



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

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

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

### Ninety-fifth Session

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### SYNTHESIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ADDRESSED TO MEMBER NATIONS ON THE ROLE OF FAO

#### I. Introduction

1. The Committee will recall that in the first half of 2005 the Secretariat carried out a review of FAO's response to the Millennium Declaration and, on the basis of its findings, issued a discussion paper outlining a strategy for enhancing the Organization's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A conclusion of that exercise was that FAO Members should be asked to express their views on the role of FAO in relation to their own efforts to achieve the MDGs, as well as on the services they would expect to need from the Organization in the future. The aim was to help ensure the continued relevance of the Organization and to enhance its ability to meet the needs of Members in the light of changing global and national priorities, and in particular the international focus on reaching the targets set within the MDG framework. Such a survey could, for example, also generate useful inputs for the preparation of revised strategic planning documentation.

2. Accordingly, a questionnaire (attached at the end of this document) was sent to all Member Nations on 5 May 2005. A follow-up message was sent on 5 August extending the deadline for reply to 15 September 2005. At its Session in September 2005, the Committee enquired about the status of this exercise and was advised that a synthesis of the results would be communicated to Member Nations in due course. This is provided in the present Information Note.

#### II. Structure of the Questionnaire

3. The Questionnaire consisted of three sections dealing respectively with: the three Global Goals of Members as contained in the Strategic Framework 2000-15; FAO's role *vis-à-vis* the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals); and the type of services desired from the Organization.

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4. More specifically, Section I asked Members to indicate their perception of the continuing relevance of the three Global Goals which may summarily be referred to as: *access to food, sustainable agricultural and rural development, and conservation of natural resources*. Suggestions could also be made for their possible revision.
5. Section II sought, in the first instance, views regarding the role FAO should play to support efforts of Members to meet each of the eight MDGs. It is recalled that, while the MDGs do not constitute a complete development agenda nor cover all fields of work of FAO, they are widely accepted as a focus for action at national level. The MDGs have also been adopted within the UN system as a means for integrating efforts to help countries achieve time-bound targets. In addressing this question, respondents could choose among high, medium and low ratings. Secondly, in the same section, opinions were sought on the relative importance of the type of services required in relation to the MDGs, i.e. in terms of policy advice, technical support and operational support.
6. Section III asked Members to fill in a matrix stating the services they would expect to need from FAO, i.e. by a range of technical disciplines, and for each of these disciplines the importance accorded to: *direct policy advice, technical support, operational support, or services at the global level*, again with the possibility of choosing among *high, medium and low* ratings.
7. The definition of services at global level was: collection, analysis and dissemination of information; assessment and monitoring of sectoral and sub-sectoral data; and development of codes, standards and agreements. The listed disciplines are summarised in Figure 3 and fall under various groups: Cross-sectoral (e.g. education and training, research and extension); Management and sustainable use of natural resources within a cross-sectoral approach (e.g. bioenergy, biosecurity); Management and sustainable use of natural resources on a sectoral basis (e.g. livestock production, aquaculture); Socio-economic issues (e.g. food security and nutrition, gender); and Emergency relief and rehabilitation (e.g. disaster prevention and preparedness).
8. It was also possible to indicate opinions under a general *other* category, for instance by referring to: agribusiness, agro-processing and marketing; trade in agricultural commodities, value addition and capacity development for participation in multilateral trading system; or additional disciplines to be specified by the respondent.
9. In addition to responding to the “closed” questions in the sections I to III described above, Members could provide narrative comments.

