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Report of the

SEVENTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Islamabad, 24 April to 3 May 1984



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FAO Member Nations in the Asia Region (at 3 May 1984)

Bangladesh	Japan	Philippines
Bhutan	Korea, Republic of	Samoa
Burma	Laos	Sri Lanka
China	Malaysia	Thailand
Democratic Kampuchea	Maldives	Tonga
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Mongolia	United Kingdom
Fiji	Nepal	Vanuatu
India	Pakistan	Viet Nam
Indonesia	Papua New Guinea	

FAO Member Nations in the Southwest Pacific Region

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

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Asia and the Pacific

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
Fifteenth	—	New Delhi, India, 5-13 March 1980
Sixteenth	—	Jakarta, Indonesia, 1-11 June 1982
Seventeenth	—	Islamabad, Pakistan, 24 April - 3 May 1984

APRC/84/REP

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Rome, 1985

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Conference made 42 recommendations of which 20 are for action by Member Nations, 18 for action by FAO and the remaining 4 call for action by Member Nations as well as by FAO. These are enumerated below in respect of each substantive agenda item.

FAO Activities in the Region, 1982-83 and Programme of Work and Budget, 1984-85

For the attention of FAO

1. FAO should document and widely disseminate successful experiences of efficient use of water and fertilizer in the Region (para. 101).
2. FAO may assist selected countries in micro-level studies on agro-ecological capabilities in terms of suitable and remunerative cropping patterns so that production potential of the land and other resources is realized rationally (para. 103).
3. FAO should assist, subject to availability of funds, Member Nations through a regional project to exchange experiences and planting materials and to strengthen management of nurseries and production of quality seeds of vegetables (para. 105).
4. FAO should continue to promote and strengthen its efforts in integrated pest management with special reference to pollution control and safe handling of pesticides (para. 107).
5. FAO should intensify research and development support to saline and brackish water utilization in the Region, particularly the evolution of salt tolerant crops (para. 109).
6. FAO should provide suitable assistance at the appropriate stage to strengthen the Pacific Island countries' efforts in the introduction of rice (para. 112).
7. A Regional Centre for Coordinated Research on Buffalos (including nutrition, reproduction, and economic feeding systems) should be established. FAO should formulate a project document and seek financial assistance for the project (para. 116).
8. TCDC activities in the Region should be further expanded and strengthened. The Conference urged international donor agencies to increase their support to TCDC programmes (para. 117).

Plan of Action for Development of Renewable Sources of Rural Energy

For the attention of governments

9. Countries should take cognizance of the various elements of the plan of action detailed in the Secretariat Document (APRC/84/4) and formulate country specific plans of action for developing rural energy supplies (para. 127).
10. Countries should make a major effort to ensure the active participation of rural people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects on renewable sources of rural energy, keeping in view the role of non-governmental organizations in mobilizing rural people (para. 130).
11. Countries should give priority attention to increasing fuelwood supplies in geographical areas facing acute scarcity/deficit of fuelwood (para. 132).
12. The creation of new fuelwood resources should be intensified both on forest lands and on non-forest lands. Social forestry and other means of action which mobilize the efforts and participation of communities and farmers in growing trees should be actively pursued (para. 133).
13. Education, extension, training and research in forestry and agriculture should be re-oriented to meet the needs of wood energy programme development (para. 134).

14. Improved wood-burning stoves which are socially acceptable and cost-effective should be promoted, keeping in view the role of women in accepting this technology (para. 135);
15. Countries (where limited progress is made on the Biogas programme) should establish pilot plants to demonstrate practicability and viability of the plants (para. 137).
16. Countries should create suitable organizational arrangements so as to make available professional engineering services to maintain installed biogas plants (para. 139).
17. Regarding Biofertilizers, countries should strengthen their efforts to effectively utilize the potential of biological nitrogen fixation (based on Azolla, blue-green algae and Rhizobium) (para. 142).
18. To improve the overall efficiency of draught animals, countries should develop appropriate feed and management practices, and design, manufacture and adopt appropriate animal drawn implements and equipment. Suitable breeding programmes should be initiated and/or further strengthened (para. 143).
19. Countries should share their experiences in management of draught animals and in developing harnessing devices (para. 143).
20. Countries should initiate basic hydrological and topographical surveys and establish demonstration projects to promote water-lifting devices (para. 145).

For the attention of FAO

21. Regional cooperation on renewable sources of rural energy should be promoted through TCDC in the form of regional networks. FAO should assist the countries of the Region in the establishment of these networks (para. 131).
22. The Conference supported the Regional Cooperative programme on Wood Energy Development formulated by FAO (para. 136).
23. FAO should organize training programmes on biogas technology and promote inter-country cooperation on biogas through the network of national institutions, to facilitate exchange of information and to stimulate applied research work (para. 138).
24. FAO should promote inter-country exchange of knowledge and experience to further develop producer gas technology using rice husk (para. 141).
25. To promote the use of wind energy, FAO should disseminate the knowledge and experience available within and outside the Region for wider application of wind energy in agriculture. FAO should also assist countries in the development of pilot demonstration projects and in the testing/adaptation of proven technologies (para. 144).
26. FAO should facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences for the early establishment of the proposed Regional Applied Research and Training Centre for Water Lifting Devices in China (para. 146).
27. FAO should facilitate the identification, testing and promotion of appropriate types of solar driers through pilot demonstration schemes and exchange of information and expertise within the region (para. 147).

Agricultural Price Policies

For the attention of Governments

28. Countries should assess the current institutional arrangements for the formulation of price policy and, wherever appropriate, establish independent agency for advice on the formulation and implementation of agricultural price policies taking into account the views of all interested groups (para. 168).

29. Countries should consider establishment of suitable mechanisms for implementing price policy (para. 170).

30. Countries should evaluate alternative approaches for providing adequate food supplies at prices affordable by lower income earners through more effectively targeted consumer programmes (para. 171).

For the attention of FAO

31. FAO should consider the possibility of arranging a workshop to discuss the different conceptual and practical issues relevant to the determination of prices for agricultural crops and their cost of production (para. 172).

32. FAO should help Member Nations, through its training activities, to strengthen national capabilities and institution building to formulate, implement and evaluate agricultural price policies (para. 173).

Training for Agricultural and Rural Development

For the attention of Governments

33. Countries should conduct training programmes for women and rural youth and complement them with special development programmes to provide farm and non-farm employment. It was also suggested that training should be imparted to rural families in an integrated manner (para. 178).

34. Countries should identify local leaders and train them in community organization, programme planning and implementation, administration and finance, monitoring and evaluation, agricultural and industrial crafts, etc. (para. 182).

35. Countries should promote the concept of "learn from farmers" and the rural development/extension workers should be encouraged to use this system (para. 183).

36. Countries should train rural development/extension workers in the techniques of group action, farm management, participatory process in development and action research to efficiently implement special action programmes relating to rural poor (para. 184).

37. Countries should explore the possibilities of Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (TCDC) more fully and for this purpose utilize the services of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) (para. 185).

For the attention of FAO

38. FAO should organize, subject to availability of funds, two regional consultations: one on linkage of agricultural education, research and education, and the second on textbook production (para. 177).

Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

For the attention of Governments, and/or FAO, and other international bodies, as appropriate

39. Acknowledging FAO's role in strengthening the communication between the member countries and the CGIAR, the Conference recommended that the Region's Representatives should be included in their national delegations to the regional conference and should be requested to report on their activities within the CGIAR (para. 190).

40. The term of the representative of Pakistan on CGIAR was extended by two years; Thailand was elected to represent the Region for the period 1984-1988 (para. 192).

41. Discussions during the Conference indicated the following priority recommendations:

- (a) Research on livestock and fruits is generally neglected in the Region and should receive due attention of CGIAR and other appropriate international bodies (para. 188).
- (b) A Regional Association on Agricultural Research should be established under the sponsorship of FAO; the cost of sponsoring such an association should be within the existing resources of the Organization (para. 191).
- (c) The International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI), Sri Lanka, should expedite the implementation of its plans to set up cooperating centres for actual research and experimentation and establish one such centre in Pakistan in view of the existence of a vast irrigation system in the country and its experience in this field (para. 102).

Review of the Performance of Selected FAO Regional Commissions

For the attention of Governments and FAO

42. Although there was no consensus on the issue of abolition of the Regional Farm Management Commission, it was agreed that the matter should be kept open and the Secretariat should make efforts to revitalize the Commission. At the same time governments were urged to take active interest in the Commission's activities. The Secretariat should report to the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference the extent of participation in the next meeting of the Commission (para. 196).

INTRODUCTION

1. The Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific was held at Islamabad, Pakistan from 24 April to 3 May 1984.
2. Member Nations that participated in the Conference were: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United States of America and Vanuatu.
3. There were observers from the Holy See, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Observers representing the United Nations and specialized agencies were: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Children's Fund, World Food Programme, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, International Labour Organization and World Bank. In addition to the above, observers from the following inter-governmental organizations were present: Asian Development Bank, Asian Productivity Organization and the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific.
4. The non-governmental organizations represented were: Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, International Cooperative Alliance, International Council of Women and World Federation on Trade Unions.
5. The list of participants of the Conference and the List of Secretariat documents issued are given respectively in Appendix B and Appendix C to this report.
6. The Technical Committee unanimously elected Mr R.A. Akhund of Pakistan as Chairman. The Technical Committee also elected the following as Vice-Chairmen: Mr Kazi M. Badrudozza of Bangladesh; Mr Douglas Malosu of Vanuatu; and Mr Salmon Padmanagara of Indonesia.
7. Mr Abu Bakar Bin Mahmud of Malaysia was elected Chairman of the Drafting Committee. Delegates of the following nations were appointed to this body: Australia, China, India, Japan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
8. Members of other delegations who wished to contribute on specific items were co-opted as appropriate.
9. The Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific welcomed the participants and observers to the Technical Committee. He expressed gratitude to the Government of Pakistan for hosting the meeting.
10. Before making introductory remarks on the agenda before the Committee, he briefly referred to the progress made in the Region in increasing cereal production and indicated that this compared favourably with progress made in other regions.
11. He also explained that at this Conference, the items: Review of FAO Activities and Programme of Work were not on the agenda of the Technical Committee and that they were suggested for consideration direct by the Plenary Session. This was done for two reasons: firstly, this would enable the Technical Committee to devote more time to essentially technical issues; secondly, it would bring in line the procedure of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific with that of most of the other Regional Conferences.
12. Referring to the subjects on the agenda of the Technical Committee he underscored the importance of the agenda item on renewable sources of rural energy, and called for considered action on the plan of action that is proposed in the Secretariat Document. The second subject on the agenda was agricultural price policy, the importance of which in the overall strategy for agricultural development is being increasingly recognized. He stressed the need to crystallize the conclusions on the subject to strengthen the capabilities of the countries to use agricultural price policy as a viable instrument for development. On training for agriculture and rural development, he said that to achieve efficiency in food and agriculture production it is mandatory to train and update the skills of the farmers and extension workers. He made a brief mention of the other agenda items: FAO Regional Commissions and the Region's representation at the CGIAR.

