

February 2011

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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-first Session

Rome, 11-15 April 2011

**Report of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East
(Khartoum, Sudan, 4-8 December 2010)**

**NERC/10/REP
December 2010**

**REPORT OF THE
THIRTIETH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR THE NEAR EAST**

Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan, 4-8 December 2010

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO Regional Office for the Near East
2010**

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for the Near East

First	- Cairo, Egypt, 2-14 February 1948
Second	- Bloudane, Syria, 28 August - 6 September 1951
Third	- Cairo, Egypt, 1-9 September 1953
Fourth	- Damascus, Syria *, 10-20 December 1958
Fifth	- Tehran, Iran, 21 September - 1 October 1960
Sixth	- Tel Amara, Lebanon, 30 July - 8 August 1962
Seventh	- Cairo, Egypt **, 19-31 October 1964
Eighth	- Khartoum, Sudan, 24 January - 2 February 1967
Ninth	- Baghdad, Iraq, 21 September - 1 October 1968
Tenth	- Islamabad, Pakistan, 12-22 September 1970
Eleventh	- Kuwait, Kuwait, 9-19 September 1972
Twelfth	- Amman, Jordan, 31 August - 9 September 1974
Thirteenth	- Tunis, Tunisia, 4-11 October 1976
Fourteenth	- Damascus, Syria, 9-16 September 1978
Fifteenth	- Rome, Italy, 21-25 April 1981
Sixteenth	- Nicosia, Cyprus, 25-29 October 1982
Seventeenth	- Aden, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, 11-15 March 1984
Eighteenth	- Istanbul, Turkey, 17-21 March 1986
Nineteenth	- Muscat, Oman, 13-17 March 1988
Twentieth	- Tunis, Tunisia, 12-16 March 1990
Twenty-first	- Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 17-21 May 1992
Twenty-second	- Amman, Jordan, 3-6 July 1994
Twenty-third	- Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, 26-29 March 1996
Twenty-fourth	- Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, 21-25 March 1998
Twenty-fifth	- Beirut, Lebanon, 20-24 March 2000
Twenty-sixth	- Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 9-13 March 2002
Twenty-seventh	- Doha, State of Qatar, 13-17 March 2004
Twenty-eighth	- Sana'a, Republic of Yemen, 12-16 March 2006
Twenty-ninth	- Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt, 1-5 March 2008
Thirtieth	- Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan, 4-8 December 2010

* Known as the United Arab Republic from 01/03/1958 to 28/09/1961.

** Known as the United Arab Republic until 02/09/1971.

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SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made by the Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East were as follows:

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 36th SESSION OF THE FAO CONFERENCE

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

1. **urged** FAO to exert efforts to further strengthen the Decentralized Offices network.
2. **endorsed** the overall vision for decentralization as well as the proposals on structure and functioning of the Decentralized Offices network as contained in document NERC/10/2 Add.1.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE GLOBAL SHARED SERVICES CENTER

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

1. **recommended** that a decision on consolidation to a single Shared Services Centre be based on a detailed and in-depth study and take into consideration consultations with the Regional Conferences.

ROLE OF THE FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCES IN THE REFORMED COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (CFS)

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

1. **urged** the CFS Secretariat in close collaboration with the FAO Regional Offices and other relevant UN agencies to organize a workshop on Food Security and Nutrition for the Near East to be held prior to the 37th Session of the CFS.

REPORT OF THE FAO ACTIVITIES (2008-2009) IN THE REGION AND ACTION TAKEN ON THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 29th FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

1. **called for** strengthening the Regional Office to enable it to better respond to Member Countries needs.

FAO REGIONAL PRIORITY FRAMEWORK

For the attention of Member Nations and FAO

The Conference:

1. **endorsed** the proposed Regional Priority Framework as presented. It also expressed support for its implementation, in the form of financial and human resource support.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET (2010-2011) AND AREAS OF PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE NEAR EAST FOR THE FOLLOWING BIENNIUM

For the attention of FAO and Member Nations

The Conference:

1. **supported** the formulation of Regional Results for 2012-13 as a means to address the regional areas of priority action endorsed by the Conference and their contribution to Organizational Results; and
2. **urged** that adequate resources be mobilized to address the priority areas of action in the Region.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF SOARING FOOD PRICES AND GLOBAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISES FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION IN THE NEAR EAST

For the attention of Member Nations

The Conference **called upon** the member countries to:

- Consider reviewing country-wide consumer support schemes to focus on the immediate food and nutrition needs of vulnerable groups, including assessment of per capita food consumption and food basket changes;
- Adopt sustainable and integrated natural resources management policies;
- Consider the establishment of a regional gene bank that could help in developing new crop varieties that are heat and drought resistant, in view of the climate change;
- Increase expenditures on agricultural research and enhance collaboration among countries on research in order to bridge the productivity gap in the Region;
- Improve market and supply-chain efficiency, and put in place a supportive business environment;
- Improve family planning services in countries that continue to have high population growth;
- Employ intra-regional trade as a tool for addressing food crisis and to minimize price volatility and overcome uncertainty of food supply;
- Promote regional trade and collaboration through food security information systems, strengthen institutions and lift obstacles to joint-venture agribusinesses;
- Pay due consideration to food security situation in host countries where foreign investment is planned, including respecting land property rights and conducting an environmental impact assessment of the proposed investments, as well as ensuring benefits to the local communities;
- Implement integrated rural development approach targeting small holders, pastoralists and fishermen in order to halt movement of rural populations to urban centers;
- Create enabling environment for attracting intra-regional investment that ensures complementarities between natural resource-rich countries and financially-rich ones through the review of rules and legislations to allow free flow of capital.

For the attention of FAO

The Conference **requested** FAO to:

- Provide technical assistance to member countries in updating their agricultural and food security and nutrition policies, including food security monitoring systems in view of the soaring food prices, as well as towards the establishment of a “ regional forum” on Food Security.
- Call for a preparatory meeting for Near East countries to convene prior to CFS Session, in order to reach common consensus on regional food security issues;
- Support member countries’ capacity on agriculture water management and enhance cooperation on issues of regional dimension;
- Develop guidelines on international land acquisition and foreign direct investment in agribusiness;
- Provide technical assistance to member countries in preparing strategies and action plans for addressing future upsurges of food prices; and
- Assist in establishing a regional forum to continue the discussion of various issues related to investment in agriculture in the Near East Region, including information sharing and building a repository of best practices, regulations and legislation. The forum would also provide input to the ongoing elaboration of the Responsible Agriculture Investment (RAI) Principles.

TRANS-BOUNDARY PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES IN THE NEAR EAST, WITH EMPHASIS ON WHEAT BLACK STEM RUST (UG99)

For the attention of Member Nations

The Conference **called upon** the member countries to:

- Review and develop national policies on Phytosanitary Measures, including coordination at the regional level;
- Enhance collaboration with FAO, the Near East Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO) and other concerned regional and international organizations for establishing relevant databases, information sharing and support national and regional networking activities related to plant protection;
- Promote awareness, on national level, on the safe use of pesticides and encourage adoption of the IPM approach;
- Continue to strengthen national efforts to combat Desert Locust, with cooperation with FAO and other concerned organizations; and

For the attention of FAO

The Conference **requested** FAO to:

- Continue providing technical assistance for developing national and regional interventions to monitor and control the transboundary pest outbreaks, particularly the witch-broom disease which broke out recently on lime in the southern part of the Islamic Republic of Iran;

- Assist in strengthening national human and institutional capacities for applying the phytosanitary measures; and
- Support establishing an Early Warning System for the Near East on outbreaks of plant pests and diseases, particularly the Wheat Black Stem Rust

REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND OTHER RELEVANT REGIONAL MEETINGS IN THE NEAR EAST

The Agriculture and Land and Water Commission (ALAWUC)

For the attention of Member Nations

The Conference **called upon** the member countries to:

- Explore the Region's potential related to the use of non-conventional water resources for agricultural purposes, as a priority area in future activities of the Commission;
- Give due consideration to the recommendations pertaining to the preparation of internal statutes for the Commission and the selection of a board from member countries to manage the Commission's affairs and the contribution to the Commission's resources;
- Support the Animal Production and Health Commission in the Near East, focusing on supporting livestock keepers in view of their vulnerability to challenges such as climate change, poverty and food insecurity; and
- Promote greater regional collaboration to benefit from recent policies adopted by some member countries in agriculture water management, trans-boundary animal diseases, crop patterns, as well as strengthening the exchange of knowledge through establishment of databases.