### III. Rate of response

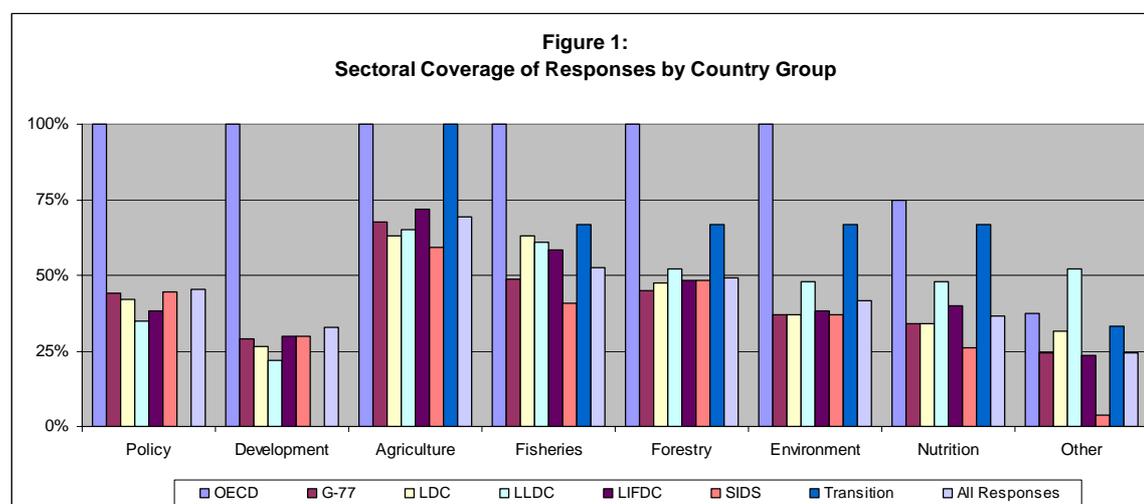
10. As per established practice in communications of this type, the questionnaire was addressed through Note Verbale to the governmental authority designated as the official focal point for correspondence with FAO. However, given the nature of the information sought, the responses were expected to require the involvement of several ministries.
11. The questionnaire invited, as the preferred approach, internal consultations to provide a consolidated view across the ministries with interest in FAO’s mandate. In effect, some countries did that explicitly, as transpired in their replies. However, the questionnaire also allowed for multiple responses to be sent by individual countries. In those cases, an averaging technique was used to obtain a single view from the country (cf. below).
12. The overall response rate was as follows:
  - 128 responses were received from 90 countries; thus
  - 48 percent of Members responded to the Questionnaire.
13. In the light of experience with surveys of this nature, this response rate is considered satisfactory. The regional distribution (i.e. by FAO regional groupings) of the questionnaires received, and of countries responding, is summarized in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Returns by FAO Regions**

Region	Countries in Region	Countries Responding	Percent
Africa	44	24	55%
Asia and Pacific	43	20	47%
Europe	44	6	14%
Latin America/ Caribbean	33	24	73%
North America	2	2	100%
Near East	21	14	67%
Total	187	90	48%

14. It may be noted that the relatively low response rate in Europe is due to the fact that no replies were received from the member countries of the European Union nor from the countries formerly part of the Soviet Union.

15. The “sectoral origin” of replies may also be of some interest. In the questionnaire, respondents were requested to indicate which sectors were covered (i.e. Policy and Planning; Development Cooperation and Finance; Agriculture; Fisheries; Forestry; Environment; Nutrition; or Other). Figure 1 below illustrates the range of sectors covered in the responses, aggregated by major country groupings. Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Environment are the sectors that were the most involved in providing responses.



## IV. Analysis of results

### A. APPROACH

16. Analysis of the responses involved both a manual review of each completed questionnaire, and a Web-Survey type of database developed for collecting all the data and the extraction of global views (tables and charts) by various dimensions of interest. In particular, as already evident from Figure 1 above, the returns were analysed by known country groups (not mutually exclusive), based on official lists: i.e. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); G-77; Least Developed Countries (LDCs); Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs); Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs); Small Island Developing States (SIDS); and Transition countries.

17. In order to be able to aggregate responses by various country groupings, it was necessary to convert the assignment of High, Medium or Low priority ratings by respondents, into numerical values. This was done as follows:

High Priority	→	Value 2
Medium Priority	→	Value 1
Low Priority	→	Value 0

18. This also permitted development of a single average response for a given country, when more than one response was provided, i.e. reflecting opinions of different ministries. For example, if a country had sent three responses assigning High, High, Medium rankings in relation to the same question, the composite response for the country was calculated as the average of the corresponding values (2, 2 and 1) i.e. 1.67. This technique is reflected throughout the tables or graphs in this document.

