

REPORT

Killarney,
Ireland,
6-10 June
1994

Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe



Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

FAO members in the European Region (as of 6 June 1994)

Albania	France	Poland
Armenia	Germany	Portugal
Austria	Greece	Romania
Belgium	Hungary	Slovakia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iceland	Slovenia
Bulgaria	Ireland	Spain
Croatia	Israel	Sweden
Cyprus	Italy	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Latvia	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Denmark	Lithuania	Turkey
Estonia	Luxembourg	United Kingdom
European Community (member organization)	Malta	Yugoslavia
Finland	Netherlands	
	Norway	

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Europe

First	– Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1949
Second	– Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1960
Third	– Rome, Italy, 8-13 October 1962
Fourth	– Salzburg, Austria, 26-31 October 1964
Fifth	– Seville, Spain; 5-11 October 1966
Sixth	– St. Julian's, Malta, 28-31 October 1968
Seventh	– Budapest, Hungary, 21-25 September 1970
Eighth	– Munich, Germany, Fed. Rep. of, 18-23 September 1972
Ninth	– Lausanne, Switzerland, 7-12 October 1974
Tenth	– Bucharest, Romania, 20-25 September 1976
Eleventh	– Lisbon, Portugal, 2-7 October 1978
Twelfth	– Athens, Greece, 22-27 September 1980
Thirteenth	– Sofia, Bulgaria, 4-8 October 1982
Fourteenth	– Reykjavik, Iceland, 17-21 September 1984
Fifteenth	– Istanbul, Turkey, 28 April-2 May 1986
Sixteenth	– Cracow, Poland, 23-26 August 1988
Seventeenth	– Venice, Italy, 3-7 April 1990
Eighteenth	– Prague, Czechoslovakia, 24-28 August 1992
Nineteenth	– Killarney, Ireland, 6-10 June 1994

REPORT OF THE NINETEENTH
FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Killarney, Ireland, 6-10 June 1994

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SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region including Future Prospects in the light of Recent Global and Regional Development

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

1. supported the Director-General's proposals, as approved by the 106th Session of the FAO Council, to decentralize FAO activities, to separate its normative and operational roles and activities, yet to ensure on the one hand the position of FAO as a Centre of Excellence, and on the other to strengthen its presence in the field (para. 15).
2. acknowledged the importance of global food security and its linkages to the specific situation of the agricultural and rural sector in the European Region (para. 16).
3. supported the strong links and effective partnership between FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) in their joint efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition and noted WFP's urgent appeal to Member Nations of the Region to maintain, and if possible increase, their contributions to WFP, particularly for emergency operations (para. 18).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

4. recommended that FAO continue and expand its activities and programmes in support of the process of transition process to a market-oriented economy by Central and Eastern European countries (para. 23).
5. requested enhanced FAO assistance in the fields of forestry and inland fisheries, in particular as regarded the Forestry Action Programme for Mediterranean Forestry (para. 25).
6. called for FAO programmes to assist countries bordering the Mediterranean in dealing with problems of agricultural production in conditions of water shortages, of salinity, soil erosion and desertification, of fragile ecosystem protection and the preservation of specific breeds and varieties in accordance with an integrated approach to development. (para. 26).

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

7. expressed its appreciation for the comprehensive review of the FAO activities in Europe during the 1992-93 biennium in the fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries (para. 28).
8. expressed appreciation for the activities carried out by the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) (para. 35).

9. expressed appreciation for the activities carried out by the Working Party on Women and the Agricultural Family in Rural Development (para. 37).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

10. recommended that FAO's basic priorities in Europe be the promotion of sustainable development in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (para. 32).
11. recommended that FAO activities regarding UNCED be integrated with projects dealing with soil, water and forest protection and sustainable technologies (para.32).
12. recommended that the ESCORENA network be further expanded in order to reflect changes in agricultural research and development, and to continue providing priority attention to the economies in transition (para. 33).
13. stressed that the important agricultural research and development potential existing in the Central and Eastern European countries be incorporated in the networks where appropriate (para. 33).
14. supported the initiative of the Intergovernmental Group on Citrus Fruits to create an integrated technical and economic network on citrus production in the Mediterranean basin (para. 34).
15. strongly recommended that FAO continue to support the activities carried out by the European Forestry Commission (para. 36).
16. requested FAO to increase its support to activities related to women and the agricultural family in rural development given their importance in rural life and environmentally friendly farming (para. 37).

Introducing Environmentally Friendly Production Technologies for Sustainable Agriculture in Europe

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

17. underlined that, while measures of regulation and control were important components of an environmentally sustainable food and agricultural strategy, voluntary schemes, if implemented within an appropriate set of incentives, often provided useful means of promoting the adoption of more environmentally sound technologies (para. 50).
18. agreed that an agrarian structure based on the family farm unit was one most likely to comply with environmental objectives that included the maintenance of cultural landscapes required for recreational and tourism purposes, while simultaneously complying with production objectives (para. 51).
19. urged that environmental standards not be used as additional barriers to agricultural trade while recognizing that trading countries sought fair and equitable trading conditions (para. 52).

20. emphasized that forestry often played a key role in sustainable, yet remunerative, farming systems in a wide range of conditions existing in Europe, but particularly in mountain and other marginal areas (para. 53).
21. emphasized the importance of applied research in developing environmentally-friendly technologies, appropriate training for farmers and the education of both consumers and government policy-makers in addressing the environmental problems associated with agriculture in the Region (para. 55).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

22. urged that FAO, in cooperation with other organizations such as the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), assist in the development for environmental standards and indicators that would satisfy criteria of environmental sustainability, social acceptability and economic viability and in their widespread adoption in the Region (para. 54).
23. recommended that FAO, and in particular the new Department on Sustainable Development, play an active role in the area of applied research in developing environmentally friendly technologies, appropriate training for farmers and the education of both consumers and government policy-makers, in collaboration with such governmental and non-governmental organizations as OECD, the European Commission on Agriculture and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) (para. 55).

New Food Consumption Patterns and Quality Control in Europe and Adaptation of Agricultural Production

For the Attention of the Governments

The Conference:

24. noted that changes in consumer food habits, life-styles, and rising incomes were factors significant in European food production, processing and marketing systems (para. 57).
25. commended the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and pointed out its increased importance in relation to the implementation of the recently-concluded GATT Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations (para. 60).
26. emphasized the role of agricultural research in the development of new foods and food productions, and highlighted the importance of information systems in providing farmers, food processors and consumers with accurate and useful reports of such research (para. 62).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

27. called for acceleration of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission particularly as it regarded import and export food inspection, analysis and certification, and emphasized the need for strong participation of consumer groups in Codex work (para. 60).
28. called upon FAO to carry out further studies in the field of changing food consumption patterns and quality control requirements, including fish and fish products, and to organize appropriate seminars, workshops and other meetings to promote information exchanges between countries of the Region on regarding these two questions (para. 63).
29. requested FAO to continue to monitor food consumption patterns in relation to food production patterns (para. 63).

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

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

30. elected Prof. Rein Teinberg (Estonia) as representative of the Region on the CGIAR for the four-year period 1995-98 (para. 70).
31. unanimously endorsed the proposals which had been identified in consultation with the newly established CGIAR Oversight Committee and the FAO Regional Office with a view to making the regional representation more effective and better able to reflect the views and aspirations of Member Nations in the Region relative to the CGIAR activities (para. 70).

Date and Place of the 20th Regional Conference for Europe

For the Attention of FAO

32. welcomed the invitation extended by the delegation of Israel to host the 20th Regional Conference in 1996 in Tel-Aviv and asked that the invitation be conveyed to the Director-General for his decision in consultation with the governments of the Member Nations of the Region (para. 76).
33. recommended that for future regional conferences, the annotated agenda clearly indicate which items were submitted for discussion and/or decision and which for information, following a practice already in use by the FAO Council and by the Council Committees (para. 77).

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, organized in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), was held in Killarney, Ireland, 6-10 June 1994, at the kind invitation of the Government of Ireland.
2. Delegations from 35 Members, including the European Community, attended the Conference. Three Member Nations from other regions participated in an observer capacity (Australia, Canada and United States of America), as well as the Holy See. The Conference was also attended by representatives of six United Nations specialized agencies and observers from six non-governmental organizations.
3. The list of participants is given in Appendix B to this Report.

Inaugural Ceremony

4. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Mr Dick Spring T.D., attended the opening session of the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe and welcomed delegates and observers to his country. He extended his greetings to Mr Jacques Diouf, the newly-elected Director-General of FAO. He recalled FAO's continuing commitment to improving the level of nutrition of people and to achieving food security for all. Ireland had supported FAO since the founding of the Organization. Ireland's history of the famine in the 1840s and the ensuing starvation and emigration were recalled. Mention was made of Ireland's assistance to the developing countries, in particular to the African continent. Rapid population growth in developing countries in the present century was stressed as a major factor affecting world food security.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

5. The Conference unanimously elected Mr Joe Walsh, T.D., the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry of Ireland, as Chairman.
6. The Conference also unanimously elected the following Vice-Chairmen:

Mr Ivan Tarnaj, Minister for Agriculture and Forestry of Croatia; Mr John Glistrup, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Representative of Denmark to FAO; and Mr Hans Popp Assistant Director, Federal Department for Public Economy and President, Swiss National FAO Committee.
7. In accordance with the practice established upon the recommendation of the Fifteenth Regional Conference for Europe to appoint either a Rapporteur or a Drafting Committee for the preparation of the Report, Ms Tzipora Rimon, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Representative of Israel to FAO was elected Rapporteur.

