

Report of the

FIFTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Mauritius, 26 April - 4 May 1988



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome 1988

*FAO Member Nations in the Africa Region
(as at 4 May 1988)*

Algeria	Gambia	Niger
Angola	Ghana	Nigeria
Benin	Guinea	Rwanda
Botswana	Guinea-Bissau	Sao Tome and Principe
Burkina Faso	Kenya	Senegal
Burundi	Lesotho	Seychelles
Cameroon	Liberia	Sierra Leone
Cape Verde	Libya ¹	Sudan
Central African Republic	Madagascar	Swaziland
Chad	Malawi	Tanzania
Comoros	Mali	Togo
Congo	Mauritania	Tunisia
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritius	Uganda
Equatorial Guinea	Morocco	Zaire
Ethiopia	Mozambique	Zambia
Gabon	Namibia	Zimbabwe

¹ Participated as full member of the Regional Conference for Africa in 1988 for the first time.

Date and Place of FAO Regional Conferences for Africa

First	— Lagos, Nigeria, 3 - 12 November 1960
Second	— Tunis, Tunisia, 1 - 10 November 1962
Third	— Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3 - 15 September 1964
Fourth	— Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 9 - 19 November 1966
Fifth	— Kampala, Uganda, 18 - 29 November 1968
Sixth	— Algiers, Algeria, 17 September - 3 October 1970
Seventh	— Libreville, Gabon, 14 - 30 September 1972
Eighth	— Rose Hill, Mauritius, 1 - 17 August 1974
Ninth	— Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2 - 12 November 1976
Tenth	— Arusha, Tanzania, 18 - 28 September 1978
Eleventh	— Lome, Togo, 16 - 27 June 1980
Twelfth	— Algiers, Algeria, 22 September - 2 October 1982
Thirteenth	— Harare, Zimbabwe, 16 - 25 July 1984
Fourteenth	— Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 2 - 11 September 1986
Fifteenth	— Mauritius, 26 April - 4 May 1988

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SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Country Statements and General Debate

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference,

1. recalled and reaffirmed the four point programme for African Agriculture as contained in the FAO Study adopted by the Fourteenth Regional Conference for Africa, namely; institution of internal reforms and guaranteed priority for agriculture, improvement in incentives, inputs, institutions and infrastructure, implementation of strategies for conservation of natural resources, and improvement of the external environment (para 31).
2. deplored and rejected linking the payment of massive arrears to the proposed review of the Organization and called for the prompt and full payment of all financial obligations of Member Nations to FAO (para 35).
3. called for realistic commodity prices, improved terms of trade and increased concessional aid flows (para 37).
4. reaffirmed the primordial importance of Economic and Technical Cooperation among African countries and urged support to sub-regional economic integration movements, use of preferential trade and customs agreements, support to inter-governmental organizations and technical cooperation networks, and promotion of joint ventures (para 38).
5. suggested that Africa's representatives on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) report to FAO Member States of the region annually and in detail through FAO channels on the activities of the Group (para 41).
6. emphasized the importance of environmental protection as part of the development of African agriculture (para 41).
7. expressed disappointment that the Twenty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference had not launched a new programme on the expansion of aid-in-kind to boost food self-sufficiency in the short term (para 41).
8. appealed for increased emergency food aid and input assistance to countries affected by drought and locust invasions (para 41).
9. emphasized the importance of irrigation in the development of agriculture (para 41).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference,

10. called for the strengthening of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (para 33).
11. reaffirmed the crucial and unique role of the FAO Regional Office for Africa as the regional arm of FAO in promoting regional and sub-regional integration and development through African inter-governmental organizations, regional projects, technical cooperation networks and other TCDC mechanisms (para 34).
12. urged FAO to expand its promotional activities for Economic and Technical Cooperation among African countries through the Regional Office for Africa (para 38), including in the field of farm mechanization (para 111).
13. requested FAO to monitor more closely the implementation by Member Nations of the UN-PAAERD and the recommendations stemming from the FAO Study on African Agriculture (para 40).
14. supported fully FAO's focus on small farmers, youth and women in food production (para 41).
15. called for additional resources for programmes and projects dealing with pre- and post-harvest losses (paras 41 and 91).
16. called on FAO to step up its support to Member States in the field of irrigation and further assist them in the design and implementation of irrigation projects suitable to local conditions and development needs (paras 41 and 90)
17. The Conference, recognizing the importance of fisheries development and management for African economies, adopted Resolution 1/88 on the Importance of Fisheries Development and Management for Africa Economics (para 42).

FAO Activities in the Region

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

18. emphasized the need for early warning systems development for crop production and protection and the design and implementation of responsive measures (para 91).

19. stressed the importance of training for the design and implementation of improved crop production and protection measures while bearing in mind the needs of the small-scale farmer (para 91).
20. requested the expanded integration of women and youth in development as a means of achieving and sustaining progress in rural development and the overall modernization of African agriculture, and in lessening the burden of farm and non-farm labour on rural women (para 94).
21. emphasized the value of the role of non-governmental organizations in the planning and implementation of rural development programmes (para 94).
22. appealed to member states of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA) and the international community to assist it in its current state of instability (para 94).
23. underlined the importance of adequate food technologies (para 95).
24. identified nutrition planning as a major input for nutrition improvement programmes in the region (para 95).
25. called for more assistance for artisanal fisheries improvement, for greater assistance in the development of fish feeds for aquaculture, and for appropriate fishing gear to exploit previously unexploited species, as well as increased training of middle-level personnel in various fisheries disciplines, including the area of fisheries data collection and processing (para 97).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference,

26. welcomed FAO's increased emphasis to the production of roots and tubers, plantains and leguminous and horticultural crops, without sacrificing cereal crops (para 91).
27. urged FAO to declare that the situation in the Sahelian Zone was critical, as a means of focusing the attention of the international community on the problem (para 92).
28. urged the expansion of FAO activities in the livestock sector (para 93).
29. requested FAO to mobilize from present and potential donors the funds necessary for reopening of the Bobo-Dioulasso Regional Training Centre in Burkina Faso (para 93).

30. urged FAO to evaluate the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on the agricultural sector, and on vulnerable populations and recommended the continuation of FAO's assistance in the development of planning capabilities in African countries (para 96).
31. called for more assistance for artisanal fisheries improvement, for the evaluation of the resources of Exclusive Economic Zones, for greater assistance in the development of fish feeds for aquaculture and for appropriate fishing gear to exploit previously unexploited species, as well as increased training of middle-level personnel in various fisheries disciplines (para 97).
32. recommended the increased use of regional experts for consultancy and other assignments within the region (para 99).
33. requested FAO to carry out the study on the negative effects of the aggressions of the South African apartheid regime on food production and food security of the Frontline States requested by the Twenty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference (para 100).
34. requested FAO to continue and, wherever feasible, strengthen its training across the various sub-sectors and programme areas, and to continue to take into account the special needs of Lusophone countries in the areas of vital importance for the rural and agricultural development of the African Portuguese-speaking countries (para 101, 102).
35. recommended that consideration be given to the special needs of island states in technical assistance in managing natural disasters such as cyclones (para 101).

Desert Locust Plague

The Conference,

36. adopted Resolution 2/88 on the Desert Locust Plague (para 50).

Information on Aid-in-kind

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference,

37. stressed the importance and value of aid-in-kind for African agricultural development and renewed the appeal to donors to support and expand their assistance to this programme (para 61).

38. stressed that the delivery of aid-in-kind inputs should as much as possible be provided on a country-by-country basis, and be strengthened to complement those already available nationally and regionally through intra-African trade and triangular transactions and should not compete with local input products (para 62).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference,

39. requested FAO to provide maximum technical assistance in the specification and selection of aid-in-kind inputs and in ensuring their appropriateness in each individual case (para 62).

Farm Mechanization in Africa: Status and Prospects

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference,

40. noted the need to consider access to credit as a necessary pre-requisite of farm mechanization (para 107).
41. indicated a clear need for improved training in the area of mechanization and maintenance and stressed the importance of establishing Regional Centres for Agricultural Mechanization and of access to readily available regional expertise (para 108).
42. urged African states to make the fullest possible use of the integration, trade and customs agreements within their sub-regions as instruments of ECDC and TCDC, in order to derive maximum advantage from mutual experiences (para 111).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference,

43. urged FAO to consider a closer integration of credit with farm mechanization in future programmes (para 107).
44. stressed that future FAO work in farm mechanization should include assistance to governments in the formulation of national policies in this sector; longer-term training programmes that will target artisanal, technical and professional level trainees involved in mechanization; studies to provide additional basic data on farm mechanization in order to identify problem areas and highlight potential opportunities for improvement (para 110).

45. requested that FAO continue to provide assistance in the various areas of village blacksmith technology, rehabilitation and maintenance of serviceable equipment, upgrading and selection of the most suitable forms of farm mechanization (para 112).

Fisheries in Africa: Their Status and Potential for Development

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference,

46. appealed to African governments to allocate adequate budgetary resources to national fisheries administrations and fisheries research institutions and accord increased priority to fisheries development initiatives in their overall national development plans (para 117).
47. called on governments to address the constraints in the fisheries sector - e.g.: shortage of inputs, the poor state of artisanal fisheries and encroachment by medium-scale and industrial fleets on artisanal fishing grounds - to ensure the further development of the sector (para 118).
48. recommended the introduction and enforcement of appropriate management measures to prevent the overexploitation of many important species which were overfished (para 119).
49. recognized the value of joint-ventures in the development of industrial fisheries, through both capital investment and technology transfer and training (para 123).
50. suggested that hatcheries be established at strategic locations in each country to solve the problem of seed supply (para 124).
51. recommended an integrated approach to the development of aquaculture (para 124).
52. recommended that regional and sub-regional collaboration efforts in fisheries management and development be strengthened (para 126).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference,

53. requested the strengthening of FAO regional projects whose work was commendable and called for a continuation of the kind of assistance provided by the project for the development and management of fisheries in the Eastern-Central Atlantic (CECAF) (para 120).

54. called on FAO to assist Member Nations in the formulation of appropriate environmental protection programmes (para 121).
55. urged FAO to continue its assistance to countries in obtaining increased benefits from their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), particularly regarding the surveillance, monitoring and control of their EEZs (para 121).
56. requested FAO to increase its assistance in solving the problem of post-harvest losses which was particularly critical in the traditional sector (para 123).
57. urged that the FAO/UNDP African Regional Aquaculture Centre (ARAC) in Nigeria be strengthened to continue its commendable role in training senior aquaculturists from the region (para 124).
58. requested FAO to give increased priority to training for the African fisheries sector (para 125).
59. suggested that the proposed in-depth study regarding opportunities and constraints facing the industrial fisheries sector be carried out by FAO in cooperation with multilateral financial institutions, on a sub-regional basis (para 126).
60. called upon FAO to assist Member Nations in formulating appropriate national fisheries development policies, plans and projects (para 126).