For the attention of FAO

The Conference **requested** FAO to:

- Provide technical assistance to member countries for sustainable land and water resources management.

Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC)

For the attention of Member Nations

The Conference **called upon** the member countries to:

- Strengthen national efforts to adapt forests and rangelands to climate change, benefiting from international funding opportunities, as well as utilizing the safe re-use of treated waste water in afforestation programmes; and
- Give due attention to the importance of building an information base on forests and rangelands for supporting development of national forest programmes planning and for the sustainable resource management.

Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFSM)

For the attention of Member Nations

The Conference **called upon** the member countries to:

- Strengthen the Regional Fisheries Commissions, particularly RECOFI in order to ensure sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development, including the socio-economic component.

For the attention of FAO

The Conference **requested** FAO to:

- Continue providing technical support to enhance cooperation among the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Kuwait related to the FAO/RECOFI initiative for sustainable fisheries management by applying the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries;
- Continue providing technical assistance to enable member countries abide with international fish trade and stand against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing; and
- Give due support to the establishment of a regional fisheries management organization in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, as well as implementing the regional project on “Marine Resources Assessment Programme in the Red Sea” without further delay.

Desert Locust Commission in the Central Region

For the attention of Member Nations

The Conference **called upon** the member countries to:

- Make all efforts in countries with current Desert Locust infestations by deployment of six additional teams to survey, monitor and treat the infestations.
- Give due attention to timely provision of information related to any upsurge of Desert Locust as well as facilitate joint surveys and information exchange with regional and international networks.

For the attention of FAO

The Conference **requested** FAO to:

- Continue to support the capacity building at national and regional levels in the fields related to Desert Locust Control activities.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE 31st FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

The Conference welcomed the offer extended by the *Government of the Republic of Iraq* to host the 31st Session of the Conference in 2012. The Conference **requested** that the Director-General of FAO take this submission into consideration when deciding on the date and place of the next Regional Conference, in consultation with Member Governments of the Region.

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East was held in Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan, from 4 to 8 December 2010 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of the Sudan. The Conference was attended by 83 delegates from 17 Member Countries, and 2 observer countries, 4 UN Organizations, and 7 NGO's/IGO's. The List of Participants is given in ([Appendix B](#)).

Inaugural Ceremony

2. The Inaugural Ceremony was attended by representatives of member countries, observers, high-ranking state officials, heads and representatives of diplomatic missions in the Republic of the Sudan, representatives of UN and Regional Organizations and representatives from the media.

3. The Conference was inaugurated by His Excellency the Minister for Agriculture Dr Abdul-Halim Al-Muta'afi, on behalf of the Republic of the Sudan. The Conference was addressed by Dr Jacques Diouf, the FAO Director-General, as well as by Mr Luc Guyau, the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council.

4. The FAO Director-General, expressed his profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan and to the Government and people of the Sudan for their warm welcome and hospitality. He started by reviewing the latest data on food insecurity in the World, noting that it was worrying to see that the trend in the number of hungry people is not declining at the envisaged pace. Collectively, countries of the Near East Regional Conference mirror the global situation.

5. The Director-General noted that, in addition to problems created by conflicts, new challenges have emerged over the last few years: including food stocks and climate change, whose negative impacts are felt on agricultural production. The increase and the recent volatility of prices have been driven by a complex mix of factors including unusual weather events and the use of food commodities for the production of biofuels.

6. The Director-General reviewed recent trends in agricultural production in the Region. He expressed his satisfaction that Member Countries have achieved positive results in food and agriculture production. However, in spite of this, there are still some 37 million people in the Region who still suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

7. Although the Near East is characterized as a low-forest cover area, the forest sector contribution is about US Dollar 7 billion US dollars to the GDP.

8. He further pointed out the significant reforms that FAO has been going through, including: establishing "One Global Shared Services Center" in Budapest for better governance of human and financial resources, formulating a new role for the decentralized Offices by delegating more functional and supervisory duties to them, the reform of the Commission on Food Security, and a move to results based management.

9. The Director-General concluded his statement by underscoring the importance of foreign investment in agriculture and the need to enhance intra-regional trade for better food supplies in the Region.

10. In his statement, His Excellency the Minister for Agriculture in the Sudan, Dr Abdul-Halim Al-Muta'afi, welcomed all participants on behalf of the Republic of the Sudan and expressed his great pleasure to host this FAO Conference. He expressed his Government's great appreciation for the positive collaboration between his country and FAO in all fields. His Excellency expressed his

hope that such collaboration would further expand in order to enhance FAO's support to national efforts to attain agricultural development and food security.

11. His Excellency concluded his statement by highlighting some of the significant government programmes that were launched in agriculture and rural development in the Sudan which affects some 70 % of its population. The large natural resources available in the country, coupled with the favorable investment regulations which the government has adopted; this should make Sudan an attractive area for foreign investment and help towards reaching better food security.

12. Mr Luc Guyau, the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council addressed the Conference after the Inaugural Ceremony calling the FAO reform taking place in the context of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal. He also highlighted the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), particularly the new executive duties and vision for the CFS. He reiterated the new CFS is working along with governments and in partnership with NGO/CSO and private sector.

13. The Chairperson concluded his statement by stressing that the Regional Conferences have become part of the FAO Governing Bodies. They now report to FAO Council through the Programme and Finance Committees on programme and budgetary matters, and to the Conference on policy and regulatory matters.

Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur

14. The Minister for Agriculture in the Republic of the Sudan, was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Conference.

15. The Conference resolved that all other Heads of Delegations would be Vice-Chairpersons and appointed Mr Habib Abdalla Al-Hasni (Sultanate of Oman), as the Conference Rapporteur.

16. The Conference also elected the Minister for Water Resources of the Republic of Iraq as the Spokesperson for the Conference.

Adoption of the Agenda

17. The Conference adopted the Provisional Agenda NERC/10/1 (Appendix A) and the Timetable NERC/10/INF/2, without any changes. Documents submitted to the Conference are listed in Appendix C.

II. STATEMENTS

Statement by the FAO Director-General

18. Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, delivered his Statement to the Conference during the Inaugural Ceremony (see above). The full text of the statement is presented in Appendix D.

Statement by the Host Government

19. H.E the Minister for Agriculture in the Sudan delivered his Statement to the Conference during the Inaugural Ceremony (see above). The Statement is presented in Appendix E.

Statement by the Chairperson of the FAO Council

20. Mr Luc Guyau, Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council addressed the Conference (see above). The Statement is presented in Appendix F.

III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Matters Arising from the World Summit on Food Security and the 36th Session of the FAO Conference, Notably Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), Including the Decentralized Offices Network

21. The Conference considered the Document NERC/10/2, “Matters Arising from the 36th Session of the FAO Conference”, with its addendum and expressed its appreciation of the work of the Organization on decentralization in the context of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA). The Conference **urged** FAO for efforts to further strengthen the Decentralized Offices network.

22. The Conference **endorsed** the overall vision for decentralization as well as the proposals on structure and functioning of the Decentralized Offices network as contained in document NERC/10/2 Add.1.

Establishment of One Global Shared Services Center

23. The Conference considered the experience to date with the Shared Services Centre (SSC) in providing administrative services from hubs at Bangkok, Budapest and Santiago. It noted that clients in headquarters, Africa and Near East Regions had not reported any decline in administrative services provided and that sustained savings of over USD 8 million per biennium had been achieved.

24. The Conference took note of the external reviews of the SSC carried out in 2008-09, which had recommended consideration of a single hub structure in Budapest, with estimated additional savings of USD 1.6 million per biennium. This would allow for standardization of processes and economies of scale and was an approach adopted by several comparable organizations.

25. The Conference **recommended** that a decision on consolidation of a single Shared Services Centre be based on a detailed and in-depth study and take into consideration consultations with the Regional Conferences.

The Role of the FAO Regional Conferences in the Reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

26. The Conference welcomed and supported the on-going reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the progress made in its implementation.

27. The Conference agreed with the importance of re-enforcing the linkage between CFS and the Near East Region. It **urged** the CFS Secretariat in close collaboration with the FAO Regional Offices and other relevant UN agencies to organize a workshop on Food Security and Nutrition for the Near East to be held prior to the 37th Session of the CFS.

