



منظمة الألفية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

APCAS/08/3  
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#### Agenda Item 4a

### ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

#### TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Kuching, Malaysia, 9-13 June 2008

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### Overview of FAO's Activities in Asia and the Pacific Region

since the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of APCAS

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The work undertaken by FAO and RAP in the Asia and the Pacific region involves normative and project work. The following sections highlight some of the work carried out in the region since 2006.

### **Selected Indicators**

Soon after the RAP Senior Statistician assumed duties in late May 2007, the first task at hand was the preparation and publication of the *Selected Indicators of Food and Agricultural Development in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1996-2006*. The Selected Indicators was published in October 2007. Copies of this publication were distributed to member countries and will be also available at the Kuching APCAS session.

The twenty-fourth issue of the Selected Indicators presented data on selected items for the years 1996-2006. The indicators were grouped under the following headings: Agricultural land and population, Agricultural inputs, Production indices, Staple food crops, Edible oil crops, Horticultural crops, Fibre crops, Other crops, Livestock, Agricultural trade, Fisheries, Forestry, Nutrition and Other indicators, including a table reporting the status of organic farming in the region. A section on country profiles preceded the tables. For almost all commodity tables, data were mainly retrieved from the FAO computerized data bases, especially FAOSTAT, or from the FAO Yearbooks. Revisions in FAOSTAT data resulted in several modifications and amendments to the statistics, so the data series presented differed in some instances from those in previous editions of the Selected Indicators (see next section).

### **FAOSTAT redevelopment**

The methodological framework, processing and dissemination systems of FAOSTAT was re-developed in 2006-2007 together with its coverage, commodity classifications, statistical and meta-databases with the aim of providing more up-to-date and reliable statistics. Data from 1990 were revisited, resulting in changes in the historical data. The methodology for the estimation of food balance sheets was also revised in FAOSTAT. This included new aggregation techniques for the conversion of transformed commodities into primary equivalents. These revisions resulted in several modifications and amendments to statistics.

Since late 2007, a full technical methodological review and analysis of FAOSTAT is being undertaken. This has caused that the core data set be temporarily unavailable on the FAOSTAT site. The revision is expected to be completed in late 2008 or early 2009. More information on the review is available at <http://faostat.fao.org>.

### **Project work**

In terms of ongoing projects, only two statistical projects were operational in May 2007. Technical backstopping has been provided to:

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<sup>1</sup> Senior Statistician and APCAS Secretary

- GCP/RAS/184/JPN “Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries (RDES)”. This project completed activities in December 2007 and a presentation of the draft final report will be made at this session of APCAS.
- GCP/AFG/042/EC “Support to the Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Information Management and Policy Unit (FAAHM) in Developing and Agricultural Statistics and Market Information System – Phase II”. Two backstopping missions have been undertaken as of June 2008.

In order to address the lack of project work in the region, a strategy was adopted to identify needs and possible areas of project work. This resulted in the formulation of several project proposals, including:

- July 2007: Formulation of the TCPF<sup>2</sup> project proposal “Improving livestock statistics in Nepal”. Proposal in Nepal’s hands.
- November 2007: Formulation of the UTF<sup>3</sup> proposal “Decentralization of Timor Leste’s Agricultural Statistics System”. Proposal awaiting Timor Leste’s signature.
- December 2007: Formulation of the TCP proposal “Training on Agricultural Census Methodology and Time Series Analysis in Pakistan”. Implementation to start soon.
- January 2008: Formulation of the TCP Facility proposal “Assistance in the formulation of a proposal for conducting an Agricultural Census in Cambodia”. The resulting project proposal is awaiting approval and funding.
- February 2008: Formulation of the regional project concept on “Strengthening National Capacity to Undertake the Census of Agriculture 2010 in Asia-Pacific Countries”. Proposal presented to a Japanese Mission and TC<sup>4</sup> on 12 March 2008.
- March 2008: Formulation of the project concept: “Food and Crop Survey for Laos”.
- May 2008: Formulation of a TCP proposal to “Monitoring Food Market Developments in the Asia-Pacific Region for Rapid Response to Soaring Food Prices”. Proposal in TC hands.
- May 2008: Formulation of a TCP proposal “Strengthening Capacity for Statistical Assessment of the Situation and Outlook of Rice in Lao PDR”. Proposal in TC hands.

