China: A founding member of FAO

China and FAO maintain close cooperation in the domain of food and agriculture development, which has had fruitful consequences on the way to eradicating worldwide hunger over the past forty years.

Investments paved the way to success

Throughout the years, FAO has provided technical support to over 400 field projects in China that have covered a majority of the country’s prioritized agriculture development areas and targeted tens of millions of beneficiaries across the vast and diverse country.

FAO has contributed to, and witnessed China’s tremendous achievement in successfully feeding 20 percent of the world’s population with only 9 percent of the arable land and 6 percent of the freshwater.

The future is promising

Continued partnership between China and FAO is not only promising from hunger eradication and agricultural development perspectives, but also from the capacity development perspective.

In addition to continuous collaboration in technical areas, FAO has started to fully take advantage of China’s successful experience in support of food security through South-South Cooperation. Furthermore, the ongoing partnership paves the way for a more sustainable future in light of China’s growing population.
CHINA AND FAO: MAJOR PROGRAMMES

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (SSC)

Since 1996, China has been consistently and actively involved in FAO’s SSC initiative; its pioneering efforts are highly appreciated by FAO and recipient countries. As a major provider in support of FAO programmes for food security, to date nearly 1000 Chinese experts and technicians have been fielded to many regions, including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The technical areas mainly cover irrigation, agronomy, livestock, fisheries, crop production, agroforestry, agro-mechanization, food processing, agro-marketing, farm tool-making and others.

In May 2006, the Government of China signed a letter of intent with FAO on forming a strategic alliance to improve world food security which stated China’s commitment to deploy at least 3,000 experts and technicians over a period of six years to work and improve the productivity of small-scale farmers and fish producers in developing countries. Similarly, in September 2008, China announced a contribution of USD 30 million to FAO as a Trust Fund to support developing countries in improving their agricultural productivity through the SSC to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

AVIAN INFLUENZA | A (H5N1) VIRUS AND OTHER EMERGING THREATS

As the focal point and knowledge hub on Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) within FAO in China, FAO’s Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) supports the Chinese Central Government in expanding the capacities of national and provincial partners in dealing with various emergency situations of animal diseases.

With the long-term financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), ECTAD China has implemented a wide range of activities to strengthen the response and understanding of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), with a particular emphasis on capacity development through the newly launched China Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (FETPV).

ECTAD has continued to support the government of China to improve HPAI control strategies by exploring and applying new approaches in different areas of work. A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) project was launched in Guangdong to address HPAI issues in domestic poultry through Live Bird Markets (LBMs) restructuring and rehabilitation. A bilateral discussion forum on HPAI disease management and control was successfully organized with the aim of establishing a platform for tripartite consultation and speaking, between countries, China, Viet Nam and FAO, and addressing key issues such as the transition from massive AI vaccination campaigns towards targeted and more cost-effective actions. Furthermore, FAO has been assisting the Ministry of Agriculture with the conduct of an epidemiological investigation and providing expert advice on the HPAI Influenza incident.

AVIAN INFLUENZA | A (H5N1) VIRUS

In 1996, the H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza virus emerged in southern parts of the country, and in 2003, it spilled over in neighbouring countries. By 2004, over 110 outbreaks were reported in domestic poultry in 23 provinces and a total of more than 35 million poultry were culled to control the spread of the disease (China Ministry of Agriculture). However, despite good results obtained through the national control and surveillance policy, the virus has been regularly detected by the Ministry of Agriculture. The surveillance process occurs at both provincial and national levels and looks out for silent viral circulation, the possible emergence of new strains and evaluation of its vaccine as used to protect the poultry and people’s livelihoods.

The surveillance activities focus on breeding farms, live bird markets, buffer regions, flocks near the migratory bird habitats and other high risk areas, especially the 45 free zones without vaccination. This corresponds to several millions of samples being collected every year and a huge amount of laboratory testing at provincial and national levels.

FAO-CHINA COLLABORATION | PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)

China is a ‘mega-biodiversity’ country, holding about one-tenth of global wildlife species; it is also a country of mega-cultural diversity with 56 minorities, each having its own unique culture, traditions, folk arts and languages. In light of this, Chinese representation is recognized as one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Despite this biological and cultural diversity, China’s agricultural heritage, rooted in over 1 000 years of history, was about to be lost forever.

Through combined efforts of FAO, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and other international and local organizations, the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) initiative was introduced, and today China is benefiting from increased national awareness of the importance of its own agricultural heritage. The GIAHS project is one of the success stories from which other countries can learn from and easily duplicate when establishing their own GIAHS initiative.

