

APRC/96/REP

*REPORT*

Apia,  
Western Samoa  
14-18 May 1996

# *Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific*



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

# FAO Member Nations in the Asia Region (as of 18 May 1996)

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

# FAO Member Nations in the Southwest Pacific Region (as of 18 May 1996)

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

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

First	Bangalore, India, 27 July-5 August 1953
Second	Kandy, Sri Lanka, 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
Eight	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, 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
Eighteenth	Rome, Italy, 8-17 July 1986
Nineteenth	Bangkok, Thailand, 11-15 July 1988
Twentieth	Beijing, China, 23-27 April 1990
Twenty-first	New Delhi, India, 10-14 February 1992
Twenty-second	Manila, Philippines, 3-7 October 1994
Twenty-third	Apia, Western Samoa, 14-18 May 1996

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**FAO 1996**

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## **SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **World Food Summit and Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region**

#### **For the attention of Governments and FAO**

The Conference:

1. reiterated its full support for the convening of the World Food Summit, in Rome, in November 1996, and encouraged the continuation of broad-based, participatory preparations for the Summit (para. 15);
2. endorsed seven priority actions for regional food security as outlined in Appendix F of this report (“Asia-Pacific Regional Perspective on Food Security”). These were under the headings of: (i) raising productivity and output in the food sector, (ii) arresting and reversing agricultural land degradation and water loss, (iii) improving preparedness for food shortages due to natural disasters, (iv) improving food marketing efficiency, (v) minimizing the risks and maximizing the opportunities of trade-based supply stabilization, (vi) protecting vulnerable groups while liberalizing food markets, and (vii) alleviating malnutrition (para. 19);
3. endorsed the idea of launching the “Food for All Campaign” during the World Food Summit as a means of highlighting awareness of food security issues, mobilizing resources and broad support in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, and ensuring long-term follow-up to the initiatives agreed to by the Summit (para. 21);
4. recommended that the consensus “Asia-Pacific Regional Perspective on Food Security” document be transmitted to the Committee on World Food Security as Asia-Pacific’s collective perspective on policies and priority actions needed to achieve food security, and that it be given full consideration in the formulation of the World Food Summit Policy Statement and Plan of Action on World Food Security (para. 19).

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

5. urged FAO to continue in-depth studies of the impacts of the Uruguay Round Agreement on food security (para. 20).

### **FAO Activities in the Region**

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

6. urged all countries that have not yet signed the amendment to the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPC) agreement, covering the contribution of funds to the work plan and budget, to do so to ensure timely implementation of the work of the Commission (para. 27).

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

7. urged FAO to recruit a full contingent of highly qualified staff to service the South Pacific sub-region as quickly as possible (para. 24);
8. supported FAO's efforts to strengthen the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (para. 24);
9. endorsed the ongoing activities of FAO in the region, giving special recognition to the organization's work in the areas of crop protection, animal health information systems, control and eradication of contagious livestock diseases, human resources development, plant and animal genetic resources, women in development, follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition, forestry development, and capacity building in the fisheries sector (para. 25);
10. supported the establishment of an *ad hoc* Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management by the 16th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) and its initial priority task of preparing a Code of Practice for Forest Harvesting in the region (para. 26);
11. requested that a separate detailed report of FAO activities carried out in the Pacific island countries be provided to future Conferences and suggested that the new Sub-Regional Office should facilitate the preparation of this report in the future (para. 28);
12. requested that summary reports of activities undertaken by regional technical commissions, networks, and other regional bodies be provided to future Conferences (para. 29).

### **Strengthening Domestic Marketing Infrastructure, Institutions and Services for Food Security**

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

13. urged governments to promote investments in food-related transportation, warehousing, processing, and market places (para. 31);
14. encouraged governments to assist independent private firms, cooperatives, farmers' organizations, and parastatals in acquiring capital and new technology to improve operational efficiency and competitiveness to enhance food security (para. 32);
15. urged governments to strengthen the four core marketing support services: credit, market information, research, and training and extension. Governments were further urged to ensure sustained growth of investments in the food marketing sector, strengthen cooperative marketing systems for small farmers, improve the cost-effectiveness of public distribution systems and develop fair competitive trade through participatory methods (para. 33);



16. recommended governments to strengthen research, training, and other development activities within the framework of TCDC and other mechanisms for regional cooperation (para. 34).

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

17. encouraged FAO to give increased attention to the unique transport, education, communication, and human resources conditions in the Pacific island countries in future revisions of the conference document or related reports dealing with marketing infrastructure, institutions and services for food security (para. 35).

#### **Development of National Policies and Strategies for Water Resources Assessment and Management in the Rural Sector**

##### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

18. recommended that all countries implement participatory inter-sectoral processes for allocating water resources (para. 38);
19. encouraged countries to learn from the water pricing experiences of other countries in the region and apply relevant pricing policies wherever feasible (para. 39);
20. urged all countries to assess the potential for increasing participatory water management by farmers and other water users (para. 40);
21. encouraged member countries of the region to increase cooperation and expand the exchange of technology and experiences with a view toward overcoming the transboundary issues and implications of water resources management (para. 41);
22. urged governments to thoroughly assess the environmental aspects of water use in their countries, including water quality, and linkages such as the impacts of wetland drainage on biodiversity, agricultural run-off effects on coastal aquatic systems, and industrial pollution impacts on urban water quality (para. 42).

##### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

23. urged FAO to facilitate increased cooperation and exchange of experiences related to water management among countries of the region (para. 41).

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

### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

24. agreed that two new representatives to the CGIAR from the region would be selected for four-year terms by the Twenty-fourth Conference (para. 43);
25. urged delegates to use the opportunity of being assembled for the Conference to discuss potential candidates to serve the region in the CGIAR (para. 44);
26. recommended that a balance should be struck with regard to the region's representation in the CGIAR, with one representative coming from an Asian country and one representative coming from a Pacific country (para. 46).

### **For the attention of Governments and FAO**

27. requested member countries with interest in representing the region in the CGIAR to submit the *curriculum vitae* of proposed candidates to FAO prior to the next Regional Conference, so that a sub-committee of the Conference could screen the proposals and make recommendations for final endorsement to the next Conference (para 45).

### **For attention of FAO**

The Conference:

28. urged FAO to facilitate better interaction between the regional representatives and their constituencies, including development of clear terms of reference for representatives and the possible organization of regional forums to discuss and clarify research priorities for the region (para 47).

## **Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO**

### **For the attention of Governments and FAO**

The Conference:

29. supported, in principle, the convening of Ministerial meetings in conjunction with COFI and COFO, but only when issues of enough significance and urgency to warrant the highest levels of consideration had emerged (para. 50).

### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

30. urged the Director-General to seek consensus from member countries on the need and timing of future Ministerial meetings, and on the issues to be addressed (para. 50);

31. advised that unless major new issues or initiatives emerge in the very near future, it would probably not be necessary or appropriate for Ministerial meetings to be called in 1997 (para. 51).

### **A Proposal for the Shortening of Regional Conference Reports**

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

32. agreed in principle with the recommendations of the Council and Conference of FAO to shorten the Regional Conference reports, with a view toward achieving cost savings (para. 52);
33. recommended that full and adequate reporting of the Twenty-third Conference's deliberations on preparations for the World Food Summit and food security in general be reflected in the report, including significant areas of disagreement (para. 53);
34. recommended that for future Regional Conferences, reporting of the different views considered by any member to be a major issue should be retained (para. 54).