Statement by the Chairman

8. The Chairman of the Conference, Mr Joe Walsh stated that Ireland was honoured to host the Nineteenth Regional Conference for Europe. He welcomed the Director-General of FAO, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, and the delegations and observers to the Conference to Ireland and to the region of Killarney, which though important in Irish agriculture, was operating under difficult conditions. The Kerry Group, active in the agriculture

of the Region, was cited as an example of a grassroots farmers' cooperative which in twenty years had grown to become a major multinational company. The challenges faced by Irish agriculture, including those of food security and food safety were underlined, parallel to the need for harmonization of agricultural development in the European Region. The Minister expressed his best wishes for the success of the Conference.

Adoption of the Agenda

9. The Conference adopted the Agenda which is given in Appendix A to this Report.

Statement by the Director-General

10. The Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, welcomed the Conference participants, and underlined the historical experience of Ireland as one of an enduring nature in liberating humanity from hunger. He thanked the Government of Ireland for having invited the Conference to Killarney and expressed his gratitude for the generous hospitality extended by the hosts to participants.

11. The complete text of the Director-General's statement is given in Appendix D to this Report.

Statement by the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE)

12. Mr Yves Berthelot, the Executive Secretary, addressed the Conference, and thanked the Government of Ireland for its hospitality in hosting this event. The complete text of the Executive Secretary's statement is given in Appendix E to this Report.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region, including Future Prospects in the Light of Recent Global and Regional Developments

13. Representatives of the Member Nations and the European Community attending the Nineteenth Regional Conference for Europe and several observers took part in the general debate. Many of these referred to the Director-General's opening statement in their deliberations.

14. They also reported on recent developments and future prospects concerning agricultural and food policies and situations in their own countries, as well as in the European Community, and on selected economic and social aspects of rural sector development in an European and global perspective.

15. The Conference supported the Director-General's proposals, as approved by the 106th Session of the FAO Council, to decentralize FAO activities, to separate its normative and operational roles and activities, yet to ensure on the one hand the position of FAO as a Centre of Excellence, and on the other to strengthen its presence in the field. It welcomed the Special Programme on Food Production in Support of Food Security in Low-income Food-deficit countries and the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES), as well as the creation of the new Department of Sustainable Development and the transformation of the current Development Department into the Department of Technical Cooperation which would enhance the possibilities for effective cooperation within and outside the Region.

16. The Conference debated in depth and acknowledged the importance of global food security and its linkages to the specific situation of the agricultural and rural sector in the European Region. The latter faced the four major challenges of (i) reform of policies and transformation of the agricultural sector in Central and Eastern European countries; (ii) agricultural policy reforms; (iii) European integration; and (iv) international trade liberalization. Since its founding the elimination of hunger and malnutrition had been FAO's major objective and the Conference supported the Director-General's priority on food security. A number of Members also supported the Director-General's proposal to incorporate food security issues into the agenda of the meetings commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of FAO in Quebec in October 1995. Some Members also welcomed the Director-General's proposal to convene a World Food Summit in March 1996, which in his view, would provide the first opportunity since the 1974 World Food Conference for a comprehensive and global high-level policy debate on world food security in the light of the projected population increase to 9 billion by 2030.

17. The Conference drew attention to the fact that several countries in the Region had faced wars and civil strife in recent years, which had exerted heavy losses on their agricultural sectors and rural populations. The Region faced weak and uneven prospects for economic recovery, severe and growing unemployment particularly in rural areas, and an agricultural production decline in the economies in transition as a result of reform-induced structural adjustment measures. Recent positive signs indicating a gradual recovery of economic activity in the Central and Eastern European countries, and significant headway in their undertaking of market economy-oriented reforms, were noted.

18. The Conference supported the strong links and effective partnership between FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) in their joint efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition which were vital for alleviating global food insecurity. It recognized that the WFP, the largest source of grant food aid to low-income, food-deficit developing countries, was playing an important role in raising and distributing resources for emergency food aid in Europe, and noted WFP's urgent

appeal to Member Nations of the Region to maintain, and if possible to increase, their contributions to WFP, particularly for emergency operations.

19. The Conference noted the essential elements of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms implemented since 1992 and the resulting adjustments in the agricultural sectors of the EEC's Member States. The ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and the earlier completion of the Single European Market constituted solid foundations for the future development of Europe in general and its economies and their agricultural sectors in particular. The reforms were oriented towards improving the balance of agricultural markets through more effective control of production means, and increasing the competitiveness of European farm products through a gradual programme of price reduction and a decoupling of farm income from production. Improving the environment and maintaining a sufficiently high number of farms to help preserve rural society were also key targets. The Conference recognized the encouraging results of reforms in 1993, which registered a marked decline in cereal production. It noted that the Community's Structural Funds had been further reformed with the aim of intensifying their impact and effectiveness.

20. The Conference noted that the enlargement of the European Union through the membership of Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden, was pending approval in national referenda, following the Agreement on the European Economic Area with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries. As a result, there would be significant modifications in their national agricultural policies and renewed opportunities for development of agricultural production and trade. In addition, world agricultural trade had entered a new phase upon the successful conclusion of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. The Conference noted that the Agreement on Agriculture foresaw a decrease of internal subsidies to agricultural production, a decrease of subsidies to farm exports, and improved market access, and would have a notable impact on European agriculture and trade.

21. In the light of these developments, the Conference suggested that FAO should assess the impacts in the short and long-term of the Agreement on Agriculture on the vulnerable economies in transition in the European Region, along the lines of the terms of analysis employed for the Low-income, Food-deficit developing countries.

22. An important element in the economic and agricultural relations in Europe was the Community's European Agreements with Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic, which had, among others, the objective of establishing an enlarged free trade area. Nevertheless, the Conference noted that the Community was not in a position to act as the sole export market for its Eastern European neighbours. In this context, the recent successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round would provide an opportunity for access to new markets for the agricultural products of these countries.

23. The Conference further recognized that the future of European agriculture would be influenced by the economic and social reforms taking place in the agricultural and rural sector in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly through trade in food and agricultural products both within this sub-region and beyond. It was informed that the process of privatization, restructuring and adjustment in this sub-region had resulted in the transfer of the greater part of farmland and other assets to private ownership or to farmer-owned, restructured cooperatives. The difficult financial situation of the emerging private farm sector, which was also a key factor hampering the recovery of agricultural production in this sub-region, was also underlined. Reduction of subsidies and price supports, coupled with a decline in the real incomes of the population, also had lowered the demand for food and farm products. Some countries of Central and Eastern Europe had designed and implemented subsidized rural credit systems to support investment in

periods of high inflation and depressed agricultural markets. The Conference recommended that FAO continue and expand its activities and programmes in supporting the transition process to a market-oriented economy. It also called for an exchange of experience among the affected countries.

24. The Conference stressed the role of the agricultural sector in preserving the rural landscape, the fabric of rural communities, employment and services. It also underlined the active participation of farmers and rural communities in development and adjustment programmes as a prerequisite condition for their success. Farmer and rural populations should be viewed as partners in development, not as targets for social welfare programmes, all the more so in that they were an invaluable source of experience in the search for sustainable agriculture and sustainable lifestyles. The role of women in rural development, as well as in maintaining rural families and community life, was particularly important.

25. The Conference noted FAO activities in forestry, in particular those of the Sylva Mediterranea, and in inland fisheries, since both areas were important for rural communities in a diverse range of situations. It requested enhanced FAO assistance, in particular, as regarded the Forestry Action Programme for Mediterranean Forestry.

26. A number of Member Nations underlined the specific problems of countries bordering the Mediterranean. Such problems included agricultural production in conditions of water shortages, salinity and soil erosion and desertification, fragile ecosystem protection and the preservation of specific breeds and varieties. The Conference called for FAO programmes to assist in dealing with these problems in accordance with an integrated approach to development of the Mediterranean countries.

27. The Conference supported FAO activities globally and in Europe in implementing Agenda 21 of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It was also informed of FAO's roles and obligations as Task Manager for various chapters of Agenda 21 of UNCED.

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93

28. The Conference expressed its appreciation for the comprehensive review of the FAO activities in Europe during the 1992-93 biennium in the fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.¹ However, some Member Nations were of the opinion that the relevant document would be more informative if FAO activities were presented against a background of the major changes taking place in European agriculture. These Member Nations stressed that the section of the document dealing with future FAO activities in the Region should be expanded. It was also emphasized that the Report on Activities should in the future attempt to appraise whether FAO activities responded to the changing needs of the European countries and should include a more analytical review on the impact of programmes and activities on those countries.

29. Several Member Nations regretted that the document did not offer information on the expenses associated with the different activities of FAO in Europe in the period under consideration, nor on their qualitative assessment. They requested that such information, covering both regular and extra-budgetary resources and the respective contributions of REUR and JEUR, be made available in the future. Information was also requested on the availability of resources for the present biennium and on the impact of increased membership in the Region on resource

¹ See document ERC/94/2.

availability. It was further questioned why the preparation of the forthcoming Medium-term Plan for 1996-2001 had not been included as part of the agenda.