Development of an Indigenous African Food Industry

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference,

61. stressed the need to cooperate and negotiate improved terms with multi-national firms in the food sector (para 135).
62. requested governments and financial and technical assistance agencies to assist in expanding diffusion and applying the more significant results of relevant research and development work, such as bread making from locally available food products and the "Chorkor Smoker" (para 137).
63. recommended that appropriate measures be taken by governments and agro-industrial concerns to safeguard the environment (para 139).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference,

64. requested FAO's assistance to undertake studies to generate more information on potential finished product markets (para 130).
65. urged FAO to continue its work on a full compendium on traditional African food products to facilitate the use of local raw materials (para 131).
66. requested FAO to increase work in the area of quality control within the context of indigenous food industry development (para 133).
67. requested FAO to act as a forum in convening agro-industrialists from developed countries and African countries to fully discuss all the major issues in integrated agro-industrial development (para 135).
68. requested that FAO, in cooperation with interested governments and industry, organize a Regional Food Processing Exhibition or Exhibitions to demonstrate the commercial possibilities of the region's food products (para 136).
69. requested FAO to assist in expanding diffusion and applying the more significant results of relevant research and development work, such as bread-making from locally available food products and the "Chorkor Smoker" (para 137).
70. requested continuing FAO assistance in the development of appropriate measures to be taken by governments and agro-industrial concerns to safeguard the environment (para 139).

Forestry in Support of Agriculture: The Tropical Forestry Action Plan

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference,

71. recommended the closer integration of forestry with agriculture and livestock production in rural development and land use planning (para 142).
72. suggested strengthening of conservation practices and the promotion of agro-forestry systems at the individual farm level (para 142).
73. called for the promotion of the participation of rural communities in efforts to develop and conserve forest and other natural resources (para 142).

74. advocated improved agricultural extension services and better equipping rural populations in boosting productivity and in slowing the advance of the agricultural frontier (para 142).
75. recommended strengthening the management, training and research institutions concerned with the development and conservation of forestry resources (para 142).
76. called for the staging of tree days and other awareness-building campaigns (para 147).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference,

77. requested that the work of regionalizing the Tropical Forestry Action Plan be pursued in order to produce sub-regional and regional cooperation programmes for Africa as soon as possible (para 146).

Representation of the Region in the CGIAR

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference,

78. suggested that increased emphasis should be placed on practical and immediately applicable research (para 150).
79. recommended that in the future reports of the representatives of the region on CGIAR should be distributed through FAO well in advance, along with other documentation for Regional Conferences (para 151).
80. elected Mauritius to represent the region from 1989 to 1991 (para 152).

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held in Mauritius from 26 April to 4 May 1988. The Technical Committee meeting, which preceded the Plenary Session, was held from 26 to 29 April 1988.

2. Delegates from 40 Member Nations in the Africa Region, as well as observers from Member Nations outside the Region, Representatives of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies and observers from African Inter-governmental Organizations and National Liberation Movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), attended the Conference. A complete list of participants is given in Appendix B to this Report.

Inaugural Ceremony

3. In a brief welcome address, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources of Mauritius, the Hon. M. Dulloo, welcomed the Ministers, delegates and observers to his country. He hoped that the facilities and arrangements placed at their disposal were convenient and efficient.

4. The Minister thanked the Rt. Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, for agreeing to open the Conference and for confirming his personal commitment to Africa and to the promotion of agriculture.

5. The Minister said that the Fifteenth Regional Conference took place at a crucial moment in the life of Africa. Africa, he said, should show the international community its resolve to meet the challenges it had set for itself by translating, into concrete actions, the various resolutions and programmes, notably: OAU's "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (1986-1990 - APPER); the "United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990 - UNPAAERD)" and the recommendations made in the FAO study, "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years". He called on the meeting to be bold and candid in addressing internal failures and weaknesses and in analysing successes and prospects in the implementation of the above blueprints for African economic recovery and development. He urged the delegates to bear in mind that Africa's major priority should be the mobilization of all available resources for the sustained and sustainable development of agriculture.

6. The Minister defined Africa's needs in this area against the backdrop of an unfavourable, if not worsening, external environment, inadequate domestic policy responses to recovery and development challenges, adverse climatic conditions and other disasters such as locust infestations and the acute financial crisis of FAO.

7. The Minister said Mauritius had registered a significant measure of success over the past five years, but stressed that the country could not develop other sectors at the expense of agriculture. The Minister earnestly pleaded that FAO be given the means, both financial and institutional, to support the development

efforts and programmes of African countries, and especially to cope with emergency situations. He underlined the support needed from FAO in their quest for agricultural development. The Minister reiterated support to the Director-General in his difficult task ahead, and noted that he had no doubt that the Director-General would continue serving the higher interests of the Organization to enable it to respond to the varying needs and aspirations of its members.

8. The Director-General of FAO, Mr Edouard Saouma, welcomed the delegates to the Conference. He said that at a time when FAO faced unprecedented difficulties in its forty years of existence, their presence was proof of Africa's commitment to the Organization. It was a great source of consolation and encouragement for himself and his colleagues.

9. The Director-General paid tribute to the Government and people of Mauritius for their warm and gracious hospitality and for the courtesies extended to the participants. He was gratified by the presence of the Prime Minister and thanked the Government for the excellent facilities provided for the Conference which exemplified an impressive organizational effort because of the substantial mobilization of human and financial resources. He commended the exemplary spirit of brotherhood, nourished by diversity and pluralism, which governed relationships among the people of different origins in the country. He invited the international community to learn from the democracy practiced in Mauritius in these times of increasing conflicts, persistent tensions and outbreaks of intolerance throughout the world.

10. The Director-General congratulated the country on the successful implementation of its Structural Adjustment Programme begun in 1979. The perseverance and wisdom of the Mauritian people had produced spectacular economic growth rates. All sectors were benefitting from the upswing. Agricultural production, in particular, was making remarkable progress. Local processing industries and exports of cut flowers, especially Anthurium, had also achieved spectacular success. In conclusion, the Director-General stated that Mauritius stood as a source of pride and inspiration to all.

11. In his opening address to the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference, the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Anerood Jugnauth, warmly welcomed the participants. He said that the presence of so many delegations demonstrated clearly their common will to come to grips with the problems impeding their common struggle for food security in Africa. It was with a compelling sense of urgency that he viewed the Conference under the aegis of the FAO. The Conference would provide an opportunity for African countries to review, discuss and exchange experiences in the efforts to implement the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). In spite of efforts so far made, the present conditions of the continent did not allow for complacency. The developing countries' inability to assume control of the market structures for commodities they produced was worrying. The law of supply and demand did not operate optimally - the balance always tilted in favour of the privileged. At the same time, growing competition from synthetic substitutes for primary products constituted a direct threat to the livelihood, security and prospects for recovery of developing countries.

12. The Prime Minister stated that the crucial objective of any governmental policy should be to uplift the standard of living of the rural poor. Instead, the focus of action had bypassed these rural masses and they had been kept on the periphery of development. Putting poor people first was a moral imperative, and the very basis for action. People should come first, he stressed. He said that the African should optimize benefits from new high-yielding disease-resistant crop varieties through packaged inputs of fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and credit which should be coupled with institutional and management structures responsive to the demands of the agricultural sector.

13. The Prime Minister confirmed the commitment of his country to the cause of African unity and development. He also placed special emphasis on cooperation within sub-regional groupings in keeping with the policy of south-south cooperation.

14. Agriculture, through sugar exports, he said, remained the life-blood of the Mauritian economy. In order to resolve the problem of massive unemployment, the government had provided a package of investment incentives to encourage expansion of the manufacturing sector. Simultaneously, the government was maintaining subsidies and incentives, and was also providing the necessary infra-structural framework to increase self-sufficiency in selected food crops. While the development of the country had brought socio-economic benefits, it had also produced the side effect of environmental degradation. The government was therefore sparing no effort in ensuring proper environmental protection and nature conservation.

15. In conclusion, the Prime Minister wondered how the supposedly wealthiest nation of the world could possibly be the most indebted one. He advocated a New Food Order, as a solution to absolute poverty, that would formulate policies to increase the material standard of living of the poor by ensuring increased availability of food and other basic necessities of life. He stressed that the right to food was the right to life.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

16. At its first working session, the Conference elected as its Chairman, by acclamation, the Hon. Murlidas Madun Dulloo, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources of Mauritius. In a short acceptance speech, the Minister expressed his appreciation to the delegates for the honour bestowed upon his country with his election to preside over the Conference. He appealed for their cooperation in the discharge of the responsibilities conferred on him.

17. The Conference then elected, by acclamation, Commodore S.G. Obimpeh (Rtd), Secretary for Agriculture of the Provisional National Defence Council of Ghana and the Hon. F.F. Muteka, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Angola, as its First and Second Vice-Chairmen respectively. His Excellency G.P. Khojane, Permanent Representative of Lesotho to FAO, was elected as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

18. The Conference considered and adopted the Agenda as reproduced in Appendix A to this Report.

Statement by the Director-General

19. In his statement to the Conference, Mr Edouard Saouma, the Director-General of FAO, confirmed his dedication and commitment to the African Region and assured the Conference that FAO would continue to accord top priority to it. Although Africa contained only eleven percent of the world's population, it still received almost half of FAO's resources.

20. The Director-General noted that the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa came shortly after the Twenty-fourth Session of the Conference of FAO, which had reaffirmed its confidence in him by having him re-elected to a new term of office. A liquidity crisis in the Organization had reduced, however, the assistance provided to member countries by 25 million dollars in 1987. This had been caused primarily by delays in the payment of assessed contributions. In order to bring these financial problems to an end, the Conference had exhorted all Member Nations to pay their assessed contributions to the Organization in full.

21. The Director-General stressed the difficult global economic situation. Africa had been hardest hit because its economy was largely dependent on agricultural and non-agricultural commodities with continually depressed markets. In real terms, the prices of Sub-Saharan export commodities had dropped by approximately 35 percent between 1980 and 1987. These worsening terms of trade compounded the already crippling problems of debt burden. For the first time the debt burden of Sub-Saharan Africa alone had exceeded 100 billion dollars in 1987. The servicing of this debt consumed over thirty percent of the Region's total export incomes. Without drastic new measures, the African debt crisis was bound to deteriorate.

22. The Director-General expressed his concern over the negative long-term trend in per caput food production in Africa. Despite a reduction in per caput food consumption, cereal imports in low-income African countries had risen by approximately one million tons per annum over the last 10 years. During the same period, the share of food aid in total imports had dropped from 33 to 27 percent. Consequently, he appealed to donors to provide food aid through triangular transactions.

23. The Director-General drew the attention of the Conference to the latest locust invasion in a wide area of the continent - a threat equal to the scourge of the 1950's. As a result, FAO's Emergency Centre for Locust Operations was working intensively with affected countries and with donors to deliver the required inputs for effective locust control.

24. The Director-General assured the Conference that, despite FAO's current budgetary crisis, funding for the Field Programme in 1988 for Africa would probably

exceed that for 1987. FAO Regional and Country Offices and the Joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division would thus be able to maintain at least the same level of activity as in 1987. The FAO Investment Centre would also continue to increase its active role in project preparation for the Region.

