

REPORT

Yerevan, Armenia

11 and 12 May 2010

European Commission

on Agriculture

Thirty-sixth Session

Reports of the European Commission on Agriculture (known as the European Committee on Agricultural Technology from 1949 to 1952 and as the European Committee on Agriculture until 1956) are as follows:

1. Preparatory Meeting Paris, 27–28 June 1949
2. First Session Rome, 26-30 September 1949
3. Second Session Geneva, 27-30 March 1950
4. Third Session Rome, 25-28 June 1951
5. Fourth Session Rome, 3-6 June 1952
6. Fifth Session Rome, 26-29 May 1953
7. Sixth Session Rome, 14-18 June 1954
8. Seventh Session Rome, 20-24 June 1955
9. Eighth Session Rome, 7-11 May 1956
10. Ninth Session Rome, 17-21 June 1957
11. Tenth Session Rome, 19-23 May 1958
12. Eleventh Session Rome, 25-29 May 1959
13. Twelfth Session Rome, 15-19 May 1961
14. Thirteenth Session Rome, 13-18 May 1963
15. Fourteenth Session Rome, 17-21 May 1965
16. Fifteenth Session Rome, 15-20 May 1967
17. Sixteenth Session Rome, 23-26 October 1968
18. Seventeenth Session Rome, 7-11 September 1970
19. Eighteenth Session Rome, 8-12 May 1972
20. Nineteenth Session Rome, 17-21 June 1974
21. Twentieth Session Rome, 17-23 June 1976
22. Twenty-first Session Rome, 19-23 June 1978
23. Twenty-second Session Rome, 23-27 June 1980
24. Twenty-third Session Rome, 21-25 June 1982
25. Twenty-fourth Session Innsbruck, Austria, 18-22 June 1984
26. Twenty-fifth Session Chania, Greece, 8-12 June 1987
27. Twenty-sixth Session Porto, Portugal, 23-26 May 1989
28. Twenty-seventh Session Herrsching, Germany, 1-5 July 1991
29. Twenty-eighth Session Valletta, Malta, 27 September – 1 October 1993
30. Twenty-ninth Session Bled, Slovenia, 2-6 October 1995
31. Thirtieth Session Nitra, Slovakia, 8-11 October 1997
32. Thirty-first Session Rome, 12-14 October 1999
33. Thirty-second Session Rome, 7-8 March 2002
34. Thirty-third Session Rome, 1-2 March 2004
35. Thirty-fourth Session Riga, Latvia, 7 June 2006
36. Thirty-fifth Session Innsbruck, Austria, 25 June 2008
37. Thirty-sixth Session Yerevan, Armenia, 11-12 May 2010

Report of the

**Thirty-sixth Session of the
European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)**

Yerevan, Armenia, 11 and 12 May 2010

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Thirty-sixth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) was held in Yerevan, Armenia, on 11 and 12 May 2010 under the Chairpersonship of Mr Zohrab V. Malek (Armenia).
2. The List of Participants is given in Appendix I to this Report

OPENING OF THE SESSION

3. The Chairperson opened the Session, thanked his Government for its hospitality and recalled that the present Session was taking place under the revised mandate of the ECA, as approved by the 119th Session of the FAO Council. Therefore the ECA Session was serving as a technical preparatory meeting to the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC). He recalled that the technical items on the Agenda, particularly Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, had been identified by the European Regional Group in Rome and during the European Union (EU) coordination meetings in Brussels. He underlined that the Commission would submit the summary conclusions from the debate as well as the resulting recommendations from the Session to the 27th FAO Regional Conference for Europe on 13 and 14 May 2010 in Yerevan.

4. On behalf of FAO, Ms Fernanda Guerrieri, Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia, welcomed the participants and expressed her gratitude to the Government of Armenia for its hospitality and for the excellent facilities provided for the Session. She emphasized the importance of the technical items on the Agenda. She underlined that it was the first time that the ECA and the ERC were deliberating on the priorities of FAO's work programme with a mandate to provide guidance to the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) as well as to the two subregional offices for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU) and for Central Asia (SEC). She recalled that in the spirit of the new consultative process, the regional Programme of Work and Budget for 2010-11 and the priority areas of action for the biennium 2012-13 had been presented and discussed at the Informal Consultation Meeting, which had been held on 23 and 24 March 2010 in Budapest. At that meeting and also in the ensuing period, representatives of the member countries had made important recommendations regarding FAO's Programme of Work and Budget and the regional and subregional priorities. She regretted that due to time constraints it had not been possible to add the summary report and the recommendations from the Informal Consultation Meeting to the background documentation of the 36th Session of the ECA.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Commission adopted its Agenda, as given in Appendix II to this Report. In this context, the Chairperson indicated that considering the short duration of the Commission's session, time constraints might not allow the Commission to adopt its complete report. The Commission therefore endorsed the Chairperson's proposal that at the conclusion of Item 10 of its Agenda, the Commission would suspend its Session for approximately two hours in order to allow the Rapporteur to draft a summary of the conclusions of the deliberations on which he/she would seek the Commission's endorsement. In view of time limitations, this summary of conclusions would be prepared in English only. The summary would form the basis of an oral report of the Rapporteur to

be made to the 27th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe on the subsequent day (13 May 2010).