In a period of just four years, FAO and the Government of China have developed a significant portfolio of GEF projects which now consists of eight projects amounting to USD 24.7 million in GEF financing and USD 122.9 million in co-financing. These projects support sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity in agriculture, forestry and fisheries production systems; strengthening of the management of protected areas including co-management with local communities to ensure co-benefits between local socioeconomic needs and conservation of global important biodiversity; reversion of land degradation processes; and promotion of sustainable forest management with co-benefits for local communities, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration.

A SUCCESS STORY | GIAHS SUCCESS STORY

GIAHS has attracted much public attention in China and around the world. An important factor in this success is its timeliness, because the GIAHS initiative was created when issues related to socio-ecological degradation, environmental pollution, climate change and rural development, particularly food safety, rose to the top of the public and political agenda.

One of the GIAHS activities was focused on agricultural product labelling. Currently, many people worldwide do not trust product labelling and certification because poor management and supervision has weakened the certification process, thereby directly compromising food safety.

In China, GIAHS stakeholders have agreed to adhere to strict certification guidelines, and today the GIAHS logo is perceived as trustworthy and public confidence in labelling and certification has been restored.

One concrete example of the success of the GIAHS initiative is the Qingtian rice-fish system in Zhejiang province, where, after use of the GIAHS logo price is increased for local products, such as rice and fish. Qingtian rice now sells for 60 percent more than regular rice, and demand has increased. This is also true for the price of Qingtian fish, which has increased from CNY 25/kg before the project to CNY 40/kg. The success of the Qingtian pilot project has encouraged many others to collaborate on the conservation of traditional systems. In Honghe prefecture, Yunnan province, although the red rice yield is low because of poor geographical conditions, the GIAHS brand has brought about a substantial increase in local farmers’ income. This has convinced many to continue with their traditional agricultural systems, thus ensuring sustainable development.
Since 1996, China has been consistently and actively involved in FAO’s GEMS initiative; its pioneering efforts are highly appreciated by FAO and recipient countries. As a major provider in support of FAO programmes for food security, to date nearly 1,000 Chinese experts and technicians have been fielded to many regions, including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The technical areas mainly cover irrigation, agronomy, livestock, fisheries, crop production, agroforestry, agro-forestry, forest processing, agro-marketing, farm tool-making, and others. In May 2006, the Government of China signed a letter of intent with FAO on forming a strategic alliance to improve world food security which stated China’s commitment to launching a China Food Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (FEPTV) in May 2006, the Government of China signed a letter of intent with FAO on forming a strategic alliance to improve world food security which stated China’s commitment to launching a China Food Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians (FEPTV).

**A SUCCESS STORY | IMPLEMENTATION OF SSC PROGRAMME IN MONGOLIA**

The technical assistance under SSC with the People’s Republic of China in support of the National Programme for Food Security in Mongolia is an ongoing project that permits the implementation of the SSC programme for 42 months.

Chinese experts are providing technical assistance aimed at improving agricultural production in support of national and household food security, and implementation of Mongolia’s National Programme on Food Security.

In fact, documented evidence indicates that the technical assistance carried out by these experts has made tangible contributions to agricultural production. In the livestock production field alone, Chinese SSC experts and technicians have assisted in conducting artificial insemination in five provinces and two towns, including 4,500 big animals and 1,000 small animals. They have successfully carried out 140 embryo transfers in 50 cattle, 64 sheep and 35 dairy goats. They also assisted in conducting oestrus synchronization tests in 400 cows and in production of 1,200 tubes of frozen semen, including 300 tubes from cows and 850 from sheep. These activities are contributing to the development of intensive livestock farming in Mongolia and strengthening capacity to produce frozen livestock semen. Last but not least, experts and technicians have assisted in establishing business contacts with corresponding Chinese suppliers and organizations, as well as conducting field trainings to benefit farmers, agricultural officers and extension workers.

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The past four decades have been marked by not only accomplishments and project realizations in various sectors, but particularly by a solid partnership between China and FAO, without which none of the above could have been possible. More importantly, the strong partnership developed between FAO and China acts as a stepping stone towards achieving greater successes in the near future.

Indeed, the Avian Flu incident that plagued the international community in 2004, allowed for the creation of successful surveillance activities, which contributes to keeping similar incidents, such as the virus H7N9, at bay to this day. Similarly, strict certification guidelines developed for GIAHS products continue to restore public confidence, thanks to a trustworthy and functioning labeling and certification system.

The SSC initiative is now transforming lives in more than twenty developing countries where Chinese experts and technicians have been deployed in the last decade, and the request for support by governments is increasing, particularly in Africa. And lastly, the development of intensive livestock farming in Mongolia obtained quick results, thanks to the technical assistance provided by experts part of the SSC initiative.

All of these successes are further proof of the possible benefits to be reaped from long-lasting and positive collaborations, like the one that exists between FAO and China.