25. The Director-General stressed that the FAO study, "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years", was a major contribution as a working document for discussions during the extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly, convened in 1986 to deal with the critical economic situation in Africa. The conclusions of this study provided the agricultural component of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990.

26. On the Structural Adjustment Programmes currently under implementation in many African countries, the Director-General pointed out that they often involved solutions for critical political and social problems for the countries concerned. Since agriculture represented up to 80 percent of their economies, FAO continued in its willingness to offer on request to African countries whatever advice and assistance was necessary in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the relevant programmes.

27. In conclusion, the Director-General indicated that although it was the prerogative of the Member Nations to fully address the problems facing the Region, the FAO Secretariat would nevertheless always be available to provide assistance in this regard. It would ensure that all resulting recommendations were given full consideration in the preparation of future FAO Programmes of Work and Budget. The full text of the Director-General's statement is given in Appendix D to this Report.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agricultural Situation in Africa

28. In their country statements, delegations addressed a large number of major issues on the African food and agricultural situation, FAO activities in the Region, FAO's current financial problems, and the external economic environment affecting African countries. Highlights of the country statements and discussions by the Conference on these issues are presented below.

29. Most delegations reported significant improvements in the food and agricultural development since the Fourteenth Regional Conference for Africa and attributed this trend to favourable weather conditions and new policy initiatives designed to boost agricultural production. Several delegations were, on the other hand, unable to report similar improvements due to various problems related to weather, civil strife, locust invasions and external environmental conditions. However, improvements in the domestic policy environment for food and agricultural recovery and development were generally more widespread among African countries than two years ago.

30. The value of the three major policy frameworks designed for the African economic recovery and development was stressed. These frameworks are the OAU's African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 (APPER); the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990; and the FAO study, "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years". These regional policy documents provided the basis for national, economic and agricultural reforms, coupled with the structural adjustment and the mobilization of national and international resources necessary to support them.

31. The Conference recalled and reaffirmed the four-point programme for African agriculture as contained in the FAO study adopted by the Fourteenth Regional Conference for Africa, namely:

- (i) institution of internal reforms and guaranteed priority for agriculture;
- (ii) improvement in incentives, inputs, institutions and infrastructure;
- (iii) implementation of strategies for conservation of natural resources;
and,
- (iv) improvement of the external environment.

32. In reviewing the items placed before the Technical Committee, the Conference noted with satisfaction their direct relevance in addressing the agricultural problems facing Africa. The Conference also commended FAO for the opportunity to exchange ideas on these urgent problems among African technical experts, administrators and policy-makers.

33. The Conference expressed special appreciation to FAO for the assistance provided to the Member Nations of the Region. The delegations recognized FAO's unique role in the agricultural development of their countries in the areas of natural resources, crops, livestock, research and technology development, agrarian reform and rural development, food and nutrition, agricultural census and statistics, food and agricultural policy, fisheries development, forestry development, and technical cooperation among African countries. The ability of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to respond rapidly to urgent situations was given special mention. Many delegations called for its strengthening in view of the relatively great impact of its projects and its cost-effectiveness.

34. The Conference reaffirmed, once again, the crucial role of the FAO Regional Office for Africa, based in Accra, Ghana and recognized its unique role as the regional arm of FAO in promoting regional and sub-regional integration and development through African inter-governmental organizations, regional projects designed to promote TCDC, and Technical Cooperation Networks. It noted with satisfaction the work of the Regional Office in the implementation of APPER and UNPAAERD at the regional level, in collaboration with OAU and ECA.

35. The Conference expressed deep concern regarding the financial crisis facing FAO and feared that the effectiveness of the Organization could be impaired. It stressed the ever-increasing need for FAO's assistance in support of agricultural development efforts in the region and appealed to Member Nations to safeguard the technical efficiency of the Organization. It deplored and rejected linking the payment of massive arrears to the proposed review of the Organization and called for the prompt and full payment of all financial obligations of Member Nations to FAO. It emphasised that FAO was irreplaceable, and that a weak FAO could never be in the interest of Africa and the Third World. Many delegations announced their countries' plans for prompt payment of contributions and/or arrears as demonstrations of their commitment to the Organization.

36. In extending its congratulations to the Director-General on his re-election, the Conference renewed its confidence and support for his leadership of FAO. It praised his commitment to the development of Africa and pledged its full cooperation to him in surpassing the challenge faced by Africans to become self-sufficient in food production.

37. The Conference deplored the external economic environment which impoverished Africa through low and depreciating commodity prices, heavy debt burdens and sharp declines in official development assistance. The Conference called for realistic commodity prices, improved terms of trade and increased concessional aid flow.

38. The Conference reaffirmed the primordial importance of Economic and Technical Cooperation among African countries (E/TCAC) as a basis for African economic development, and collective self-reliance. It also urged African states to engage in south-south cooperation, to support sub-regional economic integration movements, to make full use of preferential trade and customs agreements, to support inter-governmental organizations and technical cooperation networks

completely or partially involved in agriculture, and to promote joint ventures. It further urged FAO to expand its E/TCAC promotional activities through its Regional Office for Africa.

39. The Conference commended the Technical Committee for its lucid and concise report and for the relevant conclusions and recommendations contained therein. It also congratulated the Secretariat for the high quality of the documentation presented to the Technical Committee and Conference.

40. The Conference requested FAO to monitor more closely the implementation by Member Nations of the UNPAAERD and the recommendations stemming from the FAO Study on African Agriculture.

41. Delegations in their country statements emphasized many issues previously discussed by the Technical Committee. They: i) suggested that Africa's representatives on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) should report on the Group's activities to FAO Member Nations of the Region annually and in detail through FAO channels; ii) emphasized the importance of environmental protection as part of the development of African agriculture; iii) supported fully FAO's focus on small farmers, youth and women in food production; iv) welcomed FAO's initiatives, programmes and projects; v) expressed disappointment that the Twenty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference had not launched a new programme on the expansion of aid-in-kind to boost food self-sufficiency in the short-term; vi) appealed for increased emergency food aid and input assistance to countries affected by drought and locust invasions; vii) called for additional resources for programmes and projects dealing with pre- and post-harvest losses; viii) emphasized the importance of irrigation in the development of agriculture and called upon FAO to accelerate its support to Member States in this vital sector.

42. The Conference, in recognizing the importance of fisheries development and management for African economies, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution 1/88

Fisheries Development and Management for African Economies

The Conference,

Recognizing that the new regime concerning the resources of the oceans, as embodied in the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and in the actions and practices of states, has created new opportunities and responsibilities for African states to benefit more fully from the marine resources now under their jurisdiction,

Noting the potential for increasing the nutritional, social and economic benefits from the African continent's inland waters and aquacultural operations,

Further Noting the actual and potential importance of the fisheries sector as a whole in the economies of African states,

Aware that many of Africa's marine and inland water stocks of fish are under severe pressure, resulting in the need for further national and regional initiatives to better manage these resources,

Conscious of the need for African countries to participate more fully in the exploitation of their offshore fishery resources to increase their income, to derive other economic benefits from them and to augment food supplies for their people,

1. Invites African governments to give higher priority to the development and management of their fisheries and to take the necessary measures in qualitatively developing the various stages ranging from fishing to marketing of fishery products,
2. Urges that regional collaboration in fisheries management and development be intensified through the strengthening of existing regional fishery bodies,
3. Requests FAO to continue and to intensify assistance to African coastal states in the monitoring, control and surveillance of their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ's), and in the protection of their aquatic environment from pollution,
4. Appeals to FAO to increase its support to the fisheries sector in general,
5. Calls upon donor and technical assistance agencies, especially UNIDO, to collaborate with FAO in assisting African states in planning and executing fisheries development and management programmes, and in promoting the self-reliance of African countries in this field through training and the transfer of knowledge and technology.

Desert Locust Plague

43. Mr L. Brader, Director of Plant Production and Protection Division and Coordinator of the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations, introduced the document on the Desert Locust Plague. 1/

44. The Conference was informed of the locust control efforts already implemented, as well as the arrangements made for the remainder of the campaign.

45. The Conference expressed appreciation to the Director-General for having placed the desert locust situation on its agenda. It noted the events leading to the development of the current desert locust plague, which had already invaded the Maghreb, and several West African countries.

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46. The Conference took note that the infestations were of such magnitude that it was impossible to control all the locusts effectively. It was therefore to be expected that the plague would continue for a number of years. Most West African countries would probably be infested in the coming months, and invasion could then spread to the Sudan and the Red Sea basin.

47. The Conference welcomed FAO's strong coordinating role through the special Emergency Centre for Locust Operations. It expressed full satisfaction with the extraordinary efforts mobilized by the affected countries which had resulted in the treatment of 3 000 000 hectares. It expressed its appreciation to the international donor community for the assistance provided.

48. The Conference expressed grave concern about the potential threat of the desert locust plague to agricultural production in many other African countries. It noted that notwithstanding the efforts already made, significant losses could still be incurred, since the locust plague constituted a serious threat to overall food security in the affected countries.

49. It appealed strongly to the countries concerned, to FAO and other UN agencies, as well as to the international donor community, to provide maximum support in the preparation and effective implementation of the various control operations. It requested the Director-General of FAO to continue to give the highest priority to the work of the FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations.

50. The Conference expressed its deep concern over the serious locust invasion of many African countries in the West, North-West, and Sahelian regions, and adopted the following resolution.

Resolution 2/88
Desert Locust Plague

The Conference,

Recalling Resolution No. 641 (XXIII) on Locust Control adopted by the Fourteenth Session of the ECA Ministerial Conference held in Niamey from 14 to 18 April 1988,

Further recalling the recommendations of the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa held in Yamoussoukro from 2 to 11 September 1986,

Aware of the gravity of the locust situation which could well persist for several years to come, posing a risk to food security in number of African countries,

Aware of the pressing need for international cooperation and solidarity in the implementation of a permanent Desert Locust Early Warning and Prevention Strategy,

Considering the appeal launched by the current Chairman of the CILSS on the need for joint action for Desert Locust Early Warning, Prevention and Control efforts,

Taking into account the recommendations set forth by the Maghreb Country Ministerial Meetings held respectively in Tunis, Bechar and Rabat on 20 March, 22 March and 21 to 22 April 1988,

1. Expresses appreciation to the international community of donors and FAO for the generous support already provided for the implementation of control operations.
2. Launches an appeal to the international community to continue to mobilize the financial and material resources necessary for locust control within the region.
3. Recommends the earliest possible implementation of a Regional Project on Desert Locust Early Warning, Prevention and Control, as well as the reinforcement of National, Regional and International Desert Locust Warning and Early Warning Systems.
4. Recommends that the donor countries strengthen the Maghreb and other sub-regional programmes through the provision of adequate financial support.
5. Recommends the revitalization and reinforcement of FAO and governmental sub-regional and regional structures and national institutions responsible for locust control.
6. Recommends the reinforcement of the FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLLO).