13. The Committee unanimously adopted the agenda. It discussed the substantive frame of the Agenda and prepared a report of its deliberations for consideration by the Plenary.
14. The Conference held its Plenary Session from 29 April to 3 May 1984.
15. The Inaugural Session of the Conference was held on 29 April 1984. The Director-General of FAO, Dr Edouard Saouma, welcomed the President of Pakistan, Ministers, delegates, members of the diplomatic corps in Pakistan and observers. He thanked the Government of Pakistan for hosting the Conference. He conveyed the appreciation of the delegates and of FAO for the hospitality extended by the Government of Pakistan.
16. The Minister for Food, Agriculture and Cooperatives of the Government of Pakistan welcomed the delegates to the Conference and said that despite impressive performance in achieving a 3.5 percent growth rate in cereals, the Asia-Pacific region still faced the problem of hunger and malnutrition. The Region had the highest density of population per unit of cultivable land and its food security would increasingly rest on farmers with small holdings. The efforts to increase agricultural productivity should be redoubled and the benefits of development should be carried to the poorest segments of the population. He hoped that the Conference would greatly contribute to the development of agriculture in the Region.
17. President Zia ul Haq delivered the inaugural address. He underlined the importance of the goal of a hunger-free society but regretted that four major factors have hitherto constrained the achievement of this goal. Firstly, despite marked improvement in food production, the growth of population in several countries outpaced food production resulting in 100 million tons of current food imports against 30 million tons in the 1970s. Secondly, there was reduced flow of external assistance for agriculture in real terms. Thirdly, the share of developing countries in the world food trade declined sharply and the terms of trade for commodities produced by them suffered seriously. Fourthly, efforts of developing countries to improve their quality of life received a setback from world recession and the protectionist policies adopted by many developed countries.
18. Giving a resumé of agricultural development in Pakistan, the President said that seven years ago the country was importing wheat and had to overcome several logistical problems to feed the nation. Pakistan has now not only achieved self-sufficiency in food grains but has moved towards an era of increasing and more diversified exports of agricultural products.
19. The President commended the significant role played by farmers, technicians, researchers and planners of Pakistan in raising food output of the country. He lauded the role FAO had played in raising food production all over the world and in particular in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan had benefitted in many ways from the practical help rendered by FAO.
20. The President observed that the world was passing through an era of interdependence and no country could live in isolation and prosper by itself forever without caring for the misery and poverty in the other countries.
21. He said poverty and misery could spill over geographical and political frontiers. Deprivation could cause international instability.
22. He appealed to the nations of the region to expand cooperation in food and agriculture and other fields and said that such cooperation should be based on and contribute to mutual trust, understanding and sympathetic appreciation of each other's problems.
23. The President observed that Pakistan was committed to the principles of collective self-reliance and mentioned in this connection in particular the South Asia Regional Cooperation scheme under which, along with six other countries it had embarked on a course, which it was hoped would lead to greater cooperation among them for mutual benefit.
24. The President stressed increasing interdependence among countries and called for collective self-reliance. Agriculture in its widest sense including its upstream and downstream linkages can be the nucleus of such collective self-reliance.

25. The President said that in Pakistan local people were being involved in the process of growth and development through their own representatives elected on the local councils on the basis of adult franchise. Efforts were also being intensified to ensure participation of women in rural development and other nation building activities through training in income generating activities, especially including agriculture.

26. The President recalled the concept of Islamic system of 'Zakat' (levy on total wealth) and 'Ushr' (levy on agricultural produce) as a measure to establish a welfare society -- a system which has been introduced recently in Pakistan -- and pointed out the need for the rich to share their wealth with those who had never known prosperity.

27. He appealed to the more prosperous states in the world to extend material and technical cooperation to mitigate the sufferings of less fortunate countries. He also stressed the need and obligation of each country in a position to do so to help others, especially its neighbours.

28. The President concluded his address expressing his hope that the Regional Conference would formulate practical and useful recommendations covering various aspects of agriculture which would be of value to the countries of the Region.

29. The Director-General of FAO thanked the President for his statement and hoped that the Regional Conference would attain practical results worthy of the expectations which had been aroused.

30. The delegates elected, by acclamation, H.E. Vice-Admiral Mohammad Fazil Janjua, Minister for Food, Agriculture and Cooperatives of the Government of Pakistan as Chairman of the Conference.

31. The Conference also elected all the Ministers present as Vice-Chairmen.

32. The Conference adopted the Provisional Agenda and Timetable prepared by the Secretariat. The Adopted Agenda appears as Appendix A to this report.

33. The Conference noted, with appreciation, the work of the Technical Committee's Drafting Committee and decided that its report be prepared by the same Committee.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

34. The Director-General then addressed the delegates. He observed that Pakistan had long been in the forefront of agricultural development. Its achievements in increasing production of cereals, and especially of wheat, had been particularly impressive. The achievements of Pakistan were mainly due to the enterprising farmers of Pakistan, and the enlightened policies pursued by the Government. He thanked the President of Pakistan for his generous praise of FAO for its role in stimulating Pakistan's agricultural development.

35. He recalled the "Jakarta Consensus on Equity, Growth and Stability for Development" unanimously passed by the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference which called on governments to broaden - more decisively than they had done so far - the access of their small farmers to land, water and other productive assets, especially through agrarian reform. Governments and individuals were also called upon to protect to thin mantle of fertile top soil and maintain essential ecological processes for sustainable production.

36. Commenting on whether the Region was making progress towards the main objectives of the Jakarta Consensus, he said that a positive answer must be accompanied by many reservations.

37. The Director-General observed that world agricultural trade was in the throes of its worst crisis for several decades. By the end of 1982, the agricultural export prices of developing countries were on average 20 percent below the previous year's level. For the future prosperity of the Region's exports, it was essential that world economic recovery brought about a revival of demand in importing countries. Developed countries should relax the strong hold of protectionism which held back the growth of the Region's exports of processed agricultural raw materials such as textiles and leather goods.

38. Prospects for aid to agriculture remained far from reassuring. Particularly disquieting was the resource situation of the International Development Association (IDA), which had been a major supporter of Asian agriculture. A reduction of IDA funds to US\$ 9 000 million for the seventh replenishment would certainly affect the agricultural development of this and other regions. The general economic environment thus remained difficult, even if the worst of the recession was over.

39. Reviewing developments in agriculture in the region, he stated that in 1983, cereal production surged to an all-time high of 715 million tons. This represented an increase of no less than 10.5 percent over the 1982 harvest. While there had been considerable fluctuations from year to year, over the period 1973-83, cereal production in the Region achieved an annual compound growth rate of 3.4 percent.

40. Higher output came entirely from increases in yields, since the traditional option of ploughing up new land was now almost entirely sealed off. The pressure on land was reflected in the declining area per person engaged in agriculture; the fall was as much as 9 percent over the past decade.

41. Speaking of continuing problems in agriculture production in the Region, the Director-General observed that cereal yields, though improving, were still generally little more than two tons per hectare. Prevailing levels of technology were still very low.

42. A recent FAO study of the carrying capacity of land throughout the world showed that seven countries in the Region were on the danger list. In coming decades, they would be unable to produce enough food for their rising populations without a major improvement in the level of input use.

43. It was also required for countries to develop effective food security programmes and vigorously adopt the approach which included price policy measures, public distribution arrangements and, above all, programmes of rural development for generating higher income among the mass of the people.

44. The basic challenge was to combine such programmes, oriented primarily towards the attainment of equity, with efforts to maintain the momentum in food production that the region had painstakingly built up.

45. The Region was in a relatively strong position to launch an all-out attack to achieve growth with equity. There were a number of shared perceptions among countries of the Asia-Pacific Region. These included: security of tenure and other agrarian reform measures, packages of technology adapted to the needs of integrated farming, especially for tropical upland and semi-arid areas; and fostering rural development through people's participation. There was also a general recognition of the continuing need to reduce post-harvest food losses.

46. Many countries in the Region were also striving to give more recognition and support to the important role played by rural women in development. The establishment of women's bureaux by many governments and their close cooperation with line ministries, could help to bring about the kinds of support that were needed.

47. The Director-General stressed that technical and economic cooperation among developing countries should play an increasingly important role. The promotion of ECDC and TCDC had become a basic constituent in a widening range of FAO programmes. The regional or sub-regional approach could be particularly fruitful in many circumstances.

48. Reviewing FAO programmes in the Region he said that with resources being severely limited, FAO activities would concentrate on four main areas: increasing food production; strengthening food security; maximizing impact at the field level; and enhancing economic and technical cooperation among developing countries.

49. He concluded his address by reiterating that in striving for development, growth could and must, be combined with equity. The full text of the Director-General's statement is given in Appendix D.

MAJOR ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE COUNTRY STATEMENTS

50. Country statements were delivered by the delegates of Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the United States of America and Vanuatu. The highlights of the country statements are briefly indicated below.

Progress in Agricultural Production

51. While some country statements referred to the Asia-Pacific Region's overall progress in achieving an annual compound growth rate of 3.4 percent during the decade ending 1983, most of the country statements reflected the progress of agricultural production in individual countries in recent years.

52. Bangladesh reported a record food grain production of over 16 million tons in 1983, an increase of one million tons over the previous year. The Kingdom of Bhutan had been traditionally self-sufficient in food, but in recent years a food deficit had occurred. In Burma, the strategy of increasing agricultural production through "Whole Township of High-Yielding Rice Production" programmes had paid dividends.

53. Despite unfavourable weather conditions in 1982, there was a bumper harvest in China, and total grain output reached 353 million tons, an increase of 8.7 percent over 1981. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, special attention was directed to developing irrigation facilities, achieving comprehensive mechanization and optimal use of fertilizers.

54. In India, food grain production had risen to an all-time peak of 149.8 million tons in 1983, registering a rise of 16.5 million tons over the previous highest level of 133.3 million tons. In Indonesia, production of rice had increased at an annual growth of 6.1 percent with outstanding achievement in two successive years, 1979/80 and 1980/81, when it grew by 12.8 percent and 10.5 percent respectively. In Laos there had been an increase in the total area under irrigated rice fields to 12 000 ha. and those under rainfed rice to 450 000 ha.

55. Pakistan had achieved a growth rate of 4.4 percent per annum in agriculture during the past six years, thus exceeding the population growth rate by 1.5 percent per annum. Wheat production which was only 8.37 million tons in 1977/78 had increased by 48 percent, touching a record production of 12.41 million tons in 1982/83. In Sri Lanka, it was reported that rice was grown by 1.8 million small farms over an extent of 1.5 million ha.

Agricultural Development Strategies

56. Most of the country statements highlighted the strategies adopted in individual countries to accelerate food and agriculture production. Bangladesh had pursued the policy of improving the critical relationship between the levels of production and effective demand. Government intervention had been aimed at raising incomes of small farmers. In Bhutan, during the present plan 1982/83, the major objectives were: (i) achieving self-sufficiency in food grain and livestock production; (ii) increasing incomes of farmers through diversified cash crop development; (iii) improving the nutrition intake of the people by accelerated development of oil crops, vegetables and livestock products. In Burma, priority was given to increasing production of paddy and raising quality standards through strategies such as in the "Whole Township High-Yielding Rice Production Programme".

57. In China, the government had continued to implement the policy of "readjusting, restructuring, consolidating and improving the economy". In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the development strategy had laid stress on irrigation, electrification and agricultural equipment.

58. In India, advances in the foodgrain production had become possible due to continuous attention to planning and development of infrastructure, timely supply of inputs, research and extension back-up as also price and marketing support policies. In Indonesia, the main objectives of agricultural development in the Fourth Plan (1984/89) were: (i) self-sufficiency in food with improved nutritional standards; (ii) promoting export of agricultural commodities for foreign exchange earnings; (iii) increasing agricultural productivity and higher income

levels of farmers and fishermen; (iv) creating more employment opportunities; and (v) promoting industrial development to achieve a balanced economic structure and stable environment.