APPOINTMENT OF THE RAPPORTEUR

6. Ms Cecilia Nordin Van Gansberghe, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Sweden to the United Nations Organizations in Rome was appointed Rapporteur of the Session.

MAPPING AND POLICY RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AREAS¹

7. The Commission expressed its appreciation and support for the work of the Secretariat on inventory of climate change impacts on agriculture and rural areas and capacity-building for Ministries of Agriculture related to adaptation and mitigation of climate change.

8. A number of countries presented assessments of negative impacts of climate change on crop production, deterioration and loss of soils and water resources, soil salinization and loss of forest cover and secondly, experience in programmes to counteract these, including attracting private investment in the development of sustainable irrigation systems and increasing productivity through new drought resistant varieties. The Commission supported, for the attention of FAO, the recommendations included in paragraphs 25 to 32 of the document ECA 36/10/2. In addition it added:

- the full involvement of Ministries of Agriculture in work on adaptation and mitigation and on National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and work on Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Strategies;
- to incorporate climate change related policies into rural development and agriculture policies as well as national programmes for sustainable management of land and water resources, farm level environment protection programmes and multifunctional use of land and improved management of rangelands;
- dissemination of policies on good agriculture practices for adaptation to climate change impacts and their mitigation, based on solid scientific foundations, for sustainable management of land and water and protection of biodiversity.

CHALLENGES OF WATER SCARCITY IN THE EUROPEAN AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADAPTATION²

9. The Commission welcomed this Agenda Item as water scarcity was a problem that currently many countries in the region faced and it was expected to become more severe

¹ ECA36/10/2

² ECA 36/10/3

in relation to climate change. Many countries were already facing serious water management problems that required immediate action.

10. The Commission acknowledged the strategic approach developed by FAO and supported the technical assistance which had been provided by FAO for the member countries in the region.

11. A number of countries presented assessments of water scarcity and government responses at national and transboundary levels. It was emphasized that the situation was most critical in the Caucasus and the Central Asian region.

12. The Commission proposed the following recommendations for the attention of governments:

- develop governance structures taking into account the experiences of some Mediterranean countries as well as initiatives for the rivers Maas, Schelde and Rhine;
- develop regulatory frameworks through multilateral agreements for water management based on river basins and as an integrated approach to preserve ecosystems;
- promote dry land agricultural practices to improve water productivity and address the problems related to large-scale salinization of irrigated areas;
- policy options and related strategies dealing with water scarcity should be based on the set of solid principles as suggested by the Secretariat:
 - base strategies on a clear understanding of the causes of water scarcity;
 - ensure cost-effectiveness with a full assessment of externalities;
 - improve water governance and institutional capacity;
 - adapt response to local conditions;
 - ensure policy alignment between water, agriculture and food security;
 - anticipate change through robust decision-making and adaptive management.

13. The Commission supported for the attention of FAO the recommendations included in paragraphs 47 to 56 of the document ECA 36/10/3.

14. The Commission welcomed the establishment of the FAO Water Platform as endorsed by the FAO Programme Committee. It looked forward to the development of an FAO Water Strategy taking into consideration the recommendations of the evaluation of FAO's role in work related to water. Special attention should be given to the needs of the different regions to improve the related activities of the Organization through both better internal coordination and improved cooperation with partners, including International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CIS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION³

15. The Commission congratulated the Secretariat for the excellent paper prepared on this Agenda Item and the clear and concise format of the recommendations in Annex 1 of the document ECA 36/10/4.

16. The Commission emphasized the importance of the document's recommendation that sustainable progress in livestock sector development depended largely on integrated approaches, which take into consideration many relevant activities of the whole value chain. In a number of countries the livestock sector continues to be the main income source of a considerable proportion of rural population. The aspects and correlations of animal and human health were also highlighted as was the importance of cooperation in the prevention of an outbreak of zoonosis.