Information on Aid-in-Kind

51. The document listed as Information Note on Aid-in-Kind Study 1/ was introduced by Mr T. Taka, FAO Regional Representative for Africa, a.i., who informed the Conference of the evolution and current status of the FAO initiative to increase the provision of agricultural inputs as aid-in-kind. The concept was derived from the FAO in-depth report entitled: "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years. The Study was undertaken in response to the recommendation made by the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa in 1986.

52. The in-depth report made it clear that agricultural development in Africa could not improve significantly without intensified efforts to support **Incentives, Inputs, Institutions and Infrastructure**. From these four "i's" of agricultural development, inputs had been selected for a Special Feasibility Study at the request of the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, because their effective use would most likely increase agricultural productivity and incomes on a short-term basis. After two years of intensive and in-depth work, FAO produced the Feasibility Study on Aid-in-Kind, which was submitted to the Twenty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference for consideration and approval.

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53. The Study examined particularly the feasibility of expanding aid-in-kind, that is, the direct supply of inputs. While it did not present a specific plan of action, it identified possible activities that could be implemented by donors and recipients alike.

54. The inputs which registered the greatest supply gap were mineral fertilizers, agricultural machinery and implements, and pesticides. The Study therefore outlined four approaches to closing the supply gap, namely through the use of (i) local production, (ii) commercial purchases from other African countries through intra-African trade, (iii) commercial imports from outside the region, and (iv) input aid from developed countries.

55. The Feasibility Study proposed that donors should give first priority to local production and intra-regional trade. When such facilities had been exhausted, they should then provide African countries with greater concessional shipments or credit facilities and grants.

56. The Study identified that increases in local production and intra-regional trade were not capable of satisfying all the input requirements of Sub-Saharan Africa. The Region would still have to import much of its needs from external sources.

57. The Study recommended a number of measures to improve upon previous means of providing aid-in-kind and other forms of input aid in the following problem areas: identification and specification, programming of local input production, identification of weaknesses in **Incentives, Inputs, Institutions and Infrastructure**, and more effective coordination of input supplies. It recommended that donors, governments and the private sector should coordinate their activities, because of input unavailability where and when needed by African farmers.

58. Two years of thorough, intensive research by FAO had culminated in the conclusion that the innovative idea of aid-in-kind could assist African countries in achieving the minimum target of three percent annual growth in per caput food production.

59. The Twenty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference debated the findings and recommendations of the Feasibility Study on Aid-in-Kind. Although it was unsuccessful in reaching a consensus to launch a new programme on aid-in-kind which would have assisted African countries in achieving food self-sufficiency in the short-term, it nevertheless requested that FAO undertake a number of follow-up activities. These included assistance to member countries in establishing suitable policy and planning frameworks for input assistance, analysis of technological choices, identification of input needs, operation of input data systems, and coordination of actions at the sectoral level.

60. The Conference expressed its appreciation to FAO for the initiative it had taken in carrying out the Feasibility Study on Aid-in-Kind and in proposing the follow-up actions that were currently being implemented.

61. Notwithstanding the fact that the Twenty-fourth FAO Conference did not reach a positive conclusion regarding an expanded aid-in-kind programme, the delegates stressed the importance and value of such aid for African agricultural development. They therefore renewed their appeal to donors to support and expand their assistance to this programme.

62. The Conference stressed that the delivery of aid-in-kind inputs should strengthen and complement inputs already available nationally, and regionally through intra-African trade and triangular transactions. It stressed that care should be taken for triangular transactions not to compete with local input products and that assistance in this regard should be provided as far as possible on a country by country basis. Furthermore, FAO should provide maximum technical assistance in the specification and selection of aid-in-kind inputs to ensure their appropriateness in each individual case.

Report of the Technical Committee

63. The Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held in Mauritius from 26 April to 4 May 1988, and the Technical Committee, which preceded the Plenary Session, took place from 26 to 29 April 1988.

64. Eighty-eight delegates from 32 Member Nations in the Africa Region, observers from Member Nations outside the Region, representatives of the United Nations and observers from Inter-governmental Organizations and National Liberation Movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), attended the Technical Committee.

65. The Conference approved the Technical Committee Report, the full text of which is given below.

Opening of the Technical Committee

66. In an introductory statement, Mr T. Taka, FAO Regional Representative for Africa, a.i., welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Director-General, Mr Edouard Saouma. He thanked the Government and people of Mauritius for their warm welcome and hospitality and for the excellent facilities provided for the Conference. He expressed special appreciation to the Government of Mauritius for hosting the Regional Conference for Africa for the second time, which underlined the country's commitment to Africa and to FAO. He noted that throughout the years, Mauritius had demonstrated that the Indian Ocean was not an obstacle to friendship between the peoples of continental Africa and their brothers and sisters on this African paradise. In congratulating Mauritius for its tremendous economic progress, Mr Taka declared that it was the result of the wise policies of the government, and the hard work and enterprise of the Mauritian people.

67. Mr Taka stated that the five substantive Agenda Items of the Technical Committee were selected for their value in enhancing the implementation of the main recommendations of the major FAO Study entitled: "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years". He recalled the four-point strategy recommended by the FAO Study, namely: (i) priority to Agriculture - changes in the structure of national economies so that agriculture was given top priority; (ii) improvements in the Four "I's" of Agricultural Development - incentives, inputs, institutions and infrastructure; (iii) conservation of natural resources and the environment in agricultural development; and (iv) action by the international community to back-up and reinforce the efforts of African governments and farmers.

68. Mr Taka stressed that concerted actions were required on this four-point strategy whose aim was to achieve the minimum requirement of a three percent annual increase in per caput food production in Africa for the next 25 years.

69. He said that the problems of African agriculture were too great, too many, too complex and overwhelming to be tackled single-handedly. He called for solidarity in confronting them through north-south, south-south and intra-African cooperation efforts. He declared that such intra-regional cooperation efforts were vital at a time when international cooperation was undergoing a difficult period. Mr Taka then invited Hon. Murlidas Dulloo, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources of Mauritius to open the Technical Committee.

70. In his opening statement, the Minister welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Mauritian Government and expressed appreciation for the opportunity of hosting the FAO Regional Conference for Africa for the second time in fourteen years. Time permitting, he invited delegates to visit his beautiful country and to become acquainted with the charming people and their lifestyle.

71. The Minister noted that the strong presence of FAO Member Nations reflected their commitment to finding urgent solutions to the problems faced by the Region as a whole, and by their respective governments individually. The relative food production successes in some countries was proof that the deteriorating trend of past years could be contained, but appropriate policy reforms needed to be implemented and priority to agriculture in resource allocations needed to be granted.

72. The Minister referred to OAU Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990, the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD), and FAO African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years, the three basic documents which together constituted a Programme of Action for Africa. The documents gave clear guidelines for policies and priorities and a practical set of operational activities which, if applied, would lay the foundation for durable structural changes and improved productivity levels. They would also ensure rapid economic recovery and improved long-term prospects for the continent. All three documents emphasized the primordial place of agriculture in the economic development of Africa.

73. The Minister cited the recommendations contained in the above basic programmes of OAU, UN and FAO and called for urgent action in their implementation in order to solve the problems of institutional and physical infrastructures, economic management and administration, human resource development, and demographic and political stability. He stressed the need for the international community to support African efforts. Support could be provided through sustained assistance in finding lasting solutions to the serious problems of world recession, commodity price deterioration and fluctuations, negative financial flows, increased protectionism, high interest rates and increasing debt burdens, factors which gravely affected Africa prospects for economic growth and development.

74. The Minister cited the various successful approaches adopted in Mauritius to deal with these challenging problems, in line with the recommendations contained in the three basic documents of OAU, UN and FAO. In the hope that the Technical Committee would propose recommendations that would tackle the grave and challenging problems facing African agriculture, the Minister thanked FAO and Africa's other development partners for their assistance to the region. He then declared the meeting opened.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

75. The Technical Committee elected as its Chairman, by acclamation, Mr M.R. Dookhony, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources of Mauritius. In a short acceptance speech, Mr Dookhony thanked the delegates for the honour accorded Mauritius and pledged his best efforts to work toward the success of the meeting.

76. The Technical Committee also elected by acclamation His Excellency Jules-Marius Ogouebandja, Permanent Representative of Gabon to FAO and Mr Ibrahima Kaba, Alternate Permanent Representative of Guinea to FAO, as first and second Vice-Chairmen, respectively. His Excellency Gerard Phirinyane Khojane, Permanent Representative of Lesotho to FAO, was elected Rapporteur of the Technical Committee.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

77. The Technical Committee considered and approved the agenda. The agenda, as adopted, is shown as Appendix A to this Report.

Report on FAO Activities in the Region: Action taken on the Main Recommendations of the 14th Regional Conference and Programme of Work and Budget 1988-89 in the Region

78. Mr T. Taka, Regional Representative for Africa a.i. introduced the document which reviewed FAO activities in the Region during 1986-87, FAO's Programme of Work and Budget for 1988-89 in the Region, and actions taken on the main recommendations of the Fourteenth Regional Conference. 1/ Mr Taka explained that the Report's selectivity was due to the large volume and diversity of FAO activities in the Region.

79. The reporting period was characterized by declining, and even negative, resource flows to Africa. The situation was further complicated by FAO's critical financial position, which threatened to obstruct the complete implementation of its programmes for the region during the 1988-89 biennium.

80. Nevertheless, Mr Taka stated that FAO continued to respond to the concerns of Africa about food security and productivity enhancement in food and agriculture. Africa continued to receive almost half of FAO's total assistance budget, in terms of Regular Programme and Extra-budgetary allocations. Each of the 1200 projects currently operational in Africa responded to the objectives and strategies of the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990.

81. FAO assistance in the region comprised programmes, projects and activities of direct relevance to the needs of Member Nations. They included training courses, workshops, and study tours, meetings and expert consultations for exchanges of information and experience and for consideration of policies and strategies, advice and support to Member Nations on technical issues, as well as on the planning and implementation of their national programmes and projects, the initiation of FAO-executed field projects and their technical and operational backstopping, and the publication of basic data, information and studies of interest to Member Nations.

82. The Special Action Programmes or Schemes were other tools used by FAO with particular or exclusive focus on Africa to carry out the above-mentioned activities. Examples provided were the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLLO), the Food Security Assistance Scheme (FSAS), the International Fertilizer Supply Scheme (IFS), the Freedom from Hunger Campaign/Action for Development (FFHC/AD), the Office for Special Relief Operations (OSRO), the Investment Centre, the Programme for Control of African Animal Trypanosomiasis and Related Development, and the Seed Improvement and Development Programme (SIDP).

83. During the reporting period, there was also intensive activity on the management of red soils and land evaluation for rainfed agriculture, the formulation of a soil conservation strategy for Africa aimed at reversing current trends in soil degradation, irrigation development, improvement of roots and tubers, plant protection, livestock production and disease control, nutrition planning and statistics use, agrarian reform and rural development, fisheries, and forestry development.

84. The activities in all these programme areas focussed attention on environmental considerations, on small-scale farmers and food producers, on women in development and on technical cooperation among African countries. This last included technical cooperation networks.

