and with society as a whole;
2. That each state has the sovereign right to legislate, plan, regulate and adopt the measures and implement the actions required to restructure the tenure, ownership and use of its natural resources so as to ensure a fair distribution of the resources and of the benefits derived from their utilization; that the new structures should be suited to the conditions prevailing in the countries themselves; and that this means that there are many possible ways of tackling these problems, although this does not prevent many approaches being complementary to each other or having factors in common;
3. That an assessment of the rural situation and of its principal component - agriculture - shows that in many countries the situation is critical and contradictory: on the one hand, there is the economic expansion of a small fraction of the population which has achieved significant advances in the access to natural and financial resources, in managerial capacity, in the adoption of technological innovations and in potential benefits from opportunities on the external market; on the other hand, the old problems of emargination, characterized by, among other things, the lack of access of a large part of the population to the productive resources - land, water, credit and services - persist or are becoming more accentuated; and this, in turn, maintains or renders more acute the problems of subsistence, unemployment, emigration, the unequal distribution of income and the consequent deterioration of the general living conditions of the majority of the rural population and also of sectors of the urban population;
4. That the dynamism shown by the commercial sector of Latin American agriculture and the persistence or accentuation of the problems of the traditional peasant sector in many countries are not independent phenomena, and that these socio-economic imbalances induce it to raise again the question of the urgency and need for a real integration of the peasant sector in the development process, now and in the coming decades, since this sector has suffered from inadequate attention in regard to the amount of investments which such development requires;
5. That it views with deep concern the present state of multilateral trade negotiations, in which discussions are being held on essential matters relating to agricultural products, which in large part constitute the basis for the progress of the developing countries, whose economy depends to a high degree on exportation of these products;
6. That it feels pleasure and satisfaction at the decision taken by the Director-General of FAO to hold a World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in July 1979, and underlines the importance this Conference can have for agrarian reform rural development and the overall development of the region, since it will make possible a valuable exchange of experience among all the participating members, and also constitute an important factor in awakening world public opinion to awareness of the seriousness of the backwardness prevailing in many rural areas, in particular in the developing countries, and of the urgency of finding solutions to such a grave problem;

7. That it is glad that it is planned for the Conference to discuss agrarian reform and rural development policy within the framework of a policy of national development, as well as the implications for this policy of world economic conditions and the order which governs international economic relations;

8. That it is also pleased with the information received on the preparation of this World Conference and the contribution of the countries to preparing the corresponding studies and making an analysis of policies, programmes and strategies in this field, and notes that the preparations are being made in conformity with the indications given in the resolution of the Nineteenth FAO Conference to the effect that Latin America should provide for active and high-level participation in the World Conference, as recommended by the FAO Conference and by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and that this participation should take into account the multidisciplinary nature of the Conference.

Resolves to adopt the following recommendation:

1. The statements and resolutions on agrarian reform, rural development and overall development adopted within the international community, particularly those relating to the establishment of the New International Economic Order and the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States, should constitute the framework for the aspirations and the focus of the efforts made by Latin America in this matter.

2. It reaffirms the contents of the Resolution adopted at the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America, which lays down that in all the countries of the region, with a few exceptions, agrarian reform must be a pre-requisite for rural development.

3. In the formulation and implementation of projects and programmes for agrarian reform and rural development the following purposes should be pursued;

- (i) to create the conditions for a sustained improvement in the social wellbeing and quality of life of the rural population, combating the causes of poverty in order to eradicate it;
- (ii) to ensure the sovereign, rational and responsible use of productive resources in accordance with their potentiality and in the light of the social requirements of the population; and
- iii) to create the conditions which will guarantee effective participation by the rural population in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country;

Programmes and projects for agrarian reform and rural development should therefore be of national scope and geared clearly and specifically towards:

- i) fair and rational distribution or redistribution of the productive resources, above all the land and the use of water;
- ii) equitable distribution of incomes;
- iii) increase of production and productivity;
- iv) economic and social organization of the peasants;
- v) increase of permanent and fairly remunerated employment; and
- vi) improvement of cultural and nutritional levels.

4. The strategies adopted by countries in the light of their special conditions and sovereignty should have a conceptual basis provided by the statements already approved and by a nucleus of common objectives, such as:

- i) to carry out structural reforms or actions which will have an effect on the real root causes of the rural problem;

- ii) to accompany reforms in the agrarian and agricultural sectors by similar reforms in the other sectors of the economy, and in society;
- iii) to upgrade the role of agriculture in rural and global development, pointing out the functions fulfilled by this sector in the economy, with a view to reorienting public and private investment programmes;
- iv) to generate and adapt farm technology in the light of the economic and social effects that every technological innovation brings with it;
- v) to promote and support more effective participation by the rural population, including particularly women and the young;
- vi) to improve and expand social services in the rural areas, laying emphasis on training and other economic activities of the rural sector;
- vii) to rationalize the various government agencies and integrate them organically to enable the State to fulfil its role efficiently;
- viii) to promote actions that will enable the national economies to be inserted in a fair and harmonious way and reciprocal interests to be better attended to in the New International Economic Order;
- ix) to seek new, dynamic and imaginative forms of action for intraregional cooperation with regard to agriculture and other rural activities; and
- x) to give greater coherence and continuity to policies and instruments for agrarian reform and agricultural development, in order to take more advantage of the production potential in the light of the social aims pursued and the recognized priority to be accorded to depressed areas and emarginated groups.