59. In Laos, efforts were being made to develop food and agriculture production so that from 1985 the country has a minimum of six months' food reserve per annum. In Malaysia, a National Agricultural Policy (NAP) had recently been formulated. It aimed at the development of the country's agriculture more rationally by integrated planning for both food production and export crop production. In Nepal, a system to integrate the formulation and implementation of agricultural development programmes with the effective mobilization of local skills and resources had been introduced as part of a decentralization strategy. The Two-Year Economic Programme laid special emphasis on increasing the production of food crops, cash crops, fruits, vegetables, fish and livestock production besides encouraging other rural employment oriented agricultural activities.

60. Pakistan was following a Five-Point strategy to ensure that small farmers participate in the agricultural development of the country. The key elements of this strategy were: (i) increased availability of agricultural credit; (ii) provision of small tractors; (iii) improving rural services; (iv) special programmes for barani (rainfed) areas; and (v) establishment of small agro-industries in the rural areas. The Agenda for Action in Agriculture, 1983/87, of the Philippines, sought to ensure food self-sufficiency, reduce poverty, support economic development and export expansion, and improve the socio-economic well-being of its people, particularly the farmers. The Agenda for Action set in specific terms commodity thrusts for rice, corn, livestock, commercial crops, fisheries and for research and import substitution.

61. In the Republic of Korea the emphasis was on continuous water resource development; introduction of package agriculture to diversify the sources of farmers' income, and a new incentive plan for rural youth. In Sri Lanka the main features of the strategy followed were: development of integrated cropping mix; development of suitable agricultural pricing policy; systematic land development; rehabilitation of irrigation; and decentralization to the village level. Thailand's agricultural policy laid stress on: (i) accelerating the improvement of productivity; the reduction of production costs and the improvement of the quality of agricultural products; (ii) minimizing risks of fluctuating prices and incomes; (iii) improving water resources and providing technical services for small-scale irrigation projects; (iv) promoting farmers' groups and cooperatives and (v) providing services and assistance to facilitate private sector investment in agro-industries and agricultural input production.

Agricultural Price Policies

62. Most countries welcomed the proposed FAO study on agricultural price policies. They generally endorsed the view that farmers in many developing countries had received prices lower than world prices. It was observed that while more attractive producer prices were not a panacea for solving production problems, they were an essential pre-requisite to increase agricultural production. Many countries stated that decisions about price support were at the centre of their policies.

63. Bangladesh observed that a satisfactory level of price support was critical for the small and marginal farmers to obtain a better post-harvest price as well as for the Government to obtain a desired level of procurement especially of food-grains for building necessary buffer stock and assuring food security. India's price policies were adopted with a view to protecting the interests of the farmers and providing incentives for increased production. Indonesia considered agricultural price policy as a vital instrument which had a great influence not only on agricultural development as such, but on the overall national economy of the country. The Government of the Republic of Korea expressed the view that agricultural price policies played a key role in increasing the output and supporting rural incomes as well as promoting the consumer's welfare. In Nepal, to increase production, a policy was pursued to fix minimum prices for major foodgrains and cash crops.

64. In its country statement New Zealand observed that its agriculture had evolved on the basis of producing for export markets. The prices received determined farm profitability and land use patterns. In Pakistan, an Agricultural Price Commission had been established with the principal task of advising the Government about appropriate prices for major agriculture commodities and agro-inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and seeds.

65. Vanuatu, as other island countries, suffered from competition in prices because of lack of economy of scale of production, high production costs, and long distances from markets. The country urged stabilization of commodity prices to ensure long-term export prospects.

Agricultural Research and Training

66. Governments were unanimous in their support for the intensification of research and generally expressed the opinion that it was not possible to achieve sustained agricultural growth without efficient national agricultural research systems. The concentration of research should be on such priority areas as improved seeds, water management, and fertilizer use. It was felt that special efforts should be made to promote multi-locational and multi-disciplinary research. Dissemination of research to farmers was seen by many as an important priority. To achieve and sustain improved agricultural production, technical advances in the introduction of high-yielding varieties should take place on a continued basis. The need for sharing of research experiences by developing countries of the region was underscored. It was noted that countries of the Region should seek to gain maximum benefit from the system of research network falling under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and also make full use of the research results of the International Rice Research Institute and the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics which are located within the region. Governments were unanimous in their concern that proven technology which was increasingly emerging from national and international agricultural research institutes should be transferred to the field more effectively. Hence there was a need for renewed stress on the development of human skills through training at various levels, more particularly farmers, extension workers and technicians.

67. In Bangladesh the hitherto fragmented research efforts were being consolidated under the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC). Almost all primary agricultural research institutes in the fields of crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries were now the constituent or affiliated units of the Council. In India there were 36 Central Research Institutes engaged on fundamental and applied research of national and regional importance. As many as 23 Agricultural Universities were carrying out the triple functions of research, education and extension. Also, there were 66 all-India Coordinated Research Projects engaged in multi-locational and multi-disciplinary research.

68. In Indonesia under the programme Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment, 200 thousand rural youth were trained every year in appropriate skills so as to enable them to become self-employed. This scheme was fully dovetailed with Integrated Rural Development Programme. In Malaysia the efforts in agricultural research were intensified to produce new high-yielding varieties which were more resistant to pest and disease infestations. Malaysia supported the proposal for the establishment of a Regional Association on Agricultural Research. Nepal observed that agricultural research, extension and training in the country were rudimentary and not commensurate with requirements. It was emphasized that developing the kind of agricultural technology which best fits Nepalese farming conditions, such as dry farming was essential.

69. In Pakistan a coherent national agricultural research strategy was being implemented by the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council. Concerted efforts were being made to evolve high yielding disease resistant and fertilizer responsive varieties. Special attention was given to the needs of small farmers in rainfed areas and arid zones.

70. The United States of America emphasized their commitment to agricultural research. This commitment stemmed from lessons of their own national experience: the multi-faceted research generated over the past century by the land-grant agricultural colleges proved to be a major factor in accounting for the modernization, productivity and efficiency of American farmers.

71. In Vanuatu it was recognized that most of the agricultural work was done by women. Because of this, women were now being trained for the first time to assume the role of agricultural extension workers.

Programmes for the Rural Poor

72. A number of country statements reflected special concern with programmes relating to agrarian reform and rural development aiming at eradication of rural poverty. In Bangladesh, the Government recognized that the question of agrarian reform was basically an issue of productivity and production relations. Because of the predominantly small holding situation, any further distributive land reform was not considered feasible. China referred to the problem of small farmers in most countries of the Region. It was stressed that agrarian reforms suited to the prevailing conditions of the respective countries should be carried out to encourage integrated development of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries. In India, poverty alleviation was one of the main objectives of the Five-Year Plans. The most important programme in the income development category was the integrated Rural Development Programme which was being implemented in all parts of the country. For the generation of wage employment, in addition to the National Rural Employment programme, a Rural Landless Employment Guaranty Programme was launched last year.

73. In Indonesia, the Government gave high priority to economically least able sectors of the rural community. Various measures undertaken included the provision of credit schemes, employment creation both in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, provision of access to land and water through transmigration schemes, land clearing and small irrigation schemes, better accessibility to production inputs and government services, and improving village administration and social institutions.

74. In Nepal, integrated rural development programmes had been launched in the country with the assistance of various international agencies. The Government had decided to expand these programmes in a massive way. Pakistan indicated that special attention was given to the needs of small farmers of rainfed areas and arid zones in their research programmes.

75. The Philippines indicated that it continued to lay the foundations for a more productive and equitable food and agriculture system through agrarian reform and rural development. The Republic of Korea indicated its appreciation of progress made as a result of the follow-up action on World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD). Sri Lanka referred to its experience in transferring technology successfully to the small farmer to increase production.

SUMMARY OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S STATEMENT AT THE END OF THE GENERAL DEBATE

76. The Director-General expressed appreciation for the praise the President of Pakistan gave to the work of FAO. He also expressed his thanks for the tribute to the work carried out by the Regional Office in collaboration with FAO Representatives.

77. The Director-General observed that the country statements on the progress and problems of agriculture were comprehensive and contained a wealth of information. He added that the constructive suggestions received would sharpen the thrust of FAO's programmes in the Asia and Pacific Region.

78. The Director-General mentioned that FAO's global study on population supporting capacity of land provided the scientific methodologies for country-level studies. Three countries of the Region had already started further work on this basis. Subject to availability of funds, FAO would respond to other country requests.

79. The Director-General referred to the steady loss of valuable top soil as a dangerous long-term threat to food security. In this context, he welcomed Japan's assistance to regional projects for the special survey on protection of arable land and tropical forest resources, and support for the work of the newly-established Regional Commission on Food Security, and for the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific.

80. Concerning cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Director-General recalled a joint statement issued by him and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP in May 1983. In this joint statement, the global mandate of FAO, as specialized agency for food and agriculture in the UN system, was recognized and ESCAP had agreed to complement FAO's work through contributions on social and economic aspects of selected issues.

81. The Director-General noted the impressive gains in food production recorded in recent years in several countries of the Region. Reflecting on the concerns expressed over the environmental aspects of increasing food and agricultural production in the Region, he said that FAO had been giving increasing attention to this aspect and particular attention was being paid to the use of pesticides. He noted that the issue of safe use of pesticides and their impact on the environment was to be reviewed at the next session of the Regional Commission on Plant Protection.

82. Referring to the problems of increased agricultural production in landlocked and least developed countries of the Region, he observed that FAO had already given significant assistance to Bhutan and Nepal. The Director-General shared the concern voiced by some delegates regarding special efforts to assist the Pacific Island countries and noted several initiatives taken by FAO to help these countries.

83. The Director-General expressed appreciation for the many constructive suggestions made by delegates on promoting agricultural research and training. He particularly welcomed the past and current efforts of the United States of America in sharing agricultural research and in institution building.

84. The Director-General underlined that the progressive revision of programmes and activities was a continuing practice within FAO. The Organization's programme of work and budget fixed every two years, was based on the priorities and the needs of Member Nations and the Organization's capacity to respond to these needs effectively and economically. Priorities were indicated through the Conference and Council as well as the recommendations of inter-governmental bodies, including Regional Conferences, Council Committees, Programme Committee, FAO technical bodies and not least the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Detailed examination and evaluation of all main activities was a key part of FAO's management process.

85. The Director-General concluded by noting that he would consider carefully the final recommendations of the Conference and ensure that these were conveyed to the appropriate governing bodies of the Organization.

STATEMENTS BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

86. The Director of the Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) said that CIRDAP's strength lay in its linkages with numerous country institutions through a designated link institution in each Member Country. CIRDAP had access to the policy makers in Member Countries through a contact Ministry in each country. CIRDAP's contacts with institutions who promoted comprehensive and cohesive rural development made them aware of the need for continuous efforts to enhance the research capabilities of such institutions; strengthening their capabilities through training of trainers; and facilitate exchange of ideas and experiences among practitioners of rural development actions. CIRDAP had acted as a catalyst in implementing the ideas and recommendations of many UN Agencies particularly the FAO. While being grateful to various donors for their financial support the Director of CIRDAP called on Member Nations to exhibit increased interest and actively support and participate in the work of the Organization. He invited participation of members of the developing countries who had not joined CIRDAP so far and also called for the participation of the developed countries of the Region such as Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea.

