RAP PUBLICATION 2009/17

Expert consultation on statistics in support of policies to empower small farmers

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FOREWORD

The Expert Consultation on Statistics in Support of Policies to Empower Small Farmers was held at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific from 8 to 11 September 2009. It was designed to contribute to the improvement of agricultural statistics in the Asia and Pacific region in support of policies to empower small farmers; to discuss approaches to data collection and types of information that better suit current data needs of policy-makers in the context of a changing world economy; and to advise FAO on the development of capacity building and technical assistance programmes in the future years with a view to improving statistics in support of policies to empower small farmers.

Small farmers play a key role in agricultural development in Asia and the Pacific region. Lack of adequate data on small farmers who comprise the bulk of farm households and food-insecure people in the region is a constraint to devising effective policies to empower them. This is especially true in the context of trade liberalization and globalisation and soaring food prices which have adversely affected small farmers in Asia and the Pacific.

The Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS), at its June 2008 session in Kuching, Malaysia, emphasized the need to review data collection methods and types of information collected to keep information systems attuned to data needs for early warning signals of price and market fluctuations, in order to support the setting up of mitigating measures against negative impacts of rising prices.

The expert consultation was therefore organized to shed some light on the role of statisticians in assisting policy-makers formulate timely corrective measures when confronted with food market crises.

Experts from Australia, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand, and concerned FAO technical officers from headquarters and the regional office, contributed to discussions on these issues and developed recommendations. It is hoped the summary account contained in this report will be useful to both decision-makers and information practitioners in meeting the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of the region's malnourished by 2015.

He Changchui
Assistant Director-General and
FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFFIS	Agricultural Forestry Fisheries Information Service
AGMARIS	Agricultural Marketing Information System
AGMARKNET	Agricultural Marketing Information Network
AMIS	Agricultural Market Information System
AMNEWSS	Agricultural Marketing News Service
APCAS	Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics
APMC	Agricultural Produce Market Committees
AT	Agro-Fisheries Trade Cooperation
BAAC	Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives
BAPS	Barangay (village) Agricultural Profiling Survey
BAS	Bureau of Agricultural Statistics
CLSTS	Commodity Level Statistical Information System
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DA	Department of Agriculture
DOC	Data Operation Center
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIELDS	Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers and other infrastructure and Seeds
GPS	Global Positioning System
GR	Gratuitous Relief
HQ	Headquarters
ITC	Indian Tobacco Company
KAMIS	Korea Agricultural Market Information System
KATI	Korea Agricultural Trade Information
MINA	Marketing Information Needs Assessment
MOAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
NAD	Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam
NPCC	National Price Coordinating Council
NPF	National Policy for Farmers
NSDS	National Strategies for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organization

NWPC	National Wage Productivity Council
OAE	Office of Agricultural Economics
PAP	Provincial Agricultural Profile
PASO	Provincial Agricultural Statistics Officer
PMAS	Production and Marketing Analysis Service
PMSC	Paddy, Maize, Soybean and Cane Sugar
PSS	Philippines Statistical System
RAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
RSSIS	Rural Sector Statistical Information System
SAS	Situation Assessment Survey
SMS	Short Message Service
WCA	World Census of Agriculture
WTO	World Trade Organization

Report of the expert consultation on statistics in support of policies to empower small farmers

OPENING SESSION
(Item 1 of the Agenda)

1. The *Expert Consultation on Statistics in Support of Policies to Empower Small Farmers* was organized by the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Bangkok, Thailand from 8 to 11 September 2009. The consultation was attended by 16 participants, including nine experts from Australia, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand. Four experts from FAO headquarters were also present.

2. The Expert Consultation was inaugurated by Mr Hiroyuki Konuma, FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific. In his opening address, Mr Konuma welcomed all participants on behalf of the Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific and on his own behalf. He explained that the Expert Consultation was an FAO mechanism for focused discussions as a means to helping define the Organization's policies and programmes in support of its overall mandate of ensuring food security for all.

3. Mr Konuma pointed out that the Expert Consultation was being held at a particularly difficult time for countries in the region due to the economic slowdown which has had an adverse impact on small and marginal farmers comprising the bulk of food-insecure people in Asia and the Pacific, which is home to over two-thirds of the world's more than 1 billion hungry people. The Consultation was a follow-up to the recommendation of the Asia Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) held in Kuching, Malaysia in June 2008 which emphasised the role of statisticians in supporting policy-makers in formulating timely and corrective responses to the food market crisis.

4. He encouraged the Experts to offer guidance to FAO and its member countries in improving agricultural data systems to strengthen national policies for empowering small farmers in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in the context of high food prices, trade liberalization and economic uncertainty.

5. He stressed that there was a need for flexible agricultural statistics programme in meeting the contemporary information needs of policy makers. This implied timeliness and relevance of information to policy-making and monitoring and the need to balance ongoing needs for information against the priorities for information on specific contemporary issues. Accurate and reliable statistical information was vital in designing appropriate and effective policies and strategies for improving the incomes and supplementary livelihood options for small farmers. He added that the outcome of the Expert Consultation would be presented to the 23rd APCAS Session to be held in Siem Reap, Cambodia in early 2010. The full text of Mr Konuma's speech is given in Appendix C.

INTRODUCTORY MATTERS
(Item 2 of the Agenda)

6. Mr Jairo Castano, Senior Statistician, FAO RAP, Bangkok, served as Secretary for the Expert Consultation. He thanked the FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific for his address.

7. The Experts elected Ms Maura s. Lizarondo (Philippines) as Chairperson, Mr Rajiv Mehta (India) and Mr Dennis Farrell (Australia) as Vice Chairmen, and Mr Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, FAO Consultant, was elected as Rapporteur. Messrs Farrell, Mehta and Castano were elected as members of the drafting committee. The Agenda and Timetable (Documents STAT-EMPOWER-1 and STAT-EMPOWER-2) proposed by the Secretary as given in Appendix A were adopted. The Experts and Observers who participated in the Expert Consultation are listed in Appendix D. The list of documents is contained in Appendix B.