## **B. NARRATIVE COMMENTS**

19. Before reporting on the main results under Sections I, II and III of the questionnaire, it may be pertinent to convey the most representative narrative comments provided, as follows.

- OECD respondents:
  - a) enquired how the present exercise would correlate to the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO and the planned revision of the Strategic Framework;
  - b) stressed the importance and unique comparative advantage of FAO in its normative work (four countries);
  - c) stressed the need for continued balance between normative and field operations;
  - d) noted that, while of fundamental importance, the MDGs did not provide a comprehensive framework for development and did not cover all priority fields of FAO work;
  - e) noted that the eight MDG goals were not mutually exclusive;
  - f) stressed the need for FAO to: a) concentrate on areas of work in which it has “comparative advantage”, and b) increase its collaboration with partners.

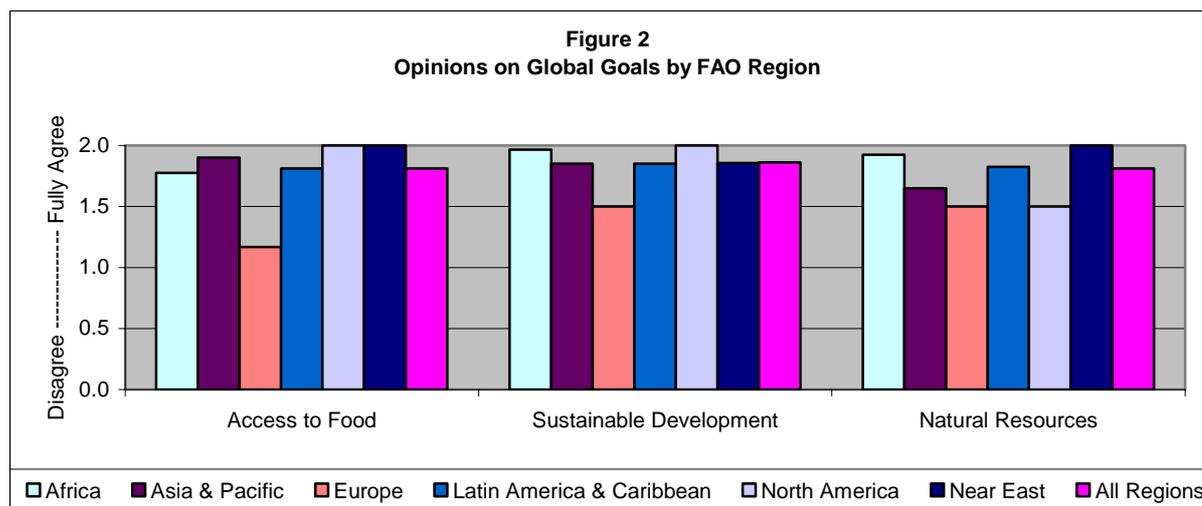
Two countries noted that the ratings they provided in their response were related to priorities in relation to FAO's mandate rather than FAO's overall role, globally (for example, gender issues might be deemed of highest importance in FAO's work, but FAO might not be deemed the best lead agency on this issue).

- G-77 respondents:
  - a) stressed the need for continued and sustained support from FAO, both for the attainment of the MDG goals and in more general terms;
  - b) expressed concern about the timeframe for attaining the MDG goals;
  - c) suggested that the members' Global Goals (i.e. in FAO's Strategic Framework) be revised to include the concept of: “halving poverty, not only hunger”;
  - d) specifically commented on trade liberalization issues and access to markets;
  - e) observed a strong correlation between the length of time of activities (of the Organization) and the degree of impact of the same activities;
  - f) expressed concern that the level of FAO financing was too low and that decision-making was too centralized;
  - g) pointed out that FAO should provide support to the development of infrastructure for improved productivity and of private investment to support activities and processing.