5. It reaffirms the interest expressed by the Latin American countries with regard to international trade and the need for the agricultural commodities exported by the countries of the region to have appropriate conditions of access, fair and remunerative prices and more favourable treatment on importing markets, in accordance with the just aspirations of the New International Economic Order. Rural development compatible with overall development cannot be attained unless conditions are created in international trade which make it possible to attenuate and finally eliminate the protectionist practices of the developed countries, which prevent access to the markets by the agricultural commodities of the developing countries and lower their prices, causing conditions of inequality as compared with the industrial products of these developed countries.

6. Joint and coordinated action should be undertaken by the United Nations Agencies to channel technical and financial resources for rural development programmes carried out by the governments of the region for the benefit of emarginated peasants.

#### The state of natural resources and the environment

61. The delegations thanked FAO for the preparation of the valuable document LARC/78/2-Sup.1. In this for the first time, the important issues of natural resources and environment associated with agricultural production are assessed in a complete and detailed manner, the necessity for a global approach and planning are emphasized, and the possible degradation/depletion of these resources is related to the unprecedented rise in population. The linkages between ensuing socio-economic changes, food demand and the whole range of problems created by capital-intensive agricultural technology are analysed. It was therefore considered that this important paper should constitute the basic document on this subject for the purpose of developing and promoting further specific activities aiming at better utilization of natural resources by small-scale producers.

62. The delegations referred to the attention that should be paid to the conservation of natural resources and to the ecological balance in view of the increasing pressure being put on these resources by indiscriminate use - a situation which could lead to the exhaustion of resources which constitute an important source of food.

63. Consideration was given to the necessity of developing and encouraging, at regional, national and local levels, specific activities aimed at studying and implementing rational management of the natural resources and controlling their degradation and loss.

64. Attention was drawn to the necessity of planning for better use of land and water, improvement of soil fertility, improvement of genetic material, greater use of cultivation techniques and more advanced forms of pest and disease control and eradication.

65. Emphasis was put on the need to integrate crop-growing with livestock-raising, agro-silviculture and aquaculture wherever possible. This could be achieved by establishing and developing agricultural systems adapted to the ecological and socio-economic requirements and conditions. This approach would include: the application of appropriate land and water conservancy measures, the recycling of organic materials, wider use of nitrogen-fixing organisms, integrated pest control, agro-silviculture, aquaculture and better utilization of local genetic resources.

66. As regards the control of soil degradation, it was indicated that this should cover erosion control and recuperation of the soil, the control of salinization, the promotion of reforestation, and the control of desertification - the penal stage in the process of destruction of the soil's productive capacity, which may occur in any kind of ecosystem.

67. The UNDP representative indicated the readiness of his organization to support projects at regional and country level for the rational management and conservation of natural resources. UNDP thereby sought to assist in increasing food and agricultural production while adopting technologies which were suitable from the point of view of conservation of the environment, and adapted to the cultural and socio-economic requirements and conditions of poor farmers.

#### African swine fever

68. Various delegations referred to the recent appearance of African swine fever in Latin America, mentioned by the Director-General of FAO in his statement. They expressed their satisfaction at FAO's speed in taking the emergency measure of convening a technical consultation of experts in Lima, on 13 and 14 July this year, in collaboration with the Pan-American Health Organization.

69. African swine fever is endemic in Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. The Cuban delegation explained that it had appeared in Cuba seven years ago and had been eradicated by drastic action in the province of Havana and further measures in all the rest of the country. It had required the sacrifice of almost the entire swine population of the province of Havana. The sudden appearance of the disease in Brazil in the middle of this year was posing a real danger to this country and there was a risk of it spreading to the rest of the region. Should this occur it would represent a catastrophe for the Latin American countries, owing to both the direct economic consequences and the serious social repercussions it would have.

70. The delegation of Brazil stated that severe measures had been adopted to control and eradicate the disease and prevent its dissemination. This had required substantial resources to compensate the producers whose animals had had to be sacrificed and to set up a reserve stock. It emphasized the importance of more detailed research into the characteristics and ways of controlling or eradicating this disease.

71. It also called attention to the negative effects of the outbreak of this infectious disease, in that some countries were using the appearance of African swine fever as a pretext for raising unjustifiable barriers restricting the importation of commodities which had nothing to do with this disease: countries which were even continuing to import this type of product from countries where the disease was endemic. Should this type of discriminatory treatment continue, countries in which outbreaks of this disease occurred might feel induced not to report its presence in order to avoid being the object of such restrictions on their exports.

72. The FAO Assistant Director-General, Development Department, reported to the Conference the details of the activities initiated by the Organization, under the Technical Cooperation Programme, to assist member countries in their efforts to prevent and eradicate African swine fever.