BACKGROUND FOR THE EXPERT CONSULTATION AND OBJECTIVES
(Item 3 of the Agenda)

8. Mr Castano, in STAT-EMPOWER-3, provided some background for the Expert Consultation. He indicated that regional Expert Consultations on statistics were organized by the FAO regional office every two years. Mr Castano noted that the 2008 APCAS session in Kuching, Malaysia noted that there was a need to revisit conventional approaches to both data collection methods and types of information collected in the context of food market crises. This led to the conceptualisation of an Expert Consultation on the topic.

9. He explained that the general objective of this year's Expert Consultation was to contribute to the improvement of agricultural statistics in support of policies to empower small farmers in the Asia and Pacific Region and more specifically to:

- Discuss approaches to data collection and types of information that better suit current data needs of policy-makers in the context of a changing world economy
- Advise FAO on the development of capacity building and technical assistance programmes in the future years with a view of improving statistics in support of policies to empower small farmers.

CHARACTERIZATION OF SMALL FARMERS TO TARGET POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
(Item 4 of the Agenda)

Small farmers in the agricultural censuses in Asia and the Pacific

10. In STAT-EMPOWER-4, Mr Hiek Som, Deputy Director, Statistics Division, FAO HQ, reviewed the importance of small holdings and the nature of small-scale agriculture in Asia and the Pacific. Small agricultural holdings comprised the vast majority of farms in many developing countries. Studies based on the World Programme of Census of Agriculture (WCA) 2000 indicated that the Asia and Pacific region had the world's smallest farm holding size. Against the global average of 5.5 ha in 114 FAO member countries, the average agricultural holding size in Asia was about 1 ha. He listed examples of average holding sizes in various countries in Asia and the Pacific as well in other regions.

11. He observed that when provided with irrigation facilities, small agricultural holdings tended to adopt intensive cultivation, growing up to four crops a year, optimizing land use to either improve household food security or to augment income from agricultural activity. Small farmers were more vulnerable to food insecurity and usually lacked resources to invest in land or livestock while farm technologies and machinery were often unsuitable for small-scale adoption. In many countries, small farmers were engaged in specific crop and/or livestock production such as millets and poultry, pig, sheep and goat rearing. In order to be effective, agricultural policy and decision-making must take into account these features of the agricultural sector. This highlighted the need for information-based analysis of policy options to evaluate their likely impact on the well-being of small farmers.

12. Mr Som informed the meeting that the FAO programme for WCA recommended classifying holdings into 18 size classes in terms of operated area. Many countries used different definitions for "agricultural holding" and different size classes, making international comparison difficult. Examples of modified definitions of agricultural holding used in censuses of the WCA 2000 round in Asia included India where, for policy purposes, farmers in 12 classes were grouped into five groups – marginal farmers (below 1 ha), small farmers (1-2 ha), medium farmers (4-10 ha) and large farmers (over 10 ha).

13. FAO recommended the adoption of detailed class distribution for tabulation of "number and area of holding" for the purpose of an agricultural census. Mr Som mentioned examples of possible cross-tabulation from agricultural census data to facilitate making of policies to empower small farmers. This included distribution of land operated by size of holding as well as livestock type and herd size by land size class of holding.

14. The Experts recommended that countries adopt the FAO farm size classification noting that too many size classes might increase survey costs. They also noted that size classes could be regrouped at the data analysis stage.

15. The Experts recommended considering sub-categorization in defining small farmers, taking into account factors such as productivity, cropping intensity and irrigation. Given the vastly heterogeneous agricultural practices in Asia and the Pacific, it was desirable to use subregional definitions for small farmers instead of an overall regional definition. The Experts noted that in the Republic of Korea, farmer classification was based on arable land area instead of total land holding.

16. It was recognized that in some countries, farmers were not aware of the actual cultivated area, especially in mountainous areas. The Experts recommended that equipment such as compass, tape and GPS might be considered for objective measurement crop area.

Farmers' directory for direct input-subsidy policy in Indonesia

17. In STAT-EMPOWER-5, Mr Bambang-Heru Santosa, Director of Livestock-Fishery-Forestry Statistics, BPS Statistics Indonesia, described how Indonesia conducted an agricultural census every tenth year ending with 3 such as in 1973, 1983, 1993 and 2003. However, the 2003 agricultural census could not cover the province of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) due to political problems and the aftermath of the December 2004 tsunami.

18. In 2008, the Indonesian government needed data on individual farmers cultivating key crops such as paddy, maize, soybeans, and cane sugar (PMSC) in order to provide them a

subsidy directly for the purchase of fertilizer instead of subsidizing fertilizer manufacturers who were required to sell at below-market prices to farmers. The government decided to directly subsidize PMSC farmers because some dealers were taking advantage of the earlier scheme to buy fertilizer at subsidized prices from the manufacturer without passing on the benefit to farmers who had to buy it at market prices. Thus, agricultural census data on PMSC farmers would be used in 2011 for the direct subsidy programme. The main objective of the subsidy was to both help small farmers and promote PMSC crops which are Indonesia's strategic agricultural crops. Small farmers having less than 2 ha were the beneficiaries of the subsidy. Mr Santosa clarified that the data on individual farmers used for the subsidy scheme, although about 2 years old, would continue to be relevant as only 5 percent of farmers change their cultivated area.

19. The Experts expressed concern about the confidentiality of the information collected in the NAD census and the independence of the National Statistics Office which provided information about individual farmers to departments operating the subsidy programme. The Experts noted the possibility of incorrect data being reported in order to benefit from the subsidy. As there was no system to check information obtained from the farmers, the Experts agreed that the success of the new subsidy scheme would depend on the credibility of the *Poktan* (farmers' group).

20. The Experts recommended ensuring the confidentiality of the information provided by individual farmers during the dissemination of data on their activities in line with national and international statistical laws and standards.

Situation assessment survey for farm sector policy formulation in India

21. In STAT-EMPOWER-6, Mr Rajiv Mehta, Additional Director General, Survey Design and Research Division, National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, presented the Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) used by his government for farm sector policy formulation. He noted that statistics played an important role in the process of policy formulation, planning and management of the sector. However, crucial gaps remained in the statistical profile relating to socio-economic conditions of farmer households and their interface with farming activities. Information on the statistical profile of farmers' socio-economic conditions was a development priority to meaningfully address farm sector issues and the well-being of farm households, particularly in predominantly agrarian economies.