30. In response, the Secretariat informed the Conference that while specific information on the work and budget in the Region was available in the relevant FAO documentation, it had not been possible at that point in time to prepare and present comprehensive material on future FAO activities, considering the decisions taken by the recently-concluded 106th Session of the Council, and the need to review and upgrade the present system of monitoring FAO's expenditures (i.e. FINSYS and PERSYS). It was anticipated that the decentralization and regionalization of FAO activities would permit an analytical review of programmes and activities by the regional offices in the future.

31. Considering that Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) resources had become, and would probably remain, the principal source of financing for activities in the Region, it was suggested that, in the future, relevant information be included in the report together with any available information on extra-budgetary resources.

32. The Conference recommended that FAO's basic priorities in Europe be the promotion of sustainable development in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. In regard to sub-regional policies, the basic priority was to provide assistance to the Central and Eastern European countries in their process of transition. The Conference recommended that FAO activities regarding UNCED be integrated with projects dealing with soil, water and forest protection and sustainable technologies.

33. Many Member Nations expressed their appreciation for the activities carried out by the European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA) network, focusing on sustainable and environment-friendly agricultural production systems and technologies. The Conference recommended that the system of networks be further expanded in order to reflect changes in agricultural research and development, and to continue providing priority attention to the economies in transition. The important role played by ESCORENA in facilitating exchange of information on research and development and in establishing linkages between scientific institutions was underlined, as well as its role in attracting and channelling available funding. One Member Nation strongly recommended that in selecting ESCORENA programme priorities, the viability and economics of crops and technologies and the experience already available in other countries be taken into account. A number of Member Nations recommended that the activities of ESCORENA be closely linked with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). It was also stressed that the important agricultural research and development potential existing in the Central and Eastern European countries be incorporated in the networks where appropriate. It was further suggested by one Member Nation to review the ESCORENA networks' structure while envisaging the creation of alternative horizontal networks on sustainable agriculture and on desertification problems and water resource management in the Mediterranean basin.

34. The Conference supported the initiative of the Intergovernmental Group on Citrus Fruits to create an integrated technical and economic network on citrus production in the Mediterranean basin.

35. The Conference expressed appreciation for the activities carried out by the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) and its input for improved fisheries management in Europe was underlined. A number of Member Nations requested that FAO increase its support to EIFAC's programmes.

36. The importance of activities carried out by the European Forestry Commission (EFC) was stressed. The Conference strongly recommended that FAO continue to support these activities in

close liaison with the Joint FAO/ECE Timber Division. FAO had, within the framework of *Sylva Mediterranea*, assisted the Mediterranean countries in furthering the Forestry Action Programme, as advocated by UNCED. In view of the importance of forestry to rural economies, it was hoped that more resources would be made available for this field.

37. The Conference was informed of the numerous activities carried out by the Working Party on Women and the Agricultural Family in Rural Development. The Conference expressed appreciation for these activities by the Working Party, and requested FAO to increase its support to them given the important role of women in all aspects of the rural environment, from family life to sustainable and environmentally-friendly farming. The activities of the Working Party in support of small businesses and training of community leaders were particularly appreciated. The programme undertaken recently to study the role and status of rural women in the economies in transition was strongly supported by a number of Member Nations.

38. FAO activities in the field of plant and animal genetic resources in collaboration with the IPGRI were of priority concern to many Member Nations. In this connection, many Members called for continued support from FAO in the field of conservation of plant and animal genetic resources, management of gene banks and the establishment of germplasm collection documentation.

39. FAO support for the economies in transition in the field of agricultural policy was highly appreciated. A number of Member Nations emphasized their appreciation for the Ministerial Consultations on Agricultural Policy in Central and Eastern European countries, convened with the assistance of FAO. The activities and contributions of the Standing Group on European Agricultural Policies, including its recent substantial contribution to the debates of the Committee on Agriculture, were particularly appreciated. In this connection, the Conference took note of the review and synthesis exercises undertaken by workshops on agricultural policies in transition, such as the Nitra II Workshop held in May 1994, and looked forward to the forthcoming publication of country reports and policy papers.

40. The Conference also took note of the Secretariat's oral representation of the Codex Alimentarius Meeting held in Stockholm in 1994.

Outcome of the 106th Session of the Council and its Implications for the Present and Future Activities in the Region

41. The Conference was informed that, due to time constraints, it had not been possible to prepare a document on this particular agenda item, without running the risk of prejudging the discussions which took place during the 106th Session of the FAO Council concerning the Director-General's Review of the Programmes, Structures and Policies of the Organization in response to Conference Resolution 10/93.

42. The Independent Chairman of the FAO Council, Mr José Ramón López Portillo, gave a verbal synthesis of the outcome of the Council session, which is given in Appendix F to this Report.

43. The Conference was also informed that the debate on this subject at the Council Session had taken place in an excellent spirit of cooperation.

44. The Conference took note of the decisions taken by the Council to endorse the strategic orientations of the Director-General's proposals: the further drive towards decentralization, the enhancement of national capacities, the strengthening of FAO as a Centre of Excellence, the

search for more effective delivery of services through adjusted structures and streamlining of procedures, and a determined approach to cost reduction.

45. The Conference also took note that the Council had approved the guidelines and general outline of the Director-General's proposed restructuring. In this connection, the Conference was pleased to note that the active participation of FAO's Members would be enlisted at all stages of this dynamic process of change.

46. An issue of particular relevance to the Conference as to the Region was the Council's decision to gradually implement a policy of decentralization through the reinforcement of the regional offices, where multidisciplinary technical teams would be established. In this connection, the Conference took note of the Council's decision to establish sub-regional offices for North Africa, Southern and East Africa, the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean and Central and Eastern Europe. In so doing, the Conference was also informed that it was the intention of the Director-General to transfer the staff currently in the Joint Divisions with the UN Regional Economic Commissions.

47. Given the major challenges which problems of the Central and Eastern European countries currently represented, several Member Nations suggested that there was need for a careful review of FAO's activities with UN/ECE, and that adequate consultations be undertaken with the UN Regional Commissions to this effect. These Member Nations were of the opinion that it was important to safeguard the existing capacity to provide support to the current activities of the joint ECE/FAO Agriculture and Timber Division. Some Member Nations suggested that consideration be given to transferring the European Regional Office from Rome to an appropriate location elsewhere in Europe, instead of creating an additional sub-regional office for Central and Eastern Europe. Other Member Nations stressed the need for FAO to service the European Region as a whole and, in this context, to establish a sub-regional office in order to meet the specific requirements of Central and Eastern Europe.

48. The Conference was informed in this regard by the Director-General of his firm intention to implement the decisions as taken by the 106th Session of the Council, and within the approved Programme of Work and Budget ceiling, and in line with the terms of Conference Resolution 10/93. He stressed that in order to comply with the mandates given by the Conference and the Council, it was necessary to redeploy staff currently working in the Joint Divisions, while at the same time ensuring the continuation of the fruitful joint activities undertaken in conjunction with UN Regional Commissions.

Introducing Environmentally-Friendly Production Technologies for Sustainable Agriculture in Europe

49. The Conference discussed this item on the basis of the Secretariat's document.² It considered that discussion of this issue was timely, and also appreciated the document's comprehensive and balanced approach in presenting what was a challenging and complex question. Food and agricultural policy had to reconcile often conflicting objectives of maintaining farmers' incomes and hence rural populations and communities, while satisfying consumer demand for a variety of wholesome food at reasonable prices. In recent years, concerns for the environment and the sustainability of agricultural production systems had been increasingly voiced. At the same time, agriculture presented a highly complex mosaic of different situations, both within and among countries in the Region, which called for different environmental policies and technologies.

² ERC/94/3.

50. The Conference noted that, in the European context, environmental problems of soil and water degradation and contamination, disturbance and loss of biotopes and wildlife habitats, and loss of biodiversity, were widely associated with conventional intensive agricultural practices. These often involved excessive use of agrochemicals linked with agro-industrial cropping systems, and intensive livestock production systems which resulted in problems of effluent management. It welcomed the fact that many Member Nations had formulated strategies and were adopting policy measures and programmes designed to mitigate such problems. Within a regulatory framework provided by the European Community, the CAP reforms provided a useful basis for change. Several Member Nations provided examples of such initiatives, i.e. creation of land set-aside programmes, and support for ecological farming and legislation regulating agrochemical use. The Conference underlined the fact that, while measures of regulation and control were important components of an environmentally-sustainable food and agricultural strategy, voluntary schemes, if implemented within an appropriate set of incentives, often provided useful means of promoting the adoption of more environmentally-sound technologies. The exchange of observations regarding experience in such promotional efforts was also highly worthwhile.

51. The Conference agreed that an agrarian structure based on the family farm unit was one most likely to comply with environmental objectives that included the maintenance of cultural landscapes required for recreational and tourism purposes, while simultaneously complying with production objectives. It also drew attention to the need to avoid adverse environmental effects due to adjustments imposed on the farm sector by new or reformed policies. These policies should refrain from abandoning or losing those environmentally-friendly traditional crops or production systems which ensured protection against soil erosion, and maintained biodiversity and water conservation.

52. The Conference noted the increasing attention being paid to the issue of trade and the environment, particularly with regard to trade in agricultural products which could be produced by a variety of more or less environmentally-friendly technologies, and with regard to the often higher costs of sustainable and environmentally-friendly production methods. In several Member Nations, the introduction of environmentally-friendly production methods was geared to food produced for export markets where environmental standards based on high consumer awareness of produce quality were particularly strict. While recognizing that trading countries sought fair and equitable trading conditions, it urged that environmental standards not be used as additional barriers to agricultural trade.

