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Report of the

**FOURTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST**

Kuala Lumpur, 25 July - 3 August 1978



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FAO Member Nations in the Asia and Far East Region (at 3 August 1978)

Bangladesh	Japan	Nepal
Burma	Kampuchea, Democratic	Pakistan
China	Korea, Republic of	Papua New Guinea
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Lao	Philippines
Fiji	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
India	Maldives	Thailand
Indonesia	Mongolia	Viet Nam

FAO Member Nations in the Southwest Pacific Region (at 3 August 1978)

Australia	France	United Kingdom
Fiji	New Zealand	United States of America
	Papua New Guinea	

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Asia and the Far East

First	—	Bangalore, India, 27 July-5 August 1953
Second	—	Kandy, Ceylon, 20-25 June 1955
Third	—	Bandung, Indonesia, 8-18 October 1956
Fourth	—	Tokyo, Japan, 6-16 October 1958
Fifth	—	Saigon, Republic of Viet-Nam, 21-30 November 1960
Sixth	—	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 15-29 September 1962
Seventh	—	Manila, Philippines, 7-21 November 1964
Eighth	—	Seoul, Republic of Korea, 15-24 September 1966
Ninth	—	Bangkok, Thailand, 4-15 November 1968
Tenth	—	Canberra, Australia, 27 August-8 September 1970
Eleventh	—	New Delhi, India, 17-27 October 1972
Twelfth	—	Tokyo, Japan, 17-27 September 1974
Thirteenth	—	Manila, Philippines, 5-13 August 1976
Fourteenth	—	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 25 July-3 August 1978

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Rome, 1978

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RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION 78/1: TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME (TCP)

The Regional Conference:

Recalling FAO Conference Resolution 5/77 which invited the Director-General to make every effort to strengthen the Technical Cooperation Programme;

Noting with satisfaction that the Technical Cooperation Programme has enabled the Organization to respond directly and speedily to Member Governments' most urgent development needs;

Noting further that most Member Countries in the Region have benefited from TCP assistance, some of them in critical emergency situations which have affected the livelihood of millions of people;

Having in mind that the Council will be reviewing the Terms of Reference of the Programme at its 74th Session;

Considering that FAO must play an increasingly active role in the future in the mobilization of investment resources, training at grassroots level and in meeting emergencies and other small-scale unforeseen requirements which arise in the agricultural sector;

1. Requests the Director-General to intensify the rapid and effective implementation of the Programme and to ensure that the Region derives maximum benefit from its resources, particularly on activities benefiting the rural poor;

2. Urges all Member Governments to assure adequate financial provision for this Programme in future Programmes of Work and Budget of FAO to allow it within its terms of reference to meet the expanding requirements of the countries of the Region.

RESOLUTION 78/2: TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (TCDC) IN THE FIELDS OF FOOD,
AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

The Regional Conference:

Recognizing the urgency to strengthen, accelerate and expand Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries in the Region on the basis of mutuality and complementarity of interests;

Recalling the General Assembly Resolutions 2974 (XVII), 3251 (XXIX), 3461 (XXX), Resolution 31/179 of 21 December 1976, and 3362 (S VII), the Kuwait Declaration on TCDC, FAO Conference Resolution 9/77 of November 1977;

Considering further that food and agriculture, fisheries and forestry are sectors of key importance to the economies of the developing countries in the Region, and that the exchange of knowledge and experience can make a vital contribution to the growth of these sectors leading to self-reliance;

Taking into account the action already being taken by many governments and FAO in promoting Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries of the Region, often in a sub-regional context, and the need to present these experiences at the forthcoming Conference on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries to be held in Buenos Aires in August-September 1978.

Noting with satisfaction that various countries of the Region have offered their training and other facilities of their centres of excellence, as well as indicating their eagerness to get assistance from some other countries of the Region in specific fields.

1. Invites the developing countries of the Region:

- (a) To adopt all necessary measures to intensify their mutual cooperation at the national, sub-regional, regional and inter-regional levels in existing and new fields including adoption of appropriate technologies;
- (b) To establish strong focal points for TCDC at the national level;
- (c) To hold intergovernmental meetings, workshops or training programmes, and
- (d) To adopt any other means for accelerating TCDC.

2. Endorses the areas identified in document FERC/78/5 for promoting TCDC in food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the immediate future in the Region, placing particular emphasis on concrete measures for these and others that may be identified, such as:

- (a) The listing of national institutions and evaluation of their technical capabilities in research, education and extension together with physical facilities available for TCDC operations in these centres and the need to supplement such capabilities/facilities by national and international efforts;
- (b) The initiation, continuation and strengthening of the mutual cooperation and further facilitation in exchange of experience and results of scientific research, appropriate technologies and development of new tools and machinery, and training of technical personnel;
- (c) The development of food processing, storage and other conservation techniques aimed at reducing food losses; and
- (d) Mobilization of financial resources for accelerating TCDC.

3. Requests the Director-General:

- (a) To take the necessary measures to orient the work both under its regular and field programmes more strongly in support of Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries.
- (b) To evaluate, when requested, relevant information on capabilities and physical facilities of national institutions for TCDC;
- (c) To catalogue and disseminate the information to all TCDC focal points in the countries in collaboration with other organizations, as appropriate;
- (d) To give high priority to organic recycling and use of renewable energy resources in TCDC programmes for agriculture and rural development;
- (e) To participate actively in the UN Conference on TCDC and to submit concrete proposals to the FAO Council to promote activities to facilitate this cooperation; and
- (f) To assist in mobilizing financial support for the strengthening of relevant institutions in the developing countries in order to enhance their capabilities for TCDC.

RESOLUTION 78/3: PROMOTION OF FOOD SECURITY WITH SPECIAL
EMPHASIS ON REDUCTION OF POST-HARVEST FOOD LOSSES

The Regional Conference:

Recognizing the crucial importance of preventing food losses, particularly post-harvest food losses, as a major factor in the promotion of food security;

Welcoming document FERC/78/6 entitled "Promotion of Food Security with Special Emphasis on Reduction of Post-Harvest Losses" focussing on the problems associated with post-harvest losses and priority action programmes providing increasing benefits to the rural sector;

Noting with satisfaction the measures that member countries have taken to reduce quantitative and qualitative losses, and for the establishment of the FAO Special Account for Prevention of Food Losses pursuant to Resolution 3/77 of the 19th Session of the FAO Conference;

Expressing appreciation for the contributions made by Governments to the Special Account and further expressing great satisfaction with the action taken by some Governments to make additional contributions to the Special Account;

Noting with approval the action taken by the Director-General under Resolution 3/77, to mobilize contributions to the Special Account, to establish a coordinating unit, to issue guidelines and procedures in regard to implementation of projects, and to carry out missions in several countries of the region;

1. Requests the Director-General to continue his energetic efforts to mobilize resources for implementation of projects under the Action Programme in countries of the Region in accordance with its recommendations namely:

- (a) Studies on assessment of losses in post-harvest operations including harvesting;
- (b) Promotion of low-cost and effective technology suitable for small farm operations;
- (c) Varietal improvements in rice to reduce field losses;
- (d) Improvements in storage, transportation and processing of root crops, fish and fruits; and
- (e) Strengthening of the activities of FAO with regard to dissemination of information and exchange of technology and experiences among the countries in the region.

2. Further requests the Director-General to take necessary steps for increased availability of external resources to achieve the targetted 4 percent growth rate of food production and also to evolve a regional food security system with a view to establishing Food Grain Reserves in this region with rice and wheat as the main commodities;

3. Urges the Director-General to coordinate the Organization's efforts under the Post-Harvest Losses Account, the Food Security Assistance Scheme and the Technical Cooperation Programme with the aim of maximizing their joint impact at country and regional level and to maintain close cooperation with other interested organizations, in their activities.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Implementation of FAO Programme in the Region

- (a) In future, regional agricultural surveys should be undertaken by FAO in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank. Such surveys could also include sector surveys of subregions like ASEAN.

- (b) Food management information systems should be strengthened and improved. The Regional Food Information Service should be tied in with promotion of integrated food security.
- (c) Prevention of pre- and post-harvest losses deserve greater attention than had been paid to it so far, considering the magnitude of such losses.
- (d) Field action projects for small farmers development should be expanded to other countries. It was necessary to take other measures into account, such as, improving the access to markets by the small farmer.
- (e) Activities under the development of rainfed agriculture be expanded to arid and semi-arid areas and should include programmes for development of appropriate cropping systems and soil management.
- (f) The development of aquaculture, which will increase employment and income of the small farmer and promote crop/livestock/fish integrated farming systems should be accelerated.
- (g) Development of commercial forestry to support the rural community through the encouragement of rural industries, e.g. saw mills, charcoal, matches, should be promoted. Involvement of rural people in this process would also strengthen the conservation programmes.
- (h) Further development of national capability in project identification formulation and appraisal and training programmes in project analysis, and in methodologies for "planning from below" must be stressed.

II. Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (TCDC)

- (a) Primary focus in the promotion of TCDC should be on establishment and/or strengthening of national institutions in specific technical fields in the developing countries and an unbiased international evaluation of national and regional institutes.
- (b) Policies to encourage developing countries to use more of the expertise, facilities, contracting and consulting firms and equipment now available within the Region must be urgently developed. This would cover fellowships also.
- (c) International and bilateral aid should also encourage these policies and their implementation.

III. Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

- (a) Countries should review overall national and sectoral policies and programmes to ensure consistency with the objectives and aims of agrarian reform and rural development.
- (b) Small-scale irrigation programmes, involving a component of self-help for small and marginal farmers, should be given special consideration.
- (c) Additional support for organization of the rural poor, i.e. small farmers and landless labourers is urgent, to facilitate their effective participation in the decision making process in local self-governing institutions and in planning, implementing and monitoring rural development projects.
- (d) Member Governments should establish and strengthen decentralized representative rural institutions to which the responsibility of initiating, planning and implementing projects must be delegated, in conformity with their political systems.
- (e) Greater encouragement for the role of national non-governmental organizations, in promoting associations of the rural poor and linking them with rural institutions is recommended.

- (f) Existing systems of delivery of government services and inputs, including the prevailing system of extension agents, need new reorientation to make them more responsive to the needs of the rural poor.
- (g) Greater scope for on-farm and off-farm employment, including in particular, the construction of rural infrastructures and small-scale industries, based on appropriate technologies is urged.
- (h) Additional resources for agricultural and rural development be allocated and these should be directed towards increasing income, employment and productivity of the rural poor. Similarly an enlarged flow of foreign assistance must complement domestic efforts in resource mobilization for the rural poor.
- (i) In view of the importance and the enormity of task in agrarian reform and rural development, a plan of action should be discussed at the World Conference in Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in July 1979.

IV. State of Natural Resources and the Human Environment

- (a) Urgent action by Member Governments and International Agencies to combat degradation and loss of natural resources was urged. In particular, soil erosion, salinity, degradation and depletion of forest and wildlife resources as well as of promoting genetic resources in agriculture, forestry and fisheries are emphasized.

V. Reduction of Post-harvest Losses

- (a) In close cooperation with Member Governments, FAO should conduct a survey on crop losses in the field and in post-harvest stages to develop adequate and reliable statistics for formulating more realistic approach to the problem. An interchange of ideas and technology among the countries in the region on a continuing basis must be encouraged.
- (b) Establishment of a regional network to promote cooperative and coordinated activities for development and transfer of technology, involving universities and other institutions, is proposed.
- (c) There is a need to examine the losses in the case of root crops, fish and fruits. These crops present numerous problems in storage, transportation, processing and marketing.
- (d) FAO is urged to coordinate its efforts under Reduction of Post-harvest Loss Account, the Food Security Assistance Scheme and the Technical Cooperation Programme for maximizing their joint impact at country level.
- (e) The need to evolve a Regional Food Security System, in collaboration with other interested agencies, is stressed.

VI. FAO Programme in the Region

The following are adopted as priority areas of work:

- (a) Promotion of active participation of small farmers in socio-economic development and increasing their productivity and income;
- (b) Development of rainfed and semi-arid agriculture;
- (c) Promotion of food security and prevention of pre- and post-harvest losses;
- (d) Promotion of crop/livestock/fish integrated farming systems;
- (e) Development of aquaculture and fishing; and
- (f) Promotion of forestry for local community development.

VII. Concluding Items

- (a) The proposal to change the name of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East to that of FAO Regional Conference for Asia and Pacific, and consequently the name of the Regional Office to that of FAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (RAP) is reiterated.
- (b) Continuation of membership of India and the Philippines in Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), for a period of two years, until the end of calendar year 1980, is confirmed.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 25 July to 3 August 1978.
2. Twenty-two member countries participated in the Conference, namely: Australia, Bangladesh, Burma, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States of America and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
3. There were observers from: Bhutan, United Kingdom, Holy See, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations High Commission for Refugees, World Food Council, International Labour Organisation, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, UN/FAO World Food Programme and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.
4. A meeting of the Technical Committee (Committee of the Whole) was held from 25 to 28 July. The Conference conducted its Plenary Session from 31 July to 3 August. The Plenary considered the Report of the Technical Committee which covered food and agriculture policy issues in Asia, including agrarian reform and rural development, technical cooperation between developing countries and post-harvest losses. A Plenipotentiary Conference to consider the establishment of a Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific (CIRDAP) was held on 29 July.
5. The list of participants appears as Appendix B of the Report. The list of documents issued appears as Appendix C.
6. The Inaugural Session of the Conference was held on 31 July. The Director-General of FAO welcomed the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the delegates, diplomatic corps, members and observers. He conveyed the appreciation of the delegates and of FAO for the hospitality extended by the Government of Malaysia. He then invited the Minister of Agriculture of Malaysia to welcome on behalf of the Conference the Prime Minister.
7. The Minister of Agriculture of Malaysia, His Excellency Dato' Shariff Ahmad, welcomed the delegates. He invited the Prime Minister to address the Conference.
8. His Excellency, Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn delivered the inaugural address to the Conference. The Prime Minister welcomed the delegates. He recalled the food crisis of the 1970s which followed a series of crop failures. The consequences were devastating and many went hungry. Countries were not prepared. The crisis has now passed; but it has, at least, left the international community with a better awareness of both the nature and magnitude of the food problem.
9. The world cannot afford another similar disaster. He recalled the various steps taken by the United Nations and countries to increase production in the food deficit countries. FAO has a major role in translating this strategy into effective action programmes.
10. The ultimate responsibility for resolving the food problem rested first and foremost on national governments. Malaysia's policy seeks to produce enough food for national needs and export the surplus. Today, Malaysia is still not fully self-sufficient and, while fortunate to have the resources to buy food abroad, must use scarce foreign exchange.
11. Rapid population growth is imposing spiralling demands on agriculture. World population is still increasing at 2% yearly, Malaysia's population is growing at 2.7%. To meet the food needs, this growth implies new technological breakthroughs.