22. To address these issues, SAS, a large-scale sample survey, was conducted in India in 2003 by the NSSO, with sponsorship from the Ministry of Agriculture. It was one of the exclusive socio-economic surveys aimed at bridging data gaps and providing statistical indicators for formulating a farmer-oriented policy.

23. The information collected in SAS included general awareness/perceptions and other aspects of farming, farming resources and their use, farmer household assets and liabilities, economics of farming and non-farm business and household living standards.

24. After summarizing the results of SAS which were published in five NSSO reports covering the above aspects, Mr Mehta pointed out that the findings provided vital inputs for the National Policy for Farmers (NPF) that was subsequently announced by the government in 2007 and addressed issues emerging from the SAS. While highlighting the differentiated pattern of household incomes, assets and liabilities in different size classes of farmer

households, he articulated the need to judge the marginalization of farmers going beyond the yardstick of size class of land holding. This was important for evolving farmer-centric policies for their well-being as well as for the development of the agriculture sector.

25. On the issue of integration of the SAS with the National Statistics System, it was clarified that the survey was specially designed for specific policy formulation requirements.

STRATEGIES TO MEET NEW STATISTICAL DEMANDS IN AN EVOLVING WORLD
(Item 5 of the Agenda)

Global strategy to improve agricultural statistics

26. Mr Pietro Gennari, Director, FAO Statistics Division, presented, in STAT-EMPOWER-7, the global strategy for the improvement of agricultural and rural statistics. He noted that policy-makers at the national and international level and those developing investment strategies to enhance economic development faced many challenges given the changing face of agriculture in the 21st century.

27. He indicated that the purpose of the global strategy was to provide the vision for national and international statistical systems to produce the basic data and information to guide decision-making needed for the 21st century. He outlined the vision as:

- Countries agree upon and pledge to provide annually, a minimum set of core data that meet emerging demands.

- Agriculture is integrated into national statistical systems in order to meet policy-making and other data use expectations that the data will be comparable across countries and over time.

- The integration would be achieved by and agreed upon a suite of methodology that includes the development of a master sample frame for agriculture, the implementation of an integrated survey framework, and with the results available in an integrated database.

28. He elaborated that the global strategy was based on a thorough assessment of data user needs and of what was currently available. This revealed not only a serious decline in the quantity and quality of agricultural statistics, but also many new and emerging data requirements. Emerging data requirements included issues surrounding agriculture – poverty and hunger, global warming, the use of land and water, and the increasing use of food/feed commodities to produce bio-fuels.

29. These data requirements, he added, led to the definition of a conceptual framework that provided an overview of the dimensions of agriculture. This conceptual framework brought forestry, fisheries, and land and water use into the agricultural and rural framework. The conceptual framework and data requirements called for a linkage between the household and agricultural holding.

30. He noted that the assessment of national agricultural statistical systems pointed to an urgent need to improve statistical capacities of countries to meet the new challenges. The assessment also showed a need to improve coordination between national statistical

organizations and others producing agricultural statistics.

31. The strategy identified three pillars of integration. The integration of agriculture into the national statistical system would begin with the development of a master sample frame for agriculture which would be the foundation for all data collection based on sample surveys or censuses. An integrated survey framework would be established to provide indicators comparable across time and countries. The concept of a master sample frame would be extended to include an integrated database in the form of a data warehouse for all official statistics related to agriculture.

32. Mr Gennari added that the basic principles were that all data collection was based on sample units selected from the master sample frame; data collection was integrated in the survey framework; and the resulting official statistics resided in an integrated database. The strategy suggested that each country established national statistical councils to coordinate the integration; however, the strategy left it to the countries to decide upon the respective roles of these organizations.

33. The steps in implementing the strategic plan would depend upon the statistical capacity of each country. Countries needing to reform their statistical systems would start with the core items and build the rest over time. The next group was countries implementing National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). The NSDS needed to be reviewed in the light of the strategic plan and revised if necessary. The third group included countries with developed statistical systems. However, many of these did not meet the integration requirement and would need to begin by developing a master sample frame for agriculture and an integrated database.

34. He stressed the long-term nature of the global strategy with its implementation in stages that would depend upon each country's initial statistical capacity. Given the dynamic nature of agriculture and related issues, the strategy should be considered as a living document to be updated when necessary to reflect the prevailing situation. Mr Gennari stressed that the global strategy would be followed by an implementation plan following its review by national and international partners.

35. The Experts noted that data might be collected and categorised into four domains - production, resources, economics, and demographic. The Experts also noted that awareness and commitment of governments were crucial for the successful improvement of national statistical systems.

36. On the involvement of donors in the development of the strategy, it was explained that donors such as the World Bank and PARIS21 were participating in this since the beginning of the process. Meanwhile, the World Bank, African Development Bank and Gates Foundation had been very active in Africa supporting statistical development projects.

37. The Experts noted the importance of the global strategy in improving agricultural and rural statistics through integration in the national statistical system and the use of agreed methodologies and dissemination practices. The Experts recommended governments to support the global strategy and its implementation.

Strategies in meeting the statistical requirements for policy and planning in the Philippines

38. Ms Maura S. Lizarondo, Assistant Director, Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS), Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippines, presented STAT-EMPOWER-8, describing the mechanisms used by the agricultural statistical system in addressing the changing and expanding needs of clients and stakeholders in the country.

39. The agricultural statistical system in the Philippines included all entities linked to the generation and dissemination of statistics on agriculture and fisheries and related fields. The major organizations under the system were the BAS and the National Statistics Office (NSO).

40. She informed the Experts that in response to persistent requests from implementers of development programmes, the BAS conducted the *Barangay* (village) Agricultural Profiling Survey (BAPS) in partnership with subnational offices of the government, including regional offices of the DA. The survey covered all barangays, using a structured questionnaire and key informants in the barangays. The BAPS obtained village-level agricultural characteristics of enterprises and households, production and marketing practices and related variables which were highly useful in designing and implementing subnational policies and programmes. At present, agricultural sector policies and programmes were embodied in the development programme FIELDS (Fertilizer, Irrigation, Extension, Loans, Dryers and other infrastructure and Seeds) which needed data as disaggregated as possible. The BAPS was helping meet the FIELDS Directorate's need for a complete database of farmers in the country. She noted, however, that BAPS was heavily dependent on funding support as it was not covered by BAS regular budget. So far, the BAPS had been conducted in only 5 of the 16 regions in the country.