73. During the ensuing discussion, various delegations explained the measures already taken by their countries. The delegations also indicated that FAO should act as the coordinating agency for the utilization of the resources made available by various agencies.

74. One delegation suggested that if the countries wished to establish an international fund to help solve this problem, they should instruct their Governors in the Inter-American Development Bank that the procedures in force be adapted to meet the current emergency situation. He also suggested the creation of a working group at the highest possible level to formulate and establish the method of operation of an international fund for the prevention and eradication of African swine fever in the region.

75. The Conference approved the following Resolution in connexion with this item.



RESOLUTION 2/78

The Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America,

Considering:

1. That the introduction of African swine fever into the American hemisphere constitutes one of the most serious threats to the livestock sector in this region and that it is necessary for countries to take urgent and coordinated steps to prevent and eradicate this disease;
2. That this emergency situation will require extraordinary and immediate resources on the part of the countries in the region, some of which do not have such resources available;
3. That the immediate action already taken by FAO and the prompt holding in Lima, Peru, of a Technical Consultation on the prevention and Control of African Swine Fever in Latin America, made it possible to take the following decisions:
  - (i) to study the possible establishment of an international fund for the prevention and eradication of African swine fever;
  - (ii) to instruct the International Group for Agricultural Development in Latin America to hold consultations with international organizations in order to draw up the corresponding project within thirty days from 14 July 1978, which resulted in the suggestion that a working party be set up to formulate and put forward, within sixty days from its formation, concrete proposals, on a project for the creation of the fund and on a plan of action which would include the necessary technical and health regulations;
4. That FAO has already acquired the necessary experience in other continents to which it has given its help as the competent coordinating body for control of this disease, which enables it to make the best use of the technical and material resources and of experts in the necessary disciplines;
5. That some importing countries have already started to restrict the access of agricultural commodities to their markets, on the pretext of the existence of African swine fever in the American hemisphere, to the great detriment of the region's economy;

Resolves:

1. To thank the Director-General of FAO for the Organization's prompt response to the emergency, in particular its assistance to Governments through the Organization's Technical Cooperation Programme;
2. To recommend that FAO continue to act as the coordinating body in the current emergency situation and keep the member countries informed, on a regular basis, of the situation as regards the disease in the region;
3. To urge governments and regional or world bodies to support FAO action in this important matter, and request multilateral and bilateral financing agencies to contribute additional resources in order to cope with this emergency;
4. To recommend that FAO convene a technical meeting to review control and eradication strategies, should the disease evolve in such a way as to warrant this;
5. To recommend that FAO, as a follow-up to the conclusions of the meeting convened by the IGAD/LA from 31 July to 9 August 1978, convene, by the most rapid procedure possible, a working group to prepare a project for the establishment of a fund for the prevention and eradication of African swine fever;

6. To request the Director-General of FAO to undertake the actions necessary to avoid the application of any kind of restrictions on the pretext of the risk of diffusion of African swine fever, in order to counteract negative effects on the external trade of the countries of the region.

Technical cooperation among developing countries, with particular emphasis on national and regional institutions.

76. The Secretariat drew attention to the importance of obtaining guidance from governments as to how the Organization could contribute better towards promoting cooperation among the countries of the region. In this connection the conclusions reached at the Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, to be held shortly in Buenos Aires, could be useful. It was emphasized that the intermediate level of development reached by Latin America placed the region in a favourable position to play a leading role in providing technical cooperation to relatively less developed countries. International organizations were responsible for identifying, in participation with interested countries, their capacity to provide technical cooperation. In this connection, FAO assigned special priority to the use of national institutions and was therefore making efforts to identify those which had the necessary capacity and experience to provide technical cooperation and, at times, to supply them with additional resources.

77. The FAO Representatives, with the support of the Organization's experts, had a panoramic view of the technical and development problems of agriculture and could thus serve as a focal point for this purpose. The FAO Technical Cooperation Programme was also a very effective instrument for facilitating horizontal cooperation. The Director-General of FAO had pointed out that he saw horizontal cooperation as one of the means of achieving the New International Economic Order. In conclusion, it was reiterated that in 1976-77, 31 percent of FAO's experts in the field came from developing countries, and that the proportion was on the increase.

78. The intervention of several delegations led to an ample exchange of information among the different countries with regard to the fields in which they could provide or receive technical cooperation. It is not possible to give in this report the full list of special fields which were mentioned. However, for any information which the Member Nations may need, it is recorded in this report that the Secretariat (FAO Regional Office for Latin America) is retaining the original texts of the delegates' statements.

79. The delegations underlined the contribution made by the documents prepared by the Secretariat to the discussion on this item.

80. The delegations reaffirmed their support for the UNDP initiative of holding a World Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

81. There was consensus among the delegations on the advantages of the TCDC and on the need to provide it with all the support it required. It was emphasized that the TCDC entailed more than the traditional concept of exchange, transmission or reception of experience, knowledge, consultants, equipment and other components. It should cover a wider range of activities and be a valuable instrument for achieving the New International Economic Order.

82. Mention was made of the need to avoid duplication of efforts and the desirability of coordinating activities within the framework of the TCDC.