87. The Representative of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific emphasized that many countries in the Region had little new arable land to devote to agricultural production in order to feed their growing populations. In view of this population pressure on limited land ESCAP endorsed the strategy of intensification of food and agricultural production. This approach would require the promotion of sound national policies with regard to market prices, production and investment incentives: small farmers' participation and improved marketing; efficiency related to the storage, processing and distribution of agricultural inputs and outputs, among others. ESCAP welcomed the joint statement by the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP on the importance of closely coordinating activities of the United Nations agencies and supported the steps taken by ESCAP and FAO to harmonize their respective work programmes. The representative gave several examples of excellent inter-agency cooperation between ESCAP/FAO

and stated that more and more the work programmes of these two United Nations bodies were made complementary to each other: FAO having its global mandate in the field of food and agriculture and ESCAP -- with its multidisciplinary capability and regional mandate -- concentrating on economic and social aspects of selected issues in the field of food and agriculture which complement FAO's activities. One of the mechanisms used to effect such harmonization was the ESCAP/FAO Annual Joint Review of Programmes of Work Related to Food, Agriculture and Rural Development. Liaison was also maintained between the agencies on an ad hoc basis to ensure complementarity.

88. The Representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) said the ILO was concerned with the issues of food and employment because nutrition of workers and their families had obvious economic and social implications; and because there was a clear relationship between unemployment, low productivity and poverty on the one hand, and hunger and malnutrition on the other. In order to achieve the common objective of alleviation of hunger ILO was ready to assist the developing countries of ASIA and the Pacific in: (i) food strategy review exercises covering, inter alia, basic-needs surveys, poverty alleviation programmes, employment promotion and income distribution, labour-intensive infrastructural works; (ii) organization and management of cooperatives; (iii) development of vocational and management training programme for employment and efficiency; (iv) promoting income-generating schemes for women, especially in rural areas; and (v) training courses in energy management, including alternative sources of energy.

89. The Representative of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) noted that agriculture continued to be the mainstay of the economies of the Region and consequently was a priority area for national and inter national action. In recognition of this, and through the resources available, UNDP placed special emphasis upon the funding of technical cooperation projects in the agricultural sector. According to the latest figures for projects financed by UNDP and executed by FAO in the Asia and Pacific Region, the total value came to more than US\$ 250 million. This included 23 regional projects and some 240 country projects. UNDP regarded FAO as a major partner in its technical cooperation efforts in Member Countries. The financial resources of UNDP were still severely constrained and UNDP was continuing to search actively for various means to augment and to use in an innovative manner the resources put at its disposal. The second meeting of the Development Coordinators for Asia and the Pacific Region (MAC II) was making a mid-term assessment of the Third Cycle Regional Programme of UNDP which was approved by the Governing Council in June 1981 and which, by and large, reflected priorities adopted by the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference as far as programmes under sub-sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries were concerned.

90. The Representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) observed that statistical evidence and experience showed that agricultural economies, based on the export of primary products, had always remained underdeveloped. Radical agrarian reforms and well formulated programmes for rural development could and did constitute the pre-requisites for balanced economic development. This development included the expansion of the domestic market and the full utilization of human resources, alleviating the tremendous problems of unemployment and under-employment in developing countries. There should be a stress upon the need for participation by rural workers and their organizations in development planning for achieving self-sufficiency in food. This was in order to ensure that the gains of development were equitably distributed and to give the highest priority to the fight against rural poverty and hunger in the Region. Women's education in the rural areas and the protection of the rights of women in these countries should be promoted to upgrade their income and earning skills. In order to promote the welfare of the population in the rural areas and to overcome poverty and other related problems, it was necessary to take concrete and rapid steps to avoid feudal relationships; encourage cooperatives; provide technical guidance and scientific know-how to these cooperatives; ensure long-term loans to the smallholders free of interest; and allow agricultural workers and small farmers to form their own trade unions. Special attention should be given to training of rural workers, in order to uplift their production capabilities and their standard of living. In order to find the resources for rural development and for a successful struggle against hunger and poverty, wide sections of world public opinion demanded an end to the arms race, for reduction in military expenditure and the transfer of these huge resources to meet urgent civilian needs.

FAO ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION' 1982-83 AND FAO'S PROGRAMME OF WORK AND
BUDGET, 1984-85

91. The Assistant Director-General of FAO and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific introduced these items. He stated that during the biennium, Vanuatu joined as a new member of FAO and a new FAO country office was opened in China. Another important development during 1982-83 was the establishment of the Regional Commission on Food Security for Asia and the Pacific. As many as 16 countries of the Region had already joined as members and the first meeting of this Commission was held at the FAO Regional Office at Bangkok in August 1983. The Association of Food Marketing Agencies for Asia and the Pacific sponsored by FAO was another major development in 1982-83.

92. Reviewing FAO's field programme, he said that as many as 537 FAO-executed projects were in operation during the biennium 1982-83. Out of these, 41 projects were of inter-country character and the balance, 496 projects, were at country level.

93. The various FAO-executed projects, among others, involved mobilization of professional expertise from all over the world. As many as 935 professional experts drawn from 65 countries of the world were provided by FAO to assist the countries in the Region in the execution of the projects.

94. Speaking about the role of the FAO Regional Office, he said that it had seven functions: (i) monitoring the major developments and trends in the food and agricultural sectors; (ii) promotion of TCDC and exchange of information; (iii) servicing of FAO Regional Commissions and the FAO Regional Conference; (iv) liaison with and FAO representation at regional bodies; (v) technical support to country offices/country level activities; (vi) participation in FAO-executed regional projects; and (vii) supervision of Joint Agricultural Divisions of the UN Economic and Social Commissions.

95. As far as the seventh function was concerned, it was not relevant to RAPA because there was no Joint Division with ESCAP. With regard to the remaining six functions, RAPA carried out extensive work during 1982-83. Every year during the period, nearly 100 technical missions were sent by RAPA to various countries of the Region. The Regional Office promoted TCDC and the exchange of information by organizing study tours and training programmes and through documenting successful experiences of various countries in specific matters such as water management, aquaculture, social forestry, etc. The Regional Office analysed the major trends in the Region in respect of selected sectors such as cereal production, aquaculture, fertilizer consumption, etc. It also brought out an important monograph on "Selected Indicators of Agricultural Development in Asia and the Pacific Region". Regarding FAO-executed projects, the Regional Office was responsible for project ideas or project identification in respect of 28 projects out of the 41 in operation. Implementation of 4 projects was directly handled by the FAO Regional Office.

96. He then reviewed the regular programme activities under 10 subject areas which covered FAO's Programme and Budget, viz: Natural Resources; Crops; Livestock; Research and Technology Development; Rural Development; Nutrition; Food and Agricultural Information and Analysis; Food and Agricultural Policy; Fisheries; and Forestry.

97. Reviewing the Programme of Work for 1984-85 for the Region, he stated that the Organization's overall programme budget for the biennium 1984-85 had been approved by the Twenty-second Conference in November 1983. The activities to be taken up were funded through Regular Programme resources as well as extra-budgetary resources provided through UNDP and trust funds. The major emphasis on resource allocation was on the technical and economic programmes which accounted for some 79 percent; the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) (8 percent); and the development support programmes (12 percent). The main thrust of FAO's programme in the Region was on strengthening the self-reliance of Member Nations, building up national, sub-regional and regional institutions and stimulating and supporting the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and the Economic Cooperation between Developing Countries (ECDC) activities.

98. The Conference commended the FAO Secretariat for the comprehensive and informative review on FAO activities in the Region and the Programme of Work for 1984-85 contained in the documents APRC/84/2 and APRC/84/3 respectively and the lucid, clear and detailed presentation.

99. The Conference endorsed FAO's Programme of Work, particularly its emphasis on technical and economic programmes which claimed as high as 79 percent of the Regular Programme resources. The Conference expressed its general agreement with the thrust of the activities detailed in the Secretariat documents.

100. Some members desired that an evaluation of FAO programmes should be presented to the Conference. The Conference was informed by the Secretariat that evaluation was not an ad hoc process but was a continuing and institutional process within FAO. The results of such evaluation were examined in depth by the Programme and Finance Committees, the Concil and FAO's Global Conference.

101. The Conference highlighted the importance of efficient use of water and fertilizer resources for optimum level of crop production and recommended that successful experiences in the Region should be documented and widely disseminated by FAO. The Conference urged the Member Nations to intensify research into water management and fertilizer use.

102. The Conference noted that research on water management was a priority area and emphasized the importance of International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) for the Region. The Conference suggested that IIMI should expedite the implementation of its plans to set up cooperating centres for actual research and experimentation and recommended the establishment of one such centre in Pakistan in view of the existence of a vast irrigation system in the country and its experience in this field.

103. The Conference noted that there was a need for increasing cropping intensity in a judicious manner in several countries of the Region. For this, it was recommended that FAO might assist selected countries in micro-level studies on agro-ecological capabilities in terms of suitable and remunerative cropping patterns so that production potential of the land and other resources were realized rationally.

104. The Conference noted the interest of some Member Countries in developing the potential of soyabean and suggested that FAO should assist these countries in strengthening soyabean production and utilization.

105. The Conference noted the significant role that fruits and vegetable (legumes) played in nutrition and in generating subsidiary income and employment. Concern was expressed that productivity of some of the important fruits was declining. The Conference recommended that the governments should give additional attention to improved production, utilization and marketing of these crops. The Conference further recommended that FAO should assist, subject to availability of funds, Member Nations through a regional project to exchange experiences and planting materials and to strengthen the management of nurseries and the production of quality seeds of vegetables.

106. The Conference noted with concern the indiscriminate use of dangerous pesticides and called for effective measures in pollution control and the safe handling of pesticides.

107. The Conference lauded the ongoing effects of FAO in promoting the judicious and safe use of pesticides and recommended that FAO should continue to promote and strengthen its efforts in integrated pest management.

108. The Conference noted that crop insurance was included in the work programme of FAO and desired that emphasis should be placed on this item of work.

109. The Conference noted the importance of saline and brackish water utilization in the Region and recommended that FAO should intensify research and development support to these activities, particularly the evolution of salt tolerant crops.

110. The Conference underscored the importance of FAO activity on promoting technical cooperation among Member Nations in the area of cooperative processing and marketing with special focus on rural poor.

111. The Conference underlined the importance of the proposed studies of FAO subsidies in agricultural inputs and urged that they should be expedited.

112. The Conference noted the ongoing efforts of some of the Pacific Island countries to introduce rice on a pilot scale and urged FAO to provide suitable assistance at the appropriate stage to strengthen the countries' efforts.

113. The Conference recognized the importance of plant protection and quarantine measures for the Pacific Island countries. While commending the ongoing FAO's activities in these fields, the Conference stressed the need for further strengthening of these activities in the Island countries.

114. The Conference, in view of the special attention that needed to be paid to the Pacific sub-region suggested separate documentation of information on Pacific countries while reporting FAO activities.

115. The Conference noted the suggestions of some Member Nations regarding research into tissue culture, hybrid seeds and requested FAO to further strengthen their activities in the above areas.

116. The Conference recognized the importance of buffalo as a source of farm power, milk and meat and recommended that a Regional Centre for Coordinated Research on Buffalo (including nutrition, reproduction and economic feeding systems) should be established. FAO was requested to formulate a project and seek financial assistance for its implementation.

117. The Conference strongly endorsed FAO's TCDC approach to promoting exchange of expertise, information and experiences among the countries of the Region and recommended that TCDC activities should be further expanded and strengthened. The Conference urged international donor agencies to increase their funding support to TCDC programmes.

118. Some countries stressed the need for interagency cooperation at regional level, particularly between FAO and ESCAP. The Secretariat drew the attention of the Conference to the joint statement by the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP which delineated the areas of responsibility of the two organizations and the mode of cooperation.