17. One observer stated that their livestock sector continued to be based on large-scale interventions and an unchanged government support system, thus addressing better production management, animal health and food safety issues.

18. The Commission's main recommendations for the attention of governments were that:

- policy measures and instruments in the various country groups of the region follow an approach which integrates improvement of feed and fodder levels, advice and other activities to improve breeding and the husbandry and animal health situation as well as access to inputs including land, credit, market information, support services and markets and all other important conditions to achieve sustainable development of livestock farms;
- use be made of the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities related to the geopolitical differences and socio-economic specificities among countries to set suitable policy options and instruments that best contribute to the sustainable development of the livestock sector.

19. The technical recommendations for the attention of FAO in paragraphs 58 to 60 of ECA 36/10/4 were adopted.

INCOME DIVERSIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN RURAL AREAS – ROLE OF FAO⁴

20. The Commission congratulated the Secretariat for the preparation of a comprehensive background document and welcomed this Agenda Item as it demonstrated the importance of agriculture and related diverse economic activities for the economic development of rural areas and captured the main obstacles and also the opportunities.

³ ECA 36/10/4

⁴ ECA 36/10/5

21. The Commission recognized the role that FAO played in assisting countries implementing effective agricultural policies that allowed farmers to seize the opportunities of national, regional and global markets, while specifically helping small-scale farms not to lag behind. In this regard, cooperatives and farmer associations should be promoted.

22. Some members of the Commission expressed their view that the renewed Common Agricultural Policy and the European Union Rural Development Policy were good examples of policies oriented towards a sustainable and competitive agriculture, while setting a whole range of measures to improve rural livelihoods and income diversification.

23. A number of countries presented their ongoing programmes in this field including territorial development, landscape preservation, rural infrastructure development, and income diversification through handicrafts, agritourism, promotion of local markets and transboundary trade. It was also pointed out that a number of conditions should be met to create an enabling environment for diversification starting from land use rights to access of resources and services and also that income diversification strategies should be tailored to each specific country.

24. The Commission stressed that exchange of experiences and related networking among member countries were of utmost importance. It was emphasized that learning best practices from other countries and sharing their experiences would be welcomed.

25. The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group of South Eastern Europe (SWG) expressed its gratitude to FAO and other partners of cooperation for the support of their activities, invited other countries from the subregion to join and offered to share their experiences with the Central Asian countries. It emphasized that the case of the SWG could be seen as a worthwhile initiative to be followed also in other subregions.

26. The Commission recognized the excellent assistance FAO and especially the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and its associated subregional offices provided to member countries in the region supporting a number of income diversification programmes and projects and expected that in the decentralization process this assistance would be further enhanced in the future.

27. The Commission welcomed the involvement of FAO in activities supporting income diversification in the region, such as the Agricultural Policy Forum for Southeastern Europe and the collaboration in a wide range of donor-funded projects on agriculture and rural development for countries in Europe and Central Asia. Collaboration with other partners in this area was encouraged. Efforts should be made to continue with FAO's involvement in ongoing activities of partners in the region.

28. The Commission supported, for the attention of FAO, the recommendations included in paragraphs 47 to 60 of the document ECA 36/10/5. In addition it added that FAO could further strengthen its assistance to help countries diversify the income of rural areas by:

- promoting quality linked to geographical origin and geographical indications;
- human capital and skills development through vocational training and outreach activities, mainly aimed at small industries and producers;

- improving advisory services to farmers and rural enterprises and sharing experiences on land consolidation.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND
BUDGET (PWB) 2010-11 AND AREAS OF PRIORITY ACTIONS
FOR THE EUROPEAN REGION FOR THE FOLLOWING
BIENNIUM 2012-13⁵**

29. The Commission welcomed the opportunity to review the document: Implementation of the PWB 2010-11 and Areas of Priority Actions for the European Region for the Biennium 2012-13, in line with the new role of the Regional Conference as a Governing Body of FAO.

30. The Commission found that the background document did not provide the basis for a thorough discussion on areas of priority action in the region for the current and future biennia. It recognized that the process of prioritization was a work in progress, involving members and the Secretariat, and improvements were to be expected in future documentation. For the current biennium, elaboration of regional areas of action should be linked to indicators in the results frameworks, identification of opportunities for use of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and leverage of voluntary contributions.

31. The Commission agreed that continuation of the present areas of priority action for the 2012-13 biennium was a sensible approach linked to the four-year Medium-Term Plan (MTP), with adjustments to take account of emerging issues, linkages to the reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and partnerships. Members expressed their appreciation of the Informal Consultation held in Budapest in March 2010, which resulted in the identification of possible areas of priority action at the subregional level, including: support to smallholders in improving land tenure systems, market access, food safety, promotion of food quality, support to genetic resources and evaluation of food security. It was regretted that the outcome of that meeting could not be reflected in the background document due to the time constraints despite the fact that the member countries attending the Budapest meeting had considered the priorities identified there as important priority areas for FAO interventions in the region.