Report of the FAO Activities (2008-2009) in the Region and Actions Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 29th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East

28. The document presented actions taken in response to the recommendations made by the 29th FAO Regional Conference. It also reported on the Emergency Activities carried out during the 2008/2009.

29. The Conference commended the FAO Regional Office for achievements reached in response to the 29th Conference. It **called for** strengthening the Regional Office to enable it to better respond to Member Countries needs.

FAO Regional Priority Framework for the Near East

30. The Conference considered the document which outlined a *Regional Priority Framework (RPF) for FAO's work in the Near East region*. Five priority areas were identified: (i) Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition; (ii) Fostering Agricultural Production and Rural Development for Improved Livelihood; (iii) Sustainable Natural Resources Management; (iv) Response to Climate Change Impacts; and Developing Adaptation Strategies; and (v) Preparedness for, and Response to, Food and Agriculture Emergencies.

31. The proposed regional framework is foreseen to support Member Countries in addressing national, subregional and regional priorities contributing to the Global Goals and Strategic Objectives as defined in the FAO Strategic Framework, fully aligned with the respective development agenda and global commitments and conforming to relevant programmes of the UN and other development partners.

32. The RPF identified a few high-level results and outputs to which all FAO field projects and programmes should contribute, in line with the principles of Results-based Management. The RPF will serve as a tool for resource mobilization and for the development of cooperative programmes, involving donors from and outside the Region.

33. The Conference **endorsed** the proposed Regional Priority Framework as presented. It also expressed support for its implementation, in the form of financial and human resource support.

Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (2010-2011) and Areas of Priority Actions for the Near East for the Following Biennium

34. The Conference was informed on the Programme of Work and Budget for 2010/2011 biennium. The correlation between the budget and the corporate Strategic Objectives was highlighted as well as the close alignment with five priority areas for action that were identified for the Near East Region.

35. The Conference considered progress in implementing the Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11 and the priority actions for the Region in the following biennium. The Conference supported the formulation of Regional Results for 2012-13 as a means to address the regional areas of priority action endorsed by the Conference and their contribution to Organizational Results. The Conference **urged** that adequate resources be mobilized to address the priority areas of action in the Region.

Report of the Senior Officers Meeting

36. The report of the Senior Officers' Meeting, annexed to the Conference Report as Appendix E, was presented at the Ministerial Level of the Conference and was **adopted**.

IV. OTHER ITEMS

Proposed List of Topics to be Considered at the 31st Regional Conference for the Near East

37. The Conference took note of the proposed list of topics to be considered at the 31st Regional Conference:

- Environmental, social and economic services of forests and rangelands: challenges and opportunities for soil, water and biodiversity conservation;
- Contribution of natural resources in forests and ranges in food security: programmes, policies and good governance;
- Streamlining and development of use of water in agriculture;
- Developing regional strategy for control of transboundary pest and diseases in agriculture;
- Fisheries and aquaculture management and development :Scenarios and options for the Near East and North Africa countries;
- Support services for agricultural production and productivity in the Near East Region;
- Developing a regional strategy to improve agricultural statistics in the Near East Region;
- Experience and need for policy and technical support on the use of non conventional water resources in the Near East Region;

- Action to Adopt/mitigate environmental and climate change impact on livestock production and health in the Near East Region;
- Ways and means to improve the agricultural investments in the Near East region;
- Reducing qualitative and quantitative post harvest crop losses in the Near East Region;
- Increase agricultural trade among Near East countries; and
- Reducing the negative impact of desertification on agricultural production.

38. Reports of the Side Events on:

Three side events were organized in connection with the Conference. This included: (i) Exploring the Future of Foreign Investment in Agriculture for the Near East; (ii) Enhancing National and Regional Governance of Food Security and Nutrition: Capitalizing on CFS Reform; and (iii) Evaluation of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices of the Near East.

39. The Conference took note of the issues discussed and recommendations made in each of the three side events.

V. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Date and Place of the 31st Regional Conference for the Near East

40. The Conference welcomed the offer extended by the Government of the Republic of Iraq to host the 31st Session of the Conference in 2012. The Conference **requested** that the Director-General of FAO take this submission into consideration when deciding on the date and place of the next Conference, in consultation with Member Governments of the Region

Adoption of the Report of the 30th Regional Conference (including the Senior Officers Meeting Report)

41. The Conference considered and, after a few amendments, adopted its Report by acclamation.

Closure of the Conference

42. The Conference was formally closed by His Excellency Dr Abdul-Halim Al-Muta'afi Minister of Agriculture in the Sudan after the adoption of the Conference Report.

43. A Vote of Thanks to the Government of the Republic of the Sudan was presented by Mr Saad Bin A'yedh AlOtaibi, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East for the excellent organization of the Conference and the warm welcome by the Sudanese people. He also expressed his thanks and appreciation to all the delegations who participated in the Conference.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

(A) SENIOR OFFICERS MEETING **4 - 6 December 2010**

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Opening of the Senior Officers Meeting
2. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4. The Implications of Soaring Food Prices and Global Financial and Economic Crises for Food and Nutrition Security in the Near East
5. Trans-boundary Plant Pests and Diseases in the Near East; with Emphasis on Wheat Black Stem Rust (Ug99)
6. Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions and Relevant meetings in the Near East
 - The Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission (ALAWUC)
 - The Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC)
 - The Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI)
 - The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
 - The Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC)

III. CONCLUDING ITEMS

7. Adoption of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting
8. Closure of the Senior Officers Meeting

(B) MINISTERIAL MEETING
7-8 December 2010

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Inaugural Ceremony
2. Election of the Chairperson, Vice–Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the FAO Director-General
5. Statement by Minister of Agriculture in Sudan
6. Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council

III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATES

7. Matters Arising from the World Summit on Food Security and the 36th Session of the FAO Conference, Notably Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), Including the Decentralized Offices Network
8. Establishment of One Global Shared Services Center
9. The Role of FAO Regional Conferences in the Reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
10. Report on FAO Activities in the Region in 2008-2009 and Actions Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 29th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East
11. FAO Regional Priority Framework for the Near East
12. Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11 and Areas of Priority Actions for the Near East Region for the Following Biennium
13. Report of the Senior Officers Meeting

IV. OTHER MATTERS

14. Proposed List of Topics to be considered at the 31st Regional Conference for the Near East

V. CONCLUDING ITEMS

15. Date and Place of the 31st Regional Conference for the Near East
16. Adoption of the Report of the 30th Regional Conference for the Near East, including the Senior Officers Meeting Report
17. Closure of the Conference.

APPENDIX B

قائمة بأسماء المشاركين

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

هيئة مكتب المؤتمر

OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE

Chairperson:

H.E. Abdul Halim Ismail Al-Meta'afi
Minister for Agriculture
Sudan

الرئيس:

معالي السيد/ عبد الحليم إسماعيل المتعافى
وزير الزراعة
جمهورية السودان

Vice-Chairperson:

All Heads of Delegations

نواب الرئيس:

جميع رؤساء الوفود

Rapporteur for Senior Officers Meeting

Habib Ben Abdalla Al-Hasni
Director of International Cooperation
Ministry of Agriculture
Muscat, Oman

المقرر للاجتماع الوزاري:

حبيب بن عبد الله الحسنى
مدير دائرة التعاون الدولي
وزارة الزراعة
مسقط - سلطنة عمان

Chairperson of the Senior Officers Meeting:

Dr. Abdel Latif Ijaimi
Undersecretary, Ministry of Agriculture
Sudan

الرئيس اجتماع كبار المسؤولين:

د. عبد اللطيف عجمي
وكيل وزارة الزراعة
جمهورية السودان

Vice-Chairperson:

All Heads of Delegations

نواب الرئيس:

جميع رؤساء الوفود

Rapporteur for Ministerial Meeting:

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Mr. Noel De Luna

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الجزائر

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أذربيجان

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

مملكة البحرين

CYPRUS

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DJIBOUTI

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المنابون

مصطفى الصغير
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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<u>Discussion Items</u>	
NERC/10/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
NERC/10/2	Matters arising from the World Summit on Food Security and the 36 th Session of the FAO Conference, notably implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), including the Decentralized Offices Network
NERC/10/3	Reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
NERC/10/4	Report on FAO Activities in the Region in 2008-2009 and actions taken on the main recommendations of the 29 th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East
NERC/10/5	Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11 and Areas of Priority Actions for the Near East Region for the following biennium
NERC/10/6	Establishment of One Global Shared Services Centre
NERC/10/7	FAO Regional Priority Framework for the Near East
NERC/10/8	The Implications of Soaring Food Prices and Global Financial and Economic Crises for Food and Nutrition Security in the Near East
NERC/10/9	Trans-boundary Plant Pests and Diseases in the Near East; with Emphasis on Wheat Black Stem Rust (Ug99)
<u>Information Items</u>	
NERC/10/INF/1	Information Note
NERC/10/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
NERC/10/INF/3	Provisional List of Documents
NERC/10/INF/4	Statement by the FAO Director-General
NERC/10/INF/5	Water Desalination for Agricultural Use
NERC/10/INF/6	Valuing Rangelands for the Ecosystem and Livelihood Services
NERC/10/INF/7	Knowledge, Information and Communication for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Near East: Recent Experiences and Lessons Learned
NERC/10/INF/8	An Update on Transboundary Animal Diseases in the Near East
NERC/10/INF/9	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: New Initiatives and Update on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
NERC/10/INF/10	Summary of the recommendations of regional commissions and relevant meetings in the Near East
NERC/10/INF/11	Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work Related to Water
NERC/10/INF/12	Paper Presented to the CoC-IEE Meeting Reporting Discussions at LARC, ARC, ERC and APRC on Decentralization and the Shared Services Centre (SSC)

APPENDIX D

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO

*Mr President,
Mr Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Introduction

It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to be with you on the occasion of the Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East, which is taking place in this historic city of Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan. Allow me to start by expressing on behalf of the Organization, its personnel and all the participants, our profound gratitude to the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir and his Government, as well as to the Sudanese people for their hospitality and warm welcome.

This Regional Conference is being held again in Khartoum after 43 years when it was first held here in 1967. The Sudan, the largest country in Africa, has realized over the past years significant strides in the spheres of socio-economic development. The country is also participating actively in the regional political and economic affiliations; including: the African Union, the League of Arab States, COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and others.

State of Food Insecurity in the World and the Region

*Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In 1996, the first World Food Summit convened in Rome and pledged to half hunger by 2015 and achieve lasting food security for all. Such high-level commitment was reaffirmed by further global agreements, notably the Millennium Summit in 2000 and the World Food Summit: *five years later* in 2002. In order to review our achievements, FAO called for another World Summit on Food Security in November 2009 in Rome, when it was decided to completely eradicate hunger from the world.

According to FAO's report *The State of Food Insecurity in the World* (SOFI) 2010, published last October, there are presently 925 million people suffering hunger and malnutrition in the world. While this represents a welcome decline of nearly 10 percent from the 2009 level, it remains unacceptably high. This decline is largely due to improved economic growth foreseen in 2010, particularly in the developing countries, and the fall in international food prices since mid-2008.

In addition, today 100 countries require emergency assistance to rebuild their agricultural productive capacity and there are 30 in a situation of food crisis. As a consequence, the level of the FAO emergency assistance programme in these countries amounts to 1.1 billion US dollars, involving 2000 experts and technicians.

The situation in member countries of the Near East Region mirrors the world situation, with more people suffering from hunger and malnutrition. The number of hungry and undernourished people in the region in 2010 is estimated at 37 million. This represents an increase of 17 million people relative to the base period of the 1996 World Food Summit. Nevertheless, it corresponds to a reduction of 5 million people from the 2009 level.

Huge disparities exist among the Near East countries in terms of the level and prevalence of undernourishment and in the progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The conflict zones in the Region, notably Afghanistan, Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen are source of serious concern.

Agricultural Production in the Region

In 2008/09, cereal production for the Region as a whole stood at 160 million tonnes, which is 5 percent less than in 2006/07. As a result, food imports increased by 11.5 percent during the same period, from 61 million tonnes to 68 million tonnes. Severe droughts and unheralded heat stresses, which hit several countries in the Region in 2008/09, were the main factors behind the drop in cereal production. A better improvement was recorded in the livestock sector, where meat production increased by 5 percent between 2006/07 and 2008/09.

Fishery and aquaculture production is assuming an increasing importance given the rich marine and freshwater biodiversity in the Region, but its pace of growth remains modest. Total capture fisheries and aquaculture production amounted to five million tonnes in 2008, with aquaculture accounting for more the 24 percent.

While the Region is regarded as low forest cover compared to the rest of the world, the forest sector contributes more than 7 billion US dollars to the regional gross domestic product. The effects of climate change on the natural ecosystems are contributing to the degradation of forests and rangelands and to faster desertification in the Region.

Main Challenges and Priorities for the Future – the Region within the Global Context

Agricultural production will need to increase by 70 percent in the world and to double in the developing countries in order to feed a global population expected to reach 9.1 billion in 2050. Almost all of this demographic growth will take place in developing countries, and primarily in urban zones. Moreover, the increasing volatility of agricultural commodity prices is becoming a major problem that requires special attention. Also, there is the impact of climate change on agricultural production.

Strong political will and adequate financial resources will be needed if we are to rise to the challenge of banishing hunger from the world. Decision taken must be followed by actions commensurate with the goals set.

Agricultural production and productivity need to be increased in developing countries, and particularly in low-income food-deficit countries, and to strengthen the resilience of their production systems by boosting investment in rural infrastructure – water schemes, rural roads, storage facilities, cold chains, slaughterhouses, communication networks and so forth, but also by using modern factors of production.

Official development assistance to agriculture should reach 44 billion US dollars per year and developing countries must themselves devote a greater portion of their budgets to the sector. The share of agriculture in public expenditures in low-income food-deficit countries must be brought to at least 10 percent.

The Near East Region is characterized by a mosaic of very different countries in terms of resources and socio-economic conditions. The total area covered by the 30 countries of the Region is vast and is spread on widely diverse land and water resources. Moreover, several countries in the Region have the largest fossil fuel reserves in the world. The Region is home to 10 percent of the world population, accounts for 6 percent of the world agricultural labor force and, in 2008, contributed about 5 percent of the world GDP.

The three major challenges to attain food security in the Region are: (i) limited water and land resources; (ii) rapid population growth; and (iii) heavy dependence on food imports. Per capita availability of renewable water resources in the Region is currently around 1,050 cubic meter per

year, compared to a global annual average of 8,900 cubic meter per person, and it is projected to drop by half by the year 2050.

While agricultural yields have improved in some countries, overall regional productivity lags behind other regions. On average, cereal yields in the Region are currently about half the world average, and the gap is widening. It is projected that the deficit in cereals will more than double between 2000 and 2030. This growing food deficit makes the majority of the Near East countries more dependent on imports and, therefore, vulnerable to shocks in international and domestic markets.

It is vital to boost investment in agriculture to increase productivity. Contrary to the period between the 1970s and 1980s, public expenditures on agriculture in the Region have been very low in the past few years, particularly in relation to the contribution of agriculture to GDP. While the share of agriculture in GDP is about 12 percent for the Region, its share national public expenditures does not exceed 5 percent. In recent years, the Region has seen an increase in intra-regional investments in agriculture which are growing amidst the global financial crisis and the expected lower levels of foreign direct investment.

The prevailing conditions in the Region look more encouraging for economic cooperation and investment compared with the second half of the 20th Century. Increased intra-regional cooperation, through increased trade and investment, continues to generate a great interest in the Near East.

Agenda of the Regional Conference

*Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

During this thirtieth session of the Regional Conference, you will be informed of FAO's activities in the Region and you will have an opportunity to discuss implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) for FAO renewal, establishment of the network of decentralized offices and reform of the Committee on World Food Security. The Conference will also offer the opportunity to review and debate the draft Regional Priority Framework which represents the outcome of a wider consultation between FAO and your countries during the last two years. The document identifies regional priority areas of action for achieving Goals and Strategic Objectives under the Strategic Framework in the Region

FAO Reform

FAO is currently undergoing the most profound process of reform within the United Nations system. It is renovating the Organization's work procedures and the way it executes its mandate and delivers its services to Member Nations.

Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) has been a primary objective for both Member Nations and the Secretariat since its adoption by the FAO Conference in November 2008. The main actions of the IPA concern mainly the following elements: the adoption of a planning framework and a new results-based approach; decentralization and a greater delegation of authority; organizational streamlining; improvement of human resource management; and a more effective governance system.