12. The Prime Minister cited two areas where countries could work together in resolving the food problem, namely: research and mobilization of human resources.

13. Research could focus on development of additional high-yielding varieties, innovative agronomic measures and reduction of post-harvest losses.

14. On a regional level, technical expertise must be built up. There must be better use of scarce expertise. National centres can draw heavily on skills that are available in other countries.

15. In Asia, there is a crucial need to draw up special programmes for the development of the small farmers. Their participation in development is essential. Countries ought to provide further support for education, training and improved institutional structures for small farmers. Experiences in programmes and methodology can also be shared.

16. The Prime Minister cited ASEAN as an example of growing effective inter-country collaboration. ASEAN projects included study of food supply and demand, regionally coordinated national food reserves, etc. This represents the political will of the countries in South-East Asia.

17. In Asia, it is ironic that there is a high incidence of malnutrition among the people who are engaged in food production. It is not fair that the people who produce food are the first ones who often go hungry.

18. The improvement of human lives is the main objective of agrarian reform and rural development programmes and not merely the indirect consequence of programmes to increase food production. If this objective is to be achieved, social reforms must complement technological innovations.

19. His Excellency, Minister of Agriculture of Malaysia, Dato' Shariff Ahmad, was elected Chairman of the Conference by acclamation.

20. The Conference, thereafter, elected all Ministers present as Vice-Chairmen.

21. The provisional agenda and timetable were adopted by the Conference. The agenda appears as Appendix A.

22. The Director-General of FAO, Dr. Edouard Saouma, addressed the Conference. The address of the Director-General appears as Appendix D.

Drafting Committees

23. The Conference noted the excellent work done by the Drafting Committee of the Technical Committee. The delegates requested that the same Committee be asked to prepare the Report for the Conference. Therefore, the following were assigned to this task: Mr. Abu Bakar Mahmud, Malaysia - Chairman; Mr. Winston Thompson, Fiji; Mr. I.R. Khurana, India; Mr. Iwata Tatsukai, Japan; Dr. Bed Bahadur Khadka, Nepal; and Mr. Parvez Masud, Pakistan.

24. A Resolutions Committee was set up by the Conference. Named to this Committee were: U Khin Maung, Burma; Dr. G.S. Kalat, India; Mr. Darmawan Adi, Indonesia; and Michael A. Wheeler, Papua New Guinea.

25. A third Committee to prepare the draft of a Commitment to Action was also constituted. The members named to this Committee were: Mr. Jose Leviste, Philippines; Mr. K. Alam, Bangladesh; Mr. Maligna Sainvongs, Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mr. T.J. Kelly, Australia and Mr. J. Abeygoonasekara, Sri Lanka.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS

26. Country statements were presented by delegates of the following countries:

Australia	Indonesia	Papua New Guinea
Bangladesh	Japan	Philippines
Burma	Republic of Korea	Sri Lanka
China	Lao People's	Thailand
Democratic People's	Democratic Republic	United States of
Republic of Korea	Malaysia	America
France	Nepal	Socialist Republic
Fiji	New Zealand	of Viet Nam
India	Pakistan	

The Regional Setting

27. Various country delegations documented the substantial progress achieved in Asia, by various food and agricultural programmes, over the last two years. The statements revealed, at the same time, a heightened awareness that these achievements fell short of meeting the basic needs of the large and growing numbers of people living in abject poverty in the rural areas.

28. China stressed that agricultural development in the Region did not match the requirements of improving the livelihood of people. Burma observed that the only solution for the food problem is increased food production.

29. Various delegates noted that the problems identified at previous Regional Conferences still persist. These include sharp fluctuations in the weather; the lag in rebuilding food reserves; spiralling costs of agricultural inputs; unstable prices for primary commodities. Nepal stressed the need of a regional food security plan.

30. Japan noted that present food stock levels had recovered but there is a regional maldistribution of supplies. The world food supply-demand situation in the middle and long-term prospect leaves little ground for complacency. Rice, as major staple food in Asia, is still in short supply in most countries of this Region. Two areas require concentrated efforts: improvement of agricultural infrastructure and the improvement and consolidation of small farmer's socio-economic welfare measures. Urgently needed are irrigation and drainage as 70 percent of the farms in this Region lack these facilities.

31. Papua New Guinea and Vietnam said rapid population growth continued to build up pressure on the land.

32. India observed that total commitments of aid to agriculture in 1977 indicated a recovery in external commitments; but the level was still far below the requirements set out by the World Food Conference. Regional investment flows conceal wide disparities among the recipient countries. Poorer countries appear to have received much less assistance per caput as well as per hectare of cultivated area. Vietnam called for a sustained flow of international assistance.

33. These problems, however, were seen by delegates in a new perspective: How they adversely affect the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors of the rural population and constitute violation of basic human rights. The right to food is a basic human right, the Philippines stressed. Concern for the disadvantaged is now so strong, Malaysia felt a "growing anxiety" that in the upsurge of poverty-redressal programmes, provision for careful evaluation was being overlooked. Evaluation is needed so the resources will actually benefit the rural poor.

34. Burma and New Zealand pointed out that the biggest potential for solving these problems lies on increasing the productivity of the small farmers and in agrarian reforms. The Philippines added that food production programmes must go, hand in hand, with agrarian reform and rural development. The elimination of poverty among small farmers, tenant farmers, fishermen and other rural poor must, therefore, be the main thrust of agricultural and rural development.

Achievements

35. Within this context, delegations reported on the progress their countries had achieved since the issuance of the Manila Declaration at the 13th FAO Regional Conference.

36. The developed countries reported on their support and contributions to international and regional efforts to develop agriculture. France had increased its contributions to UNDP by 40 percent and augmented its contribution to the Asian Development Bank. Japan recalled it had contributed to FAO's special account on post-harvest losses, IFAD, ADB and others. United States aid proposals for Asia total \$ 470 million and the Government had confirmed its decision to contribute to the Asian Development Bank's replenishment. Australian personnel are actively involved in the Southeast Asia Programme of Integrated Pest Control in Rice, sponsored jointly by FAO and the U.N. Environment Programme. Australia has pledged a substantial financial contribution and urged other developed countries to follow.

37. Developing countries enumerated a series of achievements. Burma reported completion of five irrigation and embankment works during its Second Four-Year Plan. Experiments on intensive cultivation had doubled yields. This is now being extended to three major paddy areas. Its fish culture programme, seed improvement and livestock efforts had been expanded. Despite droughts last winter, China increased her grain harvest by five million tons. Output of rape seed and other summer crops were also up.

38. Indonesia's rice output in 1977 was 21 percent higher than the 1969 harvest. The Republic of Korea revealed that 86 percent of its arable land is now irrigated and half of the rice land consolidated. The world's highest rice yield -- 9.94 metric tons milled rice per hectare -- had been achieved by a combination of high-yielding varieties, modern inputs irrigation and supporting services.

39. India had surplus grain. It had also introduced a "Food for Work Programme" aimed at providing employment in the rural areas to improve income, nutritional levels and quality of life in rural areas. An International Federation of Agricultural Research Systems for Development had been organized to bring together the agricultural research systems.

40. For its part, Lao reported that it had established a policy of transformation taking agriculture and forestry as a basis for industrialization. Under its new Plan, Malaysia will increase agriculture's share of national investment by 26 percent or nearly US\$ 8 billion. A significant amount will directly benefit small farmers, fishermen and tree planters. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has expanded its irrigation and land reclamation projects. One of the most important successes was the rural technical revolution in irrigation, electrification, mechanization and chemicalization proposed in the "Thesis on the Socialist Rural Question in Our Country" authored by President Kim Il Sung. Korea accomplished the historical task of land reform by distributing free land to the landless or land-poor peasants under the policy "Land to the tillers."

41. Nepal said that following the success of the FAO-supported small farmers development programme in two districts, it was now expanding this to 30 panchayats in 12 more districts. A new self-help programme "Sajha" has also been started in 33 districts.

42. Papua New Guinea has inaugurated a national centre for its nutrition programme while Pakistan has given well over one-fifth of the total public sector outlay in its Plan to agriculture and related water development. Pakistan set up 136 rural development centres in

the first three years of its IRD programme. Six hundred and twenty-five centres will be operating by 1978. The Philippines reported on the recent creation of a Crop Insurance System to protect farmers against crop losses, a new feedgrain production programme, a cotton project and an integrated fisheries development phase seeking self-sufficiency by 1982.

43. For its part, Thailand had successfully designed a rural works programme to alleviate suffering and restore productivity, following the worst drought in two decades. Vietnam reported it had brought back to cultivation 500 000 hectares of land abandoned during the war and Sri Lanka reported that it had increased the guaranteed price for paddy by 20 per cent while storage facilities and fertilizer supplies have been improved.

Constraints

44. In considering ways to meet the basic needs of the rural poor, delegations pinpointed some of the constraints on improving agricultural production. These ranged from inflation, lack of irrigation and investments to unchecked migration, as well as unjust agrarian structures that deny the rural poor's meaningful participation in development.

45. Australia and New Zealand cited inflation, the economic recession in its main markets and the trade barriers to its exports as major problems. Farmers' incomes had been reduced, although the prospects for 1978-1979 appear brighter, Australia said. New Zealand cautioned that the severe down turn in its terms of trade and balance of payments eroded its capability to help other nations.

46. On the other hand, Indonesia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao and Thailand cited problems including severe cold fronts, droughts, pest outbreaks, and typhoons. Low yields remain a problem in Burma where only one million out of the 12.7 million hectares, planted to rice, use the new varieties. Current agricultural technology leaves much to be desired, China stressed. Thus, its ten-year plan for agricultural development, approved by the Fifth National People's Congress, seeks to increase grain output by 400 million metric tons by 1985. From 1978 to 1985, total output value of agriculture is to increase by 4-5 percent annually and 85 percent of all major operations in agriculture will have been mechanized by 1985.

47. Rural-urban migration and environmental problems like chemical pollution troubled Japan's farmers. Increased incomes had seen Japanese diets shift from cereals to higher demand for meat in the face of production patterns based on rice, which is now produced in excess of need. Japan, therefore, hopes that FAO's "Agricultural Commodity Projections - 1985" will be completed as early as possible, and will provide useful basic guidelines.

48. Malaysia observed that efforts in agricultural development are being carried out on the basis of increasingly depleted resources, especially in terms of land. In Pakistan, out of a total of 10 million land owners, 8.5 million own less than 5 hectares of land. About 30 percent of the total farm area is owned by small farmers, owning less than 5 hectares each. Korea pointed out that the spread of industrialization steadily encroached upon available agricultural land. Vietnam pointed out that it has extremely limited arable land. What land was available had been reduced by war. The country is just beginning to apply a large-scale long-term plan to double the cropped area and repair the agricultural infrastructure.

49. Demands from increasing populations continue to spiral. Lack of trained manpower was also cited. This problem was shared by Indonesia, Nepal, Lao, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

50. Fiji and Papua New Guinea cited the special problems that face the Pacific countries which are surrounded by large bodies of water. Their food crops differ from most of the rest of Asia which are mainly root crops. They are less vulnerable to climatic variations but problems arise in relation to marketing, processing and storage. The problem of conserving migratory species of fish was also underscored. In addition, malnutrition was prevalent in Papua New Guinea due to lack of education.

51. Burma, Nepal and Pakistan noted that small farmers still are unable to participate in the development process. Resources to help achieve this end are still inadequate. Modern technology is not within the reach of the small farmer, as he suffers from lack of resources. What he produces is subject to post-harvest losses in the field, during storage and transport. He is also at the mercy of the middleman and does not get a fair price for what he produces.

Approaches

52. The rural poor was the focus of this Conference. Pakistan and the Philippines stressed that this was specifically considering the small farmer and his plight. This focus was fully justified since the overwhelming majority of producers in Asia are small farmers. Malaysia noted that 68 percent of those categorized as poor in its Third Plan are in the agricultural sector. In Nepal, 85 percent of agricultural households are those of small farmers. In their hands lie the permanent solution to the food problem.

53. China pointed out that rural development is not an isolated problem. It is part of the struggle of developing countries to chart a course of rural development, best suited to its own conditions, solidly based on voluntary choice of its people and most conducive to mobilizing and relying on them.

54. Indonesia said approaches to reach the rural poor were being developed by rural institutions, both within the governmental and nongovernmental sectors. Korea had developed its Saemaul Undong Movement precisely to incorporate this approach of widespread participation by rural families. To ensure that small farmers have access to credit and agricultural inputs, Japan urged integrated rural development systems, including reform of land ownership. Malaysia said that production of food has not kept pace with increasing population. Therefore, developing countries must encourage research programmes, reduce pre- and post-harvest losses, mobilize human resources and give attention to small farmers through comprehensive programmes of education and training.

55. Japan pledged to give assistance, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, and is committed to disburse 55 million dollars to IFAD in three years. It regretted that so far only a few projects have been submitted for drawing on the Fund's resources. A grant aid of US\$ 60 million was made for increasing food production in the 1978 fiscal year and Japan also intends to contribute around US\$ 720 million to the Asian Development Fund of ADB.

56. France noted development approaches, now being adopted, are based on the needs of the poorest, promoting self-reliance and introducing well-adopted technologies. France fully associated itself with these approaches. Those countries that have overcome mass rural poverty in recent years have done so by according rural development high priority, the United States observed. This included comprehensive, egalitarian land reform; heavy investments in rural infrastructure; attractive price investments for major food crops and organization of the rural poor for advocacy and self-help.

57. Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines said an example of a collaboration approach could be seen in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which was established in 1967. To safeguard future food supplies, ASEAN has set up a Committee on

Food, Agriculture and Forestry (COFAP) and a Working Group to establish a regionally coordinated system of nationally held rice reserves.