53. The Conference emphasized that forestry often played a key role in sustainable, yet remunerative, farming systems in a wide range of conditions existing in Europe, but particularly in mountain and other marginal areas. In this context, it drew attention to the outcome of the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of European Forests, held in Helsinki in June 1993, and to the incidence of forest fires. It urged that future documents on agriculture and the environment presented to it explicitly address the interactions of forestry and crop and livestock agriculture, both with respect to the provision of environmental services by the forest and as a source of income and employment for farmers and rural communities.

54. The Conference noted the current absence of a comprehensive and universally-agreed system of environmental standards and indicators that would satisfy criteria for environmental sustainability, social acceptability and economic viability. It urged that FAO, in cooperation with other organizations such as the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), assist in the development of such standards and indicators and in their widespread adoption in the Region. Attention was also drawn to the environmental guidelines recently adopted by IFAP. Similarly, FAO was also requested to maintain close cooperation with OECD in developing guidelines.

55. In addressing the environmental problems associated with agriculture in the Region, the Conference emphasized the importance of applied research in developing environmentally-friendly technologies, appropriate training for farmers and the education of both consumers and government policy-makers. The provision and dissemination of information was a vital component of the necessary widespread adoption of such technologies in European agriculture. It recommended that FAO, and in particular the new Department on Sustainable Development, play an active role in this area in collaboration with such governmental and non-governmental organizations as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Commission on Agriculture and the International Federation for Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). The Regional Office for Europe, and particularly its European System for Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA), should also make important contributions in exchanging applied research findings and in disseminating information on appropriate technologies. In particular, Member Nations in Central and Eastern Europe should be even more closely involved in ESCORENA which, itself, should address more cross-the-board, inter-sectoral issues. In addition, FAO should develop further its capabilities as a Centre of Excellence regarding agriculture and the environment, that would include promoting better understanding of the underlying biological processes involved as well as providing a vision of sustainable agriculture in a variety of settings, but particularly regarding the ways and means of sharing the additional costs involved.

56. The Conference was briefed on individual country responsibilities for reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) at its next session scheduled for April 1995, when the topic of sustainable agricultural and rural development (Chapter 14 of UNCED's Agenda 21) would be discussed and for which FAO had been designated Task Manager for coordination within the UN System. Reporting on progress in moving towards more environmentally-friendly agricultural systems in Europe, which account for a major share of global food and agricultural production and trade, would be a much-sought-after goal and important contribution in implementing Agenda 21.

New Food Consumption Patterns and Quality Control in Europe and Adaptation of Agricultural Production

57. The Conference discussed the issue of changes in European food consumption patterns, increased demands by consumers for better food quality and the implications of these factors for European agriculture.³ It noted that changes in consumer food habits, lifestyles, and rising incomes were significant factors in European food production, and processing and marketing systems.

58. A number of implications for European agriculture were noted. Growth in the demand for such convenience products as chilled foods and ready-to-eat meals, coupled with increasing consumption of meals in restaurants and fast-food outlets, increases in institutional feeding programmes, and changes in production and processing methods were quickly changing the profile of foods available in European markets. While aggregate demand was growing slowly for most major food groups, (meat, milk, fruits, vegetables, cereals), new consumer demand for more nutritious, healthy and convenient products was causing considerable shifts within food groups, and within established national food patterns. It was noted that demand was growing for foods produced with reduced levels of pesticides or other intensive agricultural inputs, as well as for traditional foods and foods of specific origins.

³ ERC/94/4.

59. Note was taken of the continued development of quality control mechanisms throughout Europe based on European Union food directives, and the recommended standards, codes of practice and residue limits of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission and of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). These mechanisms were required for better control of the quality and safety of foods throughout the food chain, and placed new demands on farmers, fishermen, food processors, and marketers, engaged in both the domestic and international food trades.

60. The Conference commended the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and pointed out its increased importance in relation to the implementation of the recently-concluded GATT Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. It called for acceleration of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, particularly as it regarded import and export food inspection, analysis and certification, and emphasized the need for strong participation of consumer groups in the Codex work. The relationship between the work of Codex and the GATT Uruguay Round Agreements on sanitary, phytosanitary and standard barriers to trade were also noted, as was the call in these Agreements for assistance to be provided by developed countries so that developing countries and countries in transition could meet new GATT requirements. The Conference took note of the proposed FAO cooperative work with GATT on Codex-related work, including the creation of an FAO professional post to assure strong liaison and technical input to GATT and its successor, the new World Trade Organization. Eastern European Member Nations in transition called attention to the need for additional assistance from FAO and Western European countries in strengthening their food quality and safety systems at the governmental and food industry levels. The role of the Codex Coordinating Committee was mentioned in this context, and Member Nations called for this Committee to take a more active role in coordinating European work on food quality and safety.

61. The Conference noted that such new consumer marketing factors as increased food sales through large supermarket chains, changes in consumer perception of various foods, new and novel foods and food processes and increased demands for better quality and safer foods, would require changes in agricultural production patterns and policies, and better ways of processing and marketing foods. This was especially the case since the need for improved vertical market coordination would increasingly require farmers to produce high quality products for very specific processing and marketing requirements. It was also noted that while food habits were changing, farmers and cooperative associations were beginning to produce and market such local products as better quality meats, cheese, fruits and vegetables to increase their influence in the food chain. Such initiatives would also tend to increase demand for more traditional foods, have a beneficial effect on rural development, and increase the earning capacity and labour needs of rural populations.

62. The Conference emphasized the role of agricultural research in the development of new foods and food products, and highlighted the importance of information systems in providing farmers, food processors and consumers with accurate and useful reports of such research. While farmers, private industry and academia all had roles to play, government research and extension activities would continue to exercise a key role in these matters. In addition to research and extension work on basic production and processing methods, consumers were interested in foods which had been produced with animal welfare, the use of veterinary drugs, the control of pathogenic micro-organisms and biotechnology concerns in mind. It was noted that consumer awareness of nutrition and health concerns called for increased attention to the use of food additives and better food-labelling and information regarding food marketing. Attention was called to the need to carefully assess new scientific data before alerting the press so that incomplete or inaccurate information would not unnecessarily alarm consumers or cause disruptions in food production patterns. Member Nations mentioned that the preparation and implementation of overall policies for improved food supplies and nutrition levels would have a direct relationship to overall agricultural research, production and food information systems.

53. The Conference endorsed the conclusions contained in the background paper. It called upon FAO to carry out further studies in this area, including fish and fish products, and to organize appropriate seminars, workshops and other meetings to promote information exchanges between countries of the Region regarding changing food consumption patterns and quality control requirements. It pointed out that FAO and developed country assistance to developing countries and countries in transition on better food quality and safety, and improved food research information and marketing was a crucial element in improving consumer protection in all countries, and in promoting the regional and international food trade. It requested FAO to continue to monitor food consumption patterns in relation to food production patterns, and noted the importance of improved food supplies and nutrition levels to in guaranteeing food security for all.

Preparation for a 1996 World Food Summit

64. The Conference was informed by the Secretariat that the original document⁴ for this item should be considered as being a preliminary information piece and that it had accordingly been re-issued in that format.⁵ A revised version would eventually be officially sent to all Member Nations of the Region for comments in view of the Director-General's intention to call a World Food Summit in 1996, and as part of the preparatory process for this meeting.

65. On the question of the purpose of such a Summit, the Conference was informed that it was designed to raise awareness on world food issues among world leaders and their representatives and obtain a political commitment for subsequent action, at both the national and international levels, in improving world food security. It was not the Director-General's intention to seek additional financial resources or propose any new structures in this endeavour.

66. Commenting on the preparatory process, two Member Nations proposed that this issue be discussed during the high-level meetings planned for 1994 and 1995, including the Second Ministerial Consultation on Agricultural Policy in the Central and Eastern sub-region.

67. Many Member Nations noting the preliminary nature of the document, stated that they reserved their positions on the matter until a later date when it could be further discussed in appropriate FAO fora.

Fiftieth Anniversary of FAO

68. The Delegation of Canada informed the Conference about the planned events in Quebec City to mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of FAO in October 1995 and its relationship to the proposed a World Food Summit. The Governments of Canada, the Province of Quebec and the City of Quebec will organize an international commemorative symposium from 11 to 13 October 1995 that will deal with a range of food security issues. A Fiftieth Anniversary Observance will take place on 16 October at Château Frontenac, the very site where FAO was founded in 1945, and the "Quebec Declaration" - the Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration on Food and Agriculture prepared at the request of the Twenty-seventh Session of the FAO Conference in November 1993 - will be endorsed by the Summit participants. The Director-General would call a Ministerial Meeting in Quebec on this occasion to receive recommendations for preparing the document that would be submitted to the World Food Summit.

⁴ ERC/94/6.

⁵ ERC/94/INF/11.

OTHER MATTERS

Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)⁶

69. The Conference was informed of the research and development activities conducted under the CGIAR aegis, with particular attention to securing adequate participation and representation of the research centres in Member Nations in Central and Eastern Europe. It was also informed of the recommendations of the Mid-Term CGIAR Meeting (New Delhi, May 23-27 1994), in particular with regard to the financial situation of the CGIAR. The Conference supported the request by CGIAR donors for extra-budget contributions to secure involvement of Regional Representatives in CGIAR activities.