Since last January, the Regional Offices have assumed the responsibility of overseeing the programme and budget of technical activities in the Region and are progressively taking over the technical work of the country offices. In addition, staff in the Regional Offices have been trained to take over responsibility for activities conducted under the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

A comprehensive restructuring of FAO headquarters was initiated in 2009 to align the Organization's administrative structure with the objectives of the results-based framework and will

be completed in 2012. One of its key elements has been the elimination of 40 Director-level positions to lighten the structure and hierarchy of the Organization.

The Independent Chairperson of the Council will explain in greater details the nature of the ongoing activities, especially those undertaken by the Representatives of Member Nations.

Reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

Last November, the thirty-sixth session of the FAO Conference approved another major reform: that of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The purpose of CFS reform is to improve the governance of world food security, using existing structures and programmes and creating effective partnerships. Thus the CFS becomes a true international and intergovernmental body for the fight against hunger.

The CFS, under its renovated framework, held its first session in October 2010. The session was characterized by a new spirit of openness and focused on tangible results. The CFS now comprises a high-level panel of experts, which will allow members to take the proper decisions based on objective and impartial scientific studies and analyses.

At country level and under the authority of governments, it is essential to establish partnerships, building upon thematic groups and national alliances for food security. This should provide support to the national authorities responsible for ensuring a rational allocation and utilization of budgetary resources, official development assistance and direct domestic and foreign private investment. Thus, the new Committee on World Food Security and its High-Level Panel of Experts, together with the relevant national mechanisms, will be the cornerstone of the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security.

Conclusion

*Mr Chairperson,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Only five years separate us from 2015, the date by which the world's leaders have pledged to halve hunger and extreme poverty. However, if past trends continue, that target may be missed. But I am convinced that together, we can eliminate hunger from our planet. For this goal to become reality, we must move from words to action, and we must do it quickly.

During the last 15 years, several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America have succeeded to significantly reduce the number of hungry people on their countries. This means that we know what should be done to defeat hunger. To achieve our objectives, it will be necessary to embark on policy and institutional reforms, to bolster existing capacities and to redirect investment towards agricultural development and food security.

In an increasingly inter-dependent world, the promotion of regional cooperation becomes crucial if we are to address the cross-border issues that impact on food security, to enhance intra-regional trade and investment, and to reach consensus on the policies needed to ensure sustainable agricultural development. I am encouraged by the many initiatives led by the Gulf Co-operation Council, the Islamic Development Bank, the Social and Economic Development Fund, the League of Arab States, CEN-SAD, IGAD, which are active in the Region. FAO wishes to further strengthen its already excellent collaboration with the regional and subregional organizations in order to achieve our common goals and objectives. I sincerely hope that we can continue to work along the same lines. Together we can win the battle against world hunger, a battle that nobody can afford to lose.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you every success in your work.

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE OF SUDAN

Mr Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization
Distinguished Ministers, Members of Delegation
Honoured Guests

Peace be upon you with Allah's blessings,

It is my happiness and honour to address your esteemed meeting on the occasion of the 30th FAO Regional Conference for the Near East, which we are honoured to host. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to greet you on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Sudan, and through you, to also greet the people of the Region. I wish you a comfortable stay in your second country, the Sudan, and urge to enjoy its good atmosphere of happiness and pleasure over your kind attendance.

Esteemed gathering

The country of Sudan has committed itself to providing political and economic support to the agricultural sector, which is the main sector on which the other sectors depend, and the source of raw materials and livelihood for more than 70 percent of the population. The country is also committed to implementing programmes of economic reform and an executive programme of agricultural revival, with considerable scope given to fighting hunger and achieving food security for all communities, through the implementation of infrastructure programmes in rural areas. It has also endorsed a package of policies built on strategic partnerships with the industrial sector, and aims to raise the percentage of self sufficiency in strategic food crops, in line with defined economic plans, and to encourage production for export by diversifying the agricultural commodities for which Sudan has an advantage. The country has also given priority to the rehabilitation of ongoing agricultural projects through strategic partnerships, raising the efficiency of technical and administrative performance and focusing on large-scale projects with rapid impact and higher outputs, through concentration on high-value products, and activating mechanisms of monitoring, evaluation and capacity building in the central administration and the governorates.

Esteemed gathering

By adopting this programme and package of policies, the country aims to provide the support needed to transform agriculture from a subsistence sector of low production, productivity and quality to a dynamic sector, able to achieve sustainable development, and economic, financial and social gains, both for those involved in the sector and for the national economy, through products that are able to compete in volume and quality on local and international markets, thereby supporting national food security and increasing foreign currency earnings from exports.

In the short term, we hope to present to the countries of the region a model which could be followed for transforming the prevailing traditional type of subsistence farming to a modern type of production. We take this opportunity to urge this forum and the countries of the region to benefit from such an orientation of implementing large agricultural projects through strategic partnerships for the prosperity and benefit of the region's population and neighbouring countries and for their secured supply of safe, sufficient and clean food.

Respectful gathering

The topics to be discussed at your meeting are of high importance to Sudan, particularly as the reform of the Committee on World Food Security has been approved and leaders of countries and

governments have pledged to implement such reform, which was one of the strategic objectives of the World Food Summit on Food Security held in November, 2009. We in Sudan are in support of such reform efforts which aim to place the Committee of World Food Security at the forefront of international bodies that help raise the capacity of national entities in all countries and participate in the implementation of their food and nutrition security programmes.

Esteemed gathering

As you are aware, there are several challenges in the field of agriculture and food security facing all countries. We in Sudan have been monitoring the individual efforts of countries, in the absence of one mechanism to consolidate such efforts. We are very happy about FAO's recent efforts to promote negotiations among countries of different regions to set up a roadmap to address these challenges. We also value the initiative raised to define priorities to underpin FAO's activities in the coming period, since programmes and plans that evolve from the countries themselves better reflect its ambition and will receive full support from those countries during their implementation, in contrast to imposed programmes which may not find enthusiasm or a desire to participate. There is no doubt that these new methodology will enable countries in different regions to use these programmes and strategies to benefit from their respective competitive and relative advantages, and suggest common priorities among countries of the same region and perhaps likeminded countries in other regions, in such a way as to achieve sustainable food security and agricultural development.

We in Sudan look forward to the results of your debates which will serve as an efficient mechanism for exploiting the region's available resources and for formulating programmes of joint cooperation and incentive for foreign investment.

Esteemed gathering

Finally we reiterate our gratitude for your attendance and thank FAO for its valuable confidence and for the honour of selecting us to host this meeting, We assure you of Sudan's support for the outcome of your deliberations.

Peace be upon you with Allah's blessings.

APPENDIX F

STATEMENT BY THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE FAO COUNCIL

*Mr Chairperson of the Conference,
Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Mr Director-General of FAO,
Mr Head of the Regional Office,
Honourable Delegates and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Introduction

On behalf of the FAO Council I wish to express my most sincere thanks to the Government of the Republic of Sudan for hosting this Regional Conference and for putting in place all the necessary facilities. My thanks also go to the Head of the FAO Regional Office and his team, as well as to the city of Khartoum and all the Sudanese people for their outstanding hospitality and generosity.

It is an honour and indeed a pleasure to take part in this Regional Conference. Our session in Khartoum is the fifth of five Regional Conferences in 2010. During the first semester I attended the Regional Conferences for Europe in Yerevan, for Africa in Luanda, and for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama. In September, I was in Gyeongju for the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. I can confirm that these meetings are now of primary importance because of the new role the Member Countries have given to them in the context of the reform plan.

The 2010 round of Regional Conferences represents a historic moment in the institutional life of the Organization as this is the first biennium of implementation of the reform plan, the **Immediate Plan of Action**. Its implementation, funded from the regular budget, is our collective responsibility and requires the sustained efforts of Member Countries, the Secretariat in Rome and the decentralized offices.

The 140th Session of the Council has just ended and I should like to seize this opportunity to:

1. inform you of progress in my mandate as Independent Chairperson of the Council and report on the conduct of the mission that you have entrusted to me;
2. assess the implementation of the reform plan, in my capacity as Chair of the Committee on Reform;
3. consider the future prospects for these different bodies.

First, the conduct of my mandate.

You elected me last November. There are five central planks to my work which I should like to share with you:

1- Collegiality: I have set up a process of informal coordination of the Chairs of the Committees with limited membership and the Vice-Chairs of the Committee on Reform. It seems advisable to have a consensual and cross-sectional approach when dealing with the tasks ahead. Regular meetings of this group facilitate communication and the search for a common vision to meet the established deadlines. This consultation has been extended to the Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and to the Chairpersons of the Technical Committees of the Council.