58. Burma said that of the 12.7 million acres under paddy, only one million is under HYV at present. One way to boost agricultural production is to provide more irrigation facilities to promote double cropping and steps will have to be taken to motivate the farmers themselves to initiate small-scale projects through collective efforts. Australia observed that countries must establish and maintain national reserve stock of basic food as droughts, floods and other natural disasters will recur. It continues to be willing to assist through bilateral and multilateral channels as it recognizes that it has many problems in common with developing countries of the Region.

Programme Considerations

59. Turning attention to programmes, Burma welcomed the Director-General's proposal for the need of decentralization at the country level. The Burmese Government needs TCP assistance for village livestock development to assist village milk production, prevention of post-harvest rice losses, a wheat seed production farm and fisheries training crash courses for deck officers and engineers.

60. India observed that agriculture is the world's largest solar energy harvesting enterprise. The energy shortage is going to become a key limiting factor in improving agricultural productivity. India, therefore, urged that a Regional Centre for Research in the Application of Solar Energy in Agriculture, including the more efficient utilization of sunlight by green plants be set up by FAO. India is willing to promote and assist in such projects. Concerted action by FAO and Member Governments would be useful in the development of agricultural systems based on principles of organic recycling. Regional centres for such systems are needed.

61. FAO has sent experts on study tours to China. As a developing country, China said it is also ready to send specialists to other developing countries in the Region to learn from their experience. Lao called for continuing assistance in acquisition of pesticides.

62. The countries gave additional comments on various issues affecting food and agriculture. Australia supported the UNCTAD Integrated Programme on Commodities and wishes to see the Conference on the Common Fund resume. Fiji also cited the need for stabilizing commodity prices through equitable and enduring agreements. There was also a suggestion that the World Food Council should concentrate more on the basic food needs of the least well-off countries, those designated as food priority countries.

63. Aspects of post-harvest losses and problems of land tenure are being dealt with. Due to the fact that losses are not clearly visible, a number of countries, among them Thailand, Indonesia and Burma, only began to realize that an enormous quantity of grain production was being lost through the harvest and post-harvest process. They expressed their wish to see that FAO conduct a comprehensive survey and assessment of pre- and post-harvest losses so as to equip member countries with definite and reliable statistics as a guideline for planning appropriate programmes for the Region. The annual average loss from planting period to final distribution is high. Most delegations supported an expanded reduction of food losses programme.

64. A number of countries including Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka noted with satisfaction the creation of IFAD and felt that it is the first concrete step by the international community to help the developing countries in solving the problems of the rural poor. The Philippines welcomed the creation of IFAD but felt that IFAD alone can not overcome the problem of deterioration of the level of human nutrition and that external assistance from developed countries, as well as additional international commitments of the developing countries are both necessary to achieve the four percent growth rate per annum.

65. Thailand noted that substantial FAO technical assistance is needed in formulating and executing a long-term approach to rain-fed crop production. Regional Commissions on fisheries and livestock have been established but none as yet for crop production. Thailand, therefore, called attention to a resolution of the 12th FAO Regional Conference in Tokyo, 1974, recommending that such a commission be established.

66. Speaking for the Pacific countries, Fiji suggested establishment of a sub-regional FAO Office in that area.

67. Countries expressed commitment to bring about technical cooperation in Asia and the Pacific. They agreed to approve a resolution on this subject. Similarly, they appreciated the new programmes initiated under the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). Although this Region constitutes the majority of the rural poor, the share of the TCP financing for this Region has so far been only 25 percent. This should be increased. Accordingly, a separate resolution on this topic was proposed.

United Nations and Other Organizations

68. Statements were delivered by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP as well as representatives of UN/FAO World Food Programme, United Nations Development Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development, International Labour Organisation and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

69. The ESCAP Executive Secretary said the economic improvement in Asia in recent years was improved only if compared with the general low level of performance in the preceding years. On the whole, Asia's performance was below the targets set in the International Development Strategy. The Region had been affected by the rapid succession of externally-generated crises in food, energy and the ESCAP's work programme therefore has been to secure an integrated approach to these developmental problems. Efforts to ensure effective coordination of work within ESCAP itself and with other agencies had been made. Development of food and agriculture, commodities and raw materials, energy, transfer of technology and integrated rural development had been assigned high priority. ESCAP hopes to strengthen collaboration with FAO.

70. He also reported on the Commission's work in food security and rural development. ESCAP also looked forward to working in close concert with CIRDAP. He noted there exists a common will and increasing capability among many developing countries of the Region to translate the concept of TCDC into action in a wide range of activities. This approach entailed several essential elements; fulfilment of the basic needs of the people; more equitable distribution of income; greater participation by all segments of society, particularly the poor, in the development process, and effective integrated rural development programmes.

71. The Regional Representative of UNDP noted that the UNDP had increasingly been directing its efforts to the major themes covered by the Conference. Of particular interest to UNDP was the support and recognition given to the concept and approach of TCDC. UNDP hopes this recognition will permit the elaboration and implementation of more effective development programmes. UNDP was supporting the FAO special programme for prevention of food losses. It was prepared, as appropriate, to provide financial support to it. He also stressed the importance and support which UNDP had given to rural development activities in its inter-country programme for Asia and the Pacific. UNDP is willing to provide financial support to CIRDAP for specific programme activities to be undertaken by the newly established Centre.

72. The UN/FAO World Food Programme Director of External Relations said that resources for WFP 1979-1980 had been targetted at \$950 million. No less than \$689 million had already been pledged. Contributions under the Food Aid Convention of the International Wheat Agreement and the International Emergency Food Reserve aggregated \$75 million last year. Asia and

the Far East had increased its pledge from \$8 million in 1974 to \$24 million for 1980. Nonetheless, the Programme is still a long way off from achieving the target of \$950 million. Thus, WFP may not be able to commit more than \$300 million per annum to new projects. Projects in the pipeline however far exceed this figure. Thus a number of worthwhile projects will necessarily be delayed. WFP resources will continue to be concentrated in the poorest countries, primarily those included in the LDC and MSA groups. Other countries facing hardships or having pockets of poverty will receive projects but a more rigorous scrutiny before approval is needed. Cumulative total of the projects assisted worldwide is 850 and resources committed to them reached \$3.1 billion.

73. Of the aid committed to the Region, almost 67 percent has gone to directly productive projects, about 22 percent to vulnerable group feeding projects and about 11 percent to infrastructural development projects. WFP attaches high importance to "Schemes for establishment of food reserves" and prevention of food losses through promotion of good storage. There are 12 such projects being assisted by it with food aid totalling to \$73 million in value. During the period April 1976 to May 1978, the Director-General approved 20 emergency operations in nine countries in Asia and the Far East involving a commitment of \$61.4 million in emergency relief.

74. The Assistant President of IFAD informed the Conference that its major target group are the small and landless farmers. IFAD does not normally finance projects whose overall impact on income distribution in favour of the target group is negative. This is the first time that such a criterion has been adopted as an operational principle of a financing institution. Initial resources available to IFAD are 1.22 billion dollars. Replenishment of IFAD's resources, as already envisaged in its Articles of Agreement, will take place within the next three years. Bulk of IFAD's resources will be made available in the form of highly concessional loans. The Fund had approved its first two loans: one for Sri Lanka and another for Tanzania, each for \$12 million. Work is in final stages on another seven or eight projects. Co-financing will remain a basic feature of the Fund's operations. IFAD is now sending missions to prepare projects for exclusive financing by the Fund during the next 15 months. The countries so far included are: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

75. IFAD will draw heavily upon the expertise of other international organizations within and outside the UN system. Cooperative arrangements evolved with FAO have been particularly gratifying. Apart from valuable administrative support, FAO collaborates in a number of project identification and project preparation missions on behalf of the Fund. IFAD's Assistant President specially emphasized his strong desire for even closer cooperation between FAO and IFAD.

76. The ILO representative explained the Organization's work and informed the Conference that a Special Coordinating Committee has been established in Geneva and in its regional office, to combine all activities pertaining to rural institutions and rural development.

77. The Senior Industrial Development Field Adviser outlined the work of UNIDO in the light of the Lima Declaration and Plan of Action that the share of the developing countries in the world's industrial production should reach 25 percent by the year 2000. He cited linkages between industry and agriculture.

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

78. The Conference considered the Report of the Technical Committee which had discussed earlier the following agenda items:

- Progress Report on the Implementation of FAO's Programme in the Region, since the Thirteenth Session, including the Reports of Regional Technical Bodies;
- Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries with particular Emphasis on National and Regional Institutions;

- Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in the Region with Special Reference to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform, including the State of Natural Resources and the Human Environment for Food and Agriculture;
- Progress on the Establishment of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP);
- Promotion of Food Security with Special Emphasis on Reduction of Post-Harvest Losses;
- FAO's Programme in the Region.

79. The Report of the Technical Committee, as amended and adopted by the Conference, is set out below. A report on the Technical Committee appears in Appendix F.

Implementation of FAO Programme in the Region

80. The Regional Representative addressed the Technical Committee's opening session. His statement appears in Appendix E. The Regional Representative submitted the "Progress Report on the Implementation of FAO Programme in the Region since the Thirteenth Session". This document included the reports of Regional Technical Bodies. Delegates appreciated the comprehensiveness of the report of activities, under each of the nine priority areas. As agreed by the Thirteenth Regional Conference, the central focus of the priority areas had been increasing the productivity and income of the small farmers.

81. It welcomed the timely spotlighting of the emerging problems of food and agriculture in the Region. This provided the background for FERC/78/2. Some countries reported on the improvement in the performance of their agriculture. It was suggested, that in the future, regional agricultural surveys be undertaken by FAO, in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank, and that such surveys could also include sector surveys of subregions like ASEAN. This would bring out, more clearly, the difficulties and problems involved in agricultural development.

82. Delegates attached great importance to activities in the field of food security, improvement of the nutrition of the rural poor and prevention of pre- and post-harvest losses included under Priority Area I.

83. On food security, the need for strengthening and improving the food management information systems was underlined. The Conference welcomed the Regional Food Information Service which was initiated in 1977 with the trial issue of the Quarterly Food Outlook Review for Asia and the Far East. Delegates suggested that this service be handled, in conjunction with promotion of integrated food security and, therefore, deserved to be accorded the same priority. A regional workshop on food management information is being planned.

84. Agricultural production is subject to wide fluctuations due to the vagaries of the weather. Improvement of weather data for forecasting crop yields ought, therefore, to be given increased attention.

85. Improvement of the nutrition of the rural poor depends, to a large extent, on improvement of the social economic conditions of the rural community. Food and nutrition policies, therefore, have to take into account a wide spectrum of factors such as production, distribution, purchasing power, education and improvement of health through integrated rural development. One country reiterated its request for a nutrition expert to assist in improving nutrition standards of the rural poor.

86. Prevention of pre- and post-harvest losses deserved greater attention than had been given so far, considering the magnitude of losses. The meeting was informed that the Director-General had set up a fund of US \$20 million to finance projects to cut post-harvest losses. In the Region, 18 projects had been identified to reduce these losses at the small farmer level. In this connection, a member country requested for a prevention of post-harvest losses project.

87. Some delegates requested for copies of the report prepared by the FAO Team that visited China in 1977 to study post-harvest technology. The report will be made available, once editing is completed. Reports of other missions to China will be furnished upon request.

88. Field action projects for small farmer development (Priority Area II), involving organization of small farmers around a production activity, have been in operation in three countries: Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines. The importance of expanding this programme to ensure the participation of the small farmer in the development process was stressed. At the same time, it was necessary to take other measures into account, such as improving the access to markets by the small farmer.

89. The impact of the small farmer development programme is assessed by an annual evaluation. The distinguishing characteristic of this exercise has been participatory evaluation, i.e. the farmers themselves join in the process. A country requested that the activities of the Small Farmers Development Programme be expanded.

90. The FAO Regional Office is preparing a manual outlining concepts and methodology drawn from its experience with the small farmer development programme. Copies would be made available to member countries. In this connection, the meeting took note of various activities of ESCAP under its programme "Institutions Serving Small Farmers". These include: an expert group meeting on rural institutions serving small farmers; a group farming survey and promotion project plus a workshop on the "Saemaul Undong" rural development programme in the Republic of Korea.

91. To strengthen coordination between UN agencies, an Inter-Agency Committee on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific has been organized. This consisted of the Heads of UN Agencies located in Bangkok. An Inter-Agency Task Force on Integrated Rural Development, consisting of specialists from each of the cooperating agencies, had been set up. The FAO Regional Office is participating in the Inter-Agency Integrated Rural Development Missions.

92. Activities under the development of rainfed agriculture (Priority Area III) were largely confined to humid tropics. Activities should also involve the arid and semi-arid areas. Preparation of a provisional agro-ecological zonal classification ought not be confined to the countries in the humid tropics. It was emphasized that the programmes for development of rainfed agriculture should involve appropriate cropping systems and soil management.

93. In fisheries development (Priority Area V), stress was laid on aquaculture. This sought to increase employment and incomes of the small farmer. The Conference noted the assignment of a regional aquaculture specialist to the FAO Regional Office to strengthen work in this sector. Activities under this Priority Area also related to promotion of crop/livestock/fish integrated farming systems. Case studies of successful aquaculture development were under preparation.

94. In the field of forestry and forest industry development (Priority Area VI): activities focussed on forestry for community development. Of the 22 on-going forestry projects in the Region, 13 had components for community development. The Eighth World Forestry Congress, to be held in Indonesia this October, had as its theme "Forestry for the People". This Conference would reinforce work in this priority area. Development of commercial forestry could support the rural community through the development of rural industries, e.g. saw mills, charcoal, matches. Involvement of people would buttress conservation programmes.

95. In some countries, large areas have been affected and rendered unsuitable for cultivation due to water logging and salinity. The need for giving greater attention to measures to curb water logging and salinity control, under the Priority Area VII, was underlined.

96. Some delegations stressed the importance of developing further national capability in project identification, formulation and appraisal. Countries need to have a portfolio of projects ready for presentation to bilateral and multilateral financing agencies. Training programmes, in project analysis, under Agricultural Development Planning (Priority Area IX) was therefore considered essential. One country felt there was need to give this higher priority.

97. Delegates agreed on the need to encourage "planning from below". This would make planning a two-way process. All too often, planning is paternalistically imposed from above. The FAO national workshop held in Nepal, on the two-way process of planning, had shown methods useful for bringing about a dialogue between the small farmer leaders on one hand and planners and policy makers on the other. It also indicated ways of linking local level plans with a national plan. Similar workshops could be held in Bangladesh and the Philippines, which operate small farmer development programmes.