41. Ms Lizarondo added that the BAS also conducted the Production and Marketing Analysis Service (PMAS) as part of its mandate to provide technical assistance to end-users in accessing and analysing product and market information and technology. It aimed to empower small farmers through the use of statistics on production, marketing and related activities in their decision-making. The BAS reached out to farmers through the PMAS and helped transform them into good users of statistics. The scheme trained farmer leaders on data analysis and interpretation of production and marketing statistics. The learning was expected to be transferred to other farmers who were members of organizations represented by farmer leaders.

42. In addition to BAPS and PMAS, the BAS had also established the Provincial Agricultural Profile (PAP) through its Provincial Agricultural Statistics Officers (PASOs), she informed. The profile was prepared not only for clients but also as a learning tool for staff.

43. She described other initiatives for direct empowerment of farmers such as the Processing, Analysis and Utilization of Farm Level Data project and the Commodity Level Statistical Information System (CLSIS) project. The main aim of the projects was to design and build a comprehensive, integrated, well-managed and sustainable statistical system to develop indicators for rural development and monitor rural poverty. The projects' pilot activities had successfully demonstrated the feasibility of supporting the statistical framework. Local government units such as municipalities in project sites maintained the system and baseline data obtained by the project was being used to assess community development. The agriculture-related component of the Rural Sector Statistical Information

System (RSSIS) was being maintained by the BAS.

44. She stressed that there was persistent demand from clients for more disaggregated data, to be provided more frequently.

Agricultural statistics for government policy and programs. Australian case studies

45. In STAT-EMPOWER-9, Mr Denis Farrell, First Assistant Statistician, Population, Labour, Industry and Environment Statistics Group, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), cited three case studies to describe ABS experiences in developing new statistical collection procedures to provide timely information for contemporary agricultural policy issues in Australia. These were "Changed Wheat Export Marketing Arrangements", "Informing Policy on Water Allocation and Climate Change", and "Providing a Baseline for Program Evaluation: Caring for our Country".

46. In the first case, a new wheat data collection system, including use of administrative data on exports, was developed to provide information on the Australian wheat industry to meet information requirements underpinning new wheat export marketing legislation. In the second case, ABS agricultural surveys were adapted to measure the impact of reduced water availability for irrigation and the consequential effects on agricultural production as a result of long-term drought. These statistics, combined with data on responses to perceived climate change and adverse seasonal conditions, were informing the debate about water policy and adaptation to climate change. In the third case, ABS conducted a survey of agricultural businesses to provide benchmark data on sustainable land management practices for the Australian Government's 'Caring for Our Country' programme and to assist in determining future investment priorities.

47. Mr Farrell pointed out that the case studies demonstrated the importance of a flexible agricultural statistics programme in meeting contemporary information needs of policy-makers in Australia. It also drew on lessons learned in areas that included the timeliness and relevance of information to policy-making and monitoring, the importance of confidentiality for market-sensitive information, the need to balance ongoing needs for information against the priorities for information on specific contemporary issues, and the value of administrative data as a source, among others.

48. The Experts noted different statistical challenges across the region on agricultural matters. An important challenge for developing countries was obtaining information to develop policies and programmes addressing food insecurity, poverty and marginalization of small farmers. In developed countries, priority issues included interaction within the market, farm sustainability and adaptation to climate change for all farmers.

49. The Experts recognized the importance of regular and consistent collection of information to assist in comparison of conditions over time, but also recognized the importance of a flexible approach to inform issues of topical priority. For this, a strong working relationship with key stakeholders in government and industry was considered important as a source of support and possible funding. Administrative information was also considered an important potential source of data and as a possible source for the survey frame. Efficient collection and processing practices for surveys were considered to be an effective way to achieve survey objectives where funding for statistical collection was limited.

Features of small farmers in Republic of Korea and collecting statistics to support policies for their benefit

50. In STAT-EMPOWER-10, Mr Sang-gi Lee, Assistant Deputy Director, Statistics Korea informed that the definition of small farmers in the Republic of Korea included those either cultivating less than 0.5 ha or selling agricultural products worth less than Won 5 million annually. He described structural features of small Korean farmers in several dimensions, including size of cultivated land (total, paddy and upland), farming as full-time or part-time occupation and age of the farm household manager. Information on sales by category of farmer and market was also presented.

51. He emphasized that state welfare policies needed to pay adequate attention to small farmers in order to protect national agriculture. For part-time farmers, policies should take into account other business activities to assess non-farm income.

52. Some Experts questioned the use of farm income as a criterion for classification of farmers since prices tended to vary from year to year. The Experts suggested that benchmark prices be used instead of current market prices.

Use of farmers' registration for agricultural policy implementation in Thailand

53. In STAT-EMPOWER-11, Mr Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, FAO Consultant, described how the Thai government conducted farmers' registration and used it as a tool to implement its agricultural policy.

54. Two types of forms were used in the registration process: one for general registration and another for growers of specific crops covered by government programmes such as rice, corn and cassava. The objectives of the registration were to build a farmer database for agricultural development planning, facilitate implementation of commodity price intervention schemes and provide compensation after natural disasters as well as other welfare schemes for farmers. For example, to benefit from the minimum price guarantee scheme for selected crops, farmers must have registered with provincial/district agricultural officials. Under the scheme, farmers were paid the difference between the minimum guaranteed price and market price if the latter fell below the guaranteed price. The scheme, managed by the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), had specific commodity registration targets of 3.7 million, 475 000 and 505 000 farm households for rice, corn and cassava, respectively. The general registration target was 5.7 million farm households.

55. It was clarified that information from the registration was not used for statistical data purposes as the registration was done on a voluntary basis. However, in future, if farmers found the registration programme beneficial and came forward to register, the information could be used as statistical data or as a survey sample frame.

ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION ON MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS: LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR SMALL FARMERS
(Item 6 of the Agenda)

56. Four countries papers from India, the Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand, and two papers from FAO HQ were presented as a basis for the discussion.

Market information for the benefit of small farmers

57. In STAT-EMPOWER-12, Mr Hiek Som, FAO HQ, described agribusiness statistical information in general, including information components such as functions, services, target beneficiaries and data bases.

58. He gave a detailed account of services provided under the agribusiness information system including news, monitoring, analysis and advisory services, and stressed the importance of ensuring that small farmers hade access to these outputs.

Agricultural information support to farmers in Thailand

59. In STAT-EMPOWER-13, Ms Supaporn Bongsunun, Director of Cost of Production and Price Information Division, Center for Agricultural Information, Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), Thailand, described the collection and dissemination of agricultural and price statistics in Thailand. The latter had two levels, including farmgate prices which were collected weekly and mill/factory/local market prices which were collected daily.

60. The OAE provided price information to farmers through many channels, such as its Web site www.oae.go.th, the OAE Data Operation Center (DOC) via telephone, facsimile, e-mail, Short Message Service (SMS) as well as newspapers, radio and television. Selected price information was reported to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) every Monday morning. The OAE planned to install computer kiosks in rural public places to improve communication between farmers and agriculture officials.

61. Ms Supaporn clarified that the OAE collected farmgate prices for raw products while the Department of Internal Trade of the Ministry of Commerce collected wholesale and retail prices for processed or finished products. The OAE used an innovative early warning system on farm prices for the MOAC. The "farm price speedometer" resembled the automobile speed indicator and had colour-coded zones for "critical price" (farmgate price < cost), "watching price" (cost < farmgate price < cost + profit 20%) and "satisfied price" (farmgate price > cost + profit 20%).

India's Agricultural Market Information System Network (AGMARKNET)

62. In STAT-EMPOWER-14, Mr Rajiv Mehta, Additional Director General, Survey Design and Research Division, NSSO, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, described the agricultural market information system in his country. He noted that the agrarian economy had numerous players, agents and stakeholders, all seeking information to make rational decisions. The most sought after information was on the prices and quantity of production of agricultural commodities.

63. India marked a milestone in the process of agricultural marketing development with the institutionalization of the regulatory framework through the Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC). This institutional arrangement facilitated the Internet-based agricultural market information system (AMIS) network.

64. In March 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture established the Agricultural Marketing Information Network (AGMARKNET) to disseminate accurate and timely market information to support market decision-making by farmers, entrepreneurs, government organizations, academicians and researchers, and make the marketing system more efficient

and transparent. The AGMARKNET was an Internet-based, nationwide information system providing a "single window" service, catering to diversified information demands, covering more than 3 000 markets, 200 commodities and 2 000 specifications.

65. AGMARKNET provided almost real-time AMIS to stakeholders including farmers. However, the information needs of small farmers depended on the extent of their integration in the market. In this context, Mr Mehta cited the *E-choupal* initiative of Indian Tobacco Company (ITC) that had promoted such integration. The E-choupal linked rural communities with market information and provided a support system through its rural connectivity point. Some 6 500 E-choupals covered 40 000 villages, mostly in the country's semi-arid region and benefited 4 million farmers.

66. He pointed out that initiatives such as E-choupal empowered farmers with information and helped improve their decision-making. Because farmers had access to price information before they incurred any transaction cost, they could choose the right place and time to sell, saving on overhead costs such as multiple transportation and handling.

67. The Experts noted that India offered a very good example of a comprehensive market information system. However, its use for statistical purposes must take into account that there was no system to check the consistency and accuracy of the information collected and entered at various remote locations.

Philippines' data system for prices of agricultural commodities

68. In STAT-EMPOWER-15, Ms Maura S. Lizarondo, Assistant Director, BAS, DA, Philippines, described the collection and dissemination of agricultural marketing statistics in her country.

69. The Philippines' Agricultural Marketing Information System (AGMARIS) was launched in 1992 to improve the Agricultural Marketing News Service (AMNEWSS) of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the predecessor of the BAS. The AGMARIS assessed and responded to market information needs of stakeholders at national and subnational levels, especially farmers and fish farmers. It collected, processed, analysed and disseminated information to increase market transparency and make available timely and accurate data to guide farmers, entrepreneurs and policy-makers in their decision-making. The installation of AGMARIS was preceded by a Marketing Information Needs Assessment (MINA) and development of decentralized processing systems. She described the concepts, definitions and procedures used in collecting data on wholesale and retail prices.

70. Data on farm prices were used in the valuation of agricultural production and also to update baseline data on production costs and returns. Data on retail prices were used in the calculation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) by the NSO as well as for evaluating and determining regional wage adjustments by the National Wage Productivity Council (NWPC). The BAS regularly provided price situation reports to the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) as inputs for price policy actions such as price ceilings and suggested retail prices. Reports on prices were disseminated through the BAS Web site and the print mass media. Prices, particularly retail, were disseminated in real time through the broadcast media.

Republic of Korea's agricultural market information system

71. In STAT-EMPOWER-16, Ms Eung-Chung Chung, Assistant Director, Korea

Statistics, described the system of price data collection and dissemination in the Republic of Korea which included wholesale and retail price surveys.

72. The wholesale price survey was conducted on weekdays. Five cities were selected and one market with a big trading volume was identified in each city for the survey. In each market, three wholesale stores were selected to obtain the average price for the city. The retail price survey was conducted every week day in eight cities. One retail market with three large distribution outlets was selected in each city to collect consumer prices.

73. The collected data was submitted every day at 11.30 a.m. by the branch office to the central office for processing and distributed to public at 4.30 p.m. Several agencies and systems were involved in the system such as Korea Agro-Fisheries Trade Cooperation (AT), Agriculture Forestry Fisheries Information Service (AFFIS), Korea Agricultural Trade Information (KATI) and Korea Agricultural Market Information System (KAMIS).

A simple price monitoring tool to assess monthly changes in food prices

74. In STAT-EMPOWER-17, Mr David Dawe, Senior Economist, FAO HQ, noted that price volatility was likely to be an increasing problem in Asia given new global linkages between energy and grain markets. This could be a challenge for governments. He demonstrated a simple price monitoring tool that could help policy-makers assess when prices were increasing too rapidly compared to historical experience.