70. Prof. Rein Teinberg, Representative of Estonia, was elected for the four-year period 1995-98 to represent the Region within the CGIAR. The Conference also unanimously endorsed the proposals in the document for its consideration.⁷ These proposals had been identified in consultation with the newly-established CGIAR Oversight Committee and the FAO Regional Offices with a view to making the regional representation more effective and better able to reflect the views and aspirations of Member Nations in the Region relative to the CGIAR activities. The relevant paragraphs are provided in Appendix G to this Report.

Report on Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition

71. The Conference was given a report on follow-up activities taken by FAO and countries of the Region to implement the recommendations of the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) held in Rome in December 1992. Information was provided on FAO's work with Member Nations, in cooperation with WHO and other concerned international agencies, in formulating national plans of action for nutrition and in implementing specific projects related to such ICN themes as food quality and safety activities in Eastern and Central Europe. The Conference also noted ICN implementation activities under way in various Member Nations of the Region, as well as the support given by some Member Nations in facilitating ICN implementation in developing countries. The Conference was also informed that FAO would jointly convene with WHO, an Expert Consultation on formulating dietary guidelines at the national level that would be substantiated by sound scientific evidence and judgement and that would address the various undernutrition-related problems, micronutrient deficiency diseases, and overnutrition questions affecting many different age groups in each country.

Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture

72. The Conference was informed that the draft "Declaration on Food and Agriculture"⁸ had been prepared in response to Resolution 4/93 on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization in 1995, adopted by the Twenty-seventh Session of the Conference in November 1993. In accordance with the Resolution, a draft declaration would be submitted to all Regional Conferences in 1994, and Member Governments would be asked to submit their comments in writing before a given deadline. In the case of the European Region, the deadline for such comments was 10 August 1994.

⁶ ERC/94/5.

⁷ Paras. 6-9 of ERC/94/5-Sup.1.

⁸ ERC/94/INF/7.

73. The draft would be revised by the Secretariat in accordance with the written submissions from Member Nations. The revised draft would subsequently be submitted to the 108th Session of the FAO Council in June 1995 for its consideration. It would then be further revised in light of the Council's deliberations on its wording and would be resubmitted to the Twenty-eighth Session of the Conference in November 1995. In accordance with the Resolution 4/93, the final draft would also be submitted to the Fiftieth Anniversary Observance in Quebec, Canada, on 16 October 1995 for endorsement.

74. The Conference was further informed that Resolution 4/93 also called upon all Member Nations to observe FAO's anniversary in a manner commensurate with the importance of the event. Many activities were already under consideration. For example, more than 50 countries had already decided to issue commemorative stamps and over 25 countries had so far indicated that they would issue commemorative coins.

75. In order to facilitate the consideration by Member Nations of commemorative events, the Director-General had already decided that the World Food Day theme for 1995, "Food for All", would also be the theme for the Anniversary celebration.

Date and Place of the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference for Europe

76. The delegation of Israel reiterated the invitation, which its Government had already extended, to host the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference for Europe in 1996 in Tel-Aviv. The Conference unanimously welcomed the invitation extended by the delegation of Israel which would be conveyed to the Director-General for his decision in consultation with the Governments of the Member Nations of the Region.

Adoption of the Report

77. The Conference recommended, that for future regional conferences, the annotated agenda clearly indicate which items were submitted for discussion and/or decision and which for information, a practice already followed by the FAO Council and by the Council Committees.

78. With some amendments, the text of the draft report was approved by the Conference.

Closure of the Conference

79. On behalf of the participants, the delegate of Malta thanked the Government of Ireland for the excellent organization and hospitality offered during the Conference, as well as for the highly interesting study tours.

80. On behalf of the Director-General, Mr P.J. Mahler, Special Adviser to the Director-General, Assistant Director-General for Environment and Sustainable Development, thanked the Government of Ireland for the excellent organization of the Conference and for the generous hospitality extended to all participants. Mr Mahler expressed FAO's gratitude for the fruitful debates, as well as his appreciation for the high level of representation at the Conference. He recalled that the European countries had always given their full support to the Organization. The Conference had provided constructive recommendations for FAO activities in the European Region which would be duly taken into consideration. He also paid tribute to the Chairman, Mr Walsh, T.D., the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, whose presence and experience made the Conference a notable success.

81. The Conference Vice-Chairman thanked the host government and in particular Mr Joe Walsh, T.D., the National Organizing Committee and the staff of the Irish Ministry of Agriculture for providing the excellent facilities which ensured the smooth-running of the Conference.

82. The Vice-Chairman then thanked the Director-General, his staff, the interpreters, the organizers and all those who had assisted in preparing and servicing the session and declared the Conference closed.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Statement by the Executive Secretary of the ECE
6. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region including Future Prospects in the light of Recent Global and Regional Developments
7. Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93
8. Outcome of the 106th Session of the Council and its Implications for the Present and Future Activities of FAO in the Region

III. SELECTED ISSUES OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

9. Introducing Environmentally-Friendly Production Technologies for Sustainable Agriculture in Europe

The FAO Medium-term Plan (1994-99) for the European Region expressed growing concern regarding the serious deterioration of the environment and the degradation of natural resources, and pointed to the need for development of sustainable agricultural and rural technologies. In this regard, the Eighteenth Regional Conference for Europe underlined the need for an overall integration of national and regional policies with the objectives of UNCED and Agenda 21. Such orientation introduces a new role for research, training and extension which should, in the next decade, primarily aim at developing environmentally-friendly technologies for sustainable agriculture, including fisheries and forestry production. The purpose of the discussion of this item is to examine how this can best be achieved and the role FAO, through its cooperative research networks, can play in implementing Agenda 21 in the European Region.

10. New Food Consumption Patterns and Quality Control in Europe and Adaptation of Agricultural Production

The evolution of standards of living, increasing consumer concern for health and environment, growing awareness for food quality, for "balanced" diets and "healthy" nutrition have all had a profound impact on consumption patterns in Europe. An increasing share of agricultural production value derives from special forms of production commanding a price differential in response to more sophisticated demand. The elaboration of food products between production and consumption levels created new relations among producers and processing and marketing enterprises. Agricultural qualifications evolve towards greater importance of market research skills. The purpose of discussing this subject is to highlight such trends and their implications for the agricultural sector including fisheries and forestry products and their internal differentiation. In this regard,

the document raises some important issues concerning future consumption and agricultural production patterns in the light of sustainability considerations discussed under Agenda item 8.

11. Preparation for a 1996 World Food Summit
12. Representation of the Region on the CGIAR
13. Report on the Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition
14. Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

15. Any other Business
16. Date and Place of the 20th Regional Conference for Europe
17. Adoption of the Report
18. Closure of the Conference

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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

ERC/94/1-Rev.1	Annotated Agenda
ERC/94/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93
ERC/94/3	Introducing Environmentally-Friendly Production Technologies for Sustainable Agriculture in Europe
ERC/94/4	New Food Consumption Patterns and Quality Control in Europe and Adaptation of Agricultural Production
ERC/94/5) ERC/94/5-Sup.1)	Representation of the Region on the CGIAR
<u>INF Series</u>	
ERC/94/INF/1	Information Note
ERC/94/INF/2-Rev.2	Timetable
ERC/94/INF/3-Rev.1	List of Documents
ERC/94/INF/4	Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 18th Regional Conference for Europe
ERC/94/INF/5	Report on the Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition
ERC/94/INF/6	Director-General's Statement
ERC/94/INF/7	Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture
ERC/94/INF/8	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights Submitted by the European Economic Community (EEC)
ERC/94/INF/9-Rev.1	List of Participants
ERC/94/INF/10	Reproduction of the Report of the 106th Session of the Council on the "Director-General's Review of the Programmes, Structures and Policies of the Organization" (Part III)
ERC/94/INF/11	Food Security Problems and Issues in the European Region and The Region's Role in Improving World Food Security

APPENDIX D

STATEMENT BY MR JACQUES DIOUF, DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Mr López Portillo, Independent Chairman of the Council, Mr Yves Berthelot, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are delighted to find ourselves here in Ireland surrounded by the traditional and unfailing Irish hospitality, thanks to the very kind invitation of the Irish Government. You have just elected as your Chairman His Excellency Joe Walsh, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Forestry of the Irish Republic. I wish to extend to him my warmest congratulations: I am sure that, under his wise and enlightened guidance, the work of this Conference will be conducted in harmony and will yield fruitful results.

This Conference which, as usual, is organized in cooperation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe, is of particular importance. It is taking place immediately after the conclusion of the 106th Session of the FAO Council, which, as you know, was convened in accordance with Conference Resolution 10/93, authorizing me to undertake a review of the programmes, structures and policies of the Organization. I embarked on this review, immediately after taking up duties as Director-General, in my deep-rooted conviction that FAO needs to be reinvigorated and made more effective if it is to meet the two daunting challenges ahead: to eliminate the unacceptable human tragedy in which 800 million people still do not have adequate access to food; and to ensure that the world will produce, in a sustainable manner, enough to feed 9 000 million people in the year 2030.

I am comforted to note that you have responded positively to my invitation to attend this meeting and to see that many ministers are leading the delegations. We will have an opportunity in the coming days to focus on the importance of global food security and its linkages to the specific situation of your region, which is currently facing major challenges in the form of agricultural policy reforms, integration programmes and international trade liberalization.