83. Attention was drawn to the desirability of the regions consulting agencies participating actively in the TCDC's programmes.

84. It was stated that the TCDC should be based on a high spirit of solidarity among the participating countries and bear in mind the different level of development of each country. It would lead to a strengthening of the exchange of knowledge and experience between the countries of the region and also enable them to take a positive stand in their negotiations with the developed countries.

85. It was mentioned that in the Latin American region the TCDC activities carried out by countries and various agencies had acquired special significance with the creation of the Latin American Economic System, (SELA). It was also stated that FAO should continue to support SELA's activities in those Action Committees which covered fields similar to those of the Organization.

86. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Latin America briefly described the joint action being carried out by this Agency, together with FAO, in support of agricultural, forestry and fishery development in the countries of the Region. He emphasized that the technical assistance financed by the UNDP and implemented by FAO, in connection with tropical agriculture, arid lands, animal and plant health, agricultural and rural planning, agricultural and livestock technology, market organization, irrigation and other fields, constituted a set of activities which represented an annual disbursement by UNDP in 1978 of about 25 million dollars, and which had generated new knowledge and helped to increase the productivity of the factors employed in the agricultural sector in Latin America. He added that the cooperation had helped producers to organize themselves so as to compete on the world market, and had made it less possible for the market to be manipulated for the benefit of a few transnational enterprises in the agro-industrial sector. The situation in the region and the interest of governments and their sub-regional and regional institutions had enabled this pioneer work to be carried out. He ended by stating he was confident that the resources available would make it possible to go on expanding this type of activity for the benefit of all.

87. Bearing in mind what had been stated, the Conference approved the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION 3/78

The Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America,

Considering that there are excellent possibilities for extending and improving technical cooperation among developing countries in Latin America, a region in which there are many precedents in this connection;

Recognizing that the activities of the TCDC on a regional level have acquired particular significance as a consequence of the existence of cooperation and integration schemes, especially with the recent creation of SELA;

Observing that in the course of the discussion various delegations spoke of the fields in which their countries were capable of providing technical cooperation and offered their services to the other countries of the region;

Taking into account that, according to the experience of FAO, food and agriculture, fisheries and forestry, are sectors of capital importance for the economies of the countries of the region and that an exchange of knowledge, technology and experience among them can make a notable contribution to their development;

Considering that it is the policy of the Organization to strengthen and collaborate with national and regional institutions and that the Technical Cooperation Programme and the Country Representatives are factors which will facilitate the promotion of the TCDC;

Taking into account Resolution 9/77 of the Nineteenth FAO Conference relating to the directives for implementing the TCDC;

Resolves:

1. To reaffirm the importance of the TCDC as a means for mobilizing countries' resources for their mutual benefit in order to strengthen collective confidence in international cooperation;
2. To reaffirm also that the TCDC is one of the means for achieving the New International Economic Order;
3. To reaffirm the policy of strengthening national institutions and their participation as a fundamental element for allowing countries to provide and receive technical cooperation;
4. To affirm the important role which the FAO Regional Office for Latin America should play in the promotion of the TCDC, for which the assistance of the Country Representatives is essential;
5. To invite governments to make full use of the services and experience of FAO to facilitate the identification of their technical cooperation needs and the capacity of their institutions to provide this cooperation and to formulate projects for that purpose.
6. To request also that FAO:
  - (i) continue to play an increasingly important role in the promotion of the TCDC;
  - (ii) continue to collaborate with regional institutions, particularly SELA and its Action Committees, so as to promote the TCDC further at the Latin American level;
  - (iii) collaborate with governments in the establishment of new channels of communication between national institutions and promote the existing ones, in order to facilitate direct knowledge of experiences, cooperating in the formulation and execution of projects;
  - (iv) bear in mind in the elaboration of its next Programme of Work and Budget the advisability of providing the Technical Cooperation Programme with greater resources so that it can assist national institutions in providing technical cooperation to institutions of other countries;
  - (v) adopt adequate information policies which will serve to overcome the obstacles impeding real utilization of the knowledge and experience of developing countries;
  - (vi) promote an increasing use of experts and equipment from developing countries in the Organization's field programmes.

Problems of international trade of agricultural products of the region

88. This item was introduced by the Secretariat, which highlighted the problems facing Latin American agricultural exports on the international market. It underlined the seriousness of the recrudescence of protectionist policies in the developed countries, which constituted one of the main obstacles to the expansion of the region's exports. It also emphasized the necessity of concerted action by the countries of the region to strengthen their negotiating power in the competent international fora.
89. All the delegations participating in the debate indicated their satisfaction at the fact that FAO had included consideration of these problems in this Conference and requested that this item be kept on the agenda for the next FAO Regional Conference for Latin America, owing to its importance and as part of a policy for the monitoring and continuous evaluation of such a vital matter.

90. The delegations expressed their thanks to FAO for document LARC/78/4, for the valuable information it contained and for the sensible treatment given to the subject. In particular, it wished to leave on record its satisfaction at the realism, quality, substance and excellent technical treatment of the document in question, which offered a very suitable basis for the discussions.