### **Concluding Items**

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

35. noted the offers of the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of Myanmar to host the Twenty-fourth Session of the FAO Regional Conference. The Chairman of the Conference was requested to convey these offers to the Director-General, who would decide on the date and place of the Conference in consultation with Member Governments of the region (para. 56).



## **I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

### **Organization of the Conference**

1. The Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific was held in Apia, Western Samoa, from 14 to 18 May 1996.
2. Representatives from 26 member nations participated in the Conference. Observers from 2 member nations, 4 intergovernmental organizations, and 13 non-governmental organizations were also in attendance. Representatives of 5 other United Nations bodies and Specialized Agencies participated. A complete list of participants at the Conference is given in Appendix B.

### **Inaugural Ceremony**

3. The Inaugural Ceremony of the Conference was held on 14 May 1996. His Excellency, Misa Telefoni Retzlaff, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Government of Western Samoa, and Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, welcomed all participants of the Conference. The Director-General expressed appreciation to the Government and the people of Western Samoa for making it possible to convene the FAO Regional Conference in a Pacific-island country for the first time in the fifty-year history of the Organization. He cited the significance of the Conference in “raising the curtain” on the historic World Food Summit to be held in Rome, in November 1996. He assured the delegates that their perceptions and suggestions for addressing food security in Asia and the Pacific would be given the utmost consideration in formulating a global Plan of Action for “a world without hungry people.”
4. His Excellency, Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of Western Samoa, delivered the keynote inaugural address. He noted that, with the cessation of east-west tensions, regional conferences in Asia and the Pacific had grown in importance. The Prime Minister emphasized the key role of a revitalized and decentralized FAO, working in concert with government and private sector, to address the regional problems of high population growth, persistent hunger and poverty, over-exploitation of land and marine resources, deforestation, environmental pollution and degradation, and unsustainable development.
5. The Prime Minister acknowledged the importance of the Conference in planning for the World Food Summit and noted that it would build upon recent global strategies endorsed in Rio de Janeiro during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, the Social Summit in Copenhagen, and the Women’s Conference in Beijing. He cautioned, however, that strategies and plans of action abound, but what was needed was implementation.

6. Noting that 1996 had been proclaimed by the UN as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the Prime Minister urged his Asia and Pacific colleagues to take the lead in feeding the poor and hungry. He warned that we face a future where our planet will soon be home to six billion people, but its capacity to support and sustain them will be very much diminished unless we act now.

7. The full text of the inaugural address of the Prime Minister is given in Appendix D of this report.

#### **Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, and Rapporteur**

8. The delegates unanimously elected His Excellency, Misa Telefoni Retzlaff, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Government of Western Samoa, as Chairman of the Conference.

9. The Conference also elected all the Ministers present as Vice-Chairmen of the Conference, and Mr. Jaime S. Bautista, of the Philippines, as Rapporteur.

#### **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**

10. Given the importance of food security and preparation for the World Food Summit, the Conference agreed to combine discussions on the Summit (Agenda Item 7) with Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agricultural Situation in the Region (Agenda Item 5). The Conference adopted the Agenda, which is given in Appendix A. Documents submitted to the Conference are listed in Appendix C.

#### **Statement of the Director-General**

11. In his opening statement, Dr. Jacques Diouf noted the immense diversity of the Asia-Pacific Region, which paradoxically has been a source of cohesion and unity. He emphasized that what mainly sets the region apart, however, is the wealth of its human resources. He credited this strength for the tremendous gains achieved by the region in reducing the chronic food shortages and famines common just 30 to 40 years ago.

12. The Director-General warned, however, that serious problems of structural unemployment, inequality in the distribution of income, and rural poverty persisted in the region. He noted specifically that, among the major world challenges, food and water issues loom prominently. The Director-General cautioned that unless immediate actions were taken to remedy inadequate distribution, deforestation, over-exploitation of fisheries, shortcomings in water management, rampant urbanization, and the problems inherent in rapid technological change, violent and serious conflict could result.

13. The Director-General underscored the fundamental mission of FAO to establish a food security triad of available, stable, and accessible food supplies for all, encapsulated in the slogan "Food for All." The World Food Summit, to be convened in November

1996 in Rome, was stressed as a historic means by which to enlist a solemn and top-level commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition, and to take specific action to ensure food security for all. Delegates were urged by the Director-General to maximize their opportunity during the Conference to draw up regional strategies and proposals to be considered by the World Food Summit in November. He noted that only with the combined efforts of every country and every segment of society could the problems of food insecurity be satisfactorily addressed.

14. A complete text of the Director-General's statement is given in Appendix E.

## **II. WORLD FOOD SUMMIT AND COUNTRY STATEMENTS AND GENERAL DEBATE ON THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SITUATION IN THE REGION**

15. The Conference reiterated its full support for the convening of the World Food Summit, in Rome, in November 1996, and encouraged the continuation of broad-based, participatory preparations for the Summit. With a view toward contributing an Asia-Pacific perspective to the Summit preparation, the Conference considered the World Food Summit Draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action,<sup>1</sup> and the Secretariat document on Food Security Situation and Issues in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>2</sup> All delegations present contributed fully to the discussion under these agenda items which were considered in parallel.

16. The Conference took note of the outcome of the FAO/NGO Regional Consultation for Asia and the Pacific on the World Food Summit, held in Bangkok in April 1996. It welcomed the Consultation report and declaration, and oral summaries presented by participants of the Consultation, as valuable inputs to its discussions. The useful contributions of all NGOs, IGOs, United Nations bodies and Specialized Agencies, and other international organizations participating in the Conference were acknowledged.

17. Given the extreme diversity of social conditions and resource endowments, and the uneven levels of agricultural and economic development in the region, it was not surprising that delegates revealed a wide range of perspectives on the issues of food security and preparations for the World Food Summit. Nonetheless, the Conference reached common agreement on a number of points. In particular, the Conference noted:

- impressive progress achieved in Asia and the Pacific in the past two decades in improving food security, but also noted that such progress was not universal;
- predictions that expanding populations and rapid economic growth in the region may lead to sharply increased demands for food and energy in the near future, as well as increased pressures on the environment;
- that low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) at the low end of the food security spectrum could remain at risk to fluctuations in production, natural disasters, fluctuations in international prices, and economic downturns in the foreseeable future;

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<sup>1</sup>APRC/96/3

<sup>2</sup>APRC/96/4



- the findings of the Regional Commission on Food Security for Asia and the Pacific that vulnerability to food insecurity could be attributed to many factors, as outlined in the report of its Seventh Session;
- that the policy options needed for dealing with food security issues exist, but that the political commitment and concerted ground-level action had been lacking in many LIFDCs; and
- that clear definitions of food security, self-sufficiency, and sustainable development were needed.

18. Some countries urged the international donor community to increase food aid and logistics support to improve food security in LIFDCs.