The above activities involved substantial backstopping work and visits to some of the countries.

### **Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS)**

Another area of activities was associated with the work as Secretary of APCAS. It mainly involved the publication of the last report and preparation of the current APCAS session in Kuching, Malaysia:

- Finalization of the report of the Twenty-first Session of APCAS held in Phuket, Thailand in September 2006.

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<sup>2</sup> TCPF: Technical Cooperation Programme Facility.

<sup>3</sup> Unilateral Trust Funds.

<sup>4</sup> FAO’s Technical Cooperation Department

- Visit to Malaysia in November 2007 to discuss arrangements and procedures for Malaysia to host the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of APCAS.
- Preparation of Memorandum of Understanding, invitations to participants, preparation of agenda, timetable, APCAS documents, selection of papers, etc.

### **Organization and Participation in Meetings**

The Senior Statistician participated and organized several meetings, including:

- 22–24 October 2007: Participation in the Fourth International Conference on Agriculture Statistics (ICAS-4) in Beijing and presentation of paper. Highlights of the meeting will be presented at the current APCAS session.
- Organization and holding on 11-14 December of the Expert Consultation on Farmer's Income Statistics. It included 10 presentations (6 countries, Eurostat, USDA, FAO HQ and Consultant) and roundtables. Successful. Recommendations about public awareness, funding beyond public framework, aim at consistency & comparability across countries, definition of target populations, standard definitions, study on under-reporting, methods for remote areas, improved feedback to stakeholders and study on use of technology. The report of the meeting and its main recommendations will be discussed at this APCAS session.
- Co-organization of a Regional Workshop with Stakeholders of FAO Statistical Programme in Asia and the Pacific. The main objective of the workshop was to gather views of different stakeholders about the relevance and usefulness of FAO statistical work and products (see next section).

### **Evaluation of FAO's Global Role as a Provider of Statistics and Statistical Services**

The recent Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of the FAO recommended that a review of FAO's work in statistics be undertaken, with the goal of preparing the organization for the emerging data needs of the 21st century. As a result, an independent external evaluation of FAO's statistical system, and its related databases and data systems is now underway.

An important part of the evaluation process was visits to developing countries in all regions, as well as to FAO decentralized offices and major stakeholder institutions. The independent mission visited two case-study developing countries in Asia (Vietnam and China) as well as major stakeholder institutions between March and April 2008. They assessed the quality of work undertaken by FAO in statistics, investigated national priorities and discussed with other institutions and stakeholders their viewpoints on FAO's role in global agricultural statistics, its services, its comparative advantages and its potential. The team met with both users of FAO's outputs and those involved in production of statistical information. The interviews aimed at gathering elements to help strengthen the focus, relevance and effectiveness of FAO's work.

Another important element of the evaluation was the holding of a Regional Workshop with Stakeholders of FAO Statistical Programme in Asia and the Pacific. It was held in early May and attended by participants from Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

The main objective of the workshop was to gather the viewpoints of different stakeholders about the relevance and usefulness of FAO statistical products (such as FAOSTAT, yearbooks, the Selected Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, FRA, SOFA, SOFI, etc.), and

how they could be made more useful and responsive to new and emerging data demands in the region. The participants also discussed the findings of the Evaluation Team reviewing FAO's Statistical Programme in Asia. The report of the Evaluation Team is under preparation.

### **The FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC)**

The APRC is held once every two years and is generally attended by ministers of agriculture or their deputies and senior government officials from relevant line ministries and technical departments. This high-level consultation comprises all member countries in the region and focuses on special problems in the region and priority areas which should be taken into account in preparing the FAO Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium as well as in relation to longer-term objectives. The 28th session was hosted by Indonesia in May 2006. The 29th session will take place in Islamabad, Pakistan by year-end.