32. To address the food and agriculture challenges in the region, and taking account of FAO's Strategic Framework and its core functions, the Commission emphasized that priority should be given to regional activities involving advocacy, policy support, capacity-building, knowledge management and neutral fora for discussion in the following areas of action:

- provision of basic global data and statistics;
- assistance to define national economic, social, food and nutrition policies, with a focus on capacity-building for least developed countries to meet global expectations and benefit from market opportunities;
- normative role at global level, as well as capacity-building to reinforce technical and institutional capacities, especially for least developed countries;
- implementation of food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary standards including global conventions;

⁵ ERC/10/5

- animal and plant transboundary diseases;
 - emergencies and rehabilitation;
 - interface between climate change and agriculture;
 - conservation and management of plant and animal genetic resources;
 - sustainable management of forests.
33. The Commission also stressed that the development of the European Union seemed to be important for all member countries of the region and thus the experience from European Union countries should be further transmitted to other member countries of the region.
34. Members appreciated the informal discussion inspired by the Chair following the formal statements, which allowed a more open dialogue among the member countries and with the Secretariat, while recognizing that the results of informal consultations need to be formally endorsed.
35. The Commission recommended that:
- the priorities outlined in paragraph 2 should be taken into consideration in the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13;
 - the report of the Informal Consultation held in Budapest in March 2010 should be included in the priority identification process for the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 (Annex to the ERC Report);
 - informal dialogue among members and with the Secretariat should be encouraged during preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget;
 - new approaches and formats be considered for the work of the ECA during and between sessions, involving formal and informal mechanisms, as they were needed to bring national and subregional priorities to bear on the formulation of regional areas of priority actions.
36. Therefore, the Commission proposed [for consideration by the ERC] that:
- the Executive Committee of the Commission should liaise with the Chair of the ERC and the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia during the intersessional period, including on regional areas for priority action for the next biennium;
 - the informal meetings of members in the region should continue to increase dialogue on the preparation of areas of priority action for the next Programme of Work and Budget.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECA WORKING PARTY ON WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES⁶

37. Following a summary presentation from the FAO Gender Focal Point in the region the Commission underlined the (i) importance of incorporating gender into farm support and rural development policies, programmes and projects; (ii) assistance to female rural entrepreneurs in developing products and services to market in order to diversify sources of rural populations' incomes; and (iii) improved access for women to land and other

⁶ ECA 36/10/6

production inputs. The issue of manifold impacts of migrations on rural society, both negative in terms of labour loss but also positive through investment of remittances was put as a new emerging issue area of priority. Furthermore, the growing role of women in agriculture was seen as a road to innovativeness and new ideas.

38. The Commission noted that the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) could not hold its 15th session back to back with the present 27th session of the Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan and considered that the issue of mainstreaming gender in rural development should be included as a standing item in future ECA meetings.

39. The Commission requested FAO to take a leading role in underscoring the importance of women for agriculture, food security and nutrition. Capacity-building in rural areas, fostering of gender policies for governments and policymakers, and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data are key factors.

40. The Commission stressed that reform-led improvement of gender analysis at FAO must continue and FAO should also draw on the lessons learned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in this area.

41. The Commission took note of the urge of the European Union to governments to carry out necessary reforms to overcome institutional, social, legal and political barriers to gender quality and to specifically ensure that both women and men have equal rights and access to all resources. It is expected that FAO and other agencies and programmes of the United Nations provide guidance on this.

42. The Commission took note of the European Union to urge governments to promote a number of significant non-agricultural policies targeted to women for the elimination of rural poverty.

43. The Commission welcomed the Gender and Land Rights Database developed by FAO and its further update and extension.

44. The Commission also took note of the proposal to invite the ECA WPW to improve its working methods and to include in its agenda all issues of special relevance to foster policy advice and the integration of women in rural development, such as social issues relating to non-agrarian economies, migratory patterns, demographic trends, land as collateral for non-agriculture investment and the influence of these factors on women's involvement in rural development and agriculture. It also urged the countries in the region to actively participate in future sessions and activities of the ECA WPW.

45. The Commission took note of the request of the Chair of the WPW to support its initiative to develop close cooperation with other statutory bodies of FAO, such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) among others, and ensure that funding is provided also on a Regular Programme basis for the implementation of Strategic Objective "K" on Gender.