91. The delegations recognized that international trade in agricultural commodities constituted one of the key factors for the development of the economies of the Latin American countries and of the developing countries in general; it had a decisive influence on the behaviour of the agricultural sector, which determined variations in incomes and in employment levels on the one hand, and in the amount of foreign exchange available for economic, social and overall development, on the other.

92. The delegations reported on achievements with respect to diversification and changes in the composition of their exportable agricultural production, which had not been accompanied by a corresponding expansion in the export trade, owing to restrictive tariff and non-tariff measures and to the new protectionism adopted by the industrialized countries. These constraints distorted the flow of world agricultural trade and provoked excessive fluctuations in international markets and prices. Such restrictions arose from the discriminatory policies practised by the industrialized countries against the developing ones.

93. Despite the pronouncements and offers made by some developed countries to liberalize trade and facilitate exportation by the developing countries, in reality this had not been put into practice. The delegations therefore decided to make a strong protest against protectionist policies and against tariff and non-tariff measures - health, administrative and others - imposed and maintained by the industrialized countries. The delegations agreed that, as part of the efforts made to establish the New International Economic Order, it was essential to put into operation without delay UNCTAD's Integrated Programme for Commodities and its Common Fund.

94. The delegations stressed the negative effects on the economies of their countries of the non-ratification by the United States of America of the International Sugar Agreement, as well as the lack of interest shown by the European Economic Community with regard to participation in this Agreement. This situation not only led to fluctuations in the price of sugar, but was aggravated by the appearance on the market of substitute products which were compromising the future of the sugar industry in the producing countries of the region.

95. Other delegations referred to the embargo imposed by the EEC on the importation of beef, which had resulted in a great decrease in their export returns. This situation remained unaltered, since the new regulations adopted by the EEC in 1977 represented a mechanism of variable surcharges which made it impossible for Latin American meat to have access to this market. For countries where meat was an important item in their export trade, such measures continued to present a great obstacle to the development of their enormous livestock production potential.

96. Various delegations referred to the necessity and desirability of Latin America reinforcing its power of negotiation through the adoption of joint positions in international negotiating fora. SELA was an appropriate instrument for achieving this objective.

97. Various delegations referred to the necessity of finding appropriate formulae for solving the problems which impeded the flow of intraregional agricultural trade and limited its expansion. They stated that it would be useful, within the framework of SELA and with the collaboration of FAO, to examine new kinds of agreements which could help to resolve these problems. They also indicated their support for the efforts being made by SELA to establish multinational Latin American enterprises geared to the production and marketing of agricultural inputs, enriched foods and some other items in regional agricultural and fisheries production.

98. The desire was expressed that FAO keep up-to-date information on developments in agricultural cooperation and integration in the Region and on the evolution of intraregional agricultural trade. Attention was also drawn to the importance of systemizing and coordinating information on the supply and demand, prices and supply policies for agricultural commodities, as well as of timely knowledge of stocks available and of the frequency and routes of international transport.

99. It was stated that the Codex Alimentarius food patterns and standards were still exerting negative effects on trade opportunities. It was therefore requested that the changes introduced by the Codex Commission taking into account the comments and contributions received from interested countries, be put into effect as quickly as possible.

100. The representative of LAFTA underlined the agreement between his institution and FAO on the criteria for tackling trade problems and the subjects of regional agricultural cooperation. He indicated LAFTA's satisfaction at the assistance provided and being provided by FAO, particularly through the Regional Office for Latin America, and expressed his conviction that the present links of cooperation would be maintained and increased in the future.

101. In connection with this item the Conference approved the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION 4/78

The Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America,

Considering:

1. That the persistence of grave problems in world trade works against the social and economic development of Latin America, and that the situation created by these problems, which take the form of a series of restrictions applied by many developed countries importing Latin American products, causes the Region great concern;
2. That the developed countries are continuing to increase protectionist practices, thus limiting the access of the developing countries exports and accentuating the lack of equity;
3. That the statements made by the developed countries regarding treatment of the Region's products, and their pledges with respect to international trade in agricultural commodities, have not taken concrete form in actions promoting greater participation by the developing countries in world trade, and that they have not paid heed to the proposals made by the countries of the Region;
4. That it is indispensable that in the activities conducted within the framework of UNCTAD and GATT, special emphasis be laid on consideration of the problems of agricultural commodities, so that through world trade in these commodities the developing countries may help to solve the grave food problems facing humanity;

Resolves:

1. To recommend to Member Nations and to the Director-General of FAO:
  - i) That they urge the international community, and in particular the developed countries, to adopt trade policies aimed at stabilizing international markets, so that the liberalization of trade may offer more favourable conditions for trade in agricultural commodities.
  - ii) That increased efforts be made to support the negotiations for the establishment of the Integrated Programme for Commodities, in accordance with UNCTAD Resolution 93 (IV), as regards both the establishment of the Common Fund and the activation of commodity meetings. For this purpose the Latin American countries will undertake joint and coordinated action in the various international fora in order to intensify negotiating procedures aimed at achieving the proposals made for the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

- iii) That in all the meetings of Intergovernmental Groups on Commodities and of the FAO Committee on Commodity Problems, the countries of the Region exhort the other developing countries to stress that, unless suitable international measures for each commodity are adopted within the context of the comprehensive approach contained in UNCTAD Resolution 93 (IV), the stabilization of international prices in real terms will not be achieved either in the short or in the medium-term.
- iv) That within the GATT Multilateral Trade Negotiations, the international community, particularly the developed countries, agree on specific machinery to guarantee the developing countries, within the context of a progressive liberalization of the trade in agricultural commodities, of growing and continuous access to the markets of the developed countries, in accordance with the pledge made in the Tokyo Declaration regarding the granting of special and more favourable treatment to the developing countries.