98. The Conference suggested that future progress reports on implementation of activities, under each of the Priority Areas, should also bring out both problems of implementation and results. Delegates expressed their appreciation for the work done by Regional Technical Bodies and suggested their strengthening. The establishment of Asia and the Pacific Regional Credit Association (APRACA) in October 1977 was cited. APRACA started its operation with 37 member credit institutions from 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific. FAO is providing presently the services of a secretary and secretariat. FAO's Money and Medals Programme allocated \$100 000 to assist APRACA during its initial stage. APRACA's basic objective is to provide a forum and to assist member agricultural credit institutions in improving agricultural credit systems for the small farmers in the respective countries. Agricultural credit and banking staff exchange training programmes, among the member institutions, will be launched this year. Joint efforts are being made in the coming biennium to introduce improved crop insurance schemes and improve ability to formulate small-scale agricultural credit projects for small farmer development at village level.

99. The Conference recommended that its suggestions be appropriately reflected in the FAO programme of work in the Region.

Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries

100. The Conference discussed "Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) with particular emphasis on National and Regional Institutions".

101. Cooperation and interdependence among developing countries is not new. But it has acquired a new impetus due to need for appropriate technology, specially in agriculture and its allied fields. Recent major technological breakthroughs, such as the new cereal varieties, control of crop and animal diseases, plus emergence of appropriate research and social institutions, strengthened this impetus. Progress in promotion of TCDC was essentially dependent on removal of attitudinal barriers, establishment of institutional arrangements, critical assessment of needs and capabilities and availability of funds.

102. The Conference analysed attitudinal and other barriers in the on-going field programmes. Developing countries have scope to use more of the expertise, facilities, contracting and consulting firms and equipment now available within the Region. It was also pointed out that only 20 to 40 percent of experts from developing countries, are accepted by other developing countries. About the same percentage prevails in fellowships and study tours. Utilization of contracting and consulting firms is even lower. Many developing countries are keen to send most of their fellows for training in developed countries, even though the experiences gained in such countries are often not applicable to their conditions.

103. Actions taken at the international level in promoting TCDC were reviewed. This indicated FAO's most important constitutional obligation was to promote flow of ideas, provide technical advice and cooperation and exchange of experience through its regular and extra budgetary activities, coordination and execution of intercountry and inter-regional projects.

104. Inter-country cooperation will grow only on the basis of mutuality and complementarity of interests. The fields covered could be presented in two groups: (a) regional, inter-regional and inter-country efforts such as research on crops, livestock, soil, water, forestry, etc., and (b) exchange of experience from one country to another such as farming and cropping systems, including multiple and relay cropping in irrigated areas, inter-cropping, etc.

105. Primary focus in the promotion of TCDC, on a sustained basis, should be on establishment and/or strengthening of national institutions in specific technical fields in the developing countries. Additional technical and financial support could come through international efforts such as FAO. Examples of effective mechanisms were cited: pooling resources to promote complementarity, twinning of regional networks of centres of excellence to train participants from countries with similar technical, ecological and socio-economic settings. Examples from China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines were cited.

106. An unbiased international evaluation of national and regional institutes by Specialized Agencies in the United Nations System or other international organizations, is essential, before meaningful use of these institutes can be made for TCDC. This should include suggestions for their strengthening.

107. To facilitate this work, the Conference suggested that each country define the specific assistance it needs, as well as specific technology it can offer. Some delegates enumerated the fields of activities in which they have the capability to give technical assistance to other developing countries. They also indicated in which fields they are ready to receive assistance.

108. TCDC in agriculture, is a process of inter-action among countries. Currently, TCDC is practised on a case-to-case basis. Thus, progress may be slow, until national institutional capabilities are assessed and duly strengthened. Member countries were invited to come forth with their suggestions for TCDC. These can serve as inputs to the forthcoming World Conference on TCDC, to be held in Buenos Aires in August/September 1978.

109. A view was expressed that TCDC need not be confined to adoption/transfer of successful technology from one developing country to another. Developing countries could cooperate on 'mutuality of felt interests' to collectively acquire or develop new technology. This could be advantageous, if carried out in collaboration with developed countries.

110. The Conference examined the rationality of promoting greater cooperation through the interaction of TCDC at sub-regional levels. Cooperation among ASEAN countries was cited. Collective self-reliance is the corner-stone of TCDC.

111. The meeting recognized and identified several problems which hamper the progress of TCDC. Aside from the attitudinal barriers cited earlier, there is the need to focus TCDC activities on common inter-country problems.

112. Some participants cited the lack of funds as a constraint in promoting TCDC. The meeting noted that UNDP, other international organizations and many countries give special consideration for funding to promote TCDC.

113. Some delegations noted that there is lack of sufficient planning for TCDC at national levels. Establishment of certain priorities for the Region, with regard to TCDC, and proper coordination were suggested. Taking into account paragraph 7 (d) of the ESCAP resolution 171 (XXXIII) of the Commission, it was suggested that the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Far East (RAFE) could play, in close cooperation with the Secretariat of ESCAP, a useful role in coordinating TCDC activities in the agricultural sector of the Region.

114. It was suggested that principles of TCDC can be implemented in FAO's field programme. Technical Cooperation Programme had a total of 303 projects approved so far. Of these projects 60 were approved for the Region, with a value of \$5.7 million. This represents a share of 25.5 percent.

115. The country Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) for Asia and the Pacific Region for UNDP-funded projects has increased from US\$369.2 million for 1972-76 to US\$668.4 million for 1977-81. For regional/sub-regional projects, the IPF has now increased from \$40.7 million to \$95.7 million. In the agriculture sector, FAO is currently handling UNDP approved projects of the value of \$112 million. For 1978, FAO is handling a total of 145 operational and 49 approved, not yet operational, projects. Expenditure for these operational and near operational projects this year is expected to be about \$31 million. There are 32 Trust Fund Projects being handled in the Region.

116. It was noted that the 10th Session of the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission had also underlined the opportunities offered by forestry for TCDC. This included: exchange of forest tree seeds, inter-country forestry courses, sharing of technology in pulp and paper, etc. FAO is disseminating technical information through the quarterlies "Forest News" and "Tiger Paper". The proposed UNDP/FAO Forest Industry Advisory Project for Asia-Pacific and the SIDA/FAO Centre for Forestry Education Research and Development were cited in this connection.

117. FAO is seeking ways to better reflect TCDC in its recruitment, procurement and contracting policies and procedures. It aims to obtain greater participation of experts and consultants from within the Region and to maximize appropriate local procurement. Likewise, it seeks more active involvement of local institutions. It was recognized that in the preparation of investment studies for both national and international financing, local institutions may require additional financial support, if they are to play their roles adequately.

Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

118. The Conference considered "Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in the Region with Special Reference to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform".

119. Delegates recalled that the 19th FAO Conference decided that regional aspects of agrarian reform and rural development be discussed in this year's Regional Conference. In this context, this FAO Conference emphasized the importance of analysing regional and sub-regional aspects of agrarian reform and rural development.

120. The Conference further noted that the 19th FAO Conference Resolution enjoined the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development to focus mainly on key issues, i.e. to examine "carefully the question of what institutional changes are needed to get people involved and to go forward in ways that enable the countries to meet the food and other basic needs of the poor majority of their people".

121. Delegates expressed their appreciation for the clarity and the originality of the documents, including Country Review Papers, prepared for their consideration. They stated that the critical socio-economic problems facing the Region called for in depth analysis to enable countries to fundamentally reorient their strategies and policies in solving these problems, according to the specific conditions of each country.

122. The Committee noted the wide range of social and economic conditions in the Region. This was clearly recognized in the Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. This meeting had been convened by FAO, in May 1978, in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Committee on Integrated Rural Development.

123. This Region contains a great majority of the world's rural population. A large proportion of the developing world's rural population, suffering from malnutrition, lives in this Region. The number of the people, who live below the poverty line, is increasing. Rural-urban disparities have widened.

124. Delegates stressed that the betterment of all aspects of rural life should be the ultimate objective of development. Improvement in access to resources and participation of the rural people in the development process should be given priority.

125. It was further noted that historical experiences, both in centrally-planned as well as those with market oriented economies, have demonstrated that agrarian reform should not be limited to conventional land reform programmes. These traditional programmes emphasize land distribution. Agrarian reform and rural development were inseparable components of a strategy directed towards improving the standards of living of the poorest sections of the rural population. It was necessary, therefore, for countries to review overall national and sectoral policies and programmes to ensure consistency with the objectives and aims of agrarian reform and rural development.

126. The Conference asserted that changes in the structure and social function of ownership, management of land and its use, relative to the individual and community, were crucial to the attainment of increased productivity, employment and equity. The necessary structural changes would vary from country to country. This hinged on differences in the prevailing systems of land tenure, and population pressure on resources in the rural areas. They would also include, in varying combinations, such measures as redistribution of land, increased security of tenancy, group farming and land-settlement schemes.

127. In Asia, irrigation is the crucial resource for agricultural development. Access to water is therefore equally important as to land. In this connection, the small-scale irrigation programmes, involving a component of self-help for small and marginal farmers, should be given special consideration.

128. The Conference observed that a vital component of the agrarian reform and rural development strategy was the successful organization of the rural poor i.e. small farmers and landless labourers. This would facilitate effective utilization of services and inputs provided by the Government, help in the implementation of land reform measures and enhance the bargaining power of the rural poor. Organization is a necessary precondition for their effective participation in the decision-making process in local self-governing institutions. This would include planning designing, implementing and evaluating rural development projects.

129. The Conference recommended that Member Governments establish and strengthen decentralized representative rural institutions, in accordance with their own political systems. Responsibility of initiating, planning and implementing projects ought to be delegated to such institutions, and should allow for the participation of the rural poor and the disadvantaged groups.

130. Widespread education and training facilities in the rural areas are a pre-requisite for successful formation of associations of rural poor and their participation in decision-making. The Conference therefore recommended that Member Governments encourage the role of national non-governmental organizations, in promoting associations of the rural poor and linking them with existing rural institutions.

131. Delegates reported on the various innovations and experiments in some countries of the Region for mobilizing rural people. They emphasized the need for exchange of experiences, among the countries of the Region, and continued experimentation along this line. In this connection, the Republic of Korea expressed willingness to host a Workshop on Agrarian Reform at Grassroots Level for rural people, if appropriate arrangements are made at the international level.

132. The innovative approach of FAO's field action projects for small farmers and landless agricultural labourers in several countries of the Region was cited. The Conference strongly endorsed its use of planning from below and its emphasis on developing a receiving/utilizing mechanism for the small farmers and landless labourers, rather than just relying on the delivery of services from government. Formation of small homogenous, production-oriented groupings, below the level of existing village institutions, is essential. The Conference felt that the systems of delivery of services and inputs, including the prevailing system of extension agents, need now reorientation to make them more responsive to the needs of the rural poor.

133. The Conference emphasized the need for expanding the scope for on-farm and off-farm employment including in particular construction of rural infrastructure and small-scale industries, based on appropriate technologies.

134. Some countries observed that the resources allocated for agricultural and rural development are still not adequate in relation to the importance of these sectors, either as a source of employment or income. They recommended that the flow of resources to these sectors be enlarged and that these flows be directed towards increasing income, employment and productivity of the rural poor.

135. Noting that this Region receives the lowest per capita external assistance for agriculture in the world, the Conference called for an enlarged flow of foreign assistance to complement domestic efforts in resource mobilization. Foreign assistance should also be redirected so as to contribute, directly or indirectly, to the benefit of the rural poor.

136. The Conference, however, stressed that a reorientation of external resources, in favour of the rural poor, however, is not likely to be very effective unless, where necessary, domestic policies - including policies affecting land tenure - are oriented in the same direction.

137. External financing of poverty-oriented rural development projects would require innovative approaches in the pattern and utilization of external resources flow. These include: financing of local costs, recurrent expenditures, long-term time horizon of planning, changes in procedure for monitoring and supervision. The increased resources flow to rural development would include, not only capital investment including infrastructure, but also as supply of inputs, services and credit to farmers.

138. In promoting rural development and eradicating rural poverty, political will plays a crucial role. Political will requires an understanding on the part of those exercising power and authority of the complex problems of rural development, a strong willingness to solve them, and a capacity to implement necessary policies and programmes.

139. Against this backdrop, delegates recalled the Manila Declaration of the 13th FAO Regional Conference. This called on all Member Governments "to break the shackles of the past by removing the prevailing technical, economic and institutional constraints which together combine to prevent our people, especially our small farmers, from increasing agricultural production and improving their living standards".

140. To reinforce this earlier initiative, the Conference noted the unanimous recommendation of the Technical Committee that a Declaration of Commitment to Action should be approved by the 14th FAO Regional Conference. This document should unequivocally declare the necessity to eradicate rural poverty in the Region and attempt to spell out the major components of an action programme to integrate the rural people in the main stream of development. A working group was created to draft the Commitment.

141. The working group met thereafter, and had a useful exchange of views on the matter. However, there was consensus that, in view of the importance and enormity of the task, it would be more appropriate if the matter were to be discussed at the forthcoming World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. It was also felt that the 14th FAO Regional Conference should not prejudice deliberations that should rightfully take place at this World Conference.

State of Natural Resources and the Human Environment

142. When introducing the Report on the State of Natural Resources for Food and Agriculture (FERC/78/3-Sup. 1) the Conference was informed that this Report was requested by the 17th FAO Conference (1973). It was submitted for information to the 19th FAO Conference (1977), with the understanding that the Report would be presented to the 14th FAO Regional Conference for discussion.

143. The Conference commended FAO for the preparation of this valuable document. For the first time, the important issues of natural resources associated with agricultural production, were assessed in a comprehensive manner and relate their potential and degradation/depletion to the unprecedented rise in population. The linkages of ensuing socio-economic changes, food demand and the whole range of problems, created by capital-intensive agriculture technology are analysed.

144. The Conference, therefore, recommended that this significant Report ought to constitute the basic document on this subject. It can be useful in developing and promoting further specific activities aiming at better utilization of local resources at small farmer level.

145. Rational management and conservation of national resources, the Conference stressed are of prime importance to sustain increased agricultural production. Due to the complex interrelationships existing between these resources, an integrated management approach needs to be adopted. This is essential if increased demands for food and agricultural products are to be met, on a sustained basis, and the ecological limits of these resources are not exceeded.