85. Mr Taka indicated that the design, focus and implementation of FAO activities in the region reflected the recommendations made by the Fourteenth Regional Conference for Africa and other bodies of the Organization.

86. Some encouraging developments were occurring in the region, including debt rescheduling and debt cancellations by some donors, as well as the implementation of some new financial incentives proposed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It was clear, however, that African economic and agricultural development could not be successfully managed unless the aid and financial resource flows improved significantly in Africa's favour.

87. In conclusion, Mr Taka affirmed that FAO projects and activities had been fully integrated within national and regional priorities and programmes during the reporting period. FAO had carried out with satisfaction the decisions and recommendations of the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference within the 1986-87 Programme of Work and Budget.

88. In the ensuing discussions, the Committee commended FAO for the wide-ranging role it played in support of African agriculture. The delegations addressed numerous problems and issues concerning both their countries and sub-regions. These covered the fields of natural resources, crops, livestock, research and technology, agrarian reform and rural development, food and nutrition, agricultural statistics, food and agricultural policy, fisheries development, forestry development, and economic and technical cooperation among African countries. Many delegations praised FAO for its prompt response to their urgent calls for assistance in high priority areas and emergency situations.

89. The Committee expressed deep concern regarding the current financial situation of FAO. It regretted that FAO should face severe funding limitations at a time when its assistance was most needed to support promising agricultural development efforts and emergency situations in many African countries. The Committee underlined the need to ensure the continued effectiveness of FAO activities and programmes. It appealed to all concerned Member Nations of FAO to honour promptly their financial obligation to the Organization in order to avoid further damage to its technical assistance programmes. Some delegations reaffirmed their solidarity and commitment to FAO and its programmes by confirming the actions being taken by their governments to settle their assessed contributions and arrears despite difficult financial situations in their respective countries.

90. In the area of natural resources, the Committee commended FAO for its assistance in land and water resources management and development, as well as in desertification control. It recommended that FAO expand its support for irrigation projects in Africa and further assist in the design and implementation of irrigation projects to suit local situations and development needs.

91. On crop production and improvement, the Committee paid tribute to FAO's work on varietal and productivity improvements. It welcomed FAO's intention to give high priority to the production of roots and tubers and leguminous and horticultural crops without sacrificing cereal crops. It urged FAO to continue working on the prevention of pre- and post-harvest losses through strengthened

crop protection and varietal improvements. The Committee emphasized the need for early warning systems development and the design and implementation of responsive measures. It stressed the importance of training in these areas while bearing in mind the needs of the small-scale farmer.

92. The Committee reviewed the current desert locust situation in West, North-West Africa and in the Sahelian zone. It found that the problem was a matter of serious concern and a widespread threat. It urged FAO to declare that the situation in the Sahelian zone was critical, which would serve to focus the attention of the international community on the problem.

93. The Committee expressed its complete support for FAO activities in the livestock sector, and urged their expansion to the greatest extent possible. FAO's activities in animal disease control, and especially in Trypanosomiasis and Rinderpest control, were noted with appreciation. The Committee regretted the closure of the francophone Regional Bobo Dioulasso Training Centre in Burkina Faso. It observed that, contrary to the official explanation, it was not done on the ground of the number of people trained but because of donor support withdrawal. It requested that FAO mobilize the funds necessary from present and potential donors for the Centre's reopening.

94. On agrarian reform and rural development, requests were made for the expanded integration of women and youth in development as a means of achieving and sustaining progress in rural development and the overall modernization of African agriculture. Modernization was also urged as a means of lessening the burden of farm and non-farm labour on rural women. The Committee emphasized the value of the role of non-governmental organizations in the planning and implementation of rural development programmes. It also expressed concern about the institutional stability of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA). It appealed to member states of the Centre and the international community to assist in its current state of instability.

95. On food and nutrition, delegations welcomed the increased emphasis placed by FAO on the development of root crops, tubers and plantains. They underlined the importance of adequate food technologies and identified nutrition planning as a major input for nutrition improvement programmes in the Region.

96. The Committee urged FAO to evaluate the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on the agricultural sector and on vulnerable rural populations. The Committee recommended the continuation of FAO's assistance in the development of planning capabilities in African countries.

97. On fisheries, the Committee called for more assistance for artisanal fisheries improvement, for evaluation of the resources of Exclusive Economic Zones, for greater assistance in the development of fish feeds for aquaculture, for appropriate fishing gear to exploit previously unexploited species. It advocated increased training of middle-level personnel in various fisheries disciplines, including fisheries data collection and processing.

98. The Committee considered forestry issues mainly in the context of environmental protection and desertification control. Particular consideration was given to the promotion of agro-forestry, the conservation and development of forestry resources for fuelwood production and other economic uses, and forestry training.

99. The Committee appealed for the strengthening of economic and technical cooperation among African countries. It commended the increased emphasis by the FAO Regional Office for Africa on Technical Cooperation Networks as an instrument in TCDC promotion. It also commended other TCDC activities designed or undertaken during the reporting period. A number of delegations highlighted their activities in ECDC and TCDC and noted that potentials for additional economic exchanges existed in many areas of agricultural production, in agricultural commodities trade and in vaccine production. The Committee also recommended the increased use of regional experts for consultancy and other assignments within the region.

100. The Committee noted the omission of any reference to the Study requested by the Twenty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference on the negative effects of the aggression of the South African apartheid regime on the food production and food security of the Frontline States. The Committee expressed the hope that this omission would not signify the abandonment of the study, and requested FAO to carry out the Conference-endorsed Study as a matter of priority.

101. Among other issues, the Committee noted with appreciation FAO's role in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of UNPAAERD. It requested FAO to continue and, wherever feasible, strengthen its training activities across various sub-sectors and programme areas. In this regard, it requested FAO to continue to take into account the special needs of Lusophone countries. It also recommended that consideration be given to the special technical assistance needs of island states in managing natural disasters, such as cyclones.

102. While the Committee recognized the current financial difficulties of the Organization, it nevertheless expressed the hope that FAO would be able to pursue the development of Portuguese language training courses in areas of vital importance for the rural and agricultural development of the African Portuguese-speaking countries.

Farm Mechanization in Africa: Status and Prospects

103. The Secretariat document 1/ was introduced by Mr Morton Satin, Director, a.i., of the Agricultural Services Division.

104. Mr Satin emphasized the importance of farm mechanization in facilitating small farmers to move out of subsistence agriculture and into producing marketable surpluses to feed the growing non-farm population. He elaborated on the key issues of total demand of farm power and the technological choices offered to farmers through forms of mechanization. The complete

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range of farm mechanization technologies from the use of hand tools, to draft animals, to mechanical power were discussed. Attention was also given to the development of tools and implements to specifically suit women's particular needs, as they played a major role in African farming. It was stressed that the key issue was not whether mechanization was an essential input or not, but whether a certain type of mechanization was most appropriate and by what means it could be most effectively introduced.

105. The main proposals for action were promotion of increased planning and strategy formulation for mechanization, promotion of local manufacture of selected mechanization inputs, revision of engineering education programmes and expansion of training efforts, and increased technical cooperation among developing countries.

106. The Committee congratulated FAO for the high quality of the paper. It clearly described the various aspects of farm mechanization in Africa, which encompassed a very broad subject area, dealing with a multitude of specific farming needs dependent on varying soil and agro-climatic conditions, as well as on specific socio-economic requirements.

107. The Committee noted the need to regard access to credit as a necessary pre-requisite of farm mechanization. Without the offer of credit on reasonable terms, many technological advances in farm mechanization would not be available to small farmers. The Committee urged FAO to consider a closer integration of credit with farm mechanization in future programmes.

108. The Committee indicated that there was a clear need for improved training in the area of mechanization and maintenance and stressed the importance of establishing Regional Centres for Agricultural Mechanization. Access to readily available regional expertise was considered an essential element in farm mechanization development. In this context, the Committee was advised of FAO arrangements for a training programme in mechanization strategy formulation, to be held in Harare in mid-1988.

109. The need to continue work in various alternative sources of renewable energy was referred to on several occasions. Wind power, biogas, solar energy, biomass and other renewable energy sources would, under particular conditions, relieve the heavy burden of conventional fuel expenditures. The development of more efficient energy devices and appliances would also reduce current energy expenditures.

110. The Committee stressed that future FAO work in the area of farm mechanization should include assistance to governments in the formulation of national policies in this sector, longer-term training programmes that will target artisanal, technical and professional-level people directly involved in mechanization, and studies to provide additional basic data on farm mechanization. These would point out problem areas and highlight potential opportunities for improvement.

111. The Committee noted that diverse soil and agro-climatic patterns and the wide range of socio-economic conditions led to significant variations in farm mechanization strategies throughout the region. It proposed that FAO continue to promote South-South cooperation along ECDC and TCDC principles in order to derive maximum advantage of shared experiences. To this end, the Committee urged African states to make the fullest possible use of the integration, trade and customs agreements within their sub-regions.

112. The Committee paid tribute to FAO for its technical support and expertise in the implementation of farm mechanization projects and for the development of national strategies to upgrade farm productivity. In order to maintain the accelerating pace of progress in this area, it requested that FAO continue to provide assistance in village blacksmith technology, rehabilitation and maintenance of serviceable equipment, feasibility studies related to upgrading, and selection of the most suitable forms of farm mechanization.

Fisheries in Africa: Their Status and Potential for Development

113. In introducing the document on fisheries, 1/ Mr W.Q.B. West, Senior Regional Fisheries Officer for Africa, stated that although the fishery resources of Africa were substantial, present production by African countries was nevertheless small. African fishery production accounted for about half of the total catch, while foreign fleets, operating under a variety of fishing agreements, accounted for the rest.

114. He indicated that pressure on the fishing industry was great because many important species were over-fished. The demand for fish remained strong and would continue to increase as per caput incomes and populations increased.

115. Additional development of African fisheries required action in three main fields, namely in increasing the participation level of Africans in the exploitation of their resources, in increasing aquaculture production and in reducing the degree of post-harvest losses. To achieve this, governments needed to implement clear and sound policies, strategies and programmes. Research, statistics and data in general needed to be greatly improved in order to provide the basis upon which rational management and development could be planned and implemented. FAO, through its regional bodies and related programmes, would continue to provide the means to improve collaboration efforts among African countries and with donors.

116. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee emphasized the importance of fisheries in Africa as a major protein source and as a contributor to the Region's general economic well-being. It commended FAO for its role in the rational development and management of the continent's fisheries.

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117. The Committee regretted that many governments' budgetary allocations to national fisheries administrations and research institutions had been grossly inadequate despite the significant contribution made by the fisheries sector to national economies. The Committee appealed to African governments to reverse the situation, and called upon Member Governments to accord increased priority to fisheries development initiatives, including aquaculture, in their overall national development plans.

118. Particular reference was made to the small-scale fisheries sector which currently provided well over 80 percent of total fish production by African countries. The Committee noted that the sector was constrained inter alia because of shortage of inputs, often due to lack of credit and foreign exchange, and to the poor state of artisanal fisheries and the encroachment by medium-scale and industrial fleets on artisanal fishing grounds. It called upon governments to address these problems in order to ensure the further development of the sector. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the assistance received from FAO and other agencies in this area, and requested additional support in the future.