2. To express to the international community the concern of the countries of the Region at the lack of political will on the part of the developed countries to agree to negotiate comprehensive international agreements on commodities, which has become worse in the last two years, resulting in an almost complete lack of progress in preparatory negotiations within the framework of the Integrated Programme for Commodities to which UNCTAD Resolution 93 (IV) refers.

3. To encourage the efforts being made to implement the Programme of the Conference on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, held in Mexico, and support the measures regarding external trade which were approved at this Conference, as well as the activities being carried out by the UNCTAD Division of Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, which aim at achieving world consensus in support of the aforesaid Programme.

Implementation of FAO's Priority Programme in the Region

102. The Assistant Director-General of FAO, Regional Representative for Latin America, gave a concise account of the activities carried out during the 1976/77 biennium and the first part of 1978. In support of his statement the Secretariat distributed a booklet giving details of all the work effected during this period.

103. The delegations who spoke on this item praised the statement and the supporting document, saying that FAO, and in particular the Regional Office, were giving effective technical assistance to the countries of the Region. At the same time, they expressed the desire that this assistance be intensified by bringing the experts from Headquarters and the Regional Office into more direct touch with the different countries, in close collaboration with the FAO Country Representatives.

104. A delegation then intervened to state that, while it fully supported the Director-General's intention to dedicate FAO to positive and effective action, to put this into practice would require a greater rapprochement between FAO and the countries. For this it was essential that the decentralization already started by the Director-General be intensified and that greater autonomy be given to the Regional Offices. This delegation reiterated its support for FAO and hoped that it would fulfil completely the purposes for which it had been established. It pointed out that FAO was the most important agency in the field of food and agriculture.

105. In this connection the Regional Representative repeated that decentralization came within the framework of the Director-General's proposals, approved by the FAO Conference, to gear FAO's work towards more direct and effective action. A proof of this, as an example, was the Technical Cooperation Programme and the new Programme for the Prevention of Food Losses, with a total of more than US\$ 40 million, a sum which would be fully used in 1978-79 for action projects in the countries. Never before in the history of FAO had the Organization been able to operate directly in countries with its own funds. Decentralization also comprised a gradual strengthening of the Regional Office which, within the resources approved by the FAO Governing Bodies, was reinforcing its technical staff, in order to make the assistance given to countries and also at regional level more flexible. During the present year the technical staff of the Regional Office had been reinforced by five new technical officers in the fields of external trade, agro-industry, prevention of food losses, rural administration and plant protection.

106. The delegation of Uruguay informed the Conference of the signature of the agreement establishing FAO representation in Uruguay, which it considered as a significant step in the policy of decentralizing FAO, to which it gave firm support.

107. The Regional Representative thanked the delegate of Uruguay for his words, stating that he considered highly significant the inauguration of the FAO Representative's office in Uruguay by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Director-General of FAO precisely at the time when the Regional Conference was being held in Uruguay under the generous auspices of this country.

108. Special mention was made of the fact that priority should be given to short-term missions by FAO experts to assist governments to formulate projects which could then be submitted to IFAD for consideration. For this purpose, it was added, the countries hoped that FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme would constitute an effective tool in supporting identification and pre-feasibility studies.

109. With regard to IFAD, it was mentioned that the countries of the Region hoped this Fund would not concentrate its financial aid solely on the relatively less developed countries, thereby excluding most of the Latin American countries.



110. In response to these proposals, the Secretariat stated that one of FAO's priority functions was to help countries identify and prepare projects; in the current budget, allocations to and the staff of the Investment Centre had been increased in order to collaborate with governments in the preparation of projects to be submitted to IFAD. It was also mentioned that this year at least eight missions would be undertaken in order to formulate projects for consideration by IFAD; moreover, of the first three projects favourably considered by IFAD, FAO had assisted in two. The Technical Cooperation Programme gave priority to assistance for the formulation of projects focused on investment. It added that, on 1 July 1978, as the result of eight years of work in this field, the total value of the projects prepared by FAO and approved by international financing institutions amounted to US\$ 10 thousand million.

111. The Secretariat also repeated that specialists from the Regional Office were already collaborating with countries in the identification and preparation of the Technical Cooperation Programme and other projects to be financed with extra-budgetary funds, mainly from the UNDP.