RECENT GLOBAL AND ECONOMIC EVENTS

Recent events in the global economic and political sphere have given us optimism and hope but have also, in several respects, have been sources of concern. Optimism and hope because much of the developing world has shown remarkable economic dynamism, despite the persistence of recession in many industrialized countries.

Concern, as many developing countries, particularly in Africa, continue to face economic and social difficulties, their populations are affected by wars, civil unrest and precarious food access that all too often turn into food emergencies, large-scale refugee problems or even famines.

The developed world, and the European region in particular, have had their share of distress and frustrations: the devastating war in Bosnia, weak and uneven prospects for economic recovery, severe and increasing unemployment and its sequel of economic, political and social problems, including the daunting task of consolidating reforms in the transition economies. But, also for this region, there are reasons for hope. For several countries in Western Europe there are signs that the worst of the recession might be over. Others in Central and Eastern Europe have achieved significant headway in market-oriented reform and their transition processes look set to enter a phase of economic expansion.

The political and economic future of Europe is currently being shaped by two important processes. One is the continuation and deepening of the political and economic reforms in the transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe, which are expected to have a profound effect on the evolution of their agricultural sectors, including trade both within this subregion and beyond. The other is the increasing integration of the European economies. The European Union has for decades been the main centre of this process and now looks for further expansion with the accession of four new members. At the same time, many of the transition economies are strengthening their ties to the traditional market economies of Western Europe, through the conclusion of association agreements with the European Community and free trade arrangements with EFTA countries. Accompanying this process are also attempts to re-establish trade links among the transition economies themselves: the Visegrad agreement between the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic is significant in this context. I sincerely hope that the deepening and broadening of integration between the European economies continues and even gains further momentum. It is important that the benefits of integration be accessible to all willing to join, so that the process can constitute an impulse to development in all of Europe, not just the richer parts.

The world agricultural trading environment has entered a phase of unparalleled change, and this is particularly true for the European region. At the global level, the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, signed at Marrakesh, includes agreements, decisions and declarations impacting on agriculture, to be implemented starting from January 1995. FAO welcomes the successful conclusion of these negotiations, which go well beyond tariff and customs measures. However, the Agreement on Agriculture remains a partial agreement, levels of protectionism remain high. Efforts must continue to foster trade liberalization and lessen agriculture protectionism and the same adequate mechanisms should be evolved to improve the competitiveness and the access to markets of the agricultural sector in the least-developed countries.

At the regional level, FAO also welcomes the extensive and systematic reforms occurring in the former centrally planned economies in Europe. But, in the immediate future, these countries will experience serious trade problems as they move through a period of economic transformation. Every effort is needed to assist them to realign their trade relations and trading practices. In this regard, negotiations such as those undertaken under the association agreements with the European Community and free trade arrangements with EFTA countries should be encouraged.

THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN THE REGION AND THE OUTLOOK FOR DEVELOPMENT

When looking at the problems and performances of the agricultural sector in the European context, we can see a clear distinction between the traditional market economies and the transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe.

In the West European market economies, the general characteristics of the sector are: slow growth in domestic demand; a continuing contraction, now at very low levels, of agriculture's share in GDP and employment; a slow but continuous increase in average farm size; rapid technological change; and a growing share of farm family incomes derived from non-farming activities. Oversupply has been a persisting problem in much of the region, despite very low growth of total agricultural production since the mid-1980s, a tendency that seems set to continue.

In contrast, agriculture in Central and Eastern Europe has been facing dramatic shocks over the last few years. Agriculture, an important sector in the process of economic transformation, has felt the full blow of the disruptions associated with the breakdown of command economy production structures and regional trade and the initial recessionary impact of economic reform.

All countries in the region have experienced sharp drops in agricultural production and declines in per caput food consumption levels.

The price and credit market reforms, which have been vigorously pursued in most countries of the subregion, have resulted in a completely new set of relative prices for inputs, outputs and capital. While price reform is seen as a prerequisite for introducing efficiency in resource allocation, factor costs and price relationships, its immediate impact has been unsettling for agricultural producers and consumers alike.

Other key elements in the process of institutional reform relate to property rights. Despite being an enormously complex task in the context of the subregion, land reform is crucially important in shaping stable and economically viable farm structures. Major complexities are also involved in the privatization of industrial and service sectors linked to input supply, food processing and marketing.

I have only touched briefly on some of the important issues facing the countries in transition as they move towards market-based economic systems, issues which involve a lengthy process of policy formulation and implementation. I would like to stress, however, the important role that all countries of your region can play in assisting this process. I firmly believe that securing market access and opportunities to trade for the countries in transition will provide an important stimulus to their reform efforts and their development prospects, paving the way for further integration of the region's economies.

Developments in European domestic agricultural policies will have an important impact on the food security situation both within the region and globally. Of particular concern are the uncertain effects of policy reforms in countries in transition. Although these countries do not experience food security problems of the magnitude of many other countries, nevertheless, the reforms and transformations in the first years of the 1990s have brought about certain changes, not all of which are welcome. In several countries the transformation has negatively affected the population's standard of living to the point that large population groups face actual malnutrition because of declining incomes. In some cases, changes have been so great and abrupt that they have seriously disrupted national food balances and may also endanger the functioning of national, regional and local food supply and trade systems. We should not lose track of the fact that policy reforms in these countries do not involve simple and small corrections, but a fundamental change in every single aspect of the national economies. As such, these reforms involve long-term strategy choices which will affect the countries' macroeconomic structures for decades to come. Special attention must therefore be given to developing a healthy and competitive food and agricultural sector in these countries, capable of providing adequate and good-quality food for their own citizens and ultimately of contributing to the food security of the rest of the world.

As regards the effects of the region's agricultural policy reforms on the food security of the rest of the world, I would like to highlight two points. While large efficiency gains for the world economy as a whole could derive from trade liberalization, our preoccupation as an international community concerning the world market in basic staple food commodities should go beyond efficiency considerations. We cannot afford the risk of an unstable world food market. All countries should make every effort to ensure that global food stocks remain at a level that provides a reasonable degree of market stability, although I am fully aware that this condition alone does not ensure food security for all. But it is a necessary condition. In fact, the Uruguay Round agreement recognizes the importance of food security stocks, with expenditures on such stocks exempted from reduction commitments.

Another important consideration, especially for the net food-importing developing countries, is the possible short-term increase in food import expenditures, as a result of higher food prices

following trade liberalization. In this context, I urge the major developed country exporters to take fully into consideration the implications of such developments and to take corrective measures in the form of compensation to the affected countries, through such means as enhanced financial assistance for agricultural development and increased food aid and/or concessional trade, as called for by the relevant Uruguay Round decision.

The changing trade environment in Europe has implications that go well beyond the region. I am well aware of the concerns of developing countries that access to European markets, through the Lomé Convention and the Generalized System of Preferences now operated by European countries, not be eroded. These arrangements, combined with the special and differential treatment contained in the Final Act and the decision concerning low-income food-deficit countries, will, we hope, assist developing countries in expanding their trade relations with the region.

PLACE AND ROLE OF FAO IN EUROPE

The place and role of FAO in Europe can hardly fail to be profoundly affected by the economic, political and social transformations taking place within the region. The number of Member Nations in the region increased from 29 in 1990 to 38 in 1993 and it is of the utmost importance that the Organization provide the maximum support to the 16 Member Nations undergoing transition during the immediate, delicate, and often painful, period of adjustment without at the same time jeopardizing ongoing normative regional activities. In view of the resource limitations and the acute requirements of other regions, the thrust of FAO's role in Europe has so far remained catalytic, seeking to achieve the greatest possible multiplier effect. Basically, it provided Europe with information, statistics, support for the establishment and operation of various applied research networks and, perhaps most important, a forum for the exchange of experience in agricultural policy.

The Central and East European countries are now entering a second phase of economic and social reforms that appear to be more difficult to overcome than the first years of political decisions, which were supported by enthusiasm and hopes that economic improvements would be almost immediate once the central planning system had been dismantled. These hopes have, however, not fully materialized and it is now evident that the transition process will take longer than expected. In particular, the prevailing budget deficits preclude extensive financial support schemes and subsidies for almost all sectors of the economy, notably for food and agriculture.

FAO, and the Regional Office, will therefore need to adjust its programme and method of work in order to achieve greater relevance in the new regional context.

My proposals for a reinvigorated and more effective Organization, submitted to the just concluded 106th Session of the Council, were governed by the following principles: the strengthening of FAO as a centre of excellence; the pursuit of greater decentralization; the rationalization of operational activities through appropriate structural arrangements; a drive towards more efficiency and less expensive modalities of action; and a refocusing of priorities.

As you might have been informed, the Council has endorsed my proposals. In this regard, I am particularly pleased to have received the full support of the Council to strengthen, with a resource increase of 2.1 percent, the Forestry Major Programme which demonstrates unequivocally the increased importance attached to FAO's role in the sector. I have also adopted a strategy which refocuses FAO's priorities in forestry within the 1994-95 Programme of Work and Budget to address the immediate requirements of the preparations for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) which will meet in June 1995 to assess the follow-up to UNCED. FAO is Task Manager for UNCED follow-up activities in relation to the implementation of the "Forest

Principles" and major forest-related chapters, specially Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 on "Sustainable Mountain Development". As part of its role as Task Manager, FAO organized in March this year a meeting with representatives of the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in this field. A call was made for a World Conference on Sustainable Mountain Development to be held in 1997. It will be similar in scope to the one held in January 1992 in Dublin with the main objective of raising awareness of decision-makers and public opinions on the development requirements of these marginal lands often neglected in large parts of the world. I hope that the long tradition and considerable know-how of the European region, particularly of Central Europe, in this field, will make a significant contribution to the success of this initiative.