19. The Conference endorsed seven priority actions for regional food security as outlined in Appendix F. These were under the headings of: (i) raising productivity and output in the food sector; (ii) arresting and reversing agricultural land degradation and water loss; (iii) improving preparedness for food shortages due to natural disasters; (iv) improving food marketing efficiency; (v) minimizing the risks and maximizing the opportunities of trade-based supply stabilization; (vi) protecting vulnerable groups while liberalizing food markets; and (vii) alleviating malnutrition. It recommended that the consensus be transmitted to the Committee on World Food Security as Asia-Pacific's collective perspective on policies and priority actions needed to achieve food security, and that it be given full consideration in the formulation of the World Food Summit Policy Statement and Plan of Action on World Food Security.

20. The Conference urged FAO to continue indepth studies of the impacts of the Uruguay Round Agreement on food security.

21. The Conference endorsed the idea of launching the "Food for All Campaign" during the World Food Summit as a means of highlighting awareness of food security issues, mobilizing resources and broad support in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, and ensuring long-term follow-up to the initiatives agreed to by the Summit.

### III. REPORT ON FAO ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: 1994-1995

22. The Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific (ADG/RR) reported on the major FAO activities of the past biennium.<sup>3</sup> He drew special attention to the Director-General's special thrust on sustainable food production in low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) and measures to strengthen the Regional Office and establish the Sub-regional Office for the Pacific.

23. The Conference expressed its sincere appreciation for the leadership of Dr. A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan, ADG/RR, and for his efforts to address the challenging and diverse needs of the region. Appreciation was also expressed for the various cost-savings measures being taken by FAO in the region.

24. The Conference warmly welcomed the establishment of the Sub-regional Office for the Pacific, located in Apia, which had been opened officially in a ceremony just prior to the Conference. It urged FAO to recruit a full contingent of highly qualified staff to service the sub-region as quickly as possible. The Conference also supported FAO's efforts to strengthen the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

25. The Conference generally endorsed the ongoing activities of FAO in the region. It gave special recognition to the Organization's work in the areas of crop protection, animal health information systems, control and eradication of contagious livestock diseases, human resources development, plant and animal genetic resources, women in development, follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition, forestry development, and capacity building in the fisheries sector.

26. The Conference welcomed the outcome of the 16th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC), particularly the establishment of an *ad-hoc* Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management in the Asia-Pacific Region. It supported the initial priority task of the Working Group, which is the preparation of a Code of Practice for Forest Harvesting in the region.

27. The Conference acknowledged the work of the Asia and Pacific Plant Protection Commission (APPC), and favorably noted the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the APPC and the Pacific Plant Protection Organization, which operates under the umbrella of the South Pacific Commission. The Conference urged all countries that have not yet signed the amendment to the APPC agreement covering the contribution of funds to the work plan and budget to do so to ensure timely implementation of the work of the Commission.

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<sup>3</sup> APCR/96/2

28. The Conference noted with satisfaction the preparation of a separate detailed report of FAO activities carried out in the Pacific island countries, and requested that similar reports be provided to future Conferences. The Conference suggested that the new Sub-regional Office should facilitate the preparation of this report in the future.

29. Noting the important work of regional technical commissions, networks, and other regional bodies, the Conference appreciated the summary of activities of these bodies, presented in Appendix 2 of Conference document APRC/96/2. It requested that similar summaries be provided to future Conferences.

#### **IV. STRENGTHENING DOMESTIC MARKETING INFRASTRUCTURE, INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES FOR FOOD SECURITY**

30. The Conference considered the crucial aspects of domestic marketing infrastructure, institutions, and services in support of food security.<sup>4</sup> It noted the trend in the region away from highly-protected staple food markets led by public distribution systems to efficient private trade in staple foods supported by cost-effective public distribution systems to help the poorest segments of society. The Conference agreed that for this strategy to work, the three main components of food marketing systems (i.e. infrastructure, institutions, and services) would have to be strengthened in many countries.

31. With respect to food marketing infrastructure, the Conference urged governments to promote investments in food-related transportation, warehousing, processing, and market places. The Conference identified the following measures by which to encourage such investments: (i) sound planning and technical assistance, (ii) tax concessions, (iii) access to land for factories or warehouses, (iv) liberalization of equipment imports, (v) provision of utilities, and (vi) other non-price-distorting support.

32. In regard to institutions, the Conference encouraged governments to assist independent private firms, cooperatives, farmers' organizations, and parastatals in acquiring capital and new technology to improve operational efficiency and competitiveness.

33. The Conference urged governments to strengthen the four core marketing support services: (i) credit, (ii) market information, (iii) research, and (iv) training and extension. Governments were further urged to ensure sustained growth of investments in the food marketing sector, strengthen cooperative marketing systems for small farmers, improve the cost-effectiveness of public distribution systems, and develop fair competitive trade through participatory methods.

34. To benefit from the wealth of experience and expertise in food marketing systems development in the region, the Conference recommended that governments strengthen research, training, and other development activities within the framework of TCDC and other mechanisms for regional cooperation.

35. The Conference noted that the Conference document focused primarily on domestic food marketing conditions and issues in Asia and encouraged FAO to give increased attention to the special conditions of the Pacific island countries (e.g., unique transport, education, communication, and human resources conditions) in future revisions of the document or related reports.

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<sup>4</sup> APR/96/5

## **V. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR WATER RESOURCES ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN THE RURAL SECTOR**

36. The Conference carefully considered national policies and strategies for water resources assessment and management in the rural sector.<sup>5</sup> Noting that more than two-thirds of all water drawn from the earth's rivers, lakes, and aquifers was used for agricultural irrigation, the Conference agreed that efficient and effective management of water resources was essential for the achievement of food security.

37. The Conference noted that intensive competition for limited water supplies was already constraining development efforts in many countries. With increasing competition for water, the region faced the conundrum of having to produce more food with less water. The Conference recognized that although water shortages existed in many locations, ironically, the misuse of water was widespread.

38. The Conference agreed that an integrated approach to water sector policies and issues was important, taking into account the complete water cycle and the diverse inter-sectoral development needs for water resources. It recommended that all countries implement participatory inter-sectoral processes for allocating water resources.

39. The Conference noted the growing trend toward cost recovery from water users. It noted that some countries in the region had successfully established private markets for groundwater and, in a few cases, surface water. The Conference agreed that underpricing of agricultural water was undesirable for economic, fiscal, environmental, and operational reasons. It recognized, however, that full economic pricing may not easily be achieved. The Conference encouraged countries to learn from the water pricing experiences of other countries in the region and apply relevant pricing policies wherever feasible.

40. A second trend recognized by the Conference was the decentralization of responsibility for irrigation management and other water use. Significant success had been achieved by some countries in the region in delegating greater responsibility to water-user associations, irrigation cooperatives, and other user groups. The Conference urged all countries to assess the potential for increasing participatory water management by farmers and other water users.

41. Recognizing the many transboundary issues and implications of water resources management, the Conference encouraged member countries of the region to increase cooperation and expand the exchange of technology and experience. FAO was urged to facilitate such cooperation and exchange.

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<sup>5</sup> APRC/96/7

42. Noting the large potential environmental impacts of schemes to supply, use, and dispose of water, the Conference urged governments to thoroughly assess the environmental aspects of water use in their countries, including water quality. In particular, countries were urged to assess linkages such as the impacts of wetland drainage on biodiversity, agricultural run-off effects on coastal aquatic systems, and industrial pollution impacts on urban water quality.