119. Some members called for a definition of the terms of reference of the FAO Regional Office (RAPA) and a detailed reporting on RAPA's activities to the Conference. The Secretariat pointed out that the functions of RAPA were already defined by the Council and that an attempt would be made to present a separate account of RAPA activities in the monograph on FAO activities in the Asia-Pacific Region.

120. The Conference placed on record its appreciation for the essential role of the Regional Office in supporting the activities of Member Nations at the regional, sub-regional and country levels. It considered the staff of the Regional Office to be rendering services of high quality to Member Governments and to the various regional bodies in which Member Governments were cooperating. It also considered the services of RAPA to be an indispensable complement to those of Headquarters and FAORs whose roles were also of paramount importance to the Region.

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

121. The Conference considered the Report of the Technical Committee. Concerning the Agenda of the Technical Committee, some delegates indicated, irrespective of procedures adopted in other regions, their strong preference at future meetings to return to the previous practice in this Region of considering the Review of FAO Activities and Programme of Work in the Technical Committee. A large majority of delegates, however, expressed the view that the above-mentioned items should continue to be discussed directly by the plenary session since these items were not essentially technical in nature. The Consensus at the Conference was that the agenda items on FAO Activities and the Programme of Work should continue to be considered directly by the plenary session at future Conferences and that adequate time should be provided for facilitating a full discussion.

Plan of Action for Development of Renewable Sources of Rural Energy

122. The Regional Forestry Economist introduced this agenda item. He recalled the recommendation of the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference (Jakarta, 1982) in response to whose request the secretariat document containing the main elements of a plan of action was prepared dealing with the sources of renewable energy of particular relevance to rural situations in this Region. These were: fuelwood; biogas; producer gas; bio-fertilization; draught animal power; solar, wind and water energy. The Asia-Pacific Region was by far the biggest consumer of fuelwood; its share in world consumption was 48 percent and about 1.5 billion people depended on fuelwood/charcoal to meet their daily cooking/heating needs. Over the years, the traditional sources of fuelwood had been severely depleted. For millions of the rural poor, the steady shrinkage in fuelwood supplies meant increasing difficulties.

123. He stated that the major objective of any national plan of action should be to expand the production of fuelwood on a sustained basis to increase the efficiency of fuelwood use. This objective could be achieved through a plan which centred around the following major elements: increasing the productivity of existing fuelwood resources; creating new fuelwood resources; improving the distribution of fuelwood; improving conversion technologies; and introducing improved wood-burning stoves.

124. Considering the status and the potential for biogas development, he observed that in Asia, the organic wastes generated through animals and human beings had the potential to supply biogas sufficient to meet the cooking needs of 166 million people. There was a felt need for further strengthening of the programmes in biogas, particularly in the area of: (i) standardization of data collection; (ii) optimization of designs and their efficiency; (iii) digestion studies on wastes other than animal manure; (iv) pre-treatment of feedstocks; (v) dry fermentation; and (vi) low-cost construction materials.

125. Regarding producer gas technology, he said that the plan of action identified rice husk as an important agricultural residue in the Region for gasification. The plan should address itself to formulating a fullscale development programme embracing such elements as appropriate rice husk gasification systems through research and development; establishment of pilot/demonstration plants of various capacities; provision of training in fabrication, installation and operation of producer gas plants; and documentation of technical information.

126. Biofertilizers which harvested atmospheric nitrogen through symbiosis were an important supplement to chemical fertilizers but the potential use of biofertilizers remained highly under-exploited. He said that Governments should view biofertilizers as an important and integral component of the national fertilizer policy and provide necessary development and research infrastructures to these components. Regarding draught animals, about 80 to 95 percent of the farmers in this Region depended on manual and/or animal power available to carry out agricultural operations. Detailed location specific plans of action in the areas of breeding, feeding, health care, agricultural implements and harnessing devices needed to be developed by the individual countries. Development and application of wind power, particularly for irrigation, was gaining ground in many countries of the Region. Various types of water-energy pumps were manufactured and utilized on a small scale in some countries of the Region. Solar energy technology was being developed for application to a range of activities, viz. water pumping, drying, cooking, hot water supply, water distribution and refrigeration.

127. The Conference considered the various elements of the Plan of Action for development of renewable sources of energy in the Asia-Pacific Region as proposed in the Secretariat document APRC/84/4 and observed that these elements constituted a useful framework for consideration by individual countries in the Region. The Conference therefore recommended that each country should take cognizance of these elements and formulate country specific plans of action for developing rural energy supplies in an appropriate mix which takes into account the totality of rural requirements, local specificities as well as the possible substitution and complementarity that exists among various sources of energy. Such a rural energy plan should be integrated with agricultural and rural development plans and closely linked with national energy and development policies.

128. The Conference observed that in promoting renewable sources of energy in rural areas, the following aspects were particularly relevant: biophysical potential, social acceptability, accessibility to the rural poor, environmental impact, institutional framework, the determination of national priorities and their economic feasibility.

129. While considering the main supporting actions needed to successfully implement programmes and projects for the development of renewable sources of rural energy, the Conference stressed that the development of skilled manpower through appropriate training should receive high priority. Research, training and extension should be seen as an integrated programme, leading to the improved supply and use of renewable sources of rural energy.

130. The Conference recognized that the successful implementation of programmes and projects on renewable sources of rural energy would depend, to a large extent, on the active participation of rural people themselves in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes and stressed that governments should make a major effort toward this end. The role of non-governmental organizations in mobilizing rural people for these programmes was emphasized.

131. The Conference emphasized that while Member Nations had the primary responsibility for developing renewable sources of rural energy, regional cooperation would be able to secure access to the widest possible range of expertise, experience and physical inputs available within the Region. The Committee therefore recommended strengthening of regional cooperation through TCDC in the form of regional networks. FAO was requested to assist the countries of the Region in the establishment of these networks. The Committee underscored the need for international funding and interagency cooperation, particularly the Regional Energy Development Programme of ESCAP, in support of regional cooperative action on a priority basis.

132. The Conference emphasized the need for priority attention to addressing the problem of fuelwood supplies. For this purpose, the Conference stressed that countries should identify geographical areas facing acute scarcity/deficit and undertake in those areas programmes for increased production and efficient use of fuelwood.

133. The Conference recommended that the creation of new fuelwood resources be intensified both on forest lands and on non-forest lands. Social forestry and other means of action which mobilized the efforts and participation of communities and farmers in growing trees for meeting their fuelwood and other basic needs and for environmental conservation should be actively pursued.

134. In countries where wood energy development was an important consideration, the Conference recommended that education, extension, training and research in forestry and agriculture should be reoriented to meet the needs of programme development particularly in regard to identification of fuelwood species suitable for different agro-ecological areas. The emphasis should also be on multipurpose and fast-growing trees, establishing of high density plantations with the object of maximum biomass production, integration of trees into farming systems and related aspects.

135. The Conference observed that traditional open hearths for cooking and heating were not efficient and emphasized the need for accelerating the adoption of socially acceptable and cost-effective stoves. The role of women in the acceptance of this technology needed to be highlighted.

136. The Conference strongly supported the Regional Cooperative Programme on Wood Energy Development formulated by FAO.

137. The Conference recognized that Biogas Programmes had so far made progress in a limited number of countries of the Region. In most other countries where the programme was in its early stage of development, the Conference stressed the need for the establishment of pilot plants to demonstrate the practicability and viability of the plants under specific ecological and socio-economic conditions.

138. The Conference stressed the role of training as an important component of the biogas programme for the successful construction and maintenance of improved and new designs now being popularized in a number of countries in the Region. The Conference requested FAO to organize training programmes on biogas technology to facilitate the speedy adaptation of technologies available in the Region by utilizing existing training facilities in the Region, for example the Chengtu Research Centre in China.

139. The Conference emphasized the need to create suitable organizational arrangements so as to make available professional engineering services to ensure trouble free and efficient operation of the installed biogas plants.

140. Since a great deal of information on diverse aspects of biogas technology had been generated by a number of national institutions in the Region, the Conference stressed the need to pool these results and make them available to other institutions. In this regard the Conference suggested that FAO should promote inter-country cooperation through a network of national institutions to exchange information and to stimulate applied research work on the optimization of designs and their efficiency, appropriate type of digesters utilizing wastes other than animal manures and lowering construction costs.

141. The Conference recognized that biomass gasification was a potential means for augmenting rural energy supply. While technologies using wood or charcoal only required adaptation, there was need for further research and development into the use of new feed-stocks, such as rice husk, and other agricultural residues for gasification. The Conference stressed the need for establishing the availability and economics of collection of agricultural residues before encouraging their widespread use for gasification. There was also a strong need for systematic evaluation of producer gas technologies, including their economic viability and FAO should assist the countries, upon request, to undertake such evaluation work. The Conference noted the work of China in using rice husk for gasification and rural power generation and suggested that FAO should promote inter-country exchange of knowledge and experience to further develop producer gas technology in the Region. The Committee further noted that the ASEAN/Australia Cooperative programme included large scale gasifier/combustion technology transfer.

142. Biofertilizers could be an important source of nitrogen and effectively supplement inorganic fertilizers. A number of countries in the Region had already developed biofertilizer technologies. The Committee noted on a regional basis that the potential of biofertilizers had, however, remained highly underexploited. The Conference, therefore, recommended that the Governments should strengthen their efforts to effectively utilize the potential of biological nitrogen fixation (based on Azolla, blue green algae and Rhizobium). For this, the Conference further suggested that FAO should assist sharing of the known technologies as well as the nitrogen-fixing agents.

143. The Conference noted that the overall efficiency of draught animals in the Region, was generally very poor. Considerable experience and research on increasing efficiency of draught animals had been generated in the Region, particularly in countries like China, but much of it remained unadopted. To upgrade the efficiency of the draught animals, the Conference suggested that the Governments should develop appropriate feeds and management practices, and design, manufacture and adopt appropriate animal-drawn implements and equipments. The Committee also suggested that suitable breeding programmes should be initiated and/or further strengthened. The Committee further suggested that countries should share their experiences in management of draught animals and in developing harnessing devices.

144. The Conference noted that several countries in the Region were making efforts to promote the use of wind energy, in particular to lift water for irrigation and/or for drinking purposes. The Conference stressed that the efforts made by these countries should be continued, in particular to improve the efficiency of the devices developed and reduce their cost. In this respect, the Conference recommended that FAO disseminate the knowledge and experience available within and outside the Region to promote a wider application of wind energy in agriculture. The Conference also recommended that FAO assist countries in the development of pilot demonstration projects and in the testing/adaptation of proven technologies.

145. The Conference observed that various types of water energy pumps were manufactured and utilized on a small scale in some countries of the region. Among them the water turbine pump developed in China was the most widely recommendable device at present. The Conference further noted the high potential of mini-hydro power schemes as a means for rural electrification. The Conference suggested that countries should initiate basic hydrological and topographical surveys and establish demonstration projects to promote work on water-lifting devices. Some delegates stressed that hydropower should be given appropriate consideration as an economic means of generating energy noting that World Bank studies had indicated this source of energy could make a major contribution to the energy needs of a large number of developing countries.

146. The Conference recommended the early establishment of the proposed Regional Applied Research and Training Centre for Water Lifting Devices in China which had been delayed due to the lack of funds from UNDP. The Conference requested FAO to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences in this field.