146. The necessity of integrating, wherever feasible, crop production with animal husbandry, agrisilviculture and aquaculture, was stressed by the Conference. This can be achieved by developing farming systems, adapted to the ecological as well as to the socio-economic needs and conditions of small farmers. This approach would include: appropriate land and water conservation measures, recycling of organic materials, wider use of nitrogen fixing organisms, integrated pest management, agrisilviculture, aquaculture, better utilization of local genetic resources.

147. Speedy action on the part of Member Governments, and international agencies to combat degradation and loss of natural resources which are essential for agriculture was urged by the Conference. In particular, attention should be given to soil erosion, salinity, degradation and depletion of forest and wildlife resources as well as of promoting genetic resources in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

148. The UNDP representative in this connection indicated the readiness of his organization to support projects, on regional and country levels, for rational management and conservation of natural resources. UNDP thereby seeks to assist in increasing food and agricultural production while adopting technologies which are environmentally sound and adapted to the cultural and socio-economic needs and conditions of the poor farmers.

Centre for integrated Rural Development

149. The Conference then considered the report "Progress on the Establishment of a Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)".

150. Through a series of careful consultations with 12 countries, the concept of a regional centre to link and assist national institutions in their integrated rural development programmes had been amplified and refined. The countries consulted by the joint FAO/Japan mission in 1974 were: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Korea (Rep. of), Lao, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

151. Support for the project idea on an integrated rural development centre had been expressed by governments at the 12th FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East, held in Tokyo in September 1974, as well as in various intergovernmental meetings. This included the World Food Conference in 1974 and the FAO ad-hoc Consultation on Collaboration in Selected Rural Development Activities of October 1975, as well as the Bangkok Consultation in March 1976.

152. The decision to locate CIRDAP in Bangladesh was reached by consensus, at a meeting of the Asian Group of FAO Permanent Representatives, in Rome on 27 July 1977. The host country for the Centre appraised the Conference that all preliminary arrangements for establishing the Centre in terms of physical facilities have been completed.

153. In the developing countries of the Region, the Conference observed that more emphasis is being given to rural development programmes. The IRD approach has become widely accepted as an effective strategy for development. Countries realize that IRD programmes can be greatly facilitated through the establishment and strengthening of national institutions where necessary, and through cooperation between such institutions. This cooperation can best be achieved through the establishment of an intergovernmental centre, carrying out its activities in collaboration with countries, organizations and agencies that may be able to provide financial or technical support. It was felt that the Centre should be compact, functional and effective.

154. Majority of the countries expressed their agreement on the need for such a Centre. They indicated their support for its early establishment. One country stated that it had difficulties in becoming a member of the Centre, if the Centre is to be set up in the present form, i.e. by way of an intergovernmental agreement. Alternative ways for the establishment were proposed.

155. The apprehension of certain Pacific countries that the proposed Centre might not be able to adequately assist them or service their needs relative to their IRD activities was noted by the Conference. One reason for the apprehension was the geographical location of the Centre. Socio-economic conditions in the Pacific which were quite different from those of countries on the Asian continent was another. Several delegates stated these problems could be overcome. All efforts should be made to ensure that the Centre pay adequate attention to the needs peculiar to the Pacific region.

156. Countries expressed their appreciation of the objectives of CIRDP. Some countries felt that they were not prepared to join, at the moment. But they were prepared to keep their possible membership under review. The Conference sought assurances that the creation of CIRDP would not result in the diminution of any commitment to integrated rural development by FAO in the Region.

157. A number of delegations raised questions concerning details of some provisions of the draft Agreement, including the schedule of funding. They emphasized the need for a clear cut statement on the scale of contributions for each country. Other delegations indicated that the present FAO scale of contributions would be acceptable to them. Others expressed a different point of view. The Legal Counsel of FAO clarified several issues. The Technical Committee recognized that certain revisions of the Draft Agreement might still be necessary.

158. It was therefore proposed that a small working group of the Technical Committee be organized to discuss informally what revisions might be necessary in order to facilitate action by delegates to the Plenipotentiary Conference. This was convened on 27 July 1978 at the site of the 14th FAO Regional Conference. The Technical Committee empowered the Chairman to appoint the members of the working group.

159. The following countries were appointed to constitute the working group: Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. It was agreed that the group be convened by the Philippines and chaired by Malaysia. It was likewise understood that accepting membership in the working group did not commit a country in any way.

160. While recognizing the mandate which FAO had for assisting the early establishment of CIRDP, and appreciating the great efforts made by FAO to finalize the necessary documentation following the Rome meeting in July 1977, some countries expressed concern that there had not been enough time for them to study the Agreement.

161. A majority of the delegations indicated that their governments were in accord with the proposal to establish CIRDP. A sufficient number were authorized by their Governments to participate in the Plenipotentiary Conference. At this time, the Agreement for the establishment of the Centre would be submitted for adoption and signature. It was decided that the Plenipotentiary Conference be convened on 29 July 1978.

162. After the meeting, the Chairman of the working group reported to the Technical Committee that the informal meeting was attended by delegates from Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia. The delegates of Japan and Vietnam were present as observers.

163. The consultation clarified the reasons underlying certain provisions. There were only a few provisions that gave difficulties. In a number of cases, the Group suggested solutions which would make the Draft Agreement easier to accept by Governments, now and perhaps also in future.

164. The working group felt it is desirable that an interpretative note be adopted with respect to the term "National IRD Centre". This would not preclude federal states from making arrangements, where appropriate, in the light of the constitutional structures. A qualification was agreed upon so that the Centre need not necessarily promote or assist research exclusively. Provision was also made for the Executive Committee to meet at least once a year, as two mandatory sessions a year might prove unnecessary and expensive. The Centre's Technical Committee would be composed of between 8 and 11 members, of whom the representative of a donor agency, an eminent expert and a person chosen by the Inter-Agency Committee on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific would be included if the Governing Council so agreed.

165. The Conference was also informed that the working group discussed the term of office of the Director. Suggestions varied from appointment for a single term of 4 years without eligibility for reappointment to leaving the matter entirely open to the Governing Council to decide. There was no consensus on this question.

166. Bangladesh confirmed that it would contribute US\$ 200 000 per annum for the first four years. The provisions on privileges and immunities to be granted to the Centre and its staff were examined in order to prevent delays in accession to the Agreement. It was agreed that this would be modified.

167. The Conference noted that, in view of the support expressed in the deliberations of its Technical Committee, the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of a Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific was held on 29 July 1978. Thirteen States: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Korea (Rep. of), Lao, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam sent representatives. Australia, Bhutan, New Zealand and the United States of America sent observers. An Agreement for the Establishment of CIRDA was adopted by eleven affirmative votes and two abstentions.

168. At the ceremony held on 1 August 1978 for the signature of the Final Act of the Plenipotentiary Conference and signature of the Agreement, the Agreement was signed, subject to ratification, by Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam. Thailand indicated that, while it was not in a position to sign the Agreement at that time, it hoped to accede to the Agreement in the very near future.

169. The Conference expressed its satisfaction for the significant progress that had been made towards establishing CIRDA and hoped that it would become operational at an early date.

170. The Conference was informed that, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure adopted by the Plenipotentiary Conference, verbatim records based on the sound recordings would be circulated as soon as possible to the States that had sent representatives or observers to the Conference.

Reduction of Post-harvest Losses

171. The Conference then discussed "Promotion of Food Security with Special Emphasis on Reduction of Post-harvest Losses".

172. A brief account of the food supply situation was given. In spite of the increased efforts of countries to step up food production, the overall crop production in 1977 fell below expectations, due to drought and/or flood in some countries. To help offset crop failures, steps were taken under the FAO Food Security Assistance Scheme, to help increase food production, reduce losses and build stocks.

173. Delegates noted, with appreciation, that FAO had established a Special Account to assist projects for the prevention of post-harvest losses. They reviewed the problems associated with post-harvest losses and the need for building national capabilities to deal with the problems more effectively, using locally available resources and suitable technology.

174. Avoiding and reducing post-harvest losses through simple low-cost and effective measures suitable for small farmer operation, was stressed. Action programmes providing more benefit to the rural sector, under the FAO Special Account for reduction of post-harvest losses, were suggested.

175. Delegates expressed concern at the level and the rate of food losses. In Sri Lanka, the storage loss in rice was 2.1 percent, milling and parboiling loss 2.5 percent and subsequent loss due to remilling process was 12.1 percent. The critical nature of the problem was illustrated by some delegates who stated that reducing post-harvest losses should be considered a major part of any poverty eradication programme. Pre-harvest losses were equally damaging to food security.

176. Factors causing post-harvest losses include: insects, rodents, poor storage and processing facilities, inadequate transport and marketing facilities and lack of trained personnel/technicians.

177. The Conference meeting noted the measures that are being taken in the countries of the Region to reduce quantitative and qualitative losses. Measures taken under the post-harvest technology programme include loss assessment studies, improvement of storage and processing facilities, research, training and extension programmes and establishment of pilot/demonstration units. In the implementation of these programmes, support was sought by many member countries.

178. With the reduction in man/land ratio, most countries have adopted high-yielding varieties requiring use of costly production inputs. This situation makes the pre- and post-harvest losses more critical in terms of monetary loss. Prevention of losses costs less than growing more crops. The situation also calls for an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach to the problems. It was, however, emphasized that locally available resources and craftsmanship must be used when possible.

179. The Committee was informed of the establishment of a National Post-Harvest Institute for Research and Extension in the Philippines. It was felt that inadequate statistics on food losses was a factor hampering the development of a realistic approach to the problem in many countries. Some delegates, therefore, suggested FAO should conduct a survey on crop losses in the field and in post-harvest stages to obtain adequate and reliable statistics. It was recommended that there ought to be an interchange of ideas and technology among the countries in the Region on a continuing basis.

180. The Conference also suggested that an effective campaign be undertaken, at national and regional levels, to reduce post-harvest losses. In this connection, the establishment of a regional network to promote cooperative and coordinated activities for development and transfer of technology was proposed. Involvement of the universities and other institutions would be valuable. It was suggested that FAO should take an active role in these activities.

181. Delegates emphasized the need to examine the losses in the case of rootcrops, fish and fruits. Rootcrops provide the staple food for the Pacific island countries. These crops present numerous problems in storage, transportation, processing and marketing. South Pacific delegates urged the Conference to give special consideration to these problems.

182. The Conference further noted, with appreciation, international efforts for prevention of food losses programme. At the same time, it expressed concern at the widening gap between the needs of the countries and availability of the funds for tackling the problem of post-harvest losses on a global basis. FAO was urged to coordinate, as much as possible, its efforts under the Post-Harvest Losses Fund, the Food Security Assistance Scheme and the Technical Cooperation Programme with the aim of maximizing their joint impact at country level.

183. Delegates highlighted field losses that occurred during harvest, especially in rice. They suggested varietal improvement to reduce such losses. They also referred to the global dimensions of food security problems as considered at the World Food Conference. They regretted that inadequate progress had been made towards the establishment of a World Food Reserve. Reserves now being negotiated would not include rice, the staple food in the Region. This was one of the considerations which led ASEAN member countries to establish ASEAN food security reserves, consisting mainly of rice. Mention was also made of the need to evolve a Regional Food Security System.

184. There were a number of international organizations involved in food security and reducing post-harvest losses. The Conference lauded the good work done by these organizations which were complementary to the activities of FAO. However, delegates cautioned against duplication and advocated close coordination among international and regional organizations. The social/economic dimension of the problem of post-harvest losses makes it imperative to deal with the subject as part of rural development.

FAO Programme in the Region

185. The Conference reviewed FAO's programme of work in the Region. Delegates re-examined the Priority Areas adopted by the Thirteenth Session and gave them a sharper focus. While the major emphasis of the FAO programme in the Region continues to be improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the small farmer (including tenant, sharecropper, the landless agricultural worker and the small fisherman and forestry worker), the Conference defined six areas for FAO's work, namely:

- A. Promotion of active participation of small farmers in socio-economic development and increasing their productivity and income;
- B. Development of rainfed and semi-arid agriculture;
- C. Promotion of food security and prevention of pre- and post-harvest losses;
- D. Promotion of crop/livestock/fish integrated farming systems;
- E. Development of aquaculture and fishing and socio-economic improvement of small fishermen; and
- F. Promotion of forestry for local community development.

186. Thus, instead of nine areas, as decided by the Thirteenth Session, there would now be six, with a sharper focus on the crucial problems of development in the Region. Activities in each of the Priority Areas would have to be integrated to achieve the central objective of improvement of the socio-economic condition of the small farmer and his family.

187. Under Priority Area I, the emphasis would be on building of receiving/utilizing mechanisms by helping the small farmers to organize themselves into homogenous groups, below the level of existing rural institutions, to take advantage of the inputs and services provided by governments. To increase the productivity, income and self-reliance of the small farmer, assistance will be provided both in the removal of institutional and financial constraints and in the integration of activities in the field of production, credit, marketing and cooperatives, and in project identification, formulation and appraisal.

188. It was stressed that the landless labourers should be treated on a separate footing from the small farmers. Special programmes for employment generation, such as water conservation and other work programmes, should be designed and implemented for them. The question of inclusion of plantation smallholders under the small farmer programme was raised. It was felt that raising of their productivity and income was equally important. Stress was laid on provision of assistance for improving the marketing chains and ensuring a guaranteed price to the producer, if the income of the small farmer was to be raised.

189. The problem of identifying the rural poor was raised. The definition varied from country to country. The FAO small farmer development programme's methodology provided for an initial socio-economic survey. This enabled a poverty line to be drawn, taking into account the income considered necessary for a basically adequate standard of living. This had been done in some countries of the Region.

190. The second priority area would focus attention on small water conservation and storage projects in the rainfed and semi-arid areas and on development of crop and livestock production in these areas. Special attention would be given to prevention of salinity water-logging and water management at the farm level. Since low-income small farmers are to be largely found in these areas, action programmes for development of rainfed and semi-arid agriculture was of particular importance.

191. Priority Area III would emphasize an integrated approach to problems of food security, national reserves and crop losses. It was pointed out that in view of the spread of high-yielding varieties and their susceptibility to pests and diseases, integrated pest control should be given emphasis. Regarding post-harvest losses, attention should be paid to improvement of traditional methods of storage. A survey of such traditional methods would be useful.