119. The Committee expressed concern that many important species were over-fished and recommended the introduction and enforcement of appropriate management measures to prevent further over-exploitation. In this regard, it noted that foreign fishing operations were still very significant in Africa.

120. The Committee commended the useful work carried out by FAO regional projects and requested their strengthening. For the West Africa sub-region, in particular, it called for continuation of the kind of assistance provided by the project for the development and management of fisheries in the Eastern-Central Atlantic (CECAF).

121. The Committee acknowledged that fisheries development depended on maintaining satisfactory water quality in both marine and inland waters. There was thus a need to prevent water pollution. The Committee called upon FAO to assist Member Nations in the formulation of appropriate environmental protection programmes. The Committee noted that FAO had greatly assisted countries in obtaining increased benefits from their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). FAO was urged to continue providing this assistance, particularly regarding the surveillance, monitoring and control of EEZs.

122. The Committee noted that distribution of fish supplies was uneven, although the total supplies potentially available to Africa could meet future demand. The situation called for an expansion of intra-regional trade which was currently very small compared with extra-regional trade. The Committee commended the role which the FAO Fish Marketing Information and Technical Advisory Service for Africa played in promoting and further developing intra- and extra-regional trade. Particular mention was made of the INFOPECHE project in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

123. The Committee expressed concern about the magnitude of post-harvest losses. This problem was particularly critical in the traditional sector which was ill-equipped, suffered from poor road connections and lacked adequate processing and storage facilities. The Committee requested FAO to increase its assistance in solving this problem. Additional investment was also needed for infra-structural facilities to assist, in particular, artisanal fishermen. The Committee recognized the value of joint-ventures in the development of industrial fisheries through both capital investment and technology transfer and training.

124. On aquaculture development, the Committee noted that, in addition to inadequacies in seed and feed supply and operational support, the major constraint derived from the lack of well-trained and experienced manpower. It commended the role which the FAO/UNDP African Regional Aquaculture Centre (ARAC) in Nigeria played in training senior aquaculturists from the region and urged that the centre be strengthened. It also supported the development of a comprehensive aquacultural programme with a network of training and research institutions throughout Africa. As regarded the problem of seed supply, it was suggested that hatcheries be established at strategic locations in each country. An integrated approach to the development of aquaculture was also recommended.

125. In addressing the problem of the lack of trained manpower for the development, planning and management of African fisheries, the Committee requested FAO to give increased priority to training and called upon it to intensify its training programmes so as to improve national capabilities. With particular reference to fishery statistics, the Committee noted that FAO was developing a new training package that would provide assistance on a country basis for longer periods.

126. The Committee recognized the need for a strategy to increase the economic and social benefits derived from fisheries by African countries. The strategy should be based on a series of measures related to policy, planning and project formulation, implementation and follow-up, management, production, fish-use, and training. It furthermore suggested that the proposed in-depth study regarding opportunities and constraints facing the industrial fisheries sector should be carried out by FAO in cooperation with multilateral financial institutions, on a sub-regional basis. It further called upon FAO to assist Member Nations in formulating appropriate national fisheries development policies, plans and projects. Finally, the Committee recommended that regional and sub-regional collaboration efforts in fisheries management and development be strengthened.

Development of an Indigenous African Food Industry

127. The Secretariat Document, 1/ was introduced by Mr Morton Satin, Director a.i. of the Agricultural Services Division.

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128. Mr. Satin emphasized the critical role played by agro-industries in providing stable food products for both rural and urban populations. Food processing industries did not only play an important role in the short-term prevention of food losses, but were also instrumental in conserving surplus production for use in non-productive periods. The market outlet that sustainable agro-industry could provide to farmers could be the most practical means for transgressing the confines of subsistence agriculture.

129. He stressed the need to develop cohesive links between research, government and the private entrepreneurial sector which would ensure that products resulting from research programmes would have a positive impact on the market. Rapid urbanization and population expansion created a growing market demand for processed foods, based upon indigenous crops. Consequently, he emphasized the need for qualified management and management training. He also stressed the need for access to credit facilities in order to stimulate investment. In this regard, he highlighted the very active role of women entrepreneurs in agro-industries.

130. The Committee noted that agro-industrial development was a wholly-integrated issue and required a broader perspective than previously accorded. The Committee stressed the need to develop more information on potential finished product markets in respective countries and requested FAO's assistance in undertaking studies of this kind. The risks associated with agro-industrial investment could be considerably reduced as more adequate data on national and regional market potential became available.

131. The Committee urged FAO to develop a full compendium on traditional African food products in order to facilitate the use of local raw materials. It noted that FAO was preparing such a compendium and that its completion had been delayed because of financial constraints.

132. The Committee drew attention to the need to increase the purchasing power of consumers so that they could better afford the value-added food products from agro-industry. The Committee pointed out the income-generating potential of viable and sustainable agro-industries located in urban and rural centres that could significantly increase the purchasing power of small farmers, raw materials' distributors, and employees at all stages of processing and trading. The income-generating spin-off effect of agro-industry from cottage to large-scale was considered to be very significant.

133. The Committee requested the FAO to increase its work on quality control in the indigenous food industry. Since consumer confidence contributed to more stable markets, the indigenous food industry could only be developed if the quality and reliability of the finished products met market needs.

134. The Committee acknowledged the important role of agro-industries in agricultural development. It stressed the need for FAO to evolve from a technology transfer approach to a fully-integrated systems approach which would cover all aspects of food industry development from the farm gate to the consumer.

This approach would also cover the logistics of raw material production and distribution, food process engineering and food technology, finished product marketing and distribution, as well as all aspects of management and financing for the value-added food industry. FAO would also need to provide aid in developing national policies that encouraged sustainable investment in food industries.

135. The Committee stressed the need to negotiate improved terms with multi-national firms in the food sector. Furthermore, the knowledge, experience and overall capabilities of these firms would be a substantial asset in accelerating agro-industrial development since their global connections would be extremely useful in reducing trade barriers to value-added products. It was, however, essential that negotiations with these firms be based on the goal of acquiring long-term mutual benefits for all parties. The Committee requested FAO to act as a forum in convening agro-industrialists from developed countries and African countries to fully discuss all the major issues in integrated agro-industrial development.

136. The Committee requested that FAO, in cooperation with interested governments and industry, should organize a Regional Food Processing Exhibition or Exhibitions to demonstrate the commercial possibilities of the region's food products.

137. The Committee requested governments and financial and technical assistance agencies, including FAO, to assist in expanding diffusion and applying the more significant results from relevant research and development work. Examples were given of bread-making from locally available food products and the "Chorkor Smoker".

138. The Committee emphasized the critical need for further FAO assistance in food research and development, and commended FAO for its work in this field. It stressed the need to ensure that all food product research was performed in close cooperation with the relevant food industries.

139. The Committee was conscious of the fact that agro-industries generated by-products, wastes and effluents, and recommended that appropriate measures be taken by governments and agro-industrial concerns to safeguard the environment. It requested continuing FAO assistance in this regard.

Forestry in Support of Agriculture: Tropical Forestry Action Plan 1/

140. The document was presented by Mr J.D. Keita, Regional Forestry Officer for Africa, who noted that it highlighted the relationship between agriculture and forestry. Section one of the document reviewed the numerous contributions that forest resources made to the economic, social and cultural life of rural communities. It stressed how judiciously-planted trees contributed to soil and water conservation and to maintaining the soil's fertility on agricultural land.

Section two illustrated how the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP) could be considered a major contribution to African Agricultural development. By calling for a closer integration of forestry activities in rural development, the TFAP afforded high priority to people's participation in this area.

141. The TFAP's strategy was based on the following three principles:

(i) definition of priorities resulting from the Plan's five action areas, i.e., land use planning, forest industries development, fuelwood and energy, and conservation of tropical forest ecosystem and institutions; (ii) the commitment of tropical countries to involving rural communities in forest conservation and management; (iii) a sustained commitment on the part of donor countries and agencies to finance programmes which have been identified. Mr Keita pointed out that planning had to be preceded by a clear definition of policies and priorities, and that definition was therefore a core issue of the discussions.

142. The Committee considered a number of issues in the document and agreed to the following measures being undertaken:

- (i) integrating more closely forestry with agricultural and livestock production in rural development and land use planning;
- (ii) strengthening conservation practices and promoting the development of agro-forestry systems at the individual farm level;
- (iii) promoting the participation of rural communities in the efforts to develop and conserve forest and other natural resources;
- (iv) improving agricultural extension services and better equipping rural populations in boosting productivity and in slowing the advance of the agricultural frontier;
- (v) strengthening the management, training and research institutes concerned with the development and conservation of forestry resources.

143. The Committee commended FAO for launching the Tropical Forestry Action Plan with its five priority action components, but acknowledged that these priorities varied from country to country.

144. The Committee recognized that foresters in some countries should provide greater attention to gathering statistical and other economic data on forest products in order to enhance their position when convincing policy-makers of the need to invest in forestry development.

145. The Committee agreed that the multi-disciplinary approach recommended in the document was the best means of integrating forestry development with overall rural development, and noted that it was essential for the complete, whole-hearted participation of the communities in this endeavor.

146. During the debate, delegations called for more research on natural forests management, productive agro-forestry systems in relation to the socio-economic conditions of various rural communities, and drought-resistant species. The Committee recognized the need for frequent meetings among African foresters and it recognized the importance of regional cooperation networks and exchanges of information. Consequently, it requested that the work of regionalizing the Tropical Forestry Action Plan be pursued in order to produce sub-regional and regional cooperation programmes for Africa as soon as possible. Finally, the Committee acknowledged that the lack of personnel at all levels coupled with the severe weakness of the forestry research and development institutions were still major limiting factors in the development of farm forestry.

147. Several delegates pointed out that Tree Days and other awareness-building campaigns had been staged in their countries. The Committee felt that such events had an unquestionable impact on the populations concerned, and urged all African countries which had not yet done so, to declare National Tree Days in their countries.

148. A number of delegations strongly commended FAO and the donor countries and agencies for their assistance in forestry development, and urged that all such efforts be continued.

OTHER MATTERS

Representation of the Region in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) 1/

149. In considering the Document on the Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the Committee acknowledged the broad range of research work concerning the region that had been conducted by the International Research Centres (IARCs) and expressed its general satisfaction with the efforts of the CGIAR and FAO.

150. The Committee felt that increased emphasis should be placed on practical and immediately-applicable agricultural research.

151. The Committee expressed a desire to see the reports of the Regional Representatives to GCIAR, and was assured that they would be forwarded shortly. The Committee then recommended that, in future, these reports should be distributed through FAO well in advance, along with other documentation for Regional Conferences.

152. The Committee then considered regional representation on CGIAR and unanimously elected Mauritius to represent the Region from 1989-1992. The delegation of Mauritius thanked the Committee for its support and confidence. The Committee then expressed its appreciation to Guinea for representing the region for the past four years, and the delegate of Guinea thanked the Committee for the support given to his country's representative on CGIAR during this period.