## **VI. REPRESENTATION OF THE REGION IN THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**

43. The Conference considered representation of the region in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).<sup>6</sup> The Conference recalled that, at the Twenty-second Conference in Manila, the countries of Malaysia and Nepal were selected to represent the region in the CGIAR for the period 1995 to 1998. Thus, there was no need to select representatives from the region during the Conference. The Conference agreed that two new representatives to the CGIAR from the region would be selected for four-year terms by the Twenty-fourth Conference.

44. Noting that several countries had interest in representing the region in the CGIAR, the Conference urged delegates to use the opportunity of being assembled for the Conference to discuss potential candidates to serve the region in the CGIAR.

45. The Conference requested member countries with interest in representing the region in the CGIAR to submit the *curriculum vitae* of proposed candidates to FAO prior to the next Regional Conference. In this way, a sub-committee of the Conference could screen the proposals and make recommendations for final endorsement to the next Conference.

46. The Conference recommended that a balance should be struck with regard to the region's representation in the CGIAR, with one representative coming from an Asian country and one representative coming from a Pacific country.

47. The Conference noted that mechanisms for consultation and coordination between the regional representatives in the CGIAR and National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) remained weak. It urged FAO to facilitate better interaction between the regional representatives and their constituencies, including development of clear terms of reference for representatives and the possible organization of regional forums to discuss and clarify research priorities for the region.

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<sup>6</sup> APROC/96/6

## **VII. FUTURE MINISTERIAL MEETINGS IN CONJUNCTION WITH SESSIONS OF COFI AND COFO**

48. The Conference recalled that, at the invitation of the Director-General, Ministers responsible for fisheries from around the world met for the first time, in Rome, in conjunction with the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in mid-March of 1995.<sup>7</sup> Immediately following the fisheries meeting, the Ministers responsible for forestry held a first-ever meeting in conjunction with the Committee on Forestry (COFO). The meetings offered timely and high-level guidance to FAO on a number of pressing forestry and fisheries issues, and provided input for deliberations and review by the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Inter-governmental Panel on Forests, and other bodies.

49. The Conference expressed its view that the two Ministerial meetings in 1995 had been useful to FAO and to participating countries. It recognized, however, that there were both benefits and costs associated with such meetings.

50. The Conference supported, in principle, the convening of Ministerial meetings in conjunction with COFI and COFO, but advised the Director-General that a flexible approach was needed in determining the timing and frequency of such meetings. The Conference advised that Ministerial meetings should only be called when issues of enough significance and urgency to warrant the highest levels of consideration had emerged. The Director-General was urged to seek consensus from member countries on the need and timing for such meetings in the future, and on the issues to be addressed.

51. Considering the large number of other significant events scheduled for late 1996 and during 1997, the Conference agreed that a fully flexible approach would be needed in determining the need and desirability of calling Ministerial meetings in conjunction with the 1997 sessions of COFI and COFO. The Conference advised, however, that unless major new issues or initiatives emerge in the very near future, it would probably not be necessary or appropriate for Ministerial meetings to be called in 1997.

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<sup>7</sup> APRC/96/8



### **VIII. A PROPOSAL FOR THE SHORTENING OF REGIONAL CONFERENCE REPORTS**

52. The Conference agreed in principle with the recommendations of the Council and Conference of FAO to shorten Regional Conference reports, as outlined in the Conference Document,<sup>8</sup> with a view toward achieving cost savings.

53. Given the extreme importance of the Conference discussions and debate concerning preparations for the World Food Summit and food security in general, the Conference recommended that full and adequate reporting of the Twenty-third Conference's deliberations on these topics be reflected in the Conference report, including significant areas of disagreement.

54. The Conference recommended that for future Regional Conferences, reporting of the different views considered by any member to be a major issue should be retained.

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<sup>8</sup> APCR/96/9

## **IX. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

### **Date and Place of the Twenty-fourth Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific**

55. The Governments of the Republic of Korea and Myanmar graciously extended offers to host the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in 1998.

56. The Chairman of the Conference noted that the offers of the Republic of Korea and Myanmar would be conveyed to the Director-General of FAO, who would decide on the date and place of the Conference in consultation with member governments.

### **Adoption of the Report**

57. The Conference unanimously adopted the draft report presented by the Rapporteur and the Conference Chairman.

### **Closure of the Conference**

58. In closing statements and comments, delegates expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Western Samoa for hosting the Conference. They were most appreciative of the generous and warm traditional Samoan hospitality extended to all participants.

59. On behalf of the Government of Western Samoa, His Excellency, Misa Telefoni Retzlaff thanked the participants for convening the Conference in the South Pacific and for their positive contributions. He noted that the Conference had exceeded expectations by successfully developing a substantive regional perspective on food security. He then declared the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific closed.

## **AGENDA**

### **I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

1. Inaugural Ceremony
2. Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Appointment of Rapporteur
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

### **III. SELECTED ISSUES OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

7. World Food Summit
8. Strengthening Domestic Marketing Infrastructure, Institutions and Services for Food Security
9. Development of National Policies and Strategies for Water Resources Assessment and Management in the Rural Sector

### **IV. OTHER MATTERS**

10. Representation of the Region in the CGIAR
11. Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO
12. A Proposal for the Shortening of Regional Conference Reports

### **V. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

13. Date and Place of the 24th Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
14. Adoption of the Report
15. Closure of the Conference



APPENDIX B  
ANNEXE B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE  
BUREAU DE LA CONFERENCE

Chairman: Misa Telefoni RETZLAFF (SAMOA)  
Président:

Vice-Chairmen: David BROWNHILL (AUSTRALIA)  
Vice-Présidents: Tao Seng HOUR (CAMBODIA)  
Jiang LIU (CHINA)  
Vaine Terepai TAIREA (COOK ISLANDS)  
Sjarifudin BAHARSJAH (INDONESIA)  
Datuk Amar Dr. Sulaiman Hj. DAUD (MALAYSIA)  
Padma Sunder LAWOTI (NEPAL)  
John FALLOON (NEW ZEALAND)  
D.M. JAYARATNE (SRI LANKA)  
Baron VAEA (TONGA)  
Vincent BOULEKONE (VANUATU)

Rapporteur: Jaime S. BAUTISTA (PHILIPPINES)

Independent Chairman José R. LOPEZ-PORTILLO  
of the Council:  
Président Indépendant  
du Conseil:

**MEMBER NATIONS IN THE REGION**  
**ETATS MEMBRES DE LA REGION**

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Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
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Australian High Commissioner  
Apia

Ms. Melanie DAVIES  
First Secretary, Australian High Commission  
Apia

Ms. Rose TOO  
Director, Industry Policy  
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Ministry of Agriculture  
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Ms. Keer KE  
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**REPRESENTANTS DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES ET DES**  
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**SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL  
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Maka Simanu SAPOLU  
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**PROVISIONAL LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

APRC/96/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
APRC/96/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-95
APRC/96/2 - Sup. 1	Report on FAO Activities in the Pacific Island Countries
APRC/96/3	World Food Summit: Draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action
APRC/96/4	World Food Summit: Food Security Situation and Issues in Asia and the Pacific
APRC/96/4 - Sup.1	Food for All Campaign
APRC/96/5	Strengthening Domestic Marketing Infrastructure, Institutions and Services for Food Security
APRC/96/6	Representation of the Region in the CGIAR
APRC/96/7	Development of National Policies and Strategies for Water Resources Assessment and Management in the Rural Sector
APRC/96/8	Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO
APRC/96/9	A Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conferences Reports

**INF SERIES**

APRC/96/INF/1	Information
APRC/96/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
APRC/96/INF/3	Provisional List of Documents
APRC/96/INF/4	Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 22nd Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
APR/96/INF/5	Director-General's Statement



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY  
PRIME MINISTER HONOURABLE TOFILAU ETI ALESANA

It is a great honour on behalf of the people of Samoa to welcome you all to Apia for this 23rd Regional Conference of the Food and Agriculture for Asia and the Pacific.