2 - Subsidiarity: It is essential that the governing bodies coordinate better to avoid duplication and repetition. As we progress from one level to the next, value must be added at each level. I make sure that what is tackled at one level is not dealt with again at the next level. In this regard, intersessional

work is vital and reflects the spirit of reform. Positive initiatives have been taken in this sense. They go in the right direction in that they provide for in-depth preparation of the formal sessions.

3 - Ownership: Essential dialogue within and with the Regional Groups must be based on regular meetings so that each group can express its concerns and proposals. I have thus regularly invited the Chairs of the Regional Groups to working meetings, particularly on the subject of field visits or Council reform. I intend to extend this collaboration to achieve increased cohesion and effectiveness. I take this opportunity to thank the Chair of the Near East group, Iraq, for its active collaboration.

4 - Independence: You all know how crucial it is to maintain this criterion, both for Members and for the Secretariat and the Office of the Director-General, and adjustments are under way in a constructive atmosphere. Be sure that I consider compliance with this independence to be a key element for the success of my mission. I strive every day to safeguard it, especially in view of important upcoming deadlines, including the election of the Director-General in 2011.

5 - Partnership: Partnership is crucial for the achievement of our mission and we must strive to develop it in all its forms: with other UN bodies, governments, civil society, NGOs, private companies.

Second, what is the state of progress of reform?

Reform is ongoing. Now is the time for collective action; we must help strengthen the momentum of this still fragile process. Together we must fight against all forms of inertia, capitalizing as best we can on the Organization's human resources, universally recognized for their high quality. Internal communication is critical, because this is the staff that implement reform on a daily basis. Similarly, external communication is important and each country must provide its contribution.

That is how we can expect tangible results, both in Rome and in your region. The new methods of work and planning of the Committees with limited membership led to even more specific recommendations of the Council last week. You know that the Council's authority has been strengthened in planning, priority setting, control, supervision and monitoring the implementation of governance decisions. This Council directly benefited from the conclusions of the Regional Conferences that preceded it.

I wish to take stock with you of the five major processes in our roadmap:

(1) The open-ended working group on the efficiency of the governing bodies: This was formally established on April 9 and has held two meetings, which served to enhance the performance of the Council and its Committees. Regarding the sensitive issue of representation on the Council and the more executive role of this governing body, I wish to state that in October I proposed a draft comprehensive package on the basis of dialogue with the Regional Groups. Discussion of this document has started and arrangements are under consideration, before further review in early 2011, the aim being to reach agreement at the next Conference in late June.

(2) The process of preparation of the informal meeting on the integration of extra-budgetary funding: This meeting which is part of the reform plan has been set for March 1, 2011. The discussions will therefore be taken into account during preparation of the budget for the 2012-2013 biennium. This is a new tool. It is important that each Member Country become involved in the preparation process and participate effectively in this meeting.

(3) Preparation for the election of the Director-General: Arrangements for interviewing candidates by the Council and the Conference were examined by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters. Proposals submitted by the Secretariat, mainly on the basis of a comparative analysis of rules and practices in effect in other organizations of the UN system, were approved by the Council in May. In addition, a call for nominations for the office of Director-General has been posted on the FAO website.

(4) Status of the Regional Conferences: These have acquired fully-fledged governing body status. This constitutes a breakthrough in terms of strengthening governance at regional level. The Regional Conferences are now directly linked with the Conference and the Council, to whom they must also report:

- in the first case, on aspects relating to policy and regulation;
- in the second case, on issues relating to programme and budget.

(5) Development of a multiyear programme of the Council, over two biennia, identifying issues to be addressed and following the progress of debate.

As regards the budget, the Programme Committee asked me to draw your attention to the role of the Regional Conferences in defining regional priorities, especially concerning the *Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to water*. In this connection, I confirm my willingness to cooperate fully with the Chairperson, the Bureau and the Secretariat of this Regional Conference, so that this key element of the process of reform of governance can soon be realized.

Moreover, as the Committee on World Food Security reports to the Council on programme and budget matters, I wish to comment on the work done by the Bureau of this Committee, which I consider to be extremely positive. The significant advances that have emerged can only benefit the relationship between CFS and the Council.

What are the short-term prospects?

The entry into force of the new scheduling for the Conference, now set in June, means a shortening of this biennium by nearly six months. We therefore have a demanding calendar and must make best possible use of the time available.

In this regard, work conducted in informal groups is a good approach, provided it is transparent, open and compatible with the formal sessions of governing bodies, whose decisions must not be preempted. Such groups permit early and considered preparation for important deadlines. They should remain connected to and coordinated with the work of the Committee on Reform, the Council and other entities, both formal and informal.

The next meetings of the Committee on Reform will address the decentralized offices and staff rotation policy. These are important issues for decentralization whose discussion could be enlightened by the views and recommendations of the Regional Conferences taking place in the meantime. I will facilitate consideration of the inputs of the Regional Conferences in the process of decision-making, especially during Council deliberations.

The Committees have examined issues of direct relevance to decentralization, such as progress in implementing the Technical Cooperation Programme. The Programme Committee has specifically recommended that I take action, with support from the Secretariat, for the Regional Conferences to be able to formulate precise recommendations to the Council on topics of high priority to regions. I will implement this recommendation, particularly in the formulation of the next Programme of Work and Budget.

You also know that the mission I am entrusted with requires continuous contact with institutions dealing with issues within FAO's mandate so that the Council can be kept abreast of corresponding developments. I will make sure that the Council is kept informed of discussions of relevance to FAO that take place in other bodies, and that dialogue is pursued with other governing bodies, especially those dealing with food and agriculture that are headquartered in Rome. Furthermore, I will continue my contacts with staff representatives and will step up my meetings with representatives of civil society, particularly NGOs, and of course with WFP and IFAD. Finally, I have programmed several field missions to meet the beneficiaries of FAO's work and to assess the impact of reform.

CONCLUSION

Finally, I wish to confirm my total availability for the mission you have entrusted to me, both in Rome and in the field. I wish to hear your concerns which I am ready to pass on to all members countries, whenever necessary.

My country – France – has renewed its confidence in me by asking me to stand again for the position of Independent Chairperson of the Council. If you have confidence in me, I will be happy and honoured to actively continue the mission that you have entrusted to me.

We need to remain focused on the implementation of reform and tackle the essentials without reopening already settled issues. The road is long and strewn with obstacles, and the process is still fragile. We must stand firmly together to make FAO more effective and more responsive at its various levels, and strengthen Members' accountability to achieve our primary objective of fighting better against hunger.

I am pleased to note that the Near East, building upon its community of interests and reaching beyond its national diversities, has been able to develop a Regional Framework of Priorities focused on improving food security in the region, through the sustainable management of natural resources, with the overriding objective of ensuring that present and future generations no longer suffer from food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty, particularly in rural areas. To this end, Member Countries are called upon to sustainably improve food availability, to develop regulatory and institutional frameworks for agriculture, fisheries and forestry, to protect and enhance their natural resources, to encourage the development of knowledge and to strengthen institutional capacity. While flexible and open to change, the Regional Framework is a logical reflection of the five priority areas that have been identified by the region's Member States, namely: (1) improving food and nutrition security; (2) boosting agricultural production and rural development to enhance livelihoods; (3) assuring sustainable management of natural resources; (4) responding to the impact of climate change and developing adaptation strategies; and (5) preparing for and responding to agricultural and food emergencies.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that reform is not an end in itself, but the means towards greater efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of FAO. The Secretariat and Management have already undertaken promising action to achieve culture change. Regions, yours, are now better structured to respond to this change.

The Governance Bodies, the Council, the Committees and, indeed, I myself have changed culture to encourage each delegation to participate and become more involved in the institutional functioning of FAO. This is essential if we are to fully achieve our task, everywhere in the field, in all countries. But it is equally important to develop FAO's outreach and recognition in international forums concerned about food security, such as the MDG Summit in New York, the recent G20 Summit in Seoul and the Summit on Biological Diversity in Nagoya. The Member Countries and FAO should become involved in such debates.

Mirroring what has been done with the Committee on World Food Security, we need to ensure cohesion in other platforms (on Water, Earth, Climate ...). We need to be proactive in this regard. It is in this sense that FAO reform is essential. We are all led by the same objective: to achieve, as soon as we can and in a sustainable manner, the "eradication of world hunger."