As the only global intergovernmental organization for fisheries, FAO must respond to the challenges facing the fisheries sector, which is characterized by marine resources being generally exploited up to their maximum, with many indeed overexploited and requiring urgent management and conservation methods. Here too, I am particularly pleased that the Council has approved my proposal to strengthen the Major Programme on Fisheries with a resource increase of just over US\$300 000 which will be channelled to programmes for increased aquaculture production and to ensure timely preparation of the International Code of Conduct on Responsible Fishing. As you know, this is a complex undertaking, covering not only marine fisheries operations and management but also aquaculture, trade, integrated coastal area management and research. In order to facilitate discussion and endorsement of the Code of Conduct at the next session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in March 1995, it will be necessary to have the draft text of the Code, at least of the major sections, reviewed by a Technical Consultation in the autumn of this year. We hope that this important instrument will help to introduce some order into fishing on the high seas and will soon become operational. However, as a first step, we would need to receive as soon as possible the acceptance from you, the Member Nations, of the Agreement on the Flagging of Vessels Fishing on the High Seas, which, you will recall, is an integral part of the International Code of Conduct on Responsible Fishing. I therefore cordially invite you to take action in this regard with a certain urgency.

As far as the other proposals are concerned, you will no doubt appreciate that the implementation will be a complex operation and will need to be spread over carefully articulated and planned phases, as indicated in the supplementary information submitted to the Council. As I informed the Council, we intend to implement a first set of measures during the current biennium while others will be continued in the framework of the Programme of Work and Budget to be proposed for 1996-97 and of the next Medium-term Plan, the formats of which will be adjusted accordingly.

As regards the Regional Office for Europe, whose staffing is currently extremely limited, I have the intention of gradually and progressively strengthening its human and financial resources so as to have a multidisciplinary team to cover all pertinent technical areas and thus provide a critical mass of expertise, which is so far lacking. Also envisaged is a subregional office for the central and eastern part of your region, composed of a small team of technical officers geared to the specific requirements of the subregion. The location will be determined after consultations with the countries of the region.

At this point, I wish to reiterate briefly my intention to arrange the transfer of staff at present in the Joint Divisions with the UN Regional Economic and Social Commissions. This transfer will enable me to augment the staff resources available for strengthening the regional structures and facilitate the deployment of staff to meet the requirements and functions of all regional and subregional offices. I wish to assure you that such a transfer will not result in cancelling the fruitful joint activities with the UN regional commissions. On the contrary, they would be better undertaken in the framework of a reinforced team while ensuring a proper interface and complementarity in UN system activities and avoiding duplication. I am fully aware that the

question of improved coordination between the UN/ECE and FAO has long been of great concern to the respective Member Nations and to the secretariats of the two organizations. I therefore welcome the initiative taken by the Secretary-General, Mr Boutros Boutros Ghali, to initiate a dialogue between the Executive Heads of UN institutions on the requirements and conditions for improved coordination at the regional level. I have already informed him of FAO's readiness to cooperate fully in this endeavour.

During the interim period, while the restructuring process is being implemented, FAO, through its Regional Office, will continue to carry out its programmes in the region, as recommended by your 18th Regional Conference in 1992 and approved by the 27th Session of the FAO Conference, with added focus on the fields of research and technology development, environment, rural development, assistance in restructuring the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors in the Central and East European countries, in the form of policy advice, institution building and development of human resources. In the field of research and development, I wish to mention in particular FAO's European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA) which was created in the early 1970s and which today involves nearly 400 national institutions and 5 000 scientists and technicians from 48 countries. ESCORENA, in its 20 years of existence, has proved to be a successful, efficient and inexpensive system for the promotion of cooperation in agricultural and rural research among national institutions in the region. It is a flexible, regionally oriented research network system, adaptable to changing priorities and needs and characterized by continuous evaluation and renewal.

One of the goals of ESCORENA is to promote cooperation and the transfer of European technological advances to developing countries. I see scope in enlarging this system so as to involve an increased number of institutions from developing countries and of scientists and technicians from Central and East European countries.

With increased human resources in the Regional Office, FAO will be in a better position to implement its activities on assistance in restructuring the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors in the Central and East European countries in the form of policy advice, institution building and development of human resources. This latter aspect is of particular importance and FAO should reorient its policy and planning advisory services to strengthen the capacity of Ministries of Agriculture to analyse and develop a position on sectoral policy issues and the impact on agriculture of macroeconomic policies in such areas as structural adjustment, exchange rates and trade and fiscal matters. The aim should be to assist ministries in their defence of the sector in discussions within the respective governments, as well as in negotiations on structural adjustment. This is, in my view, a service of major importance that FAO has to offer to policy-makers in the Central and East European economies in transition. In this context, FAO could participate in agricultural sector and subsector reviews which identify priority areas for technical assistance and investment opportunities and provide training to government staff in agricultural project formulation and analysis.

An important area of agricultural development which will need to be further implemented by an expanded Regional Office for Europe is related to the promotion of rural development, focusing on the enhancement of the role of women and the agricultural family in rural development and the improvement of entrepreneurial skills and opportunities in non-farm activities. Such projects will help to improve the standard of living of the rural population, especially those in the mountainous and most remote areas, to secure viability and sustainability of these depressed areas and to prevent migration to urban centres. This, I believe, is a field of interest not only to the Central and East European countries but to the entire region.

Another important emerging field concerns assistance in fisheries, forestry and environmental legislation, and FAO must be geared to meet requests for such assistance, which is the first step towards achieving sustainability.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

FAO faces acute financial restrictions. In order to meet the increasing requests for assistance, it will be of the utmost importance for FAO to ensure the participation of other institutions, multilateral and bilateral, in its endeavours. In this connection, I am happy to report that a Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was finalized and signed in March 1994. I sincerely hope that this agreement will lead to an ever-increasing and fruitful cooperation in the future. The two institutions are complementary inasmuch as FAO, on the one hand, has the expertise for providing assistance for the formulation of agricultural investment projects while, on the other hand, one of the reasons for the establishment of EBRD was to solve key economic transition issues which would facilitate increased efficiency and productivity of the agricultural sectors in Central and East European and Asian countries.

Strengthened cooperation with the European Commission is also of particular importance to me. As a matter of fact, one of my first visits since taking up my duties as Director-General in January was to Brussels to hold discussions with the Commission's President, Mr Jacques Delors. Since the conclusion on 27 January 1993 of the Arrangement on Procedures for Technical Cooperation between the Commission of the European Communities and FAO, our cooperation with the EC has increased: during 1991, the Commission approved three projects, for a total value of US\$3 million; in 1992, four projects were approved, worth US\$3.6 million; while in 1993 and early 1994 12 project agreements have been concluded for a total amount of approximately US\$7.7 million. I hope that this positive trend will continue. For our part, we will spare no effort in order to attain closer and more fruitful cooperation in assisting developing countries in their agricultural and rural development.

I would also like to mention that we have established a coordination mechanism with the OECD, to avoid duplication of work, recognizing the OECD's pioneering efforts in monitoring economic changes in Central and East European countries.

CONCLUSION

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

When we next meet on the occasion of your 20th Regional Conference, three extremely important events in the life of the Organization will have taken place. The first will be the 50th anniversary of the Organization in 1995. This will be celebrated solemnly at Château Frontenac in Quebec, the site of the founding of the Organization on 16 October 1945. I wish to express my thanks to the Government of Canada which, in conjunction with the Government of the Province of Quebec, has offered to host and to organize this event. In this connection, you have before you document ERC/94/INF/7 which includes the draft Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration on which your comments and suggestions are welcome. As you know, this is in pursuance of FAO Conference Resolution 4/93 which requested me to submit this draft Declaration, for appropriate comments, to all the 1994 Regional Conferences as well as to the June 1995 Session of the Council. It will also be submitted to a ministerial meeting which will take place in Quebec on 14 and 16 October 1995 and subsequently to the 28th Session of the Conference in November 1995 for final adoption.

During the first quarter of 1996, I intend to convene a World Food Summit. Despite the fact that the world as a whole has made considerable progress towards improved food security, as

demonstrated by the substantial increases in aggregate supplies both globally and by many individual countries, we are still faced with the unacceptable human tragedy whereby 800 million people do not have adequate access to food and 192 million children below the age of five years suffer from acute or chronic protein and energy malnutrition. I am therefore convinced that the time has come, more than twenty years after the World Food Conference, for an in-depth examination by all of us of recent trends, in particular, the reasons for the present disequilibrium and to seek together in a serious effort the actions to be taken collectively to ensure that hunger and malnutrition will be eliminated in a world of 5.5 billion persons which will reach 9 billion by the year 2030.

In this connection, you have before you document ERC/94/6 which highlights the various aspects of global, regional and national food security with particular relevance to the situation in the European region. I would particularly welcome your views and comments on this document which will be taken into account in the preparatory process for the World Food Summit which will use the sequence of normal meetings of the regional conferences and Governing Bodies to avoid costly additional special preparatory gatherings.