Two countries stressed the need for FAO to: a) concentrate on areas of work in which it has “comparative advantage”, and b) increase its collaboration with partners (e.g. same point made by some OECD respondents).

### C. SECTION I

20. In relation to section I, the main conclusion is that Members generally find that the Global Goals in the Strategic Framework 2000-2015<sup>1</sup> to be still relevant, as revealed in Figure 2 below. Of the three, Sustainable Development was perceived to be the most relevant by Members at large, followed closely by Natural Resources and Access to Food. As regards FAO regional groupings, the Near East countries most fully agreed with the continuing validity of the three Global Goals, while those which responded in Europe expressed the lowest level of agreement on average.



### D. SECTION II

- FAO support vis-à-vis the achievement of the eight MDGs

21. It may be recalled that the results of the internal survey related to the MDGs<sup>2</sup>, presented at the time of the May 2005 session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), indicated that FAO was focusing well over half of its total effort (including the Regular and the extra-budgetary programmes) to the achievement of MDG 1, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. About one-fifth was directed to MDG 7 on environmental sustainability; and a smaller but still significant proportion (6 percent) to MDG 8, global partnership, including an open trading system. It is notable that the responses to the questionnaire indicate that Members see the role of the Organization as being strongly tied to MDGs 1, 7 and 8.

- Importance that Members attach to the types of service provided in achieving the MDGs

<sup>1</sup> The Global Goals of Members are:

- Access of all people at all times to sufficient nutritionally adequate and safe food, ensuring that the number of chronically undernourished people is reduced by half no later than 2015.
- The continued contribution of sustainable agriculture and rural development, including fisheries and forestry, to economic and social progress and the well-being of all.
- The conservation, improvement and sustainable utilization of natural resources, including land, water, forest, fisheries and genetic resources for food and agriculture.

<sup>2</sup> The eight MDGs are as follows: MDG 1: Poverty and Hunger; MDG 2: Universal Primary Education; MDG 3: Gender Equality; MDG 4: Child Mortality; MDG 5: Maternal Health; MDG 6: Combating Disease; MDG 7: Environmental Sustainability; and MDG 8: Global Partnership, including an open trading system.

22. As regards the *type of services* desired (i.e. policy advice, technical support, operational support) to assist Members in achieving the MDGs, *technical support* was the service most strongly emphasized (as indicated by a high ranking), followed by *policy advice* and *operational support*. The countries in North America cited *policy advice* as the most relevant input provided by FAO. European respondents rated *policy advice* nearly as strongly as those in North America. In relation to the membership at large, those in Europe and North America provided the lowest rating to *operational support*.