This is the first time that this FAO Regional Conference is held in the Pacific and I would like to thank the FAO member countries of our region for according Samoa the honour to host this very important gathering. I am particularly delighted that so many ministerial colleagues and Director-General Dr. Diouf, are present here today. I am sure that your visit to our country and the Pacific will be an enjoyable one and that many of you will have the opportunity to experience our culture and see first-hand some of the development constraints faced by small island developing countries of our region.

Today, as world attention shifts to social and economic problems following east-west tensions, regional conferences in our Asia and Pacific region such as this, have grown in importance. For this region is by far the largest in terms of population, land and sea mass, stretching from Iran in the West to the Cook Islands in the East.

While it is also the most vibrant and fastest growing region in terms of economic growth and development, many of our member countries particularly land locked and small island countries are constrained by the lack of financial and natural resources and isolation. Nor is our Asia Pacific region immune to social and economic problems faced by other regions.

As we meet, we are still confronted with a vast array of problems in our region: high population growth, hunger and poverty, over exploitation of land resources, environmental pollution and degradation, and unsustainable development.

To provide answers to these problems would require a concerted and committed effort by all of us in government and those in the private sector. Crucial to this objective is a revitalised and more effective FAO in the delivery of its programmes throughout our region.

We welcome the decision by the FAO to decentralize its activities, by strengthening and establishing new FAO sub-regional offices, including one for the Pacific countries which we officially opened here in Apia yesterday.

The sub-regional office headed by a Pacific islander, should ensure closer assistance and attention of the organization to the priorities of the island countries of the Pacific.

Last year FAO celebrated 50 years since its founding; 50 years of combating hunger and poverty; 50 years of enhancing food security for the world's population.

And like any other organization, FAO has had some success and there have also been shortcomings.

Over the next few days, this conference will deliberate on the historic World Food Summit to be held in Rome in November. That summit will address the seriousness of the world's food situation. It would seek the commitment of leaders to strategies and measures to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in the developing world. Your meeting therefore provides a good opportunity for us in the Asia and Pacific region to address what we would like to be reflected in the Draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action for the World Food Summit.

While our priorities may not be in unison with those of other regions, we are united by a common premise, that food security for all human beings is essential.

The dangers to food security are clear to us; population growth in the developing countries continues to outgrow food production; the earth's forests are being destroyed at a very high rate, global warming is reducing the earth's ability to protect life from deadly ultraviolet radiation, and chemical wastes seep down to poison ground water. In the Pacific islands our forests and fishery resources which are the economic mainstays for our people are being unsustainably exploited with little return. Our marine environment has been exposed to nuclear contamination which has also impacted greatly on our tourist industry.

A visitor to Samoa once observed that Samoa was a Least Developed Country but most of its people were big and happy. Perhaps the answer to that is cultural and the ability of our people to sustain themselves in times of hardship and need through sharing and helping one another.

Today 1.5 billion people of the world's total population of 5.7 billion live in absolute poverty, 40 % more than 15 years ago. In human terms, this means that roughly one in four people alive today exists only on the margins of survival. Most of the world's poor are women. Children and other disadvantaged groups are the most susceptible to poverty. And by the year 2000, many low income countries will be unable to feed their people using their own land. Small island countries of our region will by then, be unable to sustain further population increases.

The promotion of efficient agriculture and agricultural production are essential to the goal of universal food security. This must be done on a sustainable basis.

Closely related to food security is the state of our water resources which the conference will also address.

The threat to our water supplies is quite evident. There is a lot of water on earth, but very little of it is fresh water. WHO estimates that contaminated water causes at least 25 million deaths in developing countries each year. About 80% of all diseases and over one

third of all deaths in developing countries are caused by consumption of contaminated water. Water is so crucial also to our food production since more than 70% of global water use is agricultural. There is an immediate need therefore for urgent action for the sustainable management and use of our water resources.

The volatile nature of the international food supply and markets makes trade an essential priority for all of us in the Asia and Pacific region. The future of our countries regardless of size, is clearly linked to the growth and integration of the global economy in this era of trade liberation. A noted concern for many relates to the increase in the food import bill faced by the low income food deficit countries of our region. Small island states with finite resources and where the devastation from natural disasters affect the whole country are particularly vulnerable.

The completion of the Uruguay Round would improve access to overseas markets for food and agricultural products. Developing countries of our region stand to benefit since our comparative advantage is in agriculture, fisheries and other marine resources.

FAO would need to assess fully the impact of the Uruguay Rounds on agricultural products from developing countries in the Asia and Pacific region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference is an important one in our planning for the World Food Summit later this year. It builds on some recent global strategies endorsed by the world community in Rio during the Earth Summit on the Environment; the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, the Social Summit in Copenhagen, and the Women's Conference in Beijing.

Strategies and Plans of Action obviously abound. What really is sadly needed, is implementation. 1996 is proclaimed by the UN as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. We in the Asia and Pacific region should take the lead in feeding the poor and hungry and we must do so swiftly. Unless we act now, we face a future where our planet will soon be home to 6 billion people but its capacity to support and sustain our lives will be very much diminished. As US President Kennedy once said.

"If the world cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich".

This is the challenge before us.

Thank you and Soifua.



STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

It is fortunate that the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific is being held in the capital of this Polynesian nation whose territory comprises an archipelago emblematic of the small island states so numerous in this part of the world, for it shows how important each Member Nation, however small or distant from FAO Headquarters, is to the Organization.

May I express our deep gratitude to Head of State Malietoa Tanumafili II, to Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana, and to the Government and people of Samoa for offering us, in the great tradition of Pacific Island hospitality, such a gracious, cordial and efficient welcome.

Landing on these far shores, one could easily think one had found a bit of paradise on earth - the lush vegetation, the mountains cloaked with magnificent forests and the clear waters teeming with fish! Yet such beauty should not mislead us. Taro, one of the staple food crops of Samoa, has been hit by a leaf disease that seriously reduces yields; the forest cover has been badly savaged by cyclones; and the gradual disappearance of the mangroves has lowered fish production in worrying proportions.

It was largely these characteristics (seeming abundance but underlying difficulties - so representative of the Pacific countries), that dictated the choice of Apia as the seat of a new FAO Sub-regional Office established to cope more effectively with the specific technical, economic, social and financial problems of the countries of the Pacific.