Date and Place of the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

153. The Conference received offers from Ghana and Uganda to host the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa. The offer from Uganda was posthumous to the acceptance of the invitation from Ghana by acclamation. Cape Verde had previously announced its decision to postpone its own offer in favour of Ghana's. The Conference was informed that, in accordance with established procedure, the Director-General would advise Member Nations of the venue of the next Regional Conference after consultation with them. The exact date of the next Regional Conference was also to be communicated in due course.

Adoption of the Report of the Conference

154. The Conference considered the Report of the Plenary and adopted it as amended.

Closure of the Conference

155. In appreciation of the warm and generous hospitality extended to participants by the Government and people of Mauritius, Mr Daniel Afome-Nze, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Rural

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Economy of the Republic of Gabon, on behalf of Gabon, The Gambia, Madagascar, Guinea, Burkina Faso and the Congo, proposed, and the Conference adopted by acclamation, the following vote of thanks:

Resolution 3/88

The Conference,

Having held its Fifteenth Session in Mauritius from 26 April to 4 May 1988,

Having appreciated the warm and generous hospitality of the Government and people of Mauritius,

1. Thanks the Prime Minister of Mauritius, His Excellency Anerood Jugnauth, for his country's kind invitation to hold the Fifteenth Session of the Conference in Mauritius;
2. Further thanks the Mauritian authorities for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference;
3. Congratulates the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources, His Excellency Murlidas Dooloo, for his outstanding and exemplary management of the Conference.

156. In his closing statement, the Director-General thanked the Conference for its declarations of support during the period of his stewardship of FAO. He called for support from the entire membership of the Organization in order to meet the immediate and long-term challenges confronting the Member Nations and the Secretariat of FAO. Although the road was expected to be rough, he promised to continue his efforts in ensuring that the Organization's effectiveness was maintained. He noted that it was especially important to maintain momentum for agricultural rehabilitation efforts in Africa in these times. Consequently, he pledged that his support to African endeavors would be unwavering and he re-dedicated himself to the common struggle to achieve food security and food self-sufficiency in the region.

157. The Director-General assured the Conference that he and his colleagues shared their concern about the financial crisis facing FAO. Everything was being done to contain the situation and he pledged his faithful support to the review process to ensure that FAO emerged even stronger in meeting the challenges of our times.

158. The Director-General undertook to study the various recommendations with the usual keen interest, and resources permitting, he would execute them as expeditiously as possible. He noted with satisfaction that the recommendations contained in the documents prepared by the Secretariat had been accepted by the Conference.

159. The Director-General acknowledged with appreciation the Conference's total endorsement of FAO's activities in the region and he expressed his belief that FAO's assistance was modestly making its contribution in support of African efforts.

160. The Director-General fully associated himself with the Conference's view that the FAO Regional Office for Africa had a vital role to play, especially in support of regional cooperation efforts and regional groupings in Africa. He promised to ensure that the Office's programmes were carried out effectively in support of the needs of the region.

161. The Director-General informed the Conference that numerous swarms of locust had been sighted on the northern parts of the Central Delta of River Niger. Preliminary indications, if confirmed, noted that the swarms could be three times the size of the largest seen during the 1950-63 plague, making it a plague of exceptional magnitude. International cooperation and assistance would thus be needed on an even larger scale to combat it. He assured the Conference that FAO was fully conscious of its responsibilities both in helping its Member Nations cope with such emergencies and in assisting in the implementation of control campaigns against the desert locust. FAO would spare no effort in continuing to involve the international donor community to provide assistance to the afflicted countries since this was the highest priority for the Organization. Nevertheless, the campaign would be waged without sacrificing assistance provided to other countries of the region affected by drought and other emergency situations, as in Ethiopia, Mozambique and others.

162. The Director-General concluded his statement by thanking once again the Government and people of Mauritius for their hospitality, and the delegations for their stimulating and rewarding cooperation.

163. Mr Murlidas Dooloo, Chairman of the Conference, in a brief closing remark, noted that the Conference had once again demonstrated the essential similarity of African problems across the Region, and the need to address them jointly and in the spirit of cooperation. He cited intra-African trade and the expansion of aid-in-kind through triangular transactions as particularly promising avenues of cooperation.

164. The Chairman thanked delegations for their understanding and cooperation which had contributed greatly to the successful conclusion of the Conference. The ultimate test of its success, however, lay in the implementation of the ideas developed or confirmed at the Conference. He noted the problems inherent in their implementation and in the creation of the New International Economic Order advocated by the Prime Minister of Mauritius in his opening statement. He therefore proposed that a Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Food and Agriculture be convened in the future to further pursue discussions on these subjects.

165. The Chairman finally thanked FAO for the quality of the Conference documents and all concerned for their contributions to its success. He then declared the Conference closed.

AGENDA

Technical Committee (26-29 April 1988)

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. TECHNICAL ITEMS

4. Report on FAO Activities in the Region: Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 14th Regional Conference and Programme of Work and Budget 1988-89 in the Region.
5. Development of an Indigenous African Food Industry.
6. Fisheries in Africa: Their Status and Potential for Development.
7. Farm Mechanization in Africa: Status and Prospects.
8. Forestry in Support to Agriculture: The Tropical Forestry Action Plan.
9. Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.
10. Adoption of the Report of the Technical Committee.

Plenary Session (2-4 May 1988)

III. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

IV. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in Africa
6. Desert Locust Plague
7. Information on Aid-in-Kind

V. CONCLUDING ITEMS

8. Consideration of the Technical Committee Report
9. Any Other Business
10. Date and Place of the Sixteenth Regional Conference for Africa
11. Adoption of the Conference Report
12. Closure of the Conference

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

ARC/88/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ARC/88/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region: Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 14th Regional Conference and Programme of Work and Budget 1988-89 in the Region
ARC/88/3	Development of an Indigenous African Food Industry
ARC/88/4	Fisheries Development in Africa: Their Status and Potential for Development
ARC/88/5	Farm Mechanization in Africa: Status and Prospects
ARC/88/6	Forestry in Support of Agriculture: The Tropical Forestry Action Plan
ARC/88/7	Representation of the Region in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

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STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Prime Minister,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

Africa is one of our central concerns; in any case, I can confidently assert that it is one of mine. My interest in this continent, with its countless past and present trials, has never waned. Torn asunder only yesterday, colonized and exploited under foreign domination, Africa today is prey to myriad afflictions in the form of famine, the refugee crisis, conflicts, civil wars and unending natural disasters. The latest calamity is the plague of locusts, which have attacked with renewed violence. Staggering under its debt burden, Africa is the part of the world with the highest number of least developed countries and the highest per caput food aid requirements.

There is at least one point on which I can offer reassurance. Today, as yesterday, FAO and its Director-General are keenly aware of Africa's problems and have no intention whatsoever of reconsidering the top priority consistently accorded to this region which, although containing eleven percent of the world's population, is the recipient of nearly half of FAO's resources.

Quite apart from these considerations, my own intense personal attachment to Africa runs deep. I instinctively perceive the wealth of your human and cultural heritage, the tangible and poetic rapport of the African people with nature, and the sense of solidarity which has been a consistent feature of African society. I am extremely sensitive to the warmth and cordiality of the dialogue which I have been privileged to pursue with so many eminent Africans. It is thus a great pleasure for me to find myself surrounded by the familiar faces of so many friends.

The occasion for this meeting is offered by the most appealing of host countries. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to His Excellency the Chairman, the Government, and in particular, His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture of Mauritius, who have invited us here, welcomed us so graciously, and made available such excellent facilities. This is a bewitching country. In the words of the poet Jean-Paul Toulet:

"Mauritius, surely some god has set amidst the waters this garden,
where the singing sea lulls the birds to sleep".

But the charm of Mauritius should not lull us into forgetting that this country, under its exemplary democratic rule, has made impressive strides toward national prosperity and well-being. Its per caput gross domestic product is today one of the highest in Africa.

The FAO Conference

The Fifteenth Regional Conference for Africa follows closely on the heels of the exceptionally valuable and important Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of FAO.

First of all, the Conference reaffirmed its confidence in the Director-General by re-electing him to a new term of office at a moment in time when FAO is in a particularly tight corner. Imbued with the seriousness of the responsibilities incumbent upon me, I told the Conference that I took up my task with humility, and this is indeed the spirit in which I have begun. Every new day brings home to me how much I need, really need, the support and confidence of everyone, and especially yours, under the present circumstances.

These circumstances are of a gravity unparalleled in the history of the Organization. The Conference took note that FAO entered into a liquidity crisis during the 1986-87 biennium, primarily due to delays in the payment of assessed contributions by the largest donor and other countries. Under these conditions, services provided to member countries had to be reduced by 25 million dollars in 1987. The Conference noted with grave concern the likely continuation of this situation into 1988-89, and exhorted all member countries to comply with their obligations to the Organization by prompt and full payment of their contributions.

The Twenty-fourth Session of the Conference was also the scene of a controversy concerning the need for a review of FAO's goals and operations. In the end it was decided to undertake such a review, and it has now begun. I want you to know that the Secretariat is determined to play its full role in this exercise, which requires a great deal of concentration, but which unfortunately occurs just at a time when we need to devote a great deal of energy to coping with the financial crisis.

The Conference also discussed a possible reform of the process for preparation and approval of the programme and budget. It proved impossible to reach an agreement, but I fervently hope that a solution will be forthcoming in the next few months, thanks primarily to the work of the Programme and Finance Committees.

We had submitted to the Conference a feasibility study on the expansion of aid-in-kind for the supply of agricultural inputs. I hardly need to remind you that this is an issue of special interest to Africa, where we were initially envisaging undertaking such a programme. The Conference discussed the issue

thoroughly, but we are forced to admit that what finally emerged from the great diversity of opinions expressed was the lack of a clear will to launch a new programme at this time. I feel disappointed by the reception accorded to this initiative, and no doubt you do as well. Though I regret it did not come to pass, I think I should point out that the study did, in any case, turn the spotlight on the importance of this form of aid. Let us at least hope it may have a concrete influence on countries providing assistance to Africa.

The Economic Situation of Africa

The world is in a particularly difficult economic bind, from which the industrialized countries are in no way exempt. Their economic power has afforded no shield against the effects of a severe growth crisis: unemployment, monetary instability and inflation. The industrialized countries are at the same time the major market for the exports of the developing countries and their principal source of aid, so that developed country response to the economic crisis has powerful repercussions for the Third World.

Africa is the continent where progress has trailed farthest behind. Her economy remains heavily dependent on the export of staple agricultural and non-agricultural commodities, for which prices continue to plummet at an alarming rate. To give one example, except for oil, the prices of primary commodities exported by Sub-Saharan Africa have dropped in real terms by some 35 percent between 1980 and 1987. While some commodities have recovered to a degree in recent months, the prices for most major African export crops - coffee, cocoa, tea, oilseeds, cotton and the like - are still terribly depressed even in nominal terms compared with the early eighties.