He pointed out that the tool did not rely on econometric techniques, making it more adaptable to institutions with either high staff turnover or those with competing demands on staff time. The tool was flexible enough to be used for different commodities and at different levels of the marketing chain (farm, wholesale, retail). It took into account the seasonality of prices as well as the variability in that seasonality, which varied from commodity to commodity. The only inputs required for the tool were commodity price data and a measure of the overall inflation (CPI).

75. The Experts agreed that the simple monitoring system was a useful tool that could be easily adopted by countries to help identify unusual price movements.

DISCUSSION

76. At the conclusion of the presentations of the six papers, the Experts agreed on the following four key issues for a round-table discussion.

Issue 1: *Can market prices be used effectively for the development of national statistics and indices for use in decision making?*

The Experts observed that prices available from farm and market sources were useful both as raw data and aggregated statistics. However, to use the data for the compilation of national statistics and indicators in a consistent manner, appropriate quality guidelines and standards needed to be ensured so that the prices for products with similar characteristics were compared and any variations were due to true price fluctuations, rather than differences in the nature and quality of the product.

Issue 2: *Can market prices and information be used effectively in early warning of changing and abnormal market conditions?*

The Experts agreed that there was a high potential for tracking raw farm and market prices to assist detection of changes in price trends for products of small farmers. The Experts agreed that this would best be applied by closely and frequently tracking price changes for a set of key products of small farmers. Where possible, the cost of production should be included in these considerations and any system put in place needed to take into account the possible impacts of existing misinformation which could detract from identification of underlying trends. The Experts agreed on the usefulness and simplicity of the price monitoring system demonstrated by Mr Dawe. The tool was seen useful in efforts to develop early warning systems about abnormal price movements in the market, and also to understand the dynamics of the market in normal conditions.

The Experts recommended the use of market information systems such as the "simple price monitoring tool" developed by FAO HQ and Thailand's "farm price speedometer" to alert on changing and abnormal market conditions.

Issue 3: *Given that prices data are used in the market for trading purposes, should market operators contribute to the cost of the information system, or should it be a public good?*

The Experts agreed that transparency of market information for all was the most ideal situation as this assisted in efficient and fair operation of markets. It was therefore recommended that information gathered by governments should be available as a public good. An exception identified was where this involved a significant amount of analysis or the information was of use to only a few people in the market. In such cases, it might be appropriate to charge the cost of collection or analysis of the information.

Issue 4: *How can market information be beneficial to small farmers?*

The Experts felt that while small farmers would benefit from the use of price information, they might have difficulty accessing the information. Many ideas were proposed. The Experts recommended providing market information regularly to farmers through means accessible by them (radio, notice boards) and advocating its use through awareness programmes.

In summary, the Experts agreed that it was important that market information was made available to small farmers and their communities to assist them to operate and integrate effectively into the market.

INFORMATION AT COMMUNITY LEVEL FOR THE BENEFIT OF SMALLHOLDERS

(Item 7 of the Agenda)

Information at community level for the benefit of smallholders

77. In STAT-EMPOWER-18, Mr Hiek Som, FAO HQ described the use of information at the community level noting that development partners made extensive use of community-level data in identifying, formulating, monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects. Small farmers often had limited access to information or data to help them decide on agricultural production, inputs or sales. Dissemination of information at community level

could be highly beneficial to small farmers, he said. The statistical unit for compiling community-level data was the lowest administrative unit such as a commune or village.

78. He informed the Experts that the World Programme for Census of Agriculture 2010 had recommended that countries collected data at community level as part of the agricultural census. It recommended 32 community-level data items grouped into four categories, including geography (location, land use, traveling time to urban centre, etc.), socio-economic conditions (demographic profile, socio-economic status, seasonal food shortage, etc.), community infrastructure and services (fertilizer dealer, seed dealer, credit institution, irrigation facilities, etc.), and development programmes. He cited the experiences of Cambodia, Indonesia and Senegal in conducting the community survey either as an integral part of the agricultural census or as an independent operation.

79. He noted that small farmers often did not have access to data distributed by traditional methods such as bulletins or yearbooks which did not reach them. Limited access to computers in developing countries meant that small farmers could not obtain data disseminated through the Internet. Radio and/or television provided the fastest means of delivering information to all people. Posting information in public places at community level was another way of ensuring small farmers' access to information.

80. The Experts noted good examples of community-level data from the Philippines (the barangay agricultural profiling survey) and from Thailand (community development survey) which provided interesting indicators appreciated by development planners and data users. Recognizing the importance of information at community level for small farmers, the Experts recommended the development of systems to provide information at the community level.

81. The Experts recommended providing regular information to farmers about prevailing domestic and international prices through radio broadcasts, notices in villages, cooperatives, farmers' associations, extension officers and representatives of related institutions. In addition, assistance should be provided through programmes implemented by national or provincial governments, industry organizations or others. The Experts recommended, not just making information readily and freely available, but advocating its use and supporting it with education programmes. Presentation in graphical and pictorial form, rather than in statistical tables, would also help small farmers in understanding the relevance and importance of the information.

Schools and statistics: involving parents, teachers and students in collecting and verifying official agricultural statistics in Bhutan

82. Mr Kuenga Tshering, Director, National Statistics Bureau, Bhutan and Mr Dorjee Kinlay, Economist, FAO HQ, presented STAT-EMPOWER-19 describing the proposal of using primary schools in Bhutan as the main hub for the collection, verification, use and uploading of community statistics in Bhutan which has 205 *geogs* (blocks). This would empower children, parents and teachers by involving them in verifying official estimates and provide updated statistics for the use of schools. Schools could be custodians of statistics and innovate ways to update and validate the statistics. Qualitative statistics for food security could also be collected through schools. For example, vulnerable households could be identified using simple income groupings which would assist in targeting assistance with schools and parents having a key role in deciding who was poor, who was rich or in the middle-income level.

83. The Experts pointed out challenging issues which needed to be considered. These included the capacity of schoolchildren to understand data connotations, their readiness to undertake the exercise without seeing it as additional class work, the willingness of overburdened schoolteachers to accept the new responsibility, and chances of local people influencing data to their advantage.