Last, but not least, preparations are under way for the FAO-sponsored Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, which will be held in Germany in June 1996. This has been made possible by the generosity of a number of governments and will lead to the production of a major report on the State of the World Plant Genetic Resources and the related costed global Plan of Action. Together, these documents will provide the first comprehensive assessment of our capacity to care for and effectively use this fundamental resource underpinning world food security, and they will be submitted for formal consideration by the Technical Conference.

The preparatory process of this report is a major component of FAO's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is designed to be participatory and country-driven and will help transform relevant parts of the UNCED process (including Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity) into an action-oriented comprehensive programme. The active participation of all countries in this FAO endeavour is essential and is strongly encouraged.

Mr Chairman,

In extending to you my warmest wishes for every success in your deliberations during the heavy week which lies before you, I wish to reiterate my appreciation for the warm and cordial hospitality extended to us all by your Government. I have no doubt that your wise chairmanship as well as the peaceful and serene natural environment surrounding us will bring the debates of this Regional Conference to a successful conclusion.

Thank you.

APPENDIX E

**STATEMENT BY MR YVES BERTHELOT, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

*Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address your eminent assembly in which I find almost all the country members of the Economic Commission for Europe, here either as members of FAO or as observers. For this important reason, I can only commend the close and trusting relations that have always existed between our organizations.

The European region has been engaged for five years in a process of political, economic and social transformation that directly affects half its states but is of concern to all. The difficulties inherent in this transformation are considerable and far more daunting and complex than anybody had initially envisaged. The ECE has constantly emphasized the need to combine determination with prudence in the process of change and has given top priority to cooperation among its members to facilitate the transition toward a market economy and the integration in the regional and global economy of the countries of central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. At its last session in May, the Committee on Agriculture of the ECE endorsed this perspective and priority for the agricultural sector. It accordingly examined the role of agricultural organizations in defining and implementing agricultural policies, thus highlighting the importance of the exchange of experiences for countries engaged in redefining relations between the State and the rural sector. With this in mind, the Committee has included, in its programme for the forthcoming year, the establishment of market mechanisms in the agricultural sector.

What is more, our activities centering on countries in transition toward a market economy will be intensified from this year with the establishment within the ECE of a group of regional specialist advisers, each with expertise in one of our fields of activities, particularly agriculture and forestry. Their mission will be to follow up the regular programme of work and provide the member countries who so wish with technical support by giving expert advice, organizing training activities, advising on implementing ECE recommendations, norms or standards, and identifying projects that could be taken up by other financial or specialized agencies. There is no doubt that this will entail close collaboration with FAO, which offers the richest source of technical expertise for international assistance in agriculture and forestry.

Beyond the problems of transition affecting individual countries, major structural changes are taking place throughout the region. Within the space of 15 years, Europe has lost 9 million hectares of farmland and gained 6 million hectares of woodland. The diversification of rural activities and environmental management in rural areas have increasingly linked the fate of agriculture and forests to that of farmers and foresters, whose role in the process of economic and social change and development remains vital.

Our region has considerable agricultural and forest potential. Western Europe's objective of attaining food self-sufficiency has been reached and hugely surpassed thanks to policies that have stimulated enviable technological development. Conversely, we now need to adopt a new approach that will avoid surplus production and environmental degradation. We can no longer encourage surpluses which the new regime for international trade forbids us to manage as in the past; and agriculture has to adapt to the fact that human activity has an impact on the local and global natural environment, which means that all action must now be judged against the criterion of sustainability. The greatest challenge is to conduct these adjustments without

prejudice to the aspirations of the men and women who have always lived in the context of skills and rural communities which we should see not so much as an unwelcome burden but as an invaluable heritage.

As for the countries in transition, these face a dual challenge. Their first urgent task is to start the machinery up again, to make up for lost time by establishing the conditions for an efficient agricultural sector, using their natural resources to the best of their comparative advantages and installing upstream and downstream mechanisms that will provide farmers with the means to boost productivity and increase their market outlets. This task is all the more urgent in that the food situation has sometimes seriously deteriorated as a combined result of falling real incomes and the dysfunctioning of production and distribution. Thus, a number of countries of the region with considerable agricultural potential have had to resort to food aid, while we depend on others for the vital food aid that is needed by countries in deficit or afflicted by natural or human-induced disasters. Hence, the extreme importance of your deliberations as you prepare for the World Food Summit which you, Mr Director-General, have reaffirmed is integral to FAO's mandate. The task of restarting the agricultural machinery is also urgent because agriculture is expected to play a decisive role in improving external trade and re-establishing the general macro-economic equilibrium without which all sectoral efforts will come to nothing. A second vital long-term challenge is to ensure the sustainability of agricultural progress, both in economic and budgetary terms and in terms of natural resource and environmental conservation or rehabilitation.

The forest sector is also redefining its objectives and constraints. The essential social and economic function of European forests is timber production and we cannot stress enough how intrinsically sound this function is; after all, wood is the renewable resource par excellence, in contrast to all its possible substitutes. But, because of its extent, (it covers one third of our region) because of its role in the equilibrium of nature and because of its emotional charge among the public, the forest has to some extent come to symbolize permanence and the future. Forest management must therefore move ahead in such a way that it can address a series of economic, social and environmental needs, ranging from preservation of biodiversity to storage of carbon, from leisure to landscape and scenery and from the production of timber to provision of so many other products and services. Great political importance is now attached to this multiplicity of objectives. In the years to come, much as is occurring today in Western Europe with regard to agriculture, forest overcapacity may well become a problem, and forest products, tourism, etc. will have to ensure the maintenance of an ever-expanding forest area. Two European ministerial conferences were held, one in Strasbourg and the other in Helsinki, in connection with the Earth Summit in Rio which formulated the Forest Principles. FAO and the ECE are actively engaged with their member countries in implementing these principles and the declarations and resolutions that were adopted by the governments. Sustainable development, along with assistance to the countries in transition, is the other intersectoral priority which our member countries have assigned to the ECE.

The subjects that you have chosen to examine emphasize change in production and consumption modalities: one of the aspects governing successful sustainability. Food consumption is assuming new patterns as a result of better education, higher incomes, greater sophistication in food processing and a cultural evolution that attaches greater importance to quality, genuineness and originality. This is one of the paths of renewal of the agricultural sector and economy. Despite the current difference in economic conditions, I do not think that this only applies to the more prosperous countries of our region. The primary impact of liberalization and trade is to provoke an osmosis of consumption patterns, which is sometimes in fact not altogether desired.

The second subject you will be examining is complementary to the first. Consumers are beginning to attach greater importance not only to product quality but also to the production process. The search for innovatory forms of production is now also governed by concern to

ensure resource conservation. The exchange of experience in this area is a form of cooperation in which our organizations can play a useful role, and the FAO/ECE Working Party on Relations between Agriculture and Environment has therefore adopted this as one of its permanent operational thrusts.

I should like, finally, to conclude by mentioning future cooperation between the ECE and FAO. I have taken note of the decision of the Council of FAO to endorse the important proposals for the restructuring of FAO that had been submitted by its Director-General. I welcome the fact that Mr Diouf's affirmed commitment toward pursuing joint fruitful activities with the ECE is also shared by the FAO Council. The secretariat of our Commission and the Committee on Agriculture have also strongly advocated such cooperation for the benefit of all intergovernmental bodies dealing with agriculture and forestry. They would appear to be unique in terms of countries represented and the manner in which they address certain issues. Thus, with regard to forestry, the ECE's Timber Committee and FAO's European Forestry Commission can work alongside each other and deal in an integrated manner with production, conservation, processing and marketing for virtually the whole boreal and temperate forest area in the northern hemisphere.

I should like therefore to inform you, Mr Chairman and Mr Director-General, of my immediate willingness to examine, together with FAO, new modalities of cooperation which could enable us to effectively deliver the services that our member countries expect of us.

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Distinguished Ministers, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I just wanted to outline some of the region's major challenges and some of FAO's and the ECE's responses and to underline the pertinence of this Regional Conference's deliberations to the process of change. I should just like to finish by saying how useful and profitable our harmonious collaboration is to our member countries in this region, and by wishing you a successful meeting.

APPENDIX F

STATEMENT BY MR JOSE RAMON LOPEZ PORTILLO,
INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF FAO

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour for me to be able to participate in this Regional Conference and to thank the Government and people of Ireland for their magnificent hospitality and organization.

In the understanding that this is an occasion for informing rather than discussing, I should like to report briefly to this 19th Regional Conference for Europe on the deliberations of the 106th Session of the FAO Council which was held from 30 May to 1 June.

The Council proceedings were conducted with extreme cordiality and in a spirit of creativity and cooperation. This resulted in the approval of the Director-General's proposals regarding his review of the programmes, structures and policies of FAO, in accordance with Conference Resolution 10/93. Veterans of numerous Council sessions even commented on the extraordinary atmosphere that prevailed and on the consensual and positive tone of the declarations which made this session such a memorable event.

This was basically due to the care that the Director-General had taken to frame his proposals within a context of positive change and reform within the United Nations system, and within a process of broad Member State consultation and participation and Secretariat transparency.

It was recognized that the Director-General's proposals were normative and represented a first step. The Council will be informed on progress made, through its Finance and Programme Committees, on the benefits