147. The Conference noted that while experience and progress on photovoltaic cells for rural electrification was mentioned and it was even claimed to be competitive with diesel electric generation in remote areas, priority attention should also be given to improved solar drying techniques which could contribute significantly to reducing crop losses and improving quality. Several countries in the Region had developed, mostly on experimental basis, various types of dryers for crops, vegetables, fruits, fish and for wood products. The Conference felt that the present effort being made at national and regional levels should be to promote a wider application of proven technologies. The Conference requested FAO to facilitate the identification, testing and promotion of appropriate types of solar dryers through pilot demonstration schemes and exchange of information and expertise within the Region.

Agricultural Price Policy

148. The Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Policy Department, introduced this agenda item. He stated that FAO's study of agricultural price policies in this Region was intended to stimulate an examination of the objectives and impact of prevailing price policies on production, consumption and economic welfare, as well as the instruments for implementing price policies. The lessons of experience of this Region in this respect would also provide an essential input to the worldwide study of agricultural price policies undertaken by FAO.

149. The Conference commended the FAO Secretariat for undertaking a comprehensive study of agricultural pricing policies. It agreed that price policies were important in achieving successful national economic development. FAO's ongoing work in this field should identify the major issues in price policy and provide insights and analysis which would be of use to policy-makers and analysts of Member Nations. The Conference noted that while many issues in price policy were country specific, there were common problems and agreed that a careful review of different country experiences could be useful as a guide to future policy decision.

150. The Conference recognized the pervasive influence of agricultural price policy on agricultural growth, employment, fiscal and foreign exchange balance, food consumption, income distribution and nutrition. It emphasized that greater attention was required to integrate agricultural price policies with national development plans and strategies.

151. The multi-faceted objectives on price policy required that decisions be based on a careful, detailed analysis of the trade-offs involved in alternative approaches. The Conference observed that the importance of income distribution, growth and fiscal effects of price policy meant that political, social and economic considerations were all involved in policy choice. The existing mechanisms for formulating agricultural price policy in several countries of the Region were discussed. In some countries, arrangements for price formulation were institutionalized while in most countries the arrangements were largely ad hoc.

152. Many delegates agreed that the process of assessment of and recommendation on price policy within national governments could benefit from a national institution charged with a comprehensive review and analysis of commodity prices at consumer and producer levels, of marketing efficiency and of input pricing and supply and optimum utilization of natural resources. This could be achieved by different institutional approaches which were best adapted to individual country circumstances.

153. It was suggested that an effective agricultural price policy would require a systematic analysis of price and non-price factors and macro-economic variables. Its full impact could best be realized if measures such as provision of infrastructure, research and extension, post-harvest care, including storage and transportation, and marketing facilities were improved.

154. The evidence based on the data relating to the seventies suggested that, by and large, farmers in many developing countries of the Region received for several commodities prices lower than world prices or negative protection which might have hampered their efforts to fully exploit the production potential. There was evidence that higher producer prices accompanied by other non-price policy measures had progressively led to a higher rate of growth in production.

155. The Conference expressed a strong view that price levels in international markets were depressed making it very difficult for developing countries to provide adequate incentives to farmers. The role of price policies of some developed countries in depressing and destabilizing international prices was noted.

156. It was agreed that effectiveness of price incentives depended, among other things, on the availability and diffusion of improved technology. Some delegates supported the need for continued input subsidies such as fertilizer and water, arguing that they encouraged production and technology transfer at a lower cost than they would at high commodity prices. In addition, small and marginal farmers producing mainly for their own consumption were likely to make more use of inputs if their prices were not too high, thereby making gains in productivity. It was noted with concern that the alternative of higher commodity prices versus lower input prices remained a major issue in price policy formulation.

157. The Conference felt there was need for food prices at levels affordable by poorer consumers. This goal always involved a difficult trade-off between consumer welfare, production increase and fiscal balance. It was stressed that remunerative producer prices and low consumer prices did not necessarily constitute feasible long-run alternatives. Eventually adequate and reasonably priced food to the consumers could be effectively secured only through increased agricultural production.

158. The Conference recognized that benefits of price policy might not accrue equally to all producers because of differences in marketable surplus in the absence of other complementary measures. Higher producer prices conferred greater benefit on larger farmers who had higher marketable surplus.

159. Food subsidies tended to benefit mostly urban consumers. Therefore, to ensure that benefits accrued to the poor, subsidies had to be targeted to reach the disadvantaged groups.

160. Harmonization of price policies within the Region, especially between neighbouring countries, was raised by some delegates as an issue especially when there was a relatively free trade between them.

161. The Conference considered the different criteria for the determination of support prices. In this connection a number of comments were made regarding the use of estimates of costs of production such as types of costs which should be included in the estimate, wide divergencies in costs between different farmers or regions within the same country, and the lack of up-to-date and comprehensive data on costs of production.

162. It was pointed out that undue attention to costs of production neglected the impact of such factors as considerations of demand, and the need to attain improved self-sufficiency and to ensure adequate net farm income. It was agreed that other factors had to be taken into account for the determination of levels of support prices such as domestic terms of trade for agriculture (the parity concept), inter crop balance, expected market conditions, production response and world prices.

163. It was agreed that world prices needed to be kept in view in determining support prices. Yet the fluctuations in international prices could not be allowed to dominate domestic prices, particularly for basic commodities. The structure of prevailing prices should be examined with a view to bringing them closer to world price trends, perhaps on the basis of an appropriate moving average of world prices.

164. The Conference agreed on the importance of market development in order to make price policies effective. It emphasized the increasing importance of achieving improvements in the efficiency of commodity marketing and input supply systems. It was noted that efforts should be aimed at encouraging effective linkage between private traders, cooperatives and public marketing channels.

165. The Conference stressed the time factor in implementing effective price policy. It had two dimensions—timeliness and continuity. For the full impact of price-induced effects on production and allocation of resources, prices should be announced well before the planting season. Whenever possible and necessary longer-term perspectives for prices might be presented at the same time.

166. The Conference recognized that lack of adequate information and analysis for assessing effects of price policy might render these measures ineffective in many instances. It urged that governments give priority to strengthening institutions for improving the price information system as well as the national capacity for price policy analysis.

167. The Conference agreed that the agriculture pricing policy was a part of the overall national development strategies. The Conference also stressed that the pricing policy should be a consistent and coherent component of food and agricultural development strategies and programmes.

168. The Conference recommended that countries should assess the current institutional arrangements for the formulation of price policy and wherever appropriate, establish an independent agency for advice on the formulation and implementation of agricultural price policies taking into account the views of all the interest groups.

169. The Conference recognized that there should be a periodical review and selective use of subsidies to avoid misallocation of resources. The burden of subsidies should be monitored closely and their impact evaluated on a commodity by commodity basis.

170. The Conference recommended that Member Nations should consider the establishment of suitable mechanism for implementing the price policy.

171. The Conference recommended that countries should evaluate alternative approaches for providing adequate food supplies at prices affordable by lower income earners through more effectively targeted consumer programmes.

172. FAO was requested to assist Member Nations in reviewing their policies and adapting them to changing conditions and requirements and in promoting the exchange of experiences in the formulation and implementation of pricing policies. FAO was also requested to consider the possibility of arranging a workshop to discuss the different conceptual and practical issues relevant to the determination of prices for agricultural crops and their cost of production.

173. FAO was requested to help the countries, through its training activities, wherever appropriate, in strengthening national capabilities and institution building to formulate, implement and evaluate agricultural price policies.

Training for Agriculture and Rural Development

174. The Regional Farm Management Economist introduced the agenda item (APRC/84/4) on the subject of training for agriculture and rural development and highlighted the main points contained in the Secretariat document. In particular, he pointed out why training had become increasingly important. In this context, he referred to the fact that while proven technology was increasingly emerging from national and international agricultural research institutions, a great deal of this technology had to be transferred to the farmers. Such a transfer was necessary for optimizing agricultural production. There was also need for training in order to improve efficiency in the use of purchased inputs so that the cost of production per unit of agricultural output did not keep on increasing. Finally there was need for training with a view to introducing a social dimension to the programmes of agricultural/rural development and also attending to new dimensions of development in regard to small farmers, fishermen, social forestry, aquaculture, etc.

175. While indicating the major requirements of training in various sectors, the Regional Farm Management Economist also pointed out the need for ensuring the development of an integrate system of training keeping together pre-service training, on the job and in-service training, etc. It was also stressed that although, in general, agricultural education facilities at the pre-service stage had been developed, there were both quantitative and qualitative gaps.

176. The Conference generally endorsed the broad approach and strategies indicated in the Secretariat document.

177. The Conference recognized that while the main responsibility for intensification of training and its extension to new aspects was essentially that of Member Governments, there was considerable scope for action at the inter-country level. It was proposed that FAO should consider the organization of two regional consultations: one on the linkage of agricultural education, research and extension, and the second on textbook production. It was also noted that the implementation of this recommendation would depend on the availability of funds in view of the fact that the budgetary resources were already committed to various activities approved by the FAO Conference in November 1983.

178. The Conference recognized the need for organizing training programmes for women and rural youth to be complemented with special development programmes that would provide them with gainful farm and non-farm employment. It was suggested that the training programmes should be integrated on a family basis.

179. With regard to training for integrated production systems, the Conference recognized that while, in some countries, considerable experience had already been gained, most other countries had still to initiate adequate research and gain experience. In such a situation before any large-scale training programme could be organized, it would be necessary to gain further experience in regard to an integrated production system and for this purpose, the Conference suggested that case studies of successful experiences should be prepared by FAO and disseminated to all countries.

180. Some delegates referred to the successful role of farmers' organizations in organizing training in their countries. In this context, it was stressed that in some countries cooperatives engaged in the distribution of agricultural inputs and agricultural marketing and processing had successfully developed extension manpower and were considerably supplementing the governments' efforts. It was noted that this was an area where a great deal of further development was possible and for this purpose, it was suggested that successful experiences already available should be documented by FAO and made available to the other countries concerned.

181. While agreeing broadly with the proposals in the document on South-Pacific fisheries, the Conference noted that there were limiting factors which the South-Pacific countries were attempting to identify and overcome either at the national level or through agencies such as the South-Pacific Forum for Fisheries Agencies.

182. The Conference recognized the importance of community leadership in planning and implementing rural development programmes. It suggested that local leaders be identified and trained in community organization, programme planning and implementation, administration and finance, monitoring and evaluation, agricultural and industrial crafts, etc.

183. The Conference recognized that farmers could learn from other farmers and that farmers could also be effectively used as resource persons for training future rural development/extension workers. The Conference suggested that Member Nations promote the concept of "learn from farmers" and the rural development/extension workers should be encouraged to use this system.

184. The Conference noted that Member Governments were increasingly implementing special programmes on organizing the rural poor into small functional groups. It suggested that in order to carry out these activities more effectively the rural development/extension workers should be trained in the techniques of group action, farm management, participatory process in development and action-research.

185. The Conference recognized that TCDC offered great scope in Asia and the Pacific Region in extension, education and special training programmes. It suggested that Member Governments explore these possibilities more fully. The services of regional institutions like CIRDAP might be utilized by the countries.

Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

186. The Director of Research and Technology Development Division, and the Regional Plant Production Officer introduced this agenda item (APRC/84/7). The Director highlighted the various steps taken by FAO to increase the effectiveness of representation of the Region on the CGIAR. He also referred to a regional association on agricultural research being formed in the Near East to facilitate monitoring and exchange of information among the Member Nations as well as with regional and international research systems.

187. The Regional Officer recalled the objectives of CGIAR and highlighted the contribution of the CGIAR centres in increasing and sustaining food production in the Region. The Conference appreciated particularly the role played by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the International Centre for Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) through development of high-yielding varieties of rice, wheat, coarse grains and legumes.