84. The Experts appreciated the concept as one designed to promote statistical literacy among schoolchildren and suggested ways to implement it. It was also suggested that data items should not be complex and be suitable for understanding by schoolchildren.

85. The Experts were informed of similar examples such as cooperation between the national statistical office and the education department in South Africa in the conduct of the population census, and the availability of the Census at Schools project which operated in many countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON STATISTICS STRATEGIES IN SUPPORT OF POLICIES FOR SMALL FARMERS
(Item 8 of the Agenda)

86. After thorough discussion on the experiences among different countries, the Experts discussed possible recommendations in each of the agenda items. They put forward some recommendations on concepts and definitions used in classifications of small farmers, the strategies on data collection and analysis including a marketing information system suitable for policy formulation and implementation to empower small farmers.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT
(Item 9 of the Agenda)

87. The Experts reviewed in detailed the content of the draft report as contained in STAT-EMPOWER-20 and, with minor revisions, approved the report in principle.

CLOSING OF THE EXPERT CONSULTATION
(Item 10 of the Agenda)

88. The Chairperson congratulated participants on their excellent contributions to the discussions and the development of the recommendations and suggestions concerning statistics in support of policies to empower small farmers. She wished all participants a safe return home and that they implement activities to improve statistics as well as share experiences with other countries in the region leading to improved well-being of farmers in the region. All participants expressed their thanks to the organizers and highlighted the usefulness of the consultation and the recommendations.

89. Mr Castano praised the active participation of the Experts and the level of contribution during the discussions. He agreed that the Expert Consultation had been successful with many ideas and issues reviewed and relevant and important recommendations being made. He wished the Experts a safe trip back home. The Expert Consultation was officially closed.

Appendix A

Agenda and Timetable

Tuesday, 8 September 2009

08:30 – 08:50 hrs. **Registration**

08:50 – 09:15 hrs. **Opening Session**

- Opening Address by Mr Hiroyuki Konuma, FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific
- Introduction of the participants
- Photograph

Break

10:00 – 10:15 hrs.

- Election of Officers
- Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
- Background for the expert consultation and its objectives (J. Castano, FAO)

Characterization of small farmers to target policy implementation

10:15 – 11:30 hrs.

- "Small farmers in agricultural censuses in Asia and the Pacific" (Mr Hiek Som, Deputy Director, FAO Statistics Division).

11:30 – 12:30 hrs.

- "Farmers' directory for direct input-subsidy policy in Indonesia" (Mr Bambang-Heru Santosa, BPS Statistics, Indonesia).

12:30 – 14:00 hrs. **Lunch**

14:00 – 15:00 hrs.

- "Situation assessment survey for farm sector policy formulation" (Mr Rajiv Mehta, Additional DG, NSS, India).

Break

Strategies to meet new statistical demands in an evolving world

15:15 – 16:30 hrs.

- "Global strategy to improve agricultural statistics" (Mr Pietro Gennari, Director, FAO Statistics Division).

16:30 – 18:00 hrs. [Drafting Committee Meeting]

18:30 – 20:30 hrs. **Dinner**

Wednesday, 9 September 2009

08.30 – 09:30 hrs.

- "Strategies in meeting the statistical requirements for policy and planning in the Philippines" (Ms Maura Lizarondo, BAS, the Philippines).

09:30 – 10:15 hrs

- "Agricultural statistics for government policy and programs. Australian case studies" (Mr Dennis Farrel, ABS, Australia).

Break

10:30 – 11:30 hrs.

- "Features of small farmers and collecting statistics to support policies for their benefit" (Mr Sang-gi Lee, Assistant Deputy Director, KOSTAT, Korea).

11:30 – 12:30 hrs.

- "Use of farmers' registration for agricultural policy implementation in Thailand" (Mr Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, FAO RAP).

12:30 – 14:00 hrs. **Lunch**

Round-table discussion on Market Information Systems: leveling the playing field for small farmers

14:00 – 14:45 hrs.
- "Market information for the benefit of small farmers" (Mr Hiek Som, Deputy Director, FAO Statistics Division).

Break

15:00 – 15:45 hrs.
- "Agricultural information support to farmers in Thailand" (Ms Supaporn Bongsunun, Director OAE's Division of Cost of Production and Price Information, Thailand).

15:45 – 16:30 hrs.
- "India's Agricultural Market Information System Network (AGMARKNET)" (Mr Rajiv Mehta, Additional DG, NSS, India).

16:30 – 18:30 hrs. [Drafting Committee Meeting]

Thursday, 10 September 2009

08:30 – 09:15 hrs.
- "Philippines' data system for prices of agricultural commodities" (Ms Maura Lizarondo, BAS, the Philippines).

09:15 – 10:00 hrs.
- "Korea's agricultural market information system" (Ms Eun-chung Chung, Assistant Deputy Director, KOSTAT, Korea).

Break

10:15 – 11:00 hrs.
- "A simple price monitoring tool to assess monthly changes in food prices" (Mr David Dawe, Senior Economist, FAO).

11:00 – 12:30 hrs. **Discussion on Market Information System**

12:30 – 14:00 hrs. **Lunch**

Information at community level for the benefit of smallholders

14:00 – 15:00 hrs.
- "Information at community level for the benefit of smallholders" (Mr Hiek Som, Deputy Director, FAO Statistics Division).

. **Break**

15:15 – 16:30 hrs.
- "Schools and statistics: involving parents, teachers and students in collecting and verifying official agricultural statistics in Bhutan" (Mr Dorjee Kinlay, Economist, ESA, FAO HQ and Mr Kuenga Tshering, Director, NBS, Royal Government of Bhutan).