### E. SECTION III

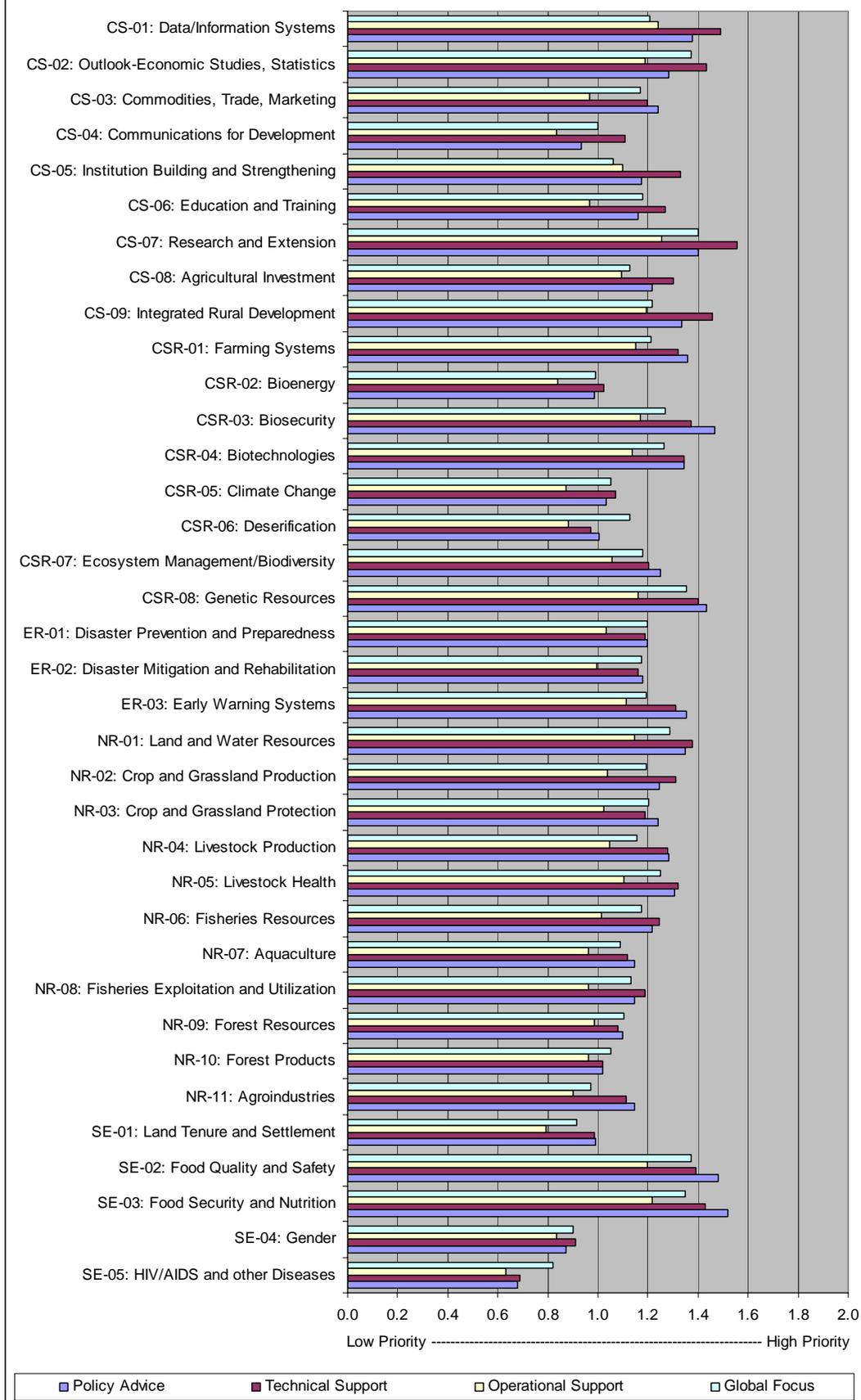
23. Under Section III, those who responded in Europe and North America most strongly emphasized services at global level. The remaining regions perceive the four types to be of nearly equal importance, but with technical support being rated as slightly more important than policy advice and global level while operational support is stated as the least desired. It is interesting to note the relatively high expressed demand for services at global level also by Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Near East, an indication that Members in developing regions attach increasing importance to the major contributions of FAO in areas such as standard-setting and the collection, analysis and dissemination of information.

24. The demand for FAO services by disciplines reveals a diversified pattern across regions. However, several disciplines are regarded as being of particularly high priority by many regions. For instance, the disciplines that have been rated among the top five in multiple regions include the following:

- Food security and nutrition – rated number 1 or 2 in Africa, Asia, the Near East, North America
- Food quality and safety – in Asia, Europe, North America
- Integrated rural development – in Africa, Latin America, North America
- Livestock health – in Europe, the Near East
- Research and extension – in Africa, Asia, the Near East
- Biosecurity – in Asia, Europe, Latin America
- Genetic resources – in Africa, Europe.

25. Figure 3 indicates the overall pattern of demand from Members.

**Figure 3: Services Desired from FAO  
(Responses of FAO Members at large)**



## **V. Conclusion**

26. The survey has generated useful results, both confirming the validity of the overall objectives and thrust of FAO's activities and, in indicating a certain evolution in Members' needs for the Organization's services, highlighting variations in demand among regions and countries at differing levels of development. The Secretariat deems these results enlightening and of relevance for the future determination of priorities and programmes.