112. In view of the opinion expressed that the Regional Representative and his Office should be increasingly able to ensure that the interests of the Region were brought to the attention of the Director-General and the Headquarters services, the Regional Representative expressed his pleasure at the presence at the Regional Conference of such a significant number of Representatives of countries to FAO, which enabled them to familiarize themselves with the specific programmes which FAO and the Regional Office were carrying out in Latin America. He then indicated the desirability of these Representatives visiting the Regional Office, when this was convenient for them, in which connection he extended to them a cordial invitation.

113. Endorsement was given to the point made in the general debate regarding the necessity of FAO, in cooperation with the governments of the Region, providing for an efficient flow of information on its activities in the Region, to enable governments to evaluate the participation, collaboration and impact of the Organization and its programmes in Latin America and on the basis of this to reorient them when necessary in the light of the Region's changing requirements.

#### Other matters

114. The Conference was provided with document LARC/75/5 as a basis for discussion on the representation of Latin America on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. It was decided that Costa Rica and Peru should continue to represent the region for a further two-year period. The mandate for these countries would therefore be extended to 31 December 1980. It was suggested that the Latin American representatives in this Group intensify contacts with governments in order to achieve a more adequate representation of the interests of the Region.

115. The Secretariat then informed the meeting of the reasons why the Consultative Group on Food Production and Agricultural Investments in the Developing Countries (GCPAIA) had been disbanded by decision of its three co-sponsors - FAO, the World Bank and UNDP; it was stated that these three bodies would continue to carry out the functions of the Group.

116. The Latin American countries, informed of the Director-General's compliance with the mandate conferred on him by the Latin American Group at the 71st Session of the FAO Council, interpreting the feelings of the Fourteenth Regional Conference for Latin America to the effect that invitations to attend as members should be issued only and exclusively to those countries serviced by the Regional Office for Latin America, other countries being invited as observers, warmly supported this action by the Director-General and thanked him for the faithfulness and promptness with which he had interpreted its decision, which was valid for the subsequent Conferences.

117. The observer of the Netherlands stated that his country had accepted the invitation to attend the 15th Regional Conference as an observer, without prejudice to the possibility of finding in the near future a definite solution to the question of participation by Member Nations in Regional Conferences.

## CONCLUDING ITEMS

### Adoption of the Report

118. The Chairman submitted for consideration by the Conference the draft report prepared by the Drafting Committee. After reviewing the draft paragraph by paragraph and introducing the modifications already incorporated in this final version, the Conference approved the report unanimously.

### Place of the 16th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America

119. The Conference listened to the offer to host the next Regional Conference made by the delegation of Guatemala, which pointed out the facilities available in Guatemala City. In expressing thanks for this offer the Director-General stated that since it was another two years before this event was to be held and he had received other offers which had not yet been formalized, he would settle this matter at the appropriate time, taking into account the various factors which were normally taken into consideration before making a final decision. The Conference expressed its approval of the Director-General's words.

### Closure of the Conference

120. The Director-General addressed the Conference in order to draw up an overall balance of the results of the discussions and reply to some points raised by the delegations.

121. He first expressed his satisfaction at the results achieved by the Regional Conference. He then underlined the consensus in support of the TCDC, which constituted an effective instrument for the establishment of the New International Economic Order.

122. Referring to African swine fever, he promised that FAO would continue its efforts to assist countries in this emergency situation, as requested in the Resolution they had just approved.

123. He also underlined the consensus obtained in the Regional Conference on approving the important resolution on agrarian reform and rural development, which would constitute important guidance in preparing the forthcoming World Conference on these matters and solid regional support for the Conference discussions. He added that it would help the Organization to get similar contributions from the other Regional Conferences.

124. As regards protectionism, which had formed the subject of a Conference Resolution, he stated that he was very concerned by this problem and that he believed opportunities existed to facilitate dialogue through the economic cooperation among the developing countries which FAO was promoting.

125. He expressed his thanks for the support given by delegations as regards the Programme and Fund for the Prevention of Post-Harvest Losses. He took the opportunity to make a fresh appeal to those countries which had not yet made their proportionate contributions to the Fund, to return to the Special Account the cash surplus for the biennium which they had withdrawn for a total of US\$ 3 million.

126. He then referred to the increased number of FAO Representatives already established in the Region. FAO, together with WHO, was the most decentralized Organization of the United Nations system. He underlined the fact that in this biennium FAO disposed of US\$ 40 million in cash to finance technical assistance in the form of equipment and experts. He expressed thanks for the support shown by delegations for the Technical Cooperation Programme. With regard to this, he stated that he had decided to authorize the FAO Representatives in the countries to approve directly projects financed by the TCP, within certain limits.

127. The delegation of authority and decentralization must be tackled pragmatically, he added. Referring to the experience of another Regional Office, where the member countries were financing regional projects with funds of the region itself, he stated that he would consider with interest a similar possibility for the Regional Office for Latin America. Since there existed in this Region many very active intergovernmental and regional organizations, he would be willing to entrust the Regional Office with greater authority so that it would have sufficient flexibility to deal directly with these bodies.