16:30 – 19:00 hrs. [Chairperson meeting to prepare and discuss first draft report]

Friday, 11 September 2009

08:30 – 11:00 hrs. **Recommendations on statistics strategies in support of policies for small farmers**

11:00 – 14:00 hrs. [Chairperson meeting to finalize draft report]

12:00 – 14:00 hrs. **Lunch**

14:00 – 14:45 hrs. Circulation of the Draft Report

Break

15:00 – 15:45 hrs. **Adoption of the Report**

15:45 – 16:15 hrs. **Closing of the Expert Consultation**

Appendix B

List of Documents

Doc. No.	Agenda Item	Title of Documents
STAT-EMPOWER -1	2	Agenda
STAT-EMPOWER -2	2	Timetable
STAT-EMPOWER -3	3	Background for the Expert Consultation and objectives
STAT-EMPOWER -4	4	Small farmers in agricultural censuses in Asia and the Pacific
STAT-EMPOWER -5	4	Farmers' directory for direct input-subsidy policy in Indonesia
STAT-EMPOWER -6	4	Situation assessment survey for farm sector policy formulation
STAT-EMPOWER -7	5	Global strategy to improve agricultural statistics
STAT-EMPOWER -8	5	Strategies in meeting the statistical requirements for policy and planning in the Philippines
STAT-EMPOWER -9	5	Agricultural statistics for government policy and programs. Australian case studies
STAT-EMPOWER -10	5	Features of small farmers and collecting statistics to support policies for their benefit
STAT-EMPOWER -11	5	Use of farmers' registration for agricultural policy implementation in Thailand
STAT-EMPOWER -12	6	Market information for the benefit of small farmers
STAT-EMPOWER -13	6	Agricultural information support to farmers in Thailand
STAT-EMPOWER -14	6	India's Agricultural Market Information System Network (AGMARKNET)
STAT-EMPOWER -15	6	Philippines' data system for prices of agricultural commodities
STAT-EMPOWER -16	6	Korea's agricultural market information system
STAT-EMPOWER -17	6	A simple price monitoring tool to assess monthly changes in food prices
STAT-EMPOWER -18	7	Information at community level for the benefit of smallholders
STAT-EMPOWER -19	7	Schools and statistics: involving parents, teachers and students in collecting and verifying official agricultural statistics in Bhutan
STAT-EMPOWER -20	9	Adoption of the Report

Appendix C

OPENING ADDRESS

Hiroyuki Konuma
FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific

Distinguished participants,
Colleagues from FAO,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Dr. He Changchui, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific and on my own behalf, I welcome you all to this Expert Consultation on *Statistics in Support of Policies to Empower Small Farmers*.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to greet and meet colleagues from ministries, universities and statistics agencies in the region. I would also like to thank FAO colleagues from headquarters for joining this consultation at the FAO Regional office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok.

It is, indeed, a privilege for FAO to bring together your highly valued professional expertise and experience from across the region in helping define the Organization's policies and programmes in support of its overall mandate of ensuring food security for all.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Expert Consultation on *Statistics in Support of Policies to Empower Small Farmers* is being held at a particularly difficult time for countries in the Asia-Pacific region. As you are well aware, the global economic slowdown has had an adverse impact on small and marginal farmers in the region who comprise the bulk of food-insecure people in Asia and the Pacific, which is home to over two-thirds of the world's over 1 billion hungry people.

Together with soaring food prices over 2007 and 2008, which still remain significantly above their 2007 levels, the financial meltdown has been a big setback to regional progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the commitment at the 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) of reducing hunger by half by 2015. Latest estimates by FAO show that that the number of undernourished people in the world has increased by about 100 million to 1.02 billion in 2009. Of these, 642 million are in Asia and the Pacific, 10.5 percent more than in 2008.

At its last Session in Kuching, Malaysia in June 2008, the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) emphasized the need to review conventional approaches to both data collection methods and types of information collected in the context of market crisis such as rising food prices. This was necessary to keep information systems attuned to data needs for early warning signals of price and market fluctuations, in order for decision-makers to set up mitigating measures.

Following up on the Commission's recommendations on the role of statisticians in supporting policy makers in formulating timely corrective responses to food market crises, the FAO Regional Office has organized this expert consultation.

There is a need for flexible agricultural statistics program in meeting the contemporary information needs of policy makers. This implies timeliness and relevance of information to policy making and monitoring and the need to balance ongoing needs for information against the priorities for information on specific contemporary issues. Accurate and reliable statistical information is vital in designing appropriate and effective policies and strategies for improving the incomes and supplementary livelihood options for small farmers.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Over these four days, as experts in the field of agricultural statistics, you have the opportunity to offer guidance to FAO and its member countries in improving agricultural data systems aimed at empowering small farmers in the Asia-Pacific region in a context of high food prices, trade liberalization and economic uncertainty.

The discussions will be guided by presentations from FAO, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand that will provide international and national perspectives and experiences on improving agricultural statistics in support of small farmers.

In the context of the current international economic crisis, the expert consultation will examine some agricultural data collection methodologies and types of information better suited to present national agricultural policy priorities.

Accurate market statistical information is crucial in helping prepare small farmers for the opening up of farm trade. Experiences and views on developing market information systems to ensure a fair playing field to small farmers will be shared from India, the Philippines, Republic of Korea and Thailand as well as FAO.

Participatory development of community-level statistics for the benefit of smallholders is a valuable information tool and there will be an FAO presentation on community statistics as well as one from Bhutan on involving school students, teachers and parents in corroborating official statistics.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The efficient use of resources committed to agricultural and rural development in the region requires continual monitoring and evaluation and FAO is taking the initiative to develop guidelines and caveats for countries and agencies engaged in collecting, analyzing and disseminating agricultural and related data. As a knowledge organization, FAO gives priority to continuous learning and adaptation to emerging needs and a primary aim of this expert consultation is to learn from you in order to strengthen the Organization’s technical assistance and capacity building activities.

I am sure that this consultation will be successful in formulating ways and means to strengthen national statistical capacities in the region in support of policies to empower small farmers.

In conclusion, I would like to remind you that you are present here in your personal professional capacities and the views expressed at this consultation will be of a purely independent professional nature and not necessarily reflect country positions. FAO looks

forward to a free and frank exchange of ideas to make this Expert Consultation a success, the outcome of which will be presented to the 23rd Session of APCAS to be held in Siem Reap, Cambodia in early 2010.

I wish you all a very fruitful meeting and a very pleasant stay in Thailand, the land of smiles.

Thank you.

Appendix D

Expert Consultation on
Statistic in Support of Policies to Empower Small Farmers

Bangkok, Thailand, 8 -11 September 2009

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