192. In Priority Area IV, the emphasis would be on the promotion of integrated farming systems in which the raising of livestock and the practice of aquaculture, along with crop production, would increase the productivity and income of the small farmer. As such, it was felt that this Priority Area was complementary to that of Priority Area I.

193. Priority Area V would seek to correct the disadvantage of the small fishermen stemming from unequal competition with commercial industrial fishing. Since more than 80 percent of the world's aquaculture production is in the Region, its development was of great urgency. Besides enabling the small fisherman to diversify his production, it would create alternative or subsidiary means of livelihood. In this connection, it was suggested that development of local species, as opposed to introduction of exotic fish, should receive attention.

194. In Priority Area VI, the main emphasis would be on forestry for community development. Such an approach could serve to satisfy some of the basic needs of the rural poor, in fuel, food and fodder, as well as help in maintaining environmental stability. It was stressed that commercial forestry could also serve the needs of the small farmer, if properly managed.

195. The Committee noted that the various activities under the priority areas would be coordinated by the Policy and Planning Unit set up at the FAO Regional Office. This unit would also develop a capacity to assist countries in planning project preparation, and evaluation, particularly for the small farm sector.

196. In implementing the programme of action under the Priority Areas, the need for exploring and strengthening the possibilities for TCDC was underlined. The FAO Regional Office was requested to draw up a list, taking into account the fields in which individual countries have specialized. A number of such fields of specialization were mentioned. The interchange of experience should be mutually beneficial. A comprehensive and vigorous programme of TCDC should, therefore, be developed.

197. In view of the limited resources in relation to the magnitude of the problems there was need for closer coordination among various programmes such as the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), the World Food Programme, the Food Security Assistance Programme and the Special Account for reduction of post-harvest losses. The possibilities of undertaking joint projects, such as the Project for Integrated Pest Control for Rice, for which Australia was providing financial assistance, needed to be explored.

198. A strong request was made for increased commitment of TCP projects for the Region.

CONCLUDING ITEMS

Adoption of Resolutions

199. After reviewing the recommendations made during the discussions, the Conference adopted unanimously three resolutions on the following subjects, which were considered of special importance:

Resolution 78/1 - Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

Resolution 78/2 - Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (TCDC) in the Fields of Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Resolution 78/3 - Promotion of Food Security with Special Emphasis on Reduction of Post-Harvest Food Losses.

200. The full text of these resolutions appears in the Section on "Resolutions and Recommendations".

Proposal for Change in the Name of the Conference

201. It was recalled that at the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference, Papua New Guinea proposed that the name of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East be changed to reflect FAO's coverage of the Pacific. The name suggested was: FAO Regional Conference for Asia and Pacific. If adopted a change would also be required in the name of the Regional Office to FAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (RAP). In view of the Conference's discussions on the special problems and needs of the Pacific area countries, delegates reiterated this recommendation.

202. The Conference was informed that the proposal for changing the name was now pending the consideration of the concerned FAO Governing Bodies.

Date and Place of the Fifteenth Regional Conference

203. The delegates from Bangladesh and Pakistan informed the Conference that their countries would be pleased to host in 1980 the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East. The Conference thanked the two countries and directed the Secretariat to transmit this offer to the Director-General of FAO for his consideration.

Other Matters - Regional Representation on CGIAR

204. The Conference unanimously reconfirmed India and Philippines to represent the Region on CGIAR until the end of calendar year 1980.

Closing of the Conference

205. In closing statements, all delegations stated that they considered the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference a valuable exercise. The quality of the documentation had been excellent and deliberations, conducted in a spirit of harmony, had focussed on vital issues of food and agriculture that are of great importance to the member countries.

206. Delegates cited the creation of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and Pacific (CIRDAP) as a positive outcome of the Conference. CIRDAP was a practical example of TCDC in action.

207. The Conference noted, with appreciation, the initiative taken by the Director-General to convene the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979. Both the Technical Committee and the Conference had analysed the spreading problems of rural poverty and the constraints imposed by unjust rural agrarian structures. This Conference's deliberations would help the Preparatory Committee in Rome pave the way for world-wide action.

208. In Asia, the Conference stressed that, FAO work should continue to focus on small farmers. Redefinition of the priority areas for FAO and the infusion of a positive bias for the rural poor were fully supported by the Conference.

209. All delegations expressed their sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to them by the Government of Malaysia and for the assistance it gave to FAO in organizing the Conference.

210. The Conference complimented the Secretariat for its contributions, organization and for the high quality of documentation.

211. On behalf of FAO, the Regional Representative made a concluding statement. He thanked the Government of Malaysia, the FAO and Malaysian secretariats for the help in organizing the Conference. He conveyed FAO's special appreciation for the wise counsel provided by the Prime Minister of Malaysia in his opening speech to the Conference. The judgement on whether the response shown by the Conference to the problems of rural poverty was adequate, rested with the poor themselves.

212. The Chairman made a concluding statement on behalf of Government of Malaysia. He noted that the rural poor followed the deliberations with interest. He welcomed the substantial accomplishments of the Conference, as reflected in the creation of CIRDAP, the preparation of an excellent technical report, the drawing up of practical recommendations and adoption of the three resolutions. The Chairman thanked FAO and the secretariat for their work. He then declared the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East closed.

AGENDA

Technical Committee (25 - 28 July)

1. Election of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Technical Committee
2. Progress Report on the Implementation of FAO Programme in the Region since the Thirteenth Session, including the Reports of Regional Technical Bodies and the Programme of Work in the Region for 1978-79
3. Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in the Region with Special Reference to the World Conference on Agrarian Reform including the State of Natural Resources and the Human Environment for Food and Agriculture
4. Progress on the Establishment of a Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)
5. Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries with Particular Emphasis on National and Regional Institutions
6. Promotion of Food Security with Special Emphasis on Reduction of Post-Harvest Losses
7. Adoption of the Technical Committee Report

Plenary Session (31 July - 3 August)

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Statement by the Representative of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme
6. Country Statements
7. Consideration of the Technical Committee Report
8. Other Matters
9. Date and Place of the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference
10. Adoption of the Report

LIST OF DELEGATES - LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

MEMBER NATIONS IN THE REGION - ETATS MEMBRES DE LA REGION

AUSTRALIA - AUSTRALIE

H.E. Ian SINCLAIR Minister for Primary Industry	Canberra
Mr. Iain WORRALL Senior Private Secretary to Minister for Primary Industry	Canberra
Mr. T.J. Kelly First Assistant Secretary Development Division Department of Primary Industry	Canberra
Mr. A.P. GODEFREY-SMITH First Secretary Australian High Commission	Kuala Lumpur
Mr. P.W. SEARLE Australian High Commission	Kuala Lumpur

BANGLADESH

Mr. Aziz-ul HUQ Minister for Agriculture and Forests	Dacca
Mr. Khorshed ALAM Secretary Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives	Dacca
Maj. Gen. K.M. SAFIULLAH High Commissioner	Dacca
Mr. Quazi HABIBUL HAQUE Economic Minister and P.R. to FAO	Rome
Mr. Shahed LATIF Joint Secretary Ministry of Agriculture	Dacca
Mr. MERAZ UDDIN AHMED Private Secretary to Agriculture and Forests Minister	Dacca

BURMA - BIRMANIE

U. KHIN MAUNG Managing Director Agricultural Corporation Ministry of Agriculture and Forests	Rangoon
---	---------

U. TUN MIN
Additional Director
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Rangoon

U. WIN KYI
General Manager
Livestock Development and Marketing
Corporation
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Rangoon

U. WIN HTIN
Director, Department of Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests Rangoon

TUN NYUNT
Assistant General Manager
Agriculture and Farm Produce Trade
Corporation
Ministry of Trade Rangoon

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
REPUBLIQUE POPULAIRE DE CHINE

Mr. LI YUNG-KAI
Director of Foreign Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Peking

Mr. HUANG TSUNG-TAO
Professor
Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences Peking

Mr. WANG SHOU-JU
Deputy Chief, International Division
Bureau of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Peking

Mr. WU TIEN-HSI
Official, Bureau of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Peking

Ms. LIU SHU-SHEN
Official, International Division
Foreign Affairs Bureau
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Peking

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE POPULAIRE DE COREE

Mr. JANG YON JUN
Director of Asian Department of
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pyongyang

Mr. CHONG SONG MUN
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the D.P.R. of Korea Kuala Lumpur

Mr. PAK CHANG RIM
Minister of Foreign Affairs Pyongyang

Mr. LI KANG CHOL
Assistant Secretary Pyongyang
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

FIJI - FIDJI

H.E. Charles WALKER Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries	Suva
Mr. Eric H. JONES Managing Director Fiji Sugar Marketing Company	Suva
Mr. Winston THOMPSON Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and Fisheries	Suva

FRANCE

S.E. M. André TRAVERT Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire en Malaisie	Kuala-Lumpur
M. Jean PERRIN Conseiller Ambassade de France	Kuala-Lumpur
M. Philippe COSTE Représentant permanent de la France auprès de la CESAP Ambassade de France	Bangkok
M. Bernard MIYET Secrétaire des Affaires étrangères Direction des Nations Unies et Organisations internationales Ministère des affaires étrangères	Paris

INDIA - INDE

Mr. Surgit Singh BARNALA Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation	New Delhi
Mr. Rajinder SINGH Special Assistant to Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation	New Delhi
Mr. G.V.K. RAO Secretary to the Government of India Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	New Delhi
Mr. S.J.S. CHHATWAL High Commissioner of India	Kuala Lumpur
Mr. G.S. KALKAT Additional Secretary Agriculture (Production) Department of Agriculture Government of India	New Delhi

Mr. Vohra BRIJ LAL
Assistant Commissioner
Land Reform Division
Department of Agriculture
New Delhi

Mr. I.R. KHURANA
Directorate of Economics and Statistics
Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
New Delhi

INDONESIA - INDONESIE

Mr. Salmon PADMANAGARA
Director General for Agricultural
Education, Training and Extension
Jakarta

H.E. Makmun MUROD
Ambassador
Embassy of Indonesia
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. DARMAWAN ADI
Special Assistant to Minister of
Home Affairs
Jakarta

Mr. SOEGENG AMAT
Expert Staff, National Logistics
Agency (BULOG)
Jakarta

Mr. HARINGUN
Minister Counsellor
Embassy of Indonesia
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. AMIDJONO MARTOSUWIRYO
Permanent Representative of
Indonesia to FAO
Rome

Mr. SUHARYO HUSEN
Senior Official of the Ministry
of Agriculture
Jakarta

Ms. ADIATI SOEGIHARTO
Senior Official
Directorate General of Rural
Development
Ministry of Home Affairs
Jakarta

Ms. SAODAH SJAHRUDDIN
Senior Official
Department of Foreign Affairs
Jakarta

JAPAN - JAPON

Mr. Yutaka YOSHIOKA
International Affairs
Advisor to the Agriculture Minister
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Isao IMANISHI
Overseas Technical Cooperation Office
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Tokyo

Mr. Iwata TATSUAKI
Official, Specialized Agencies Division
United Nations Bureau
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tokyo

Mr. Tomoya KAWAMURA
Counsellor
Embassy of Japan Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Koji KADOYA
First Secretary
Embassy of Japan Kuala Lumpur

REPUBLIC OF KOREA - REPUBLIQUE DE COREE

Mr. SANGJIN CHYUN
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of the Republic
of Korea to Malaysia Kuala Lumpur

Mr. JOO-HO KIM
Assistant Minister for Planning
and Coordination
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Seoul

Mr. YOUNG WOO PARK
Counsellor
Embassy of the Republic of Korea Kuala Lumpur

Mr. JOON KIL CHA
Assistant Director
International Organization Division I
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Seoul

Mr. KWANG-SHIK WON
Assistant Director
International Cooperation Division
Ministry of Agriculture and
Fisheries Seoul

Mr. WON HO SUH
Deputy Manager
Research Department
National Agricultural Cooperative
Federation (NACF) Seoul

Mr. DAE HWA CHOI
Second Secretary
Embassy of the Republic of Korea Kuala Lumpur

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE POPULAIRE LAO

M. Khamsing SAYAKONE
Chef adjoint de Cabinet
Ministère de l'agriculture, des
forêts et de l'hydraulique Vientiane

Mr. SOMPHONG MONGKHONVILAY
Director, Planning, Statistics
Department
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry
and Irrigation
Vientiane

H. Maligna SAIGNVONGS
Chef du Service des affaires
économiques et sociales du
Département des organisations
internationales
Ministère des affaires étrangères
Vientiane

MALAYSIA - MALAISIE

DATUK SHARIF AHMAD M.P.
Minister of Agriculture
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Edmund LANGGU ANAK SAGA
Deputy Minister of Agriculture
Ministry of Agriculture
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. HAJI ZAKARIA BIN HADJI ABDUL RAHMAN
Deputy Minister of Agriculture
Kuala Lumpur

DATO' ISHAK BIN HAJI PATEH AKHIR
Secretary-General
Ministry of Agriculture
Kuala Lumpur

DATUK HARUN BIN ARIFFIN
Secretary-General
Ministry of Land and Regional Development
Kuala Lumpur

DATUK WAN SIDEK BIN WAN ABDUL RAHMAN
Deputy Secretary-General
Ministry of Agriculture
Kuala Lumpur

AHMAD B. YUNUS
Deputy Director-General
Department of Agriculture
Kuala Lumpur

ISMAIL BIN SHAMSUDDIN
Director, Planning and Research Division
Lembaga Padi dan Beras Negara
Kuala Lumpur

MOHD. RIDZUAN BIN MOHD. NOH
Director of Development and Training
Department of Agriculture
Kuala Lumpur

ABU BAKAR YUSOF
General Manager
Agricultural Bank Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur

ABU BAKAR MAHMUD
Agriculture Attache
Rome

ABDUL RAHIM RAHMAT
Director of Development
Farmers' Organization Authority
Kuala Lumpur