I hope this conference will bear fruit from the richness of its debate and from the relevance of its recommendations, thus contributing, with FAO support, to the development of agriculture and the rural sector in the Near East, and to the strengthening of food security in the region. Thank you for your attention.

APPENDIX G

**NERC/10/SOM/REP
December 2010**

**THIRTIETH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR THE NEAR EAST**

**REPORT OF THE
SENIOR OFFICERS MEETING**

Khartoum, The Republic of the Sudan (4-6 December 2010)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Regional Office for the Near East

2010

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Meeting

1. The Senior Officers Meeting of the Thirtieth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East was held from 4-6 December 2010 in Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan.

Inaugural Ceremony

2. The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Mr. Abbas Guma'a the State Minister for Agriculture in the Republic of the Sudan. The Meeting was also addressed by Mr Saad AlOtaibi, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for the Near East. In attendance, there were 70 participants representing 15 Member Countries and 11 observers from UN and other International and Regional Organizations, as well as representatives of diplomatic missions in the Republic of Sudan, some Non-Governmental and Civil Society Organizations and representatives from the news media. The list of participants is given in Appendix B.

3. Mr AlOtaibi, in his opening statement, expressed his thanks and appreciation for the people and Government of the Sudan for their warm welcome and hospitality. He pointed out that this was the second time that the Regional Conference is held in Khartoum, after over 43 years. Mr AlOtaibi thanked H.E. the State Minister for Agriculture for his participation in the inauguration of the Meeting and for all the efforts exerted by the Ministry and the National Organizing Committee, as well as the excellent arrangements and facilities provided for the success of the Meeting. Mr AlOtaibi also thanked the senior officers and representatives of Member Countries and the International and Regional Organizations for their attendance.

4. The Regional Representative stressed the role of the Senior Officers Meeting as an integral part of the Regional Conference and as a preparatory forum for an in-depth discussion of technical issues of concern to the Near East. Mr AlOtaibi reviewed the Agenda of the Meeting and expressed his hope that the Meeting would reach positive and concrete recommendations for adoption by the Ministerial Meeting. He pointed out that the directives and recommendations of the Conference will constitute the basis of the programme of work for FAO and its Regional Office in the Region during the coming two years. In addition, he highlighted the new structural and administrative, as well as functional changes related to FAO Regional Offices.

5. Mr AlOtaibi referred to the three Side Events that are held in parallel to this Regional Conference and he also made a special mention of the document on Regional Priority Framework that the Regional Office accomplished.

6. In his opening statement, the State Minister for Agriculture expressed his sincere thanks to FAO and its Office for the Near East for convening the FAO Regional Conference in Sudan. He reviewed the main challenges facing countries of the Region in agriculture, water and environment sectors, including limited water resources, desertification, conservation of biodiversity and the control of transboundary animal diseases.

7. Mr Guma'a reiterated Sudan's continued commitment to the World Food Summit Plan of Action and to the Millennium Development Goals, especially the alleviation of poverty.

8. The State Minister noted with appreciation the productive cooperation with FAO to enhance food security in the Sudan. In this context, the Government has formulated a comprehensive agricultural development strategy for the optimal utilization of land and water resources. He pointed out the comparative advantage of Sudan, with its rich natural resource base, as a main provider of food for its neighboring countries who are net importers of staple food items.

9. In conclusion, the State Minister reiterated his country's policies already adopted for encouraging foreign investment in agriculture.

Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur

10. The Meeting unanimously elected Mr Abdel Latif Ijaimi, Deputy Minister for Agriculture in the Republic of the Sudan, as its Chairperson and it was resolved that all other Heads of Delegations for the Senior Officers Meeting would be Vice-Chairpersons. Mr Habib Ben Abdalla Al-Hasni, Director of International Cooperation Department in the Sultanate of Oman was appointed Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

11. The Provisional Annotated Agenda (NERC/10/1) and Timetable (NERC/10/INF/2) were adopted without any changes.

II. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

The Implications of Soaring Food Prices and Global Financial and Economic Crises for Food and Nutrition in the Near East

12. The Meeting considered Document NERC/10/8 " The Implications of Soaring Food Prices and Global Financial and Economic Crises for Food and Nutrition in the Near East"; which was a response to a recommendation made by the 29th FAO Regional Conference held in 2008. The Meeting commended FAO for addressing such a major pressing and global issue, as well as noting the high technical quality of the document.

13. Soaring food prices were noted as a major concern for the region, particularly due to the vulnerability of countries arising from dependence on world commodity markets for staple food products, given that majority of countries are net importers of food. While the reasons behind soaring food prices are numerous, the magnitude of the effect on the countries largely arises from the non-optimal use of resources, absence of complementary collaboration among countries, low productivity, and shortages in food production.

14. The Meeting noted that this situation poses a major challenge to food security and nutrition standing in many countries of the Region; given that the largest portion of the family budget goes to food, thus impacting livelihoods of the poor and food insecure.

15. The Meeting commended the actions and policies adopted by governments to address the food price shocks in the short medium and long term.

16. To achieve better food security, governments' actions need to be complemented with regional trade and cooperation, as well as international investments in agriculture.

17. **Member Nations are called upon to:**

- i. Consider reviewing country-wide consumer support schemes to focus on the immediate food and nutrition needs of vulnerable groups, including assessment of per capita food consumption and food basket changes;
- ii. Adopt sustainable and integrated natural resources management policies;
- iii. Consider the establishment of a Regional Gene Bank that could help in developing new crop varieties that are heat and drought resistant, in view of the climate change;

- iv. Increase expenditures on agricultural research and enhance collaboration among countries on research in order to bridge the productivity gap in the Region.
 - v. Improve market and supply-chain efficiency, and put in place a supportive business environment.
 - vi. Improve family planning services in countries that continue to have high population growth.
 - vii. Employ intra-regional trade as a tool for addressing food crisis and to minimize price volatility and overcome uncertainty of food supply;
 - viii. Promote regional trade and collaboration through food security information systems, strengthen institutions and lift obstacles to joint-venture agribusinesses;
 - ix. Pay due consideration to food security situation in host countries where foreign investment is planned, including respecting land property rights and conducting an environmental impact assessment of the proposed investments, as well as ensuring benefits to the local communities;
 - x. Implement integrated rural development approach targeting small holders, pastoralists and fishermen in order to halt movement of rural populations to urban centers.
 - xi. Create enabling environment for attracting intra-regional investment that ensures complementarities between natural resource-rich countries and financially-rich ones through the review of rules and legislations to allow free flow of capital.
18. **FAO is requested to:**
- i. Provide technical assistance to Member Nations in updating their agricultural and food security and nutrition policies, including food security monitoring systems in view of the soaring food prices, as well as towards establishment of a “regional forum” on Food Security.
 - ii. Call for a preparatory meeting for Near East countries to convene prior to CFS Session, in order to reach common consensus on regional food security issues;
 - iii. Support Member Countries’ capacity on agriculture water management and enhance cooperation on issues of regional dimension; and
 - iv. Develop guidelines on international land acquisition and foreign direct investment in agribusiness;
 - v. Provide technical assistance to Member Countries in preparing strategies and action plans for addressing future upsurges of food prices;
 - vi. Assist in establishing a regional forum to continue the discussion of various issues related to investment in agriculture in the Near East Region, including information sharing and building a repository of best practices, regulations and legislation. The forum would also provide input to the ongoing elaboration of the Responsible Agriculture Investment (RAI) Principles.

Trans-boundary Plant Pests and Diseases in the Near East, with Emphasis on Wheat Black Stem Rust (Ug99)

19. The Meeting considered the document” NERC/10/9, “Tran-boundary Plant Pests and Diseases in the Near East, with Emphasis on Wheat Black Stem Rust (Ug99)” which aims to highlight the present situation and measures taken by countries to address the threats of transboundary plant pests and diseases in the Near East, including these pests: tomato fruit miner, the Red Palm Weevil, the Peach Fruit Fly, the Desert Locust and the new virulent strains of Wheat Rusts.

20. As recommended by the FAO 29th Regional Conference, the document focused on Wheat Black Stem Rust as the most serious among rust diseases, whereby losses of up to 60 percent are possible in the case of Yellow Rust and of 70–100 percent in that of the Stem Rust (Ug99), in susceptible wheat cultivars.