128. The Director-General referred to the importance for the countries of the Region of the extension of the limit of jurisdictional waters to 200 miles, and to the recommendations of the Committee on Fisheries regarding the work of the Regional Fishery Commissions, for which he was studying the possibilities of decentralizing their Secretariats, even to the point of having them operated by the member countries of the Commissions, while maintaining contact with the Organization.

129. He expressed appreciation of the presence of representatives of United Nations Agencies and of the Inter-American System. He requested their understanding for the fact that the Conference had been restrictive as regards their intervention in the discussions, since it was an intergovernmental meeting at which the most important thing was to hear the government representatives. He put forward the idea of organizing a meeting in the Regional Office at the beginning of 1980, to which FAO would invite all the intergovernmental bodies connected with agriculture in the Region; here they could exchange information, among themselves and with FAO, in order to ensure that their activities were complementary, avoid duplication of efforts and harmonize their respective programme. Should the first meeting so agree, such meetings could be made periodical.

130. He ended by thanking the Government of Uruguay for the warm welcome given to the participants in the Conference and for its generous hospitality.

131. Speaking on behalf of the delegations, the Chairman of the Latin American Group of Permanent Representatives to FAO took the floor to underline the results of the Conference, after abundant discussions on such compromising, dramatic and urgent matters as the prospects for food and agriculture in the Region, agrarian reform and rural development, horizontal cooperation, international trade in agricultural products, and the appearance in the Region of African swine fever. He emphasized the usefulness of the documents prepared by the Secretariat, which had served as the bases for the discussions, and expressed his recognition of this contribution.

132. He repeated that the delegations supported and endorsed the Director-General's work to make FAO an increasingly operative Organization and expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in this direction.

133. In conclusion, he congratulated the Chairman on the way in which he had conducted the discussions and expressed thanks to the Uruguayan authorities and people for the organization of the Conference and for the warm demonstrations of fellowship and friendship shown towards the participants.

134. Finally, the Chairman of the Conference took the floor. He pointed out the importance of the event as a forum for dialogue and direct knowledge of the food and agriculture problems of the various countries of the Region, and the relevance of the items which had been discussed.

135. As regards agrarian reform and rural development, he emphasized the consensus on the existence of a plurality of ways for solving these aspects and on the fact that rural development should not be either conceived or promoted in isolation from the countries' economic and social activities. Rural development must create the conditions for sustained improvement of the social wellbeing and quality of life of the people and at the same time ensure rational use of productive resources.

136. He then referred to the importance of technical cooperation among developing countries, in particular owing to the characteristics of the Region and the potential this cooperation mechanism has for accelerating the scientific, technological, economic and social development of the countries.

137. He mentioned the similarity of the problems of external trade in commodities existing among the participating countries and, in general, the other aspects discussed at the Conference, which had been shown in the energetic declarations made by the delegates and in the resolutions adopted.

138. He concluded by expressing his thanks for the honour bestowed on him and the satisfaction of the people and government of Uruguay for having acted as host to the delegations of the fellow countries of the Region.

139. He ended the session by declaring the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America closed.

AGENDA

- I. Introductory items
  1. Opening of the Conference
  2. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur
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  4. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
- II. Statement by the Director-General of FAO
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- IV. General debate on situation and prospects of food and agriculture in Latin America
- V. Selected problems of agricultural and rural development
  1. Agrarian reform and rural development in the region, with reference to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, including consideration of the Report of the CEPAL/FAO Technical Meeting on Rural Social Development in Latin America and the document "State of Natural Resources and Human Environment for Food and Agriculture"
  2. Technical cooperation among developing countries, with particular emphasis on national and regional institutions
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- LARC/78/1(a)        Provisional Annotated Agenda
- LARC/78/2            Agrarian reform and rural development in the region, with reference to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, including consideration of the Report of the CEPAL/FAO Technical Meeting on Rural Social Development in Latin America
- LARC/78/2-Sup.1    The state of natural resources and human environment for food and agriculture
- LARC/78/3            Technical cooperation among developing countries, with particular emphasis on national and regional institutions
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- LARC/78/5            Representation of developing regions on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

B. General Information

- LARC/78/INF/1        Information Note
- LARC/78/INF/2        Provisional Timetable
- LARC/78/INF/3        Provisional List of Documents
- LARC/78/INF/4        Report of the UN/FAO World Food Programme to the 15th Regional Conference for Latin America
- LARC/78/INF/6-  
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C. Conference Documents

- LARC/78/CONF/1-  
Rev.1                Statement by the Director-General of FAO at the Fifteenth Regional Conference for Latin America
- LARC/78/CONF/2        Statement by Mr. Pedro Moral López, Assistant Director-General, FAO Regional Representative for Latin America: 'FAO's Priority Programme in the Region'
- LARC/78/CONF/3        Address given by His Excellency the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, Dr. Aparicio Méndez, at the opening of the 15th FAO Conference for Latin America, on 15 August 1978
- LARC/78/CONF/4        Presentation by Mr. Hernan Santa Cruz, Special Representative of the Director-General of FAO for this Conference, of the item 'Agrarian reform and rural development in the region, with special reference to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development'





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M-90

ISBN 92-5-100686-5

M-90

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