188. The Conference noted that research on water management was a priority area and was happy to learn that an international irrigation institute was being established in Sri Lanka under the auspices of the CGIAR. The Conference further noted that research on livestock and fruits was generally neglected in the Region and should receive due attention of the CGIAR and other appropriate international bodies.

189. The Conference noted that the external reviews of the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARC) had revealed that most of the centres were now approaching "maturity" though programmes were still expanding. The reviews had lately addressed themselves to the management aspects also, which had been quite fruitful. The Conference further noted that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the CGIAR was updating the priorities for the international support to agricultural research with due consideration to the increasing strength and capacity of national research systems in developing countries. The Conference emphasized that at this critical juncture when the next phase of working and strategies of the IARC were being developed, the participation by the representative of developing countries of the Region on the CGIAR was all the more desirable and should be made more effective.

190. The Conference appreciated FAO's role in strengthening the communication between the Member Nations and the CGIAR. The representatives of the Region of the CGIAR, whose participation in CGIAR meetings was supported by FAO, would circulate their reports to the Member Nations. The Conference recommended that the Region's representatives should present at every regional conference a report on their liaison with the CGIAR.

191. Recognizing the significance of keeping the research priorities under continuing review to exchange experiences, to prioritize common research needs, and to maintain a dynamic interaction among national research programmes, sub-regional and regional networks and the CGIAR centres, and recalling the experiences of such associations such as the Asian and Pacific Regional Agricultural Credit Association (AORACA, the Association of Food Marketing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (AFMA), etc., the Conference recommended that a regional association on agricultural research should be established with the sponsorship of FAO. The Conference noted that the cost of sponsoring such an association should be within the existing resources of the Organization.

192. The Conference noted that the terms of the representatives from Pakistan and Indonesia on the CGIAR, who were elected in 1980, after serving for a four-year term, had expired. As per the decision made by the FAO Regional Conference in 1982, which allowed extension of the term of one of the present representatives for a further two-year period to allow continuity in representation, the Conference extended the term of the Representative of Pakistan for another two years. Further, the Conference elected Thailand to represent the Region for the period 1984-1988.

Review of the Performance of selected FAO Regional Commissions

193. The Assistant Director-General and the Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific introduced this agenda item. He reviewed the status of working of selected FAO Regional Commissions, viz: Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC); Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPPC); Regional Commission on Farm Management for Asia and

the Far East; Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural statistics (APCAS); and Regional Animal Production and Health Commission for Asia, the Far East and the South West Pacific (APHCA).

194. He observed that, in general, most of the Regional Commissions had proved to be useful and effective fora to review and discuss problems, to develop programmes and projects and to exchange technical information and experiences. They had also become effective instruments to promote TCDC and regional cooperation in their respective field of activities. He also added that the usefulness of the Commission had depended very much on the interest taken by Member Governments and the level of their participation. In this context, the performance of the Commission on Farm Management was not satisfactory mainly for the reason that the interest shown by Member Governments had been very low. It was therefore, proposed for consideration whether this Commission should be abolished on the premise that there was no need for a permanent body to deal with this subject. Other methods of work to promote farm management activities could be utilized more profitably, such as ad hoc consultations, workshops and seminars.

195. During the discussions many countries favoured the continuation of the Regional Farm Management Commission and stressed the need to reactivate the work of the Commission especially to deal with farming systems development. Other delegates, however, supported the abolition of the commission. There was also a suggestion from one of the countries to the effect that the terms of reference on the Farm Management Commission should be incorporated into the newly established Regional Food Security Commission.

196. Although there was no consensus, it was agreed that the issue of abolition of the Commission should be kept open. The Secretariat should make efforts to revitalize the Commission and at the same time the Member Governments were urged to take active interest in the Commission's activities. The Conference desired that the Secretariat should report to the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference the extent of the participation in the next session of the Commission.

CONCLUDING ITEMS

Date and Place of the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

197. The delegation from Sri Lanka stated that there had been no Regional Conference in Sri Lanka since 1955. Hence their Government would be pleased to host in 1986, the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. The Conference welcomed the offer and supported the proposal to hold the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference in Sri Lanka. The Director-General thanked the Sri Lanka delegation and said that the date and place of the next Regional Conference would be decided in consultation with the Government of Sri Lanka.

Closing of the Conference

198. On behalf of all delegations, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Vanuatu delivered the closing statement to the Conference. He expressed their appreciation to the Government of Pakistan for hosting the Conference as well as for the generous hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Conference. He commended the Director-General of FAO for his stewardship and the Secretariat for the excellent quality of the documentation and its efficient work.

199. The Assistant Director-General and the Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific thanked the Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen, the Chairman of the Technical Committee, the Chairman and Members of the Drafting Committee and other office bearers of the Conference for having performed their tasks efficiently. On behalf of FAO, he expressed his sincerest thanks to the Minister of Food, Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Government of Pakistan for their exemplary hospitality and facilities provided for the Conference.

200. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, the Minister of Food, Cooperatives and Agriculture of Pakistan made the closing statement. He expressed Pakistan's appreciation for having been able to host the Conference. He emphasized the role of FAO as an effective agent for promoting intercountry cooperation and appealed to Member Nations to make full use of FAO's services. He then declared the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific closed.

AGENDA

Technical Committee (24-28 April 1984)

I. INTRODUCTION ITEMS

1. Opening of the Technical Committee
2. Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen, and Election of the Drafting Committee
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. TECHNICAL ITEMS

- ✕ 4. Training for Agriculture and Rural Development
- ✕ 5. Agricultural Price Policies
- ✕ 6. Plan of Action for Development of Renewable Sources of Rural Energy
7. Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
8. Review of the Performance of Selected FAO Regional Commissions
9. Adoption of the Report

Plenary Session (29 April - 3 May 1984)

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Inaugural Ceremony
2. Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region
6. FAO Activities in the Region, Including Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the Sixteenth Regional Conference
7. Programme of Work and Budget 1984-85 for the Region

III. CONCLUDING ITEMS

8. Consideration of the Technical Committee Report
9. Any Other Business
10. Date and Place of the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
11. Adoption of the Report
12. Closure of the Conference

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

APPENDIX B
ANNEXE B

OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE
BUREAU DE LA CONFERENCE

Chairman: Mohammad Fazil Janjua (Pakistan)
Président:

Vice-Chairman: All ministers present
Vice-Présidents:

<u>Drafting Committee:</u>	Australia	Japan
<u>Comité de rédaction:</u>	China	Pakistan
	India	Sri Lanka

Rapporteur: Abu Bakar Bin Mahmud (Malaysia)

OFFICERS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
BUREAU DU COMITE TECHNIQUE

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Président:

Vice-Chairman: Kazi M. Badrudozza (Bangladesh)
Vice-Présidents: Douglas Malosu (Vanuatu)
Salmon Padmanagara (Indonesia)

<u>Drafting Committee:</u>	Australia	Japan
<u>Comité de rédaction:</u>	China	Pakistan
	India	Sri Lanka

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OPENING STATEMENT BY THE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE PLENARY

It is a pleasure for me to address the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. The member countries of this Region contain almost three quarters of the world's Agricultural population - but little more than one third of the world's arable land. Here is the greatest battlefront in the world's never ending war against hunger and insecurity of food supplies.

Tribute to host country

On this occasion, we are greatly privileged to enjoy the generous hospitality of the Government and people of Pakistan. The excellent arrangements made by our hosts will favour a constructive outcome of our debates. They will also permit us to appreciate some of the splendours of this area, described by its national poet, Allama Mohamed Iqbal, as "a world of rosy dawns and flame-clad sunsets".

Pakistan has long been in the forefront of agricultural development. Its achievements in increasing production of cereals, and especially of wheat, have been particularly impressive. In the period 1973-1983, total food production has grown by an average of about 4.4 percent a year - well ahead of population. This excellent result is due in the first place to the enterprising farmers of Pakistan, but also to the enlightened policies pursued by the Government. I am sure that, during this Conference, the distinguished delegates will be interested to exchange experiences and ideas with their colleagues from our host country.

Mr Chairman, we last met in Jakarta two years ago. On that occasion, the Conference unanimously adopted the "Consensus on Equity, Growth and Stability for Development".

The Jakarta Consensus

In this eloquent document, introduced on the initiative of Indonesia, member governments faced up to "a resource-short world of growing hunger and malnutrition". They rejected as "unacceptable" the increasing number of people sentenced by absolute poverty to live out bleak lives of deferred hopes. To enable the poor to move forward towards more humane standards of living, the Consensus called on governments to broaden - more decisively than they have done so far - the access of their small farmers to land, water and other productive assets, especially through agrarian reform.

The document also warned that: "The accelerating tempo of environmental degradation threatens our life support systems." Governments and individual were called upon to protect "the thin mantle of fertile top soil and maintain essential ecological processes for sustainable production".

The question we must ask today is whether the Region is making progress towards the main objectives of the Jakarta Consensus. I am afraid that a positive answer must be accompanied by many reservations. Let us look at first at developments in the global economy which affect the prosperity of this Region.

Global recession

Already at the time of the last Regional Conference, world agricultural trade was in the throes of its worst crisis for several decades. By the end of 1982, the agricultural export prices of developing countries were on average 20 percent below the previous year's level. This was reflected in much reduced export earnings from products of major interest to Asia and the Pacific, such as sugar, rice, vegetable oils and tea. Indeed, earnings from rubber exports fell in 1982, for the second year in succession, by over one quarter. The losses, amounting to nearly US\$ 900 million at global level, were almost entirely borne by rubber exporters in Asia and the Pacific.

Hopes of recovery

I welcome the long-overdue movement towards price recovery in recent months. This should bring relief to producers of many of the vital export commodities of the Region. But, as the exceptional increase in tea prices since the middle of last year demonstrates, most of the improvement has coincided with reductions in exportable supplies which may yet prove only temporary.

For the future prosperity of the Region's exports, it is essential that world economic recovery bring about a revival of demand in importing countries. Equally important, I look to the developed countries to relax the stranglehold of protectionism which holds back the growth of the Region's exports of processed agricultural raw materials such as textiles and leather goods.

External debt is a less overwhelming problem here than in certain other regions. Nevertheless, it is of concern to note that four countries of the Region ranked among the 20 largest developing country borrowers in 1982, and accounted for 20 percent of the long-term debt of this group.

Prospect for aid

Prospects for aid to agriculture remain far from reassuring. Particularly disquieting is the resource situation of the International Development Association (IDA), which has been a major supporter of Asian agriculture. A reduction of IDA funds to nine billion dollars for the seventh replenishment will certainly affect the agricultural development of this and other regions. There are also continuing difficulties over the replenishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and resource shortages have brought about a drastic reduction in the operations of UNDP.

The general economic environment thus remains difficult, even if the worst of the recession is over. It is encouraging that, despite the problems of the last three years, the agriculture of the Region has continued to perform well. In particular, it has shown impressive resilience in recovering from the ravages of aberrant weather.

Agriculture in the Region

In 1982, drought seared much of Australia and the Indian sub-continent. Cereal production still went up in that year, but only by a small amount. In 1983, however, it surged to an all-time high of 715 million tons. This represents an increase of no less than 10.5 percent over the 1982 harvest. All grains participated in the advance but the results in wheat were especially striking: thanks to bumper harvests in China and India, the increase was equivalent to 22 percent.

What is, perhaps, even more heartening is the long-term trend that underpins the immediate figures.

While there have been considerable fluctuations from year to year, over the period 1973-1983 cereal production in the Region achieved an annual compound growth rate of 3.4 percent. It would seem that this is currently being maintained.