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AHMAD HASSAN BIN OSMAN Director, Economic Planning Unit Prime Minister's Department	Kuala Lumpur
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AMHA BIN BUANG Assistant Secretary Ministry of Primary Industries	Kuala Lumpur
JAAFAR MAT Assistant Director, Treasury	Kuala Lumpur
PANG LEONG HOON Director-General Drainage and Irrigation Department	Kuala Lumpur
TENGGU UBAIDILLAH BIN ABDUL KADIR Director-General of Fisheries	Kuala Lumpur
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DEVA MOHD. RIDZAM Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Kuala Lumpur
LIM YEE LAN Ministry of Law	Kuala Lumpur
M. MUNANG Senior Assistant Conservator of Forests Forest Department, Sandakan	Sandakan, Sabah
Richard E. WEST Institute of Cultural Affairs	Kuala Lumpur
YAP TEOW CHONG Veterinary Officer Ministry of Agriculture	Kuala Lumpur
SAAD BIN MARZUKI Director-General Department of Cooperative Development	Kuala Lumpur

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T. MAKENDRANOTHON Veterinary Headquarters	Kuala Lumpur
KAKA SING DHALWAL Executive Officer	Kuala Lumpur
LIM CHENG BENG Assistant Director National Livestock Development Authority	Kuala Lumpur
ABDUL LATIFF B. BUANG Executive Officer	Kuala Lumpur
LIM ENG SIANG Assistant Director National Livestock Development Authority	Kuala Lumpur
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MOHARI BIN MUHARAL Assistant Director	Kuala Lumpur
ABDUL WAHID AZAHARI General Manager Kemubu Agricultural Development Authority Ministry of Agriculture	Kota Bharu
MOHD. ADMIN BIN HAJI SIDEK Accountant	Kuala Lumpur
MOHAMED TAMIN BIN YEOP Director-General Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute	Kuala Lumpur
SOON KAI WONG Minister of Agriculture State of Sarawak	Kuching

E.T. GIBBONS
Senior Marketing Adviser
National Livestock Development Authority Petaling Jaya

YAHYA ISMAIL
Director-General
The National Livestock
Development Authority Petaling Jaya

S. THURAISINGHAM
Director-General of Veterinary Services Kuala Lumpur

MOHD. NOORANI KAMARUN
Director-General
Fisheries Development Authority
Ministry of Agriculture Kuala Lumpur

ABU BAKAR B. ABDUL HAMID
Director
Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority Petaling Jaya

ABDUL GHANI AHMAD
Managing Director, Bank Rakyat
Ministry of Agriculture Kuala Lumpur

LAI KWOK KONG
Senior Agricultural Economist
Ministry of Agriculture Kuala Lumpur

NEPAL

Mr. BED BAH DUR KHADKA
Senior Agricultural Adviser and
Chief, Planning and Coordination
Ministry of Food, Agriculture
and Irrigation Kathmandu

Mr. Shiva BAHADUR NEPALI
Director-General
Department of Agriculture
Ministry of Food, Agriculture
and Irrigation Kathmandu

Mr. Thakur N. PANT
Executive Director
Agricultural Projects Services
Centre Kathmandu

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Mr. K.C. DURRANT
Deputy Director-General
Ministry of Agriculture and
Fisheries Wellington

Mr. James A. HOWELL
First Secretary
New Zealand High Commission Kuala Lumpur

PAKISTAN

Mr. K.M. SAFDAR Minister for Food and Agriculture	Islamabad
Mr. Anis AHMED Joint Secretary (Rural Development) Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development	Islamabad
Mr. Manzur AHMAD Additional Secretary Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Islamabad
Mr. Asif EZDI Chargé d'Affaires Embassy of Pakistan	Kuala Lumpur
Mr. Parvez MASUD Alternate Permanent Representative of Pakistan to FAO	Rome

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Mr. Norbert MAKMOP Executive Officer Department of Primary Industry	Port Moresby
Dr. Barry D. SHAW First Assistant Secretary Department of Primary Industry	Port Moresby
Mr. A. Michael WHEELER Agriculture Economist Department of Primary Industry	Port Moresby
Mr. Paul KAHATA Area Coordinator Department of Primary Industry	Konedobu
Mr. George LECH MALYNICZ Chief, Livestock Development Office Department of Primary Industry	Port Moresby

PHILIPPINES

Mr. José P. LEVISTE Jr. Assistant Minister Ministry of Agriculture	Manila
Mr. Benjamin R. LABAYEN Assistant Minister Ministry of Agrarian Reform	Quezon

Mr. Elizardo A. FRANCISCO Senior Consultant Ministry of Agriculture	Quezon
Mr. J. ANDRES LIMCAOCO Senior Consultant Ministry of Agriculture	Manila
Mr. Candido S. DIZON Supervising Consultant	Quezon
Mr. Salvador ESCUDERO Director, Bureau of Animal Industry	Manila
Mr. Fernando A. NAZARENO Director, Ministry of Local Government and Community Development	Manila
Mrs. Angela V. MADRID Public Relations Officer Fishery Industry Dev. Council Ministry of National Resources	Quezon
Mr. Antonio NOCOM President ANSA FARMS	Manila
Mr. Florentino TAN Deputy Executive Director Fishery Industry Develop. Council	Manila
Mr. EDISON VILLASIS Assistant Director Marketing Operations National Grains Authority	Quezon
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Mr. Jesus TANCHANCO Administrator National Grains Authority	Quezon
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Mr. Earle H.W. JAYASEKARA Director of Agriculture Department of Agriculture	Peradeniya

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Dr. Yuwat VUTHIMEDHI Chief, Research and Evaluation Division Community Development Department Ministry of Interior	Bangkok
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Mr. Sumathee SRISUCHART Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation	Bangkok
Ms. Nisa SHENAKUL National FAO Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	Bangkok

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---	------

Mr. Melvin SCHUWEILER
Coordinator, FAO Affairs
Agency for International Development
IIA-IA-UNR
WASHINGTON DC

Mr. E. Wayne DENNEY
Agricultural Economist
U.S. Department of Agriculture
FDCD-ESCS
WASHINGTON DC

Mr. Robert SVEC
Agricultural Attache
American Embassy
Kuala Lumpur

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Deputy Minister of Agriculture
Hanoi

Mr. LA-XUAN-DINH
Director of International
Cooperation Department
Ministry of Agriculture
Hanoi

Ms. NGUYEN-BINH-THANH
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
International Organizations
Hanoi

Mr. TRAN LE DUC
Official of the Embassy
Hanoi

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Director, Department of
Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
Thimbu

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Church of the Holy Redeemer
Kelang

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ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT INDUSTRIEL (ONUDI)

Mr. F.M. IQBAL
Senior Industrial Development
Field Adviser
Jakarta

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)
COMMISSION ECONOMIQUE ET SOCIALE POUR L'ASIE ET LE PACIFIQUE (CESAP)

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Executive Secretary
Bangkok

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Economic Affairs Officer
Bangkok

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Chief, Agriculture Division
Bangkok

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Dacca

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Singapore and Brunei
Kuala Lumpur

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Deputy Regional Representative for
Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei
Kuala Lumpur

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for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei
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Programme Officer
Kuala Lumpur

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HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LES REFUGIES (HCNUR)

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Regional Representative
Regional Office for Eastern
South Asia Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Christopher J. CARPENTER
Deputy Regional Representative
Regional Office for Eastern
South Asia Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Luise DRUKE
Programme Officer
Regional Office for Eastern
South Asia Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Rajn ALOCHAN KAPUR
Resettlement Officer
Regional Office for Eastern
South Asia Kuala Lumpur

WORLD FOOD COUNCIL (WFC)
CONSEIL MONDIAL DE L'ALIMENTATION (CMA)

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NATIONS UNIES/FAO
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ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DU TRAVAIL (OIT)

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Regional Office for Asia Bangkok

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G.C. CLARK, Leader, Small Farmers Development Team
M.L. Dewan, Chief, Regional Bureau for Asia and
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G.C. JUNEJA, Chief, AGOF
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Human Environment), AG
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A. ROCHE, Principal Legal Officer
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Representative for Asia and the Far East

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO

In the name of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization and on behalf of all the delegates present, I thank His Excellency the Prime Minister, and the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, for inviting the 14th FAO Regional Conference to Malaysia.

I also wish to express to the Government of Malaysia our appreciation for the generous hospitality and for the excellent facilities extended to the Conference in this graceful city. Its lush beauty reflects the warm welcome we have received.

May I express my deepest condolences for the sad demise of the former Minister for Agriculture of Malaysia, Mr. Dato Ali Hadji Ahmed - distinguished son of this country - who played an important part in the organization of this Conference.

I welcome the Ministers, the distinguished delegates, the observers and participants from the Region and from other parts of the world, who have assembled here today.

Mr. Chairman, Ministers and Distinguished Delegates: As you remember, two years ago, the 13th FAO Regional Conference drew up the Manila Declaration. In this Declaration the member countries pledged themselves to attach high priority to the development of the food and agricultural sector. They resolved to accelerate mobilization of domestic resources, human and physical; to remove domestic constraints in the way of self-reliant and equitable rural development. The Declaration urged intensified international collaboration in respect of investment, research and world food security as well as growth and stability in agricultural trade. It endorsed the new initiatives and policies of FAO in this regard.

How far have we progressed since then? Even though two years is too short a period for decisive breakthroughs, we must constantly measure performance against resolutions. Perhaps I may begin with an appraisal of the state of food and agriculture in the last two years. The rate of growth of world food and agricultural production slowed down in 1977 compared to the previous two years. This is also true, on the whole, in this Region. The slowest increase has taken place in the MSA and in the poorer developing countries. At the same time, large stocks, especially of wheat, have piled up, mostly in a few developed countries. They threaten to depress prices in surplus countries, and lead to unilateral decisions to cut back production while shortages persist in many developing countries.

Taking a longer-term view, the growth rate has been slower in the seventies than in the sixties. Food production in the Region has barely kept pace with the population increase; above all, it has fallen short of the target of 4 percent set by the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade.

The performance of individual developing countries in the Region has varied widely; a few have achieved higher rates of growth than in the sixties. In some countries large increases in production have taken place in 1977 due to a combination of good weather and improved government policies and programmes. At the same time there are many countries in this Region which are facing today serious food shortages. This Region contains the largest concentration of population in the world suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

A disquieting feature of food production in this Region is the unacceptably low yields in rice production, its most important cereal crop. This is a subject to which the FAO Committee on World Food Security is paying particular attention. I have set up an Inter-Departmental Task Force on Rice to identify practical ways of tackling this problem. There is a wide diversity of ecological conditions and resource endowments in the Region. In many countries a substantial increase is also required in the yields of coarse grains, pulses, starchy roots and tubers to combat hunger and malnutrition.

Mr. Chairman, turning our attention to international policies and action, I need not remind you that progress has been far from satisfactory. External assistance for increasing food production declined sharply in 1976 and despite an increase in 1977 has improved little in real terms compared with 1975. It is still substantially below the \$8.3 billion target set by the World Food Council.

However, the International Fund for Agricultural Development with an initial capital of \$1 billion has begun its operations. It is a welcome step forward. On the other hand, the pledges for the World Food Programme fall short of the target. Similarly, the food aid target of 10 million tons is yet to be fulfilled.

The International Emergency Reserve has not reached its target of 500 000 tons. I welcome the recent resolution of the World Food Council in Mexico endorsing this reserve on a continuing basis with regular replenishments. The negotiations for an internationally coordinated system of national food reserves continues to be stalled in the absence of agreement between the major participants. The FAO Committee on World Food Security in 1977 has reconfirmed the criteria and guidelines which an international grains agreement must fulfill to meet the objectives of food security.

It is against this background that FAO pursues its policies and programmes. We conceive our mission in a spirit of partnership with the member countries. We seek cooperation with other UN agencies in meeting what, in terms of sheer magnitude of the task in the Region, is one of the greatest challenges facing us.

We have emphasized decentralization, country level action, flexibility and pragmatism. We have responded to requests from the countries of the Region for the establishment of FAO country offices. I am happy to inform you that FAO offices have so far been installed in Bangladesh, Burma, India, Nepal, Philippines and Viet Nam. We are engaged in negotiations with a few more countries.

In our technical assistance projects in the Region, our objective is to help member countries to identify, formulate and execute development projects. Currently, FAO implements 246 projects funded by UNDP. They amount to about US \$157 million. In addition, there are 89 projects funded by trust funds of various kinds, which amount to \$29 million.

Through our Technical Cooperation Programme, we seek to serve as a catalyst in accelerating agricultural development. Under this programme we can respond promptly to the urgent needs of the member countries. From its beginning up to now, I have approved fifty-eight Technical Cooperation Programme projects for a total amount of about \$5.6 million.

We recognize the great importance of increased capital investments in agriculture. Under FAO's cooperative programme with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, sixteen investment projects were prepared and approved for financing in 1977. This will result in an investment flow of \$830 million.

As you are aware, I have given high priority to the prevention of food losses. The 19th FAO Conference approved my proposal to establish an action programme for the prevention of food losses with a minimum target of US \$20 million. The resources under this programme have now reached \$13 million. I greatly appreciate the strong support the member countries of this Region have given to this programme. I am personally interested in ensuring its speedy implementation.

I continue to receive a large number of requests for emergency food aid from this Region. During 1977 we supplied emergency food assistance equivalent to \$35.5 million. Moreover, between mid-1976 and 1978, 48 World Food Programme projects, amounting to about \$377 million, have been approved for promoting socio-economic development and improving nutrition.

I respond to the needs of the priority areas as fast and as best as I can under the constraint of inadequate resources.

Since 1976 FAO has been implementing a Food Security Assistance Scheme to help member countries to build up food reserves as well as storage and related facilities. Since its inception we have sent missions to nine countries in the Region; in some FAO has acted as a catalyzing agent in attracting outside funds; in others it has channelled funds of its own. Resources at the disposal of FAO for this scheme are limited. I have accordingly appealed to the donors for increased contributions.

Under its collaborative arrangements with IFAD, FAO helps to identify and appraise its investment projects. IFAD, as you know, is intended to concentrate its resources on the rural poor, particularly in the poorer developing countries. Your Region, dominated as it is by small farmers and landless labourers, would have, therefore, a special interest in its programmes.

As I have indicated in various fora of FAO, we are deeply committed that rural development projects and programmes must benefit the majority of the rural poor. Past experience in this respect must be scrutinized. New procedures and guidelines must be evolved.

It is in this context that I visualize the proposed Centre for Integrated Rural Development in Asia and the Pacific as playing a pioneering role. It would indeed be a unique institution of its kind in the world. It would work through a network of national institutions and facilitate an exchange of experience among them. It would provide opportunities for training and research.