As Africa watches its export income dwindle, the bill for the goods and services it is forced to import goes up. One of the major consequences of deteriorating terms of trade is of course a steadily accelerating growth of indebtedness. The latest World Bank figures show that in 1987 for the first time the external debt for Sub-Saharan Africa alone topped 100 000 million dollars. External debt has indeed doubled since 1980. Debt servicing for the sub-region swallows one-third of its total export income for goods and services, and in some countries the proportion is much higher. It is thus no exaggeration to say that the continent is strangled by debt. All African authorities are keenly aware of this. As you know, the Third Extraordinary Session of the Summit of the Organization of African Unity gave priority attention to the examination of this problem. The Summit issued a major declaration expressing the anxiety of African Nations in the face of this phenomenon, analysing its causes and making specific proposals to reverse the situation, and urgently requesting the convening of an international conference on Africa's indebtedness in 1988.

The international community cannot, in fact, remain passive before a problem of such magnitude. A number of developed countries have already, of their own accord, extended generosity to debt-ridden African countries. But the region cannot continue to live on aid. The occasional relief from debt pressure is not enough. Indeed, debt-ridden countries often become prisoners within a vicious circle, from whose chains only development can free them. But any new loans they obtain are completely absorbed by debt-servicing, driving them deeper and deeper into debt. More drastic measures are therefore essential, and until such time as this is accepted, indebtedness will continue to be a painful concern and crucial problem for the OAU.

In this dramatic context, one naturally wonders what has become of official aid to development and what share of this aid is going to Africa, particularly to African agriculture. We would of course be happy to point to a clear upturn in the flow of external resources to the agricultural sector of the Region, but the real situation is hazy and ambiguous. An increase in absolute figures probably corresponds to a decline in real figures, if price trends and rates of exchange are taken into account. In any case, inflows of funds on concessional terms are on the wane. The initiatives of the IDA and the African Development Bank, which will unquestionably provide a whiff of oxygen to African agriculture, are certainly worthy of note, and we can be thankful for them. But unfortunately, we are obliged to say that resources lag far behind requirements, and their flow is a trickle compared with the level recommended by the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

The Food and Agricultural Situation

Poor harvests, particularly for cereal grains, have severely reduced food supplies in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is one more fact in an extremely unfavourable long-term trend; per caput food production for all of Africa has dropped by an average of one percent every year since 1970. This has pushed up import requirements even as per caput food consumption has, alas, declined. Given the deteriorating terms of trade which I have just described, Africa is obviously in no position to cover its deficit through commercial imports alone. Food aid accordingly remains essential, even outside those areas where the threat of famine demands the distribution of emergency relief.

Here I should like to clarify one point, however; cereal imports in low-income, food-deficit African countries have been rising by some 1 million tons per annum in the last ten years or so. According to our forecasts, these countries will import some 20 million tons of cereals during 1987/88 season. Now, nearly 75 percent of this volume is made up of commercial imports. In absolute figures, the volume of food aid is increasing but, contrary to what one might suppose, the trend in food aid's share of the total cereal imports of the

poorest countries in the region is downward, having actually dropped from 33 to 27 percent of the total figure between 1976/77 and 1987/88. If we consider the precariousness of the resources which these countries are able to marshal for commercial imports, we can only conclude that they are still barred from access to food security, and are in a frighteningly vulnerable position.

And yet, a means of bettering this situation can be found right here in Africa. Let us now forget that there are African countries which, year after year, produce exportable surpluses of coarse grains which could be used to bolster food security for other countries on the continent. However, the producer countries need assistance to market successfully their surpluses; while laudable efforts have certainly been expended to this end, particularly by the European Economic Community and the World Food Programme, these are not enough. So I appeal to donors, including EEC, to intensify such action and to purchase still larger volumes from the surplus-producing African countries to supply deficit countries through triangular transactions. Otherwise there is a risk that producer countries will be discouraged. The ideal, in the long term, would be for Africa to become self-sufficient as a region along the lines of South-South cooperation.

Do the harvest prospects for 1987/88 hold out further grounds for hope? This is a hard question to answer. The situation looks fairly good in some areas, but much will depend on the rains (not to mention civil disorders, which are hindering farm activities in more than one country). This year, however, the main threat comes from locusts and grasshoppers, particularly the desert locust. As you know, the Maghreb countries - Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya - are presently taking the worst beating, where desert locusts, having encountered the right breeding conditions, now number in the thousands of millions. Despite rigorous ground and aerial control campaigns, losses are already substantial. However, the outcome of the match is being settled right now; if the bulk of the swarms can be successfully wiped out before they reproduce and survivors successfully controlled, the scourge can be halted. Otherwise, there will be terrifying outbreaks of locusts. The swarms will multiply and ravage the sub-region and, when the winds change in the North, the locusts will again invade the Sahel countries - you can easily imagine the consequences. We are therefore at a critical stage in the fight.

FAO continues to do its utmost to inform all those involved, to assess requirements, to mobilize the international community of donors and to help to organize cooperation among the most endangered countries. FAO sees to the timely delivery of all forms of aid - aircraft, equipment, insecticides - wherever needed. The Emergency Centre for Locust Operations, established by FAO, works intensively alongside the countries affected. Ninety aircraft and nearly 600 vehicles have taken part in these operations, but the fight must be continued and intensified as vigorously as possible if we are to prevent continuing devastation by this scourge in Africa in the years to come.

I assure you that we shall continue to follow the situation very closely and pursue our efforts to ensure the necessary flow of aid. In particular, the Emergency Centre for Locust Control will continue to liaise closely with countries likely to be menaced anew, particularly in the Sahel.

The Role of FAO in Africa

Let us now look a bit beyond these immediate prospects. As FAO witnesses the shrinkage of its available resources, the African countries have growing need of FAO's help, and we may well wonder what the outcome will be. On this point, at least, I can afford some words of reassurance; the budgetary crisis is not going to affect our Field Programme. According to our estimates, the funds available for this item of expenditure in Africa in 1988 will probably exceed the figure for 1987.

The offices of our Country Representatives and our Regional Office will therefore maintain at least their present level of activities, and the same is true of the joint ECA/FAO Agriculture Division with offices in Addis Ababa. We firmly intend to pursue and even to intensify the excellent working relations which typify our cooperation with OAU and the various regional organizations.

The FAO Investment Centre is far from slowing down its activities. In 1986, 21 Investment Centre-assisted projects were approved by international financing agencies, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, for a total investment of over 660 million dollars throughout Africa. The corresponding figure for 1987 was 29 projects, with investments of some 825 million dollars. As you see, the Organization's financial difficulties have not prevented a healthy expansion of Investment Centre activities.

In 1986, the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted an extraordinary session to the critical economic situation of Africa. You have every right to ask what FAO has contributed to this extraordinary session and its follow-up. FAO's main contribution was, first of all, an in-depth study which made its debut at the last Regional Conference and which we published under the title "African Agriculture: the Next Twenty-five years". The point I would like to underscore here is that this study enjoyed the participation of a great many African experts. I believe this is one of the main reasons why its conclusions were basically used as the underpinning of the agricultural component of the United Nations Action Programme for the Economic Recovery and Development of Africa. I also want to emphasize that all of FAO's concrete action in Africa and efforts to assist African agriculture fall in line with the UN Programme of Action, to which they comprise the de facto follow-up. I think there is no need to point out that we are putting all our energies, care and heart into this effort.

Quite a number of countries have had to embark upon the process called "structural adjustments", in order to have their debts restructured and to obtain the new loans essential for their development, this being one frequent condition imposed by agencies such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund to maximize the performance of their loan facilities.

There is no need to define the meaning of the term "structural adjustments" to top-level officials such as yourselves. The basic point is to begin to manage the economy of a country in accordance with business criteria, the goal being cost-effectiveness, which translates into a policy of strict austerity. It involves monetary and financial adjustments, often accompanied by dizzying devaluations; trimming government expenditure; withdrawing State participation from deficit firms; eliminating consumer subsidies; price system reforms; extremely strict salary policies; credit restrictions; heavier indirect taxation; import reductions; rehabilitation or development of infrastructures; relaunching profit-making production; higher producer prices; etc. This is, as you know, the straight and narrow path along which the major financing agencies hope to lead countries in difficulty toward recovery and prosperity.

In countries where agriculture represents up to 80 percent of the economy, these adjustments will obviously involve primarily the agricultural sector. The operation is an extremely difficult and delicate one, since Third World countries are barely equipped to launch a reorganization of this sector, to plan its development and to develop the right strategies. Let me stress at this point that FAO is at hand to advise and to help them with these problems.

The UNDP organizes round tables for planning economic development and mobilizing aid for plans and projects which have been selected. There again, agriculture is at the forefront. This is why we help countries to prepare the documentation for these round tables so that they can carry out a dialogue with the World Bank and the IMF in which every aspect of the problem will receive the attention it deserves.

Unless care is taken, structural adjustments can, in fact, prove a harsh medicine which may cure the disease but kill the patient. In many countries, ill-planned structural adjustments - or, to be precise, adjustments which had been envisaged solely from the economic standpoint - have been seen to entail disastrous consequences, threatening the stability of the entire political and social edifice. All too frequently, it is the little people who bear the brunt of the operation: urban consumers, wage earners, small businessmen and poor peasants. For in practice, recovery measures which touch producer prices and agricultural inputs basically benefit well-to-do producers.

FAO stands ready as an independent, disinterested adviser to help countries to take an authoritative stance in their discussions with the financial agencies, to ensure that the only structural adjustment operations accepted will be those "with human face". In citing this eloquent expression, I mean operations whose

social cost is not prohibitive. However, you should know that FAO is not invited to these round tables as a general rule, unless an express and insistent request is made by the governments attending. Countries wishing to benefit from our assistance should therefore take this initiative themselves.

The number and magnitude of the problems facing the region make the Agenda before you a particularly full one. It abounds with issues of the greatest interest, but I shall not address them here. This is your prerogative, Honourable Ministers and Representatives of sovereign states, and yours alone. I further believe that no other approach can better serve the cause of Africa. In your discussions here at this major Regional Conference, which brings together nearly one-third of FAO's member countries, you have the opportunity to get to know one another better, to reach a better understanding, and to put the cooperation of the entire African community on a solid footing. Our Secretariat is of course at your full disposal, but the direction of your discussions and their conclusions are entirely up to you.

FAO will be following your deliberations and recommendations with the greatest attention, and will not fail to give them the fullest consideration in preparing its future programmes of work. We know that Africa expects renewed efforts from us and we stand ready to furnish them. We also know that the African people and their leaders are firmly resolved to take their destiny in hand.

Yes, this continent is prey to cruel trials and countless difficulties, but it does not face these difficulties unarmed. Fragile though they may be, its natural resources constitute an infinitely valuable heritage, and there seems to be a rebirth of the sense of solidarity among the international community, particularly with respect to Africa. But what is more important is the wealth of Africa's human resources, its sons and daughters, their vitality, courage, ingenuity, and most of all, their heart. Our firmest reason for hope in a better future lies here. And here lies also the full sense of my warmest wishes for the success of your Conference.

Thank you very much.