Admittedly, this falls short of the 4 percent Development Decade target. Nor does it resolve automatically the long-festering problem of 300 million chronically malnourished people. But it has enabled the Region to keep a slender but positive lead over population growth.

Higher output came largely from increases in yields, since the traditional option of ploughing up new land is now almost entirely sealed off. The pressure on land is reflected in the declining area per person engaged in agriculture: the fall was as much as 9 percent over the past decade.

Mr Chairman, behind these cold statistics lie deeply moving human achievements. For example we find, in the decade briefly reviewed, that improved nutrition added three centimetres to the average height of the children in the Republic of Korea. It increased life expectancy to 63 years for Thailand and 66 years for Sri Lanka.

There are many reasons for these gains.

Factors favouring progress

Aside from good weather, they include: the adoption of policies that unlocked the productivity of small farmers; a growing pool of scientists; continued investment in agriculture; the rapid spread of new technology; and a series of significant institutional initiatives. A few examples will illustrate these points.

In China, the harnessing of peasant energy and enterprise through the new system of production responsibility has contributed to massive increases in cereal output during the last two years. The Philippines has continued to train large numbers of students in tropical agriculture, drawing them from all over the Region. Using new varieties, Burma has doubled paddy yields under its Township programme. Aware that starving agriculture of funds can trigger off economic decline, Malaysia has firmly held the line on budgetary allocations for the sector. Through increases in milk production averaging well over 4 percent yearly for more than a decade, India has achieved what has been called a "White Revolution". Indonesia has promoted a sharp spurt in coconut yields through the systematic provision of inputs. Aquaculture has prospered in Philippine waters, attaining an 18 percent increase in production. Fiji's fish landings rose by a remarkable 23 percent.

On the institutional plane, Japan last year set up a new regional trust fund for programmes to parry the danger of soil erosion, and to improve forest management. The Association of South-East Asian Nations adopted an understanding on fisheries. ASEAN also took the first tentative steps towards forging a common forestry policy. And 16 Member Nations launched FAO's Regional Food Security Commission. The recommendations of its first session will provide the basis for useful work in the years ahead.

Continuing problems

Mr Chairman, the Region has many successes to its credit. But unfortunately, they do not tell the whole story. As always, aggregated figures conceal wide variations in the performance of individual areas, even within countries. Agricultural weakness, lagging structural reforms, and mounting population pressure combine all too often to extend the already swollen ranks of the impoverished. Cereal yields, though improving, are still generally little more than two tons per hectare. Prevailing levels of technology are still very low.

A recent FAO study of the carrying capacity of land throughout the world has shown that seven countries in the Region, with a total of more than 800 million inhabitants, are on the danger list. In coming decades, they will be unable to produce enough food for their rising populations without a major improvement in the level of agricultural technology.

The problem posed by continuing population growth thus remains acute, and the fall in fertility rates which appears to have begun is unlikely to bring speedy relief.

The challenge facing policy-makers is therefore increasingly difficult. The need to achieve a massive growth in output requires a concentration of resources on the most productive land, notably for extending the irrigation network. But equity, and the need to stem migration to already bloated cities, call for special efforts to benefit the less favoured producers, particularly in rainfed areas.

National food security programmes

A possible framework for handling this task is offered by FAO's proposal that countries develop national food security programmes. These should give appropriate weight to each of the three principal components of food security: ensuring that production, as far as is technically feasible, rises in line with demand; promoting stability in the flow of food supplies to the points where they are required; and securing effective access to food on the part of those who need it.

The question of access is linked to the twin problems of poverty and malnutrition still so regrettably prevalent in Asia today. There is a lethal time constraint. People who remain locked into twilight lives by malnutrition cannot wait. Delays in alleviating their needs are paid for in the coin of human anguish.

Physical availability of food does not, of itself, resolve the problem of hunger. In fact, food can become an obscene mockery to the hungry, if they are unable to buy it.

FAO estimates that the desirable intake per caput in most countries of this Region should be around 2 200 calories. If consumption falls below 1 600 calories, undernourishment takes its toll.

The problem of undernutrition

It is significant that all countries in Asia and the Pacific have an average per caput availability exceeding 1 600 calories. Unfortunately, the sharing of available food is unequal because purchasing power is unevenly divided. This leads to wide differentials in access to food. It is the basic cause of the serious problem of undernutrition.

The complex issue of food distribution can be even more intractable than that of increasing food production. In the years ahead, food distribution problems are likely to occupy a place close to the centre of the stage.

As foreseen in both the Jakarta Consensus and FAO's concept of food security, the Region will have to address itself increasingly to the designing of policies and programmes which will ensure physical and economic access to food on the part of the poorer sections of the population.

The approach will generally include price policy measures, public distribution arrangements and, above all, programmes of rural development for generating higher income among the mass of the people.

Securing better access to food and higher production

The basic challenge is to combine such programmes, oriented primarily towards the attainment of equity, with efforts to maintain the momentum in food production that the Region has painstakingly built up. Policies and programmes that help farmers to reach out beyond the narrow confines of subsistence slash-and-burn farming, or elementary systems of livestock rearing and crop production, must be compatible with the major objective of mobilizing the full productive capacity of the Region.

I have already mentioned some of the advantages, in terms of trained manpower, which place the Region in a relatively strong position to launch an all-out attack on these problems. I would add here another important characteristic: the skill of your planners, and the sophistication of national development plans.

A reading of those plans reveals - after allowing for national differences - a number of shared perceptions of the strategies required. These include: security of tenure and other agrarian reform measures; packages of technology adapted to the needs of integrated farming, especially for tropical upland and semi-arid areas and fostering rural development through people's participation. There is also a general recognition of the continuing need to reduce post-harvest food losses.

These ideas are very much in line with the main thrust of the Programme of Action adopted by the 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD). It is therefore no surprise that a number of countries in the Region have sought FAO cooperation in a review of their rural development policies and programmes aimed at re-orienting them for the alleviation of rural poverty. As a part of its follow-up of WCARRD, the Organization has initiated high-level Policy Review Missions and other technical missions to various countries in the Region.

Women in development

Many countries in the Region are striving to give more recognition and support to the important role played by rural women in development. The contributions made by women in both economic and social spheres have for too long been undervalued, even completely unrecognized. Today we know that significant numbers of women are household heads, landless labourers, and agricultural producers, yet they often lack direct access to productive resources and services.

ECDC/TCDC

The establishment of women's bureaux by many governments, their close cooperation with line ministries, can help to bring about the kinds of support that are needed. They should promote equity, while remaining compatible with the generally prevailing patterns of culture. Working with women's groups, for example, has proved to bring about significant and acceptable change in many places.

In all the fields which I have discussed, technical and economic cooperation among developing countries should play an increasingly important role. The promotion of ECDC and TCDC has become a basic constituent in a widening range of FAO programmes. The regional or sub-regional approach can be particularly fruitful in many circumstances. An FAO brochure on "Sharing Experience for Progress", of which copies are available here, shows what TCDC has to offer in the fields of food, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and rural development, and illustrates the catalytic assistance that FAO can provide.

The many tasks I have outlined must be tackled, in the first instance, by the farmers and by the governments of the Region. FAO is privileged to serve as your collaborator in this immense undertaking. With resources being severely limited, we have selected four main areas in which to concentrate our work: increasing food production; strengthening food security; maximising impact at the field level; and enhancing economic and technical cooperation among developing countries.

The Organization's Programme of Work and Budget 1984-85 was approved unanimously last year by the Twenty-second Session of our biennial Conference, and is the source of our Regular Programme activities. Our support to field programmes, which is closely linked to the Organization's regular activities, derived from a variety of aid and technical assistance activities funded by UNDP, other programmes and institutions and Trust Funds.

The FAO programme in the region

At the end of December 1983, there were 265 FAO/UNDP projects in operation in the Region, at a total cost of more than US\$ 250 million, and 114 Trust Fund projects involving about US\$ 100 million. They involved cooperation between 560 FAO experts and the technical staff of member countries. In addition our FAO Representatives, and staff from our Regional Office in Bangkok, kept in close contact with governments in developing and monitoring our field programmes.

While the overall figures for our field programme may, at first sight, appear substantial, they should be viewed against the background of a rapid contraction in the resources available from UNDP. Our delivery of UNDP-funded projects in the Region dropped from more than US\$ 60 million in 1981 to about US\$ 47 million in 1982, and just over US\$ 38 million last year. In these circumstances our own, relatively modest, Technical Cooperation Programme has been able to play a key role, for instance in ensuring the continuity of certain projects threatened by the reduction in UNDP financing.

Most countries have by now built up their reservoir of national expertise to a point where the need for technical assistance projects of the traditional type has been greatly reduced. On the other hand, new requirements have emerged, often relating to more specialized forms of cooperation. Overall, I do not feel that the need for FAO's assistance is any less than it was a few years ago.

On the contrary, the arrival of a new generation of problems, programmes and projects - relating, for instance, to rural development - is placing heavy demands on the capacity of the Organization. We must provide help that is finely tuned to the needs of the requesting countries. The decline in the size of the UNDP-financed programme is thus a source of much concern.

Main topics of the Conference

The agenda of this Conference has been drawn up in the light of the many factors I have outlined. It gives the Conference a chance to address several topics which are crucial if farmers are to have the possibility, so long denied to them, of working their way out of poverty and hunger.

Price Policies

One of the themes concerns agricultural price policy. We know, from historical experience, that all farmers respond quickly and rationally to the incentives that favourable price policies provide. Price policies that reinforce the earning capacity of producers, especially small farmers, can be effective trigger mechanisms for sustained agricultural growth.

In the course of the Conference, I look forward to learning more about the experience in this field acquired by the countries of the Region. This will serve as a major contribution to the global study now underway, whose findings I expected to present at the Twenty-third FAO Conference in 1985.

Training

Another major topic which the Conference will discuss relates to training for agriculture and rural development. Human resource development is of crucial importance for upgrading the productivity of agriculture, and Governments have allocated substantial resources to it. But there is a powerful orthodoxy about traditional forms of training. Much of the benefit has tended to flow towards the better-off sector of agriculture. Far too many training programmes are divorced from the daily lives of farmers in the village. The training of leaders, at village level, remains a largely unfulfilled task.

The need for innovative training programmes at village level can perhaps best be seen in the field of irrigation. In 1983 alone, investments in large-scale irrigation amount to US\$ 1.4 billion. Yet we know that large sectors of existing irrigation networks are idle or poorly utilized because farmers lack the training.

The task before us is to recast traditional training programmes. Village-level programmes must build on the strength of local cultural patterns and must reflect village aspirations.

People's participation

Even more important, training must be seen to have, as its major objective, the ensuring of people's participation in self-determined and locally directed change. It is my hope that we can learn from the rich experience of existing village-level programmes.

Mr Chairman, the varied experience of Asia and the Pacific clearly demonstrates that programmes to raise the productivity of the poorest are of benefit to all. They accelerate economic growth, provide resources to create jobs, stimulate the demand for consumer products and underpin fledgling programmes of industrialization.

Growth can, and must, be combined with equity.

Growth and equity

Pakistan's current Five-Year Plan admirably sums up the points in its introduction: "It is necessary to combine a strong production base with an equally strong social conscience", the Plan says. "Rapid economic growth is crucial for the future; without it, we can only redistribute poverty. But economic growth is a necessary, not a sufficient condition for changing the daily lives of the people. Economic growth cannot benefit the poor unless it reaches the poor and unless the majority of the population participates in economic life and provides not only for a general agricultural advance but for small farm production."

This is a sentiment all nations of the Region share. It is a fitting theme for this Seventeenth Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

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