During the last biennium the two main priorities for FAO Statistics Division have been: (1) the modernization of FAOSTAT and (2) the preparation of new World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010 for the censuses to be carried out in the next ten years. These two issues will be discussed during the current APCAS session.

### **Forestry Statistics**

FAO conducted the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005), the most comprehensive assessment of forests and forestry to date - not only in terms of the number of countries and people involved, but also in terms of scope – and was published in 2006. It examined the current status and recent trends for about 40 variables covering the extent, condition, uses and values of forests and other wooded land, with the aim of assessing all benefits from forest resources. Information was collated from 229 countries and territories for three points in time: 1990, 2000 and 2005. The results were presented according to six thematic elements of sustainable forest management. CD-ROMs of FRA 2005 will be distributed in Kuching.

The FRA 2010 process was officially launched in March 2008. Like the last assessment (FRA 2005), FRA 2010 will provide a comprehensive picture of the extent of forests and other wooded land, their condition, management and uses; this time covering all the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management. Moreover, FRA 2010 is designed to cover the forest-related information needs for monitoring progress towards the 2010 Biodiversity Target of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Global Objectives on Forests of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the Millennium Development Goals. The website <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra2010/en/> provides a full range of information about the forest resources related information by country, sub-region, region and global levels.

### **Fishery statistics**

In the last two years, RAP Fishery Group (RAPI) has participated in several regional meetings and workshops on fishery statistics<sup>5</sup> organized by regional organizations (e.g. Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, SEAFDEC). Additionally, RAPI co-organized (with the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific, NACA) and formed the secretariat for the “Workshop on establishing a coordinating working party on

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<sup>5</sup> Capture and Aquaculture, marine and inland

aquaculture statistics (CWP- AS)”. The workshop was held in Thailand in January 2008 and the report is available at [ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/r863\\_advanced/r863\\_advanced.pdf](ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/r863_advanced/r863_advanced.pdf).

Several projects relating to fishery statistics has been backstopped and implemented by RAPI, among these the FishCode STF project on “Fishery information gathering for fishery policy and management” in Thailand and a TCP project on “Addressing the Quality of Information on Inland Fisheries” in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand. RAPI has additionally taken part in a project formulation mission to China on “The improvement of information on inland capture fisheries in China” and backstopped a GCP project on a “Marine Fishing vessel census” in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

A major component of the statistical work performed by RAPI in fishery statistics is the preparation of the biannual publication “Status and Potential of fisheries and aquaculture in Asia and Pacific”. This year the report will also highlight the issue of inland capture fisheries statistics. More information can be found on the APFIC website ([www.apfic.org](http://www.apfic.org)), where also earlier issues of the publication can be downloaded.

### **Cooperation with other Organizations and Agencies**

Close co-operation is maintained with UN and International Organisations involved in food and agricultural statistics in the Asia and Pacific region. FAO has been represented in meetings on statistics, including those organised by ESCAP, such as the:

- “Third Workshop on Forging Partnerships in Statistical Training in Asia and the Pacific” held on 20–21 November 2007.
- “Third Session of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)” held on 22–23 November 2007.

The FAO Statistics Division also continued to play its due role in the process of revision of international classifications like CPC, ISIC, ISCO and SITC undertaken by UNSD in the last years. The FAO’s contribution to the process of revision of these statistical classifications was aimed at providing adequate and suitable representation to agricultural commodities and activities in the revised versions of these commonly used classifications.

In 2006, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD), the World Bank and FAO Country Statistics Service (ESSS) undertook the preparation of a sourcebook on indicators for monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes in agriculture and rural development. The Sourcebook develops a framework for standardizing approaches for selecting indicators and proposes a menu of core indicators for monitoring and evaluating agriculture and rural development (ARD) activities. Ultimately, the objective is to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation of agriculture and rural development programmes at the national and global levels. Highlights of this major work will be presented at the current APCAS session.