21. Member Nations are **called upon** to:

- i. Review and develop national policies on Phytosanitary Measures, including coordination at the regional level;
- ii. Enhance collaboration with FAO, the Near East Plant Protection Organization (NEPPO) and other concerned regional and international organizations for establishing relevant databases, information sharing and support national and regional networking activities related to plant protection;
- iii. Promote awareness, on national level, on the safe use of pesticides and encourage adoption of the IPM approach;
- iv. Continue to strengthen national efforts to combat desert locust, with cooperation with FAO and other concerned organizations; and

22. **FAO is requested to:**

- i. Continue providing technical assistance for developing national and regional interventions to monitor and control the transboundary pest outbreaks, particularly the witch-broom disease which broke out recently on lime in southern part of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- ii. Assist in strengthening national human and institutional capacities for applying the phytosanitary measures.
- iii. Support establishing an Early Warning System for the Near East on outbreaks of plant pests and diseases, particularly the Wheat Black Stem Rust

Report on the Outcomes of the Regional Commissions and Other Relevant Regional Meetings in the Near East

23. The document (*NERC/10/INF/10*) discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Commissions and other relevant regional meetings in the Near East, including:

The Agriculture and Land and Water Commission (ALAWUC);

24. The Meeting reviewed and **endorsed** the conclusions and recommendations **adopted** by the 6th. Session of the Agriculture and Land and Water Commission (ALAWUC) which reviewed the critical challenges, including the impacts of climate change and drought.

25. **Member Countries are called upon to:**

- i. Explore the Region's potential related to the use of non-conventional water resources for agricultural purposes, as a priority area in future activities of the Commission;
- ii. Give due consideration to the recommendations pertaining to the preparation of internal statutes for the Commission and the selection of a board from Member Countries to manage the Commission's affairs and the contribution to the Commission's resources;
- iii. Support the Animal Production and Health Commission in the Near East, focusing on supporting livestock keepers in view of their vulnerability to challenges such as climate change, poverty and food insecurity; and

- vii. Promote greater regional collaboration to benefit from recent policies adopted by some Member Countries in agriculture water management, trans-boundary animal diseases, crop patterns, as well as strengthening the exchange of knowledge through establishment of databases.

26. FAO is requested to:

- i. Provide technical assistance to Member Countries for sustainable land and water resources management.

Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC)

27. The Meeting was informed on the new mandate of the Near East Forestry Commission to include “range” and thus the Commission became the “*Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC)*”. Regional issues identified by the Commission were: fragility of the forest and range ecosystem, declining investment in the forestry and range, scarcity of information about the resources, as well as risks and vulnerability to climate change and weak institutional capacity.

28. The Meeting recognized the pivotal role of forests and rangelands in national strategies, action plans and programmes to combat desertification, adaptation and mitigation to climate change impacts. It was further noted that the lack of information and knowledge about forests, trees and rangelands hinders taking sound policy decisions.

29. Member Countries are called upon to:

- i. Strengthen national efforts to adapt forests and rangelands to climate change, benefiting from international funding opportunities, as well as utilizing the safe re-use of treated waste water in afforestation programmes; and
- ii. Give due attention to the importance of building an information base on forests and rangelands for supporting development of national forest programmes planning and for the sustainable resource management.

Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI) and General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

30. The Meeting took note of the conclusions and recommendations of the 5th Session of RECOFI held in May 2009, as well as the (GFCM) Sessions held in March 2009 and in April 2010, focusing on regional issues of importance to the conservation and management of fisheries and aquaculture.

31. Member Countries are called upon to:

- i. Strengthen the Regional Fisheries Commissions, particularly RECOFI in order to ensure sustainable fisheries management and aquaculture development, including the socio-economic component.

32. FAO is requested to:

- i. Continue providing technical support to enhance cooperation among Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Kuwait related to the FAO/RECOFI initiative for sustainable fisheries management by applying the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries;
- ii. Continue providing technical assistance to enable Member Countries abide with international fish trade and stand against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing; and

- iii. Give due support to the establishment of a regional fisheries management organization in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, as well as implementing the regional project on “Marine Resources Assessment Programme in the Red Sea” without further delay.

Desert Locust Commission in the Central Region

33. The Meeting took note of the conclusions and recommendations made by the last Session of the Desert Locust Commission in the Central Region, covering main issues and concerns of combating Desert Locust in the Region.

34. Member Countries are **called upon** to:

- i. All efforts need to be made in countries with current Desert Locust infestations by deployment of six additional teams to survey, monitor and treat the infestations.
- ii. Give due attention to timely provision of information related to any upsurge of Desert Locust as well as facilitate joint surveys and information exchange with regional and international networks.

35. **FAO is requested to:**

- i. Continue to support the capacity building at national and regional levels in the fields related to Desert Locust Control activities.

III. OTHER MATTERS

36. The Meeting took note of the technical Information Notes prepared for this session of the Regional Conference, which covered priority topics for the Region as identified in previous sessions. The following Information Notes were circulated:

- NERC/10/INF/5: Water Desalination for Agricultural Use
- NERC/10/INF/6: Valuing Rangelands for the Ecosystem and Livelihood Services
- NERC/10/INF/7: Knowledge, Information and Communication for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Near East: Recent Experiences and Lessons Learned
- NERC/10/INF8: An Update on Transboundary Animal Diseases in the Near East
- NERC/10/INF/9: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: New Initiatives and Update on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- NERC/10/INF/10: Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions and Relevant Meetings in the Near East
- NERC/10/INF/11: Evaluation of FAO’s Role and Work Related to Water
- NERC/10/INF/12: Paper Presented to the CoC-IEE Meeting Reporting Discussions at LARC, ARC, ERC and APRC on Decentralization and the Shared Services Centre (SSC).

Side Events

37. The Meeting took note of holding of three Side Events that were held in parallel to the Conference, with participations from country delegates and some regional organizations, as well as FAO staff. These Side Events covered these topics:

A. Exploring the Future of Foreign Investment in Agriculture

38. This Event was held on 5 December 2010, with 69 participants, including country delegates and other observers, to seek their views on the Principles for Responsible Agriculture Investment (RAI) developed jointly with UNCTAD, IFAD and the World Bank and to discuss the country-specific nature of all aspects of foreign investment and the appropriate policy responses. It was suggested that a regional forum be established to continue the discussion of various issues related to investment in agriculture in the Near East Region, including information sharing and building a repository of best

practices, regulations and legislation. The forum would also provide input to the ongoing elaboration of the RAI Principles.

B. Enhancing National and Regional Governance of Food Security and Nutrition: Capitalizing on CFS Reform

39. Benefiting from the reformed CFS structure and vision, this Side Event was attended by some 70 participants from country delegates, regional bodies, UN agencies, private sector institutions, research and academia in the Near East Region. Three main issues emerged from the panel discussion: (i) the need to launch a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach to food security in the Region; (ii) the need to have a long term strategy for food security and nutrition both at the national and regional levels; and (iii) the importance of commitment by national governments as a pre-condition to successful regional efforts. Also, it was recommended to avoid duplication of efforts through regional coordination. This Side Event recommended: i) building on existing regional food security bodies to develop multi-stakeholder coordination process; ii) drawing on technical expertise of relevant UN agencies; and iii) organizing annual regional multi-stakeholder coordination meetings prior to the CFS sessions.

C. Evaluation of the Regional and Sub-regional Offices of the Near East

40. This Event was held on 6 December 2010 and was attended country delegates. A fruitful dialogue and exchange of views took place between the evaluation team and Member Nations of the Near East region. These were considered valuable inputs for the finalization of the evaluation report.

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Adoption of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting

41. The Meeting adopted the report of the Senior Officers Meeting after introducing some amendments.

Closure of the Senior Officers Meeting

42. Upon conclusion of the discussions of the Senior Officers Meeting, Mr Saad AlOtaibi, ADG and Regional Representative for the Near East thanked all participating country delegates, representatives of UN agencies, the Near East Group Leader for Country representatives for FAO and to the observers for their attendance. He further appreciated the excellent support provided by the Ministry of Agriculture in the Sudan and to the National Organizing Committee for their support.

43. The Chairperson, Mr Abdel Latif Ijaimi, Undersecretary, Ministry of Agriculture in the Republic of the Sudan expressed his thanks to all the delegations for their deliberations and participation in the Meeting. He also thanked FAO and its Regional Office and the Conference Secretariat for preparing the documents and for the good preparation and smooth running of the Meeting.

44. Mr Ijaimi declared the Meeting closed at 16:00 hours, on 6 December 2010.