46. The Commission endorsed the work programme as outlined in paragraph 23 of the document ECA 36/10/6 and proposed to include this item in future as a standing item of the Agenda of ECA sessions.

47. The Commission recommended that FAO support the Central Asia countries through targeted policy and project-sharing experience activities, including gender aspects of land reform and follow-up and, at the request of the WPW Chair, support from extrabudgetary resources be mobilized for WPW activities.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

48. The Chairperson recalled that during the 35th Session of the Commission six members had been elected for the Executive Committee. From the current members only Mr Fazil Düsünceli (Turkey) put forward his candidature for re-election. The Chairperson thanked Ms Daniela Moyzesová (Czech Republic), Mr Sören Skafte (Denmark), Ms Rita Mannella (Italy), Mr Evgeny Utkin (Russian Federation) and Mr Emmanuel Manoussakis (Greece) for their collaboration in the Executive Committee during the last two years.

49. The Commission unanimously re-elected Mr Fazil Düsünceli (Turkey) to the Executive Committee for the next two years for his second term.

50. The Commission unanimously elected the following members of the Executive Committee for a term of two years, eligible for re-election for up to two additional two-year terms:

- Ms Marina Calvino (Italy)
- Ms Natalie Feistritzer (Austria)
- Mr Hans-Jörg Lehmann (Switzerland)
- Ms Christina Pitta (Cyprus)
- Mr Vasily Lavrovskiy (Russian Federation)

OTHER BUSINESS

51. No issues were raised under this Agenda Item.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

52. The Chairperson informed the Session that the proposal made by Azerbaijan during the 35th Session of the Commission to host the 37th Session of the ECA together with the 28th Session of the ERC in Azerbaijan, had been scrutinized by the Director-General.

53. The Commission took note of the proposal of Romania to host the Thirty-eighth Session of the ECA and the 29th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe in 2014 in Bucharest, Romania.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OR SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS PRESENTED BY THE RAPPORTEUR

54. The presentation of the summary of conclusions by the Rapporteur on the deliberations of the debate regarding Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 was unanimously endorsed by the Commission.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

55. In closing the Session, the Chairperson warmly thanked the Armenian authorities for hosting the present Session. He also thanked all the participants for their contribution. In particular, he expressed appreciation to those Member Nations that had sent delegations from their capitals. Furthermore, he thanked on his own behalf and that of the Commission, the outgoing members of the Executive Committee. He also warmly welcomed the newly-elected members of the Executive Committee and wished them every success in guiding the Commission's future activities. In addition, he expressed his gratitude to the Secretariat for the support provided during his four-year term as Chairperson. The Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia thanked the participants for their contribution, and welcomed the lively debate, fruitful discussions and excellent recommendations for endorsement by the Regional Conference for Europe

**APPENDIX I
ANNEXE I
ARÉNDICE I
ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ I**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES
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**APPENDIX II
ANNEXE II
APÉNDICE II
ПРИЛОЖЕНИЕ II**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE
Thirty-sixth Session
Yerevan, Armenia, 11 and 12 May 2010**

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda: *for decision (ECA: 36/10/1)*
3. Appointment of Rapporteur: *for decision*
4. Mapping and policy response to climate change impacts on agriculture and rural areas: *for discussion and recommendation (ECA: 36/10/2)*
5. Challenges of water scarcity in the European and Central Asia Region and recommendations for adaptation: *for discussion and recommendation (ECA: 36/10/3)*
6. Improvement of rural livelihoods in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS through sustainable improvements in livestock production: *for discussion and recommendation (ECA: 36/10/4)*
7. Income diversification for sustainable development of European and Central Asia rural areas – Role of FAO: *for discussion and recommendation (ECA: 36/10/5)*
8. Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011 and areas of priority actions for the European Region for the following biennium 2012-2013: *for discussion as preparation for the ERC (ERC/10/5)*
9. Mainstreaming gender in rural development through ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development activities: *for discussion and recommendation (ECA: 36/10/6)*
10. Election of members of the Executive Committee: *for decision*
11. Other Business
12. Date and Place of the Thirty-seventh Session
13. Summary of conclusions presented by the Rapporteur ¹
14. Closure of the Session

¹ In line with para. 32 of the Report of the 33rd Session, the drafting of the final report is entrusted to the Secretariat and the Rapporteur. The Rapporteur will make an oral presentation of the outcome of the session to the 27th FAO Regional Conference for Europe and main conclusions and recommendations on Items 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 will be submitted to the Regional Conference as LIM documents for endorsement.