FAO in its work has to contend with the immense diversity of the countries making up the Asia and Pacific Region. Ranging from luxuriant fertility to the driest of deserts, the region includes every conceivable type of climate, land and water resource, crop and farming practice. It takes in the world's largest and more populous countries and also tiny island states - dots in the ocean that may have no more than a few thousand or hundred thousand inhabitants. It comprises a host of co-existing social, political and economic systems and a vast of cultures. Stunningly modern megacities exist side by side with rural landscapes that look as if they have remained unchanged for millennia. The region embraces some of the most advanced and richest of nations and some of the poorest and least privileged.

Through one of those habitual human paradoxes, the region's very diversity has been a source of cohesion and unity. Cradle of ancient cultures and civilizations, source of ancient wisdom (and no doubt the part of the world where universality in human thinking was first attained) today it still inspires the thoughts and actions of many of the world's inhabitants. The interdependence typical of our times has now added new layers to this legacy from the remote past. What mainly sets the region apart, however, is the wealth of its human resources: dynamism and skill are fused in a determined and clearly-focused

will to ensure adequate food for everyone, to maximize development potential in all domains, and at the same time to carefully safeguard the future resource base. This is, after all, the region that spawned the fundamental concept that we do not own the Earth; it has only been placed in our stewardship for future generations.

Recent history attests to the reality of this strength. Barely 30 to 40 years ago, many countries in this region were a long way from meeting their needs, experiencing chronic shortages and sometimes terrible famines. And yet many of the countries that had to import huge quantities of grain every year and were constantly in need of food aid now produce the amounts they require and some have even become net exporters. The aid that these countries received would never have produced such results if they had not been in a position to assimilate and successfully apply the set of technologies we call the Green Revolution.

Despite some setbacks in the realms of social equity and the environment, the spectacular progress of this revolution in terms of agricultural production has provided a firm foundation for remarkable and lasting economic growth. The latest figures for 1995 indicate a growth rate of more than 4 percent in virtually all the developing countries of the region.

Does this mean that the problems have all been solved and that this is the best of all possible worlds? Unfortunately, no, not by a long chalk. A number of countries were sidelined by the economic take-off of which the region can otherwise be justifiably proud. Serious problems of structural unemployment, inequality in the distribution of income and rural poverty still persist. Additionally, the corollary of some reforms, such as those introduced to stimulate free trade in staple food commodities, has heightened food insecurity for small farmers, landless peasants and the rural poor. Such problems only worsen as population growth soars, agricultural, forest and fishery resources shrink, and rural populations migrate to urban areas or settle on increasingly marginal land.

Immediate action is clearly needed to remedy inadequate distribution, deforestation, shortcomings in water management, rampant urbanization and the problems inherent in introducing technological change everywhere while at the same time respecting the environment. These are the principal thrusts of FAO's action in the region. These are the concerns that have placed two specific items on your agenda: one on strengthening domestic marketing infrastructure, institutions and services in the region; and the other on the development of national policies and strategies for water resources assessment and management in the rural sector. The objective in each case is to draw maximum benefit from those elements that can meaningfully contribute towards securing food security.

This objective reflects the Organization's fundamental concern, which is precisely to establish the food security triad of available, stable, and accessible food supplies for all. This ardent undertaking, briefly encapsulated in the FAO slogan "Food for All", formed the basis for the decision by the Conference of FAO to hold a World Food Summit in 1996. The goal of the Summit is to enlist a solemn and top-level commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and to take specific action through combined world, regional and national efforts to ensure food security for all. The principal task of the Summit will be to give



substance to this commitment in the form of a Policy Statement and Plan of Action that will constitute the charter of an immense and powerful world campaign.

This Regional Conference, like the others this year, has a dominant theme: the World Food Summit, which will be held in Rome in November 1996. In the 50 years since the founding of FAO, this will be the first time that a meeting on world food has been held at the level of Heads of State and Government. The fact that the proposed Summit was unanimously approved by the Conference of FAO and backed by the United Nations General Assembly clearly attests that the problem has now become very serious.

The sheer scale and nature of the food problem have evolved with a speed typical of our century. It is FAO's prime responsibility to alert world opinion and world leaders to the deteriorating food situation before it attains irreversibly catastrophic proportions.

There has undoubtedly been prodigious progress in technology and know-how in recent decades; the transformation in plant and animal production, the knowledge and use of inputs, progress in water management and in resource conservation, storage and processing techniques have revolutionised the rural and agricultural sectors in many countries.

And yet, at the same time, the world population has grown substantially even as the per capita farmland continues to diminish. The current modes of exploitation degrade the environment; forest cover is shrinking fast, and as increasingly marginal land is brought under the plough, the pace of erosion has accelerated. Fishery resources are overexploited and in this as in many other domains, nature can no longer regenerate its resources as fast as people destroy them.

Additionally, even though there is now enough food to feed everyone in the world, its distribution remains terribly skewed.

Political upheavals, conflict, and the growing plethora of refugees and displaced persons exacerbate the situation.

In the developing countries, nearly 800 million people are chronically undernourished and some 200 million children under the age of five are affected by acute or chronic protein and calorie deficiency.

And yet, the right to food is absolutely fundamental; it is the first and foremost human right, without which the others have no meaning. How can a hungry person be expected to exercise his or her right to education, work, and culture, and to participate fully in the political and social life of the community?

Food and water loom prominently among the major world challenges as we enter the third millennium. The dimensions of the problem are ethical, political and strategic, and could lead to extremely violent and serious conflict unless we put things right.

FAO is so keenly aware of the need for strong, immediate action that it launched a Special Programme for Food Security for Low-Income, Food-Deficit Countries, without awaiting the world-level decisions that will be taken by the Summit.

The philosophy behind the Programme, now in its pilot phase in about 15 countries and showing promising results, can help to chart the major orientations of the Summit.

Public opinion and the media will have to be mobilized, however, with world political leaders setting the guidelines for resolute and dynamic food policies and solid sustained action.

The general debate on food will also address the problems of investment and trade, which are of particular importance.

Beyond the Summit itself, what is needed is a truly global campaign, with co-operation and consultation at all levels.

The driving-force for this campaign to ensure "Food for All" would come from national Committees involving all segments of civil society: the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, women's associations and youth groups. To muster the support and mobilization necessary to ensure its success will demand long-term commitment and sustained resources.

The challenge before the World Food Summit is unprecedented. Even though much has been done to overcome hunger and malnutrition, to bolster agricultural growth and to ensure that the available food is distributed more equitably, past actions have for the most part been one-off, uncoordinated efforts.

What are now required are articulated actions that will target every country where the need for programmes to secure or consolidate food security is becoming increasingly acute.

The huge surpluses in the developed countries were long and erroneously seen as a global cushion against serious shortfalls. Even back in the 1970s the food crisis brought home how easily these mountains of surpluses could vanish like snow in the sun, leaving painful shortages. After a renewed period of bumper surpluses, we are now back to a situation where the world's grain reserves have fallen below the level considered necessary to guarantee global food security. World prices have soared and the low-income, food-deficit countries will have to pay out an additional 3 billion dollars this year for their food imports.

The poet Aragon wrote the man's work is never done. Nonetheless, it is precisely this state of uncertainty that inspires human endeavour. Has not impending disaster always driven people to come up with the energy and inventive capacity required for their survival? We are, all of us, now living in a state of impending disaster.