I feel happy that FAO has taken the initiative in providing impetus and help to the member countries of this Region to establish such a Centre.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates: In conclusion, I would like to share with you my thoughts about the future; about the challenges confronting us as well as about our possible response.

The call for the New International Economic Order can have no meaning unless the rural masses in Asia, the most populous region, are uplifted and their basic needs are satisfied.

The most crucial challenge in this respect is how to integrate the rural poor in the development process; how to promote self-reliance and how to combine growth with equity. In the light of FAO's experience in this Region, I would highlight today only two preconditions - among many others - for responding to such a challenge.

One is to promote effective mechanisms so that the rural communities can not only secure access but also make best use of services and inputs provided by the government. The rural poor must participate in mobilizing resources, in designing and formulating projects at the grass roots level.

We must give deep thought as to how best organize the rural poor and to render more effective their relationship to the rest of society. We need to abandon paternalism and stimulate self-reliance of the rural masses. Non-governmental institutions may play a key role in promoting peoples' organizations.

In recent years, several countries in Asia have initiated new approaches and experiments for development through self-help at the village level. A few have been initiated by the people themselves. They provide evidence that political and social consciousness can stimulate the momentum for meaningful development at the grass roots level. The time has come for us to identify, analyse and learn lessons for the future from these various approaches.

A second important pre-condition is the reorientation of the rural extension services. Conventional extension agents are proving inadequate in numbers and quality. We need to create new rural cadres. We may call them the new class of "human extension agents". Their primary duty is to activate and mobilize the rural human resources, with an accent on the poor. Their basic responsibility is to the people they serve. In their quest for this class of social cadres, the governments of the Region may seek to harness the cooperation of voluntary and non-governmental agencies.

I have only briefly outlined a few of the new directions in which, I believe, we must move in the future. They are not exhaustive but illustrative. These and related issues provide the raison d'être for the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

This Conference, as you know, is due to be held in 1979 in Rome. You have an agenda item on this subject which, I hope, will provide a valuable contribution to the deliberations of the World Conference.

This Conference is not only an exercise in collective self-analysis; above all, I trust that it will agree on a programme of action at national and international levels for meeting the challenges, some of which I have depicted above.

I have appointed Mr. H. Santa Cruz as my Special Representative for this World Conference. To advise me on substantive aspects of the Conference, I have also established a High Level Advisory Committee of Experts, in consultation with Member Governments, and drawn from the various regions of the world, including your own.

Mr. Chairman, Ministers and Distinguished Delegates: I have only given you a glimpse of the tasks for the future, as I see them. I have shared with you a few of my thoughts in this respect. They require a clear understanding, a firm commitment and a political will on the part of the national leadership.

Rural Asia contains the world's largest concentration of rural poor. This Region is also the home of rich cultures and ancient civilizations. The Region has great potentials. Some countries in this Region have achieved substantial rural progress in recent years.

You, therefore, face a great undertaking as trustees of the aspirations and possibilities of the rural populations of Asia. These aspirations, if I may sum up, are a highly productive agriculture and a prosperous rural society, a society in which justice and equity prevail; in which basic human needs are satisfied; in which self-reliance and human dignity are achieved and preserved.

I wish your deliberation a great success.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE FAO REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR
ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

There is a Malaysian proverb that we ought perhaps to recall as we begin the initial session of our Technical Committee meetings.

Out there in the kampongs or villages, the Malaysian farmers like to say: "Beras secupak tidak akan jadi sa-gantang."

Freely translated, it means: Unless you work hard on filling your small chupa-measures of rice, it will never grow into a ganta.

Like most peasant proverbs, this saying is full of earthy wisdom. It reflects the farmer's experience that food comes only through hard work; that despite scientific advances, one still must sow and weed and reap before the hungry can be fed.

I have chosen to stress down-to-earth action, as the focal point of our deliberations - even before discharging the traditional duties of expressing our gratitude to the Government of Malaysia for its hospitality and welcoming you here - because of the crucial problems that face us in the field of food and agriculture.

In a nutshell, the problem is: Despite the increased resources given to agriculture and the good harvests, substantial numbers of people today remain hungry. In fact, per capita food production in most developing countries deteriorated last year. Growth has slipped from the 2.8 per cent achieved in the 1960s to 2.4 per cent for the most part of the 1970s.

If we are not able to develop new productive capacities, we could face food shortages in the years ahead.

This trend is complicated by the widespread poverty in our Region.

About 412 million people fall into the "absolute poverty" category. Even if we had a string of bumper harvests, many of our people would simply be unable to buy the food they need.

This is why our so-called "food surpluses" of today have been aptly likened to a mirage. If the purchasing power of our rural people were to increase even marginally, these surpluses would be bought out overnight by people living in that twilight zone between deprivation and starvation.

What is worse, this poverty has not been contained. It is, in fact, spreading. The ILO study on Poverty and Landlessness in Rural Asia, for instance, documents that incomes of the poorest sectors in seven Asian countries studied have deteriorated.

Yet, these shortages - and the crippling human suffering they imply - are not intractable.

We have many things going for us.

In this hall, are Governments with strong political commitment to resolve the food problem. Some have clamped down on prestige or urban-centred projects to release resources for crucial programmes in the rural sector. In our societies, we have the laws, the skills, the technology. There are new institutions that can make additional support for food production available.

We also have the mistakes of past development strategies to learn from. For instance, we now know - with the clarity of hindsight - that hunger and poverty are exacerbated, when one grapples with them as purely technical issues, without reference to the people caught in a complex web of social and economic relationships.

Let us, however, not be misled into believing that hunger and poverty are the problems. Rather, they are the gross symptoms or consequences of the real problem which is: The unjust economic, social and political structures that distort and constrain the development process.

Our development experience of the past two decades also shows that a permanent solution to hunger rests basically with the rural poor and how they are helped to correct these unjust structures.

Adequate food - and consequent political stability - will come only when we help the small farmer, the landless labourer and artisanal fisherman acquire effective access to tools for production and a just share in it.

This thrust, of course, includes organization, credit and technology. But above all, it also requires provision of essential but intangible instruments like mechanisms to make the voices of the peasants heard and their right to make decisions - even mistakes - on the application of those resources.

From the papers, I note that U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young has been - well, not exactly praised - for some of his more recent statements. Who was it who said: "When I do right, nobody remembers; when I do wrong, nobody forgets".

Nonetheless, Ambassador Young made some points in his address to the 34th Session of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok that are worth remembering and I quote:

"People do not need paternalistic redemption, however well intentioned, however noble ... Management prescriptions (imposed from above) that ignore the well springs of creativity of the people to whom the approaches are directed will lead to a dole at best - at worst, it will merely bring forth and reinforce regimentation and repression ... This is a formula for upheaval."

This is the reason why the agenda items before us - agrarian reform, of natural resources and human environment, rural development, technical cooperation between developing countries and post-harvest losses - are issues that have wide social dimensions. These focus on the elements that have the potential for unlocking the potential for growth.

They are items designed to help us focus our attention and our deliberations on developing together - as nations and as fellow human beings - policies and programmes to enable our farmers to work at meeting their basic human needs.

This thrust is underpinned by a growing understanding that our lives are all inextricably linked to the lives of the weakest of our peoples; that development occurs only when the basic needs of the poorest are met and their right to participate in decisions that shape their lives are fully secured. Was it not Chairman Mao who once said: "Of all things in the world, human beings are the most precious."

Today, we live in a world that has become sensitized to the issue of human rights. The headlines often focus on the political aspects of those rights.

Here in Kuala Lumpur, in this meeting, we are primarily concerned with the social aspects of those rights. And it is this perspective that reveals that programmes to reach the disadvantaged are not just a question of charity but of justice.

And at rock bottom, is this not what the New International Economic Order is all about? That each man can, in accordance with his God-given dignity, satisfy his needs and fulfill his human potentials.

In keeping with the practice we adopted at the 13th and 14th FAO Regional Conferences, our work is divided into two phases.

First, there will be our Technical Meeting. This will run from today, July 25, to Friday, July 28. Here, we hope to prepare the technical foundation for the policy decisions that will be reached at the Plenary Sessions, which constitute the second and final phase. This is now scheduled from July 31 to August 3.

Many of us here have had opportunities to work together in the past. From that experience, I knew that this meeting will benefit from your expertise, your insight and above all your sympathetic concern for the small farmer and his modest hopes for what the late Ramon Magsaysay concisely summed up as "a little more shelter over his head."

On behalf, therefore, of the Director-General of the FAO -whose administration is pledged to effective field action for the rural poor- I welcome you to this initial meeting of our technical Committee.

All of you here, I know, will also join me in expressing to the Government of Malaysia our warmest appreciation and sincerest gratitude for hosting this Conference.

As you can see, the facilities extended by the Government are excellent and the hospitality extended to all of us heartwarming.

May I make of record of our appreciation for the assistance that has been extended to all of us by His Excellency Dato' Ahmad Shariff, the Minister of Agriculture, as well as Datul Ishak, Secretary-General of Agriculture; Mr. Abu Bakar, Malaysia's Permanent Representative to FAO; and Mr. Azmi, Deputy Secretary-General and Conference Liaison Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture.

CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE FAO REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR
ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

In the Philippines, they have a proverb that perhaps sums up today's occasion.

"No matter how long the procession," the farmers like to say, "it will return to the church."

They use this saying to stress that even good things - like this very useful and positive meeting - must come to an end.

At these closing ceremonies of our 14th FAO Regional Conference, permit me, first of all, to discharge the pleasant duty of conveying our gratitude to all the people who helped us.

May I, therefore, thank, first of all, on behalf of the delegations, as well as on the part of FAO, His Excellency Datuk Hussein Onn, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, for hosting this Conference and for addressing us at the inaugural session. All of us, I am sure, appreciated the wise advice that he offered.

I would also like to thank the member countries for sending delegations composed of such talented men and women. We have all benefitted from their experience and insights and our deliberations were conducted without acrimony and in a spirit of collaboration, based on the common goals of alleviating hunger.

I convey to His Excellency, the Minister of Agriculture, Dato' Shariff Ahmad, our gratitude for his skill in chairing this Conference and guiding our discussions.

A special word of thanks should go to the Malaysian Government's Secretariat staff, organized by Dato' Ishak, Mr. Azmi and Mr. Abu Bakar. They assisted us in our deliberations, arranged for field trips and ensured that our stay in this city was comfortable.

We have benefitted from the expertise and the experience from colleagues who came from FAO Headquarters. I would like therefore to acknowledge our appreciation to them.

You heard their voices over the microphones and read their handiwork in the various official languages of our documents. To the translators and interpreters from Headquarters go our accolades.

In any conference, we tend to see only what appears on the conference floors and on the podiums. But much of the work is done by self-effacing people who run the mimeographing machines, drive the cars and make the telephone calls for us. Without them, our conference would have quickly collapsed. To them, I express our sincerest gratitude.

May I say thank you to the news media for the coverage they have given of our proceedings.

Mr. Chairman: In our summing up, it would perhaps be useful if we set our work in context.

Since the 11th FAO Regional Conference in New Delhi member countries have instructed us to focus our work on coping with the problems of rural poverty, with a strong stress on the small farmers.

But there has been a significant evolving of priorities and focus. In 1972, when we met in New Delhi, the concentration was on efforts at spurring production growth. But the early 1970s had started to document the fact that despite major development programmes, rural poverty was spreading.

Spurred by traumatic food shortages of the early 1970s, the 12th and 13th Sessions of the Regional Conference in Tokyo and Manila laid greater stress on efforts to help the weakest and the poorest of our rural populations emerged. The Manila Declaration reflects, this perception.

When we met in Kuala Lumpur, the world had recognized that hunger and poverty are merely gross symptoms or consequences; that the real problem which we have to confront, as I told the Technical Committee, is: the unjust economic, social and political structures that distort and constrain and condemn our rural people to life sentences of poverty development. This is the basic reason for the Director-General's decision to call the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

This Regional Conference has addressed itself to these institutional and structural problems. It has seen the organization of CIRDA and adopted three resolutions on (1) Technical Cooperation Programme, (2) Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries in the Fields of Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and (3) Promotion of Food Security with Special Emphasis on Reduction of Post-Harvest Food Losses.

These are useful resolutions addressed to very real problems. Consider, for instance, our consensus on post-harvest losses. The Chinese peasants, for instance, like to say that 'for every grain you lose, a drop of sweat must be paid.' It is my hope that we can implement these resolutions adequately.

Equally important, our deliberations will be considered by the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. It will give indications of both practical programmes and thresholds of what is possible and shape the recommendations to the Conference.

Mr. Chairman: For the past week, we have met in this beautiful air-conditioned ballroom.

I have always thought this ballroom was aptly called the Nirvana - a state of blissful forgetfulness, far distant from the grim realities of our rural poor and the unjust agrarian structures that entrap them.

The fact is that we have a world where - if I could borrow the words of the Greek philosopher - "the powerful exact what they can and the weak grant what they must."

It was the Prime Minister of Malaysia in his inaugural address here, who warned that, in our resource-short decade, we may be reaching the limits of our agricultural structures.

"It is unfair," Datuk Hussein Onn said, "that those who produce the food are often the ones who suffer poverty the most."

Whether our programmes respond adequately to the Prime Minister's call is not for us to say. That judgement will be reserved for the rural poor we are all pledged to serve.

Thank you and Godspeed.

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Technical Committee of the 14th FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Far East opened its meeting on 25th July in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It ended on 28 July 1978.

Representatives of the following Member Governments were present: Australia, Bangladesh, Burma, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States of America and Vietnam.

There were observers from: United Kingdom, Holy See, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF-ESEAGOR) and Asian Productivity Organization (APO)..

The Regional Representative of FAO for Asia and the Far East welcomed the participants and observers. He expressed the Conference's appreciation to the Malaysian Government for hosting the meeting. He gave a report on food situation and urged common action to solve problems facing Asian agriculture.

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Technical Committee unanimously elected Mr. Justin Abeyagoonasekara of Sri Lanka as Chairman and Mr. K.C. Durrant of New Zealand as Vice-Chairman.

Drafting Committee

The following delegates were appointed to the Drafting Committee: Mr. Abu Bakar Mahmud, Malaysia (Chairman); Mr. Winston Thompson (Fiji); Mr. I.R. Khurana (India); Mr. Iwata Tatsukai (Japan); Mr. Bed Bahadur Khadka (Nepal) and Mr. Parvez Masud (Pakistan).

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