And yet, paradoxically, this could prove to be the hope and salvation of this and future generations, if only we can read the signs of the times and rise to the occasion.

Prodigiously clear thinking, imagination, courage, patience and tenacity will be required, as will universal mobilization on a scale largely unparalleled in human history.

Citizens of all countries and ranks, of all ages and religions, associations and groups of all kinds; professional from all sectors; community leaders in the intellectual, social, economic, political and spiritual walks of life; government officials and representatives at all levels; men and women from the smallest villages to the largest international organization will have to marshal their forces and rally together for an all-out joint effort.

Are there sufficient resources for such a vast undertaking? Will the interdependence of our global village outweigh the narrow short-term interests that divide it? I hope with all my heart that this is so. Confidently, therefore, and from the bottom of my heart, I wish you every success in the work of the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

Thank you for your kind attention.



**ASIA -PACIFIC REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON FOOD SECURITY**

*Preamble*

The Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific agreed that:

- a) Regional Conferences are expected to consider regional dimensions of food security and identify regional priorities and actions to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and achieve lasting food security for all.
- b) The considerable progress made in improving aggregate per caput food availability in the region in the past two decades was achieved through domestic production and assisted by imports and stocks.
- c) The absolute number of chronically undernourished in the region remains large at about half a billion, accounting for some 67 percent of the world's total.
- d) The aggregate food supply for the region as a whole is not the greatest problem; the problem now and in the near future is its inequitable distribution at the country and household levels.
- e) There are a number of factors that require careful monitoring such as: expected increase in food demand and quality due to population growth and economic development, structural changes in food supply/demand due to rapid and dynamic economic transformation, and natural disasters.
- f) The existing hunger and malnutrition problems need to be urgently addressed in the region, and that regional food security has multiple dimensions. Some countries have concerns regarding food supply instability and mid- to long-term availability, and stress domestic food production. Other countries consider that food security in the region would improve with further trade liberalization based on comparative advantage.
- g) There is a necessity for human resource development and sustainable management and use of available agricultural, forestry, and fishery resources.

- h) The region is disaster prone owing to environmental degradation and rapidly rising population densities and migrations to vulnerable areas.
- i) Some countries consider that the multiple functions of agriculture will contribute to food security, help to redress the excessive rate of rural-urban migration confronting many countries and enhance social stability.
- j) There is diversity among the countries of this region and differences in views on some issues relative to food security and comparative advantage.
- k) The importance of adopting food security and commodity policies based on a combination of domestic production, imports, and reserve stocks is stressed. Clear definitions of food security, self-sufficiency, and sustainable development are needed. It is the right of each country to choose its own strategy and action plan to attain food security according to its own situation.
- l) Member countries, individually and collectively, should carry out the following priority actions to achieve sustainable food security within the proposed framework of the World Food Summit Global Plan of Action.

## **Priority Actions**

### **1. Raising productivity and output in the food sector**

#### *Objective*

To raise food output through productivity gains from improved technology, management, and efficiency of capital use, especially in LIFDCs and developing countries by:

- a) Raising the past decade's low production growth rates of staple food commodities, particularly cereals, pulses, and roots and tubers, primarily through yield- and cropping-intensity improvements;
- b) Continuing the past decade's high meat and milk production growth rate mainly through improvements in technology and management;
- c) Increasing aquaculture output at more sustainable yield-derived growth rates against the explosive area-cum-intensity-led growth rate of the past decade.

## *Actions to be taken*

### *At the national level:*

- a) Identify high-potential areas which may also include rainfed and upland areas for accelerated cereal, livestock and aquaculture production, and also other food commodities which may be important to the concerned country like roots and tubers, pulses, and fruits and vegetables;
- b) Develop intensive support services to raise productivity especially input supply, credit, marketing, and extension for these high-potential areas;
- c) Extend water control facilities and improve water management systems through participatory methods and the small command area approach;
- d) Strengthen National Agricultural Research Systems, stressing the development of environmentally-friendly policies and technologies such as integrated pest management, integrated plant nutrition systems, farmer-centered resource management, biotechnology and others;
- e) Remove barriers to technology adoption and investments such as exploitative tenancy arrangements, irrational taxes, transportation bottlenecks and inefficient marketing systems;
- f) Strengthen agricultural policy regimes to improve the terms of trade of producers, paying special attention to input supply and producer prices;
- g) Improve the investment climate in the food sector, giving high priority to rationalizing interest, exchange, and labor rates, and general price levels, tax systems, infrastructure developments and other investment benefits;
- h) Introduce participatory approaches to intensive production planning and implementation to mobilize contributions from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and concerned communities; and
- i) Develop a technology-based farmer-driven food-security strategy, and a nutrition strategy, and action plans for both, and simultaneously build an enabling environment (i.e. the technical, managerial and investment capacity for the plan to be implemented effectively).

### *At the sub-regional and regional levels:*

- a) Strengthen TCDC/ECDC through existing crop, fisheries (including disease control in aquaculture) and livestock research development agencies in the region;
- b) Seek to broaden technical cooperation in the region;

- c) Promote intra-regional private sector investment flows for food production and trade by setting up appropriate rules and regulations for foreign investment in this sector.

## **2. Arresting and Reversing Agricultural Land Degradation and Water Loss**

### *Objective*

To conserve and improve agricultural land and water resources by implementing a comprehensive action plan to follow through with commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development's Earth Summit.

### *Actions to be taken*

#### *At the national level:*

- a) Empower and fund adequately the authorities responsible for land and water conservation and improvement;
- b) Decentralize land and water resource management and ensure peoples' participation;
- c) Refine and improve property or user rights and obligations for public and private resources;
- d) Seek to ensure sustainable limits and conditions for agriculture, fishery and forestry resource utilization;
- e) Develop and extend environmentally-friendly farming systems and methods based on biological and software technologies;
- f) Seek to strengthen systems for charging water-use;
- g) Strengthen systems for preventing pollution;
- h) Seek to regulate the loss of prime agricultural land to housing and industry; and
- j) Provide a framework to encourage reclamation of degraded land through reforestation and other rehabilitation measures.

#### *At the sub-regional and regional levels:*

- a) Promote TCDC/ECDC in land and water resource management and improvement through FAO, UNEP, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and other international agencies and NGOs;
- b) Establish and strengthen riparian and watershed communities for joint management of the resources; and
- c) Encourage foreign investment and technology transfer in land and water improvement projects and reduction of marine pollution.



### **3. Improving preparedness for food shortages due to natural disasters**

#### *Objectives*

- a) Reduce the incidence and impact of natural disasters;
- b) Limit the vulnerability of populations to natural disasters;
- c) Avoid hunger and malnutrition due to natural disasters; and
- d) Ensure the quick and effective rehabilitation of farming systems and livelihoods following natural disasters.

#### *Actions to be taken*

##### *At the national level:*

- a) Commitment to a long-term integrated program for disaster prevention and mitigation based on self-reliance which should include among other measures minimizing deforestation, reforestation, protecting watersheds and drainage systems and undertaking other conservation measures;
- b) Develop cropping patterns, plant varieties and other technologies and infrastructure which might help vulnerable areas withstand natural disasters.
- c) Strengthen the basic elements of preparedness, namely, emergency foodgrain reserve stock, the early warning system, the standby natural disaster unit and the food-relief contingency plan; and
- d) Make long-term investments in physical infrastructure, education and employment and income generation in disaster-prone areas.

##### *At the sub-regional and regional levels:*

- a) Improve national early warning systems and establish sub-regional/regional early warning systems; and
- b) Strengthen the ASEAN and SAARC collective emergency food reserves and establish other reserves where feasible and cost effective.

### **4. Improving food marketing efficiency**

#### *Objective*

To improve the technical and pricing efficiency of food marketing systems.

*Actions to be taken*

***At the national level:***

- a) Appropriate liberalization of food markets to improve the business environment subject to food security safeguards;
- b) Build a network of wholesale markets and improve transportation systems and other post-harvest facilities for the food sector;
- c) Strengthen marketing institutions, particularly independent private firms and cooperatives; and
- d) Improve marketing support services, especially information credit, research, training and extension.

***At the sub-regional and regional levels:***

- a) Organize TCDC in food marketing systems' improvement through regional associations such as AFMA (Association of Food Marketing Agencies in Asia and the Pacific); and
- b) Encourage technology transfer from developed countries in the important areas of grading, packing, storage, processing and other post-harvest operations.

**5. Minimizing the risks and maximizing the opportunities of trade-based supply stabilization**

*Objectives*

- a) To ensure regular and reliable foreign sources of supply for food import requirements;
- b) To enhance the capacity to finance food import needs;
- c) To improve domestic marketing efficiency; and
- d) To stabilize food supply by combining all available measures including domestic production.

*Actions to be taken*

***At the national level:***

- a) Liberalize food trade in line with the provisions of the Uruguay Round Agreement;
- b) Maximize foreign exchange earnings by utilizing the full benefits of comparative advantage in commodities production;
- c) Strengthen domestic market mechanisms for price and supply stability including among others, early warning and market information systems, public and private stocking, and marketing infrastructure, institutions and services; and

- d) Increase stability of food availability including domestic production.

*At the sub-regional and regional levels:*

- a) Promote food trade liberalization within the six formal and informal sub-regional trade and investment cooperation zones<sup>1</sup>
- b) Pursue long-term food trade arrangements such as the ASEAN *Principle of First Refusal*, Indonesian-Filipino food loans, Malaysian palm oil credit facility, Thai rice credit facility and the Chinese-Sri Lankan food-for-rubber barter, and other growth-area cooperation.

## **6. Protecting vulnerable groups while liberalizing food markets**

*Objectives*

- a) To protect food entitlements of the households living at or below nationally-drawn poverty lines;
- b) To alleviate poverty among the hardcore poor such as rural landless workers, subsistence farmers, fisherfolk, and deprived urban households; and
- c) To provide basic staple food needs to the destitute, especially women and children in such households.

*Actions to be taken*

*At the national level:*

- a) Maintain cost-effective PDS (Public Distribution Systems) targeted at the very poorest and the destitute households;
- b) Establish a lean-income protection scheme including food-based minimum wages, food stamps, food-linked wage increments and employees' provident funds;
- c) Develop off-farm employment and income-generation programs based on investment incentives for the private sector in vulnerable rural communities;
- d) Improve farming systems in rainfed and upland areas to raise the production and incomes of subsistence farmers;
- e) Encourage non-governmental community welfare and self-help programs funded by contributions and company set-asides; and
- f) Actively pursue strategies defined at both the Cairo Population Conference and the Beijing Conference on Women, as applicable to each country.

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<sup>1</sup> Three sub-ASEAN, Indochinese Golden Quadrangle, Mekong and Greater China economic/trade cooperation zones.

*At the sub-regional and regional levels:*

- a) Collaborate in the development of vulnerable group protection models covering, among others, household food security indicators, identification and monitoring methodologies, employment and income-generation programs and public distribution schemes;
- b) Promote legal and orderly mechanisms for inter-country labor migration;
- c) Continue food-aid flows including from the more affluent developing countries.

## **7. Alleviating malnutrition**

### **Objective**

To implement national plans of action on nutrition (NPANs) in accordance with the commitments made at the ICN 1992.

### *Action to be taken*

*At the national level:*

- a) Formulate and refine NPANs if not already carried out;
- b) Promote, protect and support breastfeeding; and
- c) Encourage multi-party participation in the implementation of the NPAN including local governments, NGOs, community leaders, private enterprises and the beneficiaries.

*At the sub-regional and regional levels:*

- a) Maximize the use of human resources and facilities for nutrition research and development; and
- b) Exchange experiences in the implementation of NPANs.

## **Responsibilities for implementing priority actions**

The national governments have the primary responsibility for creating the conditions required for food security in their countries. National governments, according to each country's conditions and capabilities, are responsible for creating an economic and social environment conducive to fast, sustainable and equitable growth in which agricultural and rural development must play a central role. More specifically, national governments will achieve food security through strong policy commitment to the priority actions outlined above. This will require the building of appropriate structures and

mechanisms and the involvement, not only of all relevant public entities but also of the private sector and civil society in general.

Governments in the region also have shared responsibilities with other countries within and outside the region, international and non-governmental organizations, in the pursuance of food security goals according to each country's conditions and capabilities.

***Responsibilities at the sub-regional and regional levels:***

The governments of the region, in accordance with their national laws and regulations should act collectively to:

- a) Reinforce regional cooperation mechanisms in agriculture and food policies for food security, including the strengthening of Asia-Pacific inter-governmental organizations and research institutions;
- b) Encourage the exchange of technologies for food and agricultural production, including the establishment of technical cooperation networks;
- c) Facilitate intra-regional trade and investment flows, especially in food and agriculture, fisheries and forestry;
- d) Encourage investments and technology transfer, especially in the sciences of biotechnology, environmental protection and rehabilitation, management of water resources, and soil improvement.

***Responsibilities at the international level:***

The international organizations and the donor community should:

- a) Help to define the scope and modalities for global cooperation in the critical areas of food security including, among others, managing fragile ecosystems, reforestation, promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development, improving household food security, food safety and balanced diets;
- b) Improve the global monitoring system for food security and nutrition at both regional and international levels;
- c) Encourage investment programs for food security and nutrition projects in LIFDCs;
- d) Extend sources and channels for investment assistance and technology transfer by involving private-sector companies and NGO networks;
- e) ensure implementation of the Uruguay Round *Decision and Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least developed and Net Food Importing countries*; and
- f) Assist national governments to achieve macro-economic stability and food-system efficiency in keeping with social objectives.

*The expected role of civil society:*

Farmers, individuals, private institutions, and NGOs are expected to work towards:

- a) The realization of sustainable agriculture and rural development;
- b) Protection of vulnerable groups including the rural landless, subsistence farmers, tribals, remote communities, shifting cultivators, small fisherfolk, urban unemployed and underemployed and other deprived groups;
- c) Empowerment of women, leading to an enhanced role in household food security and nutrition;
- d) Basic education in food security, nutrition and health, and
- e) Compliance with laws, rules and regulations deriving from international agreements and/or commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Nutrition, the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Women's Conference, and others.

Among others, these duties of individual members of society and their organizations have taken on added importance as regional member governments increasingly liberalize and privatize economic activities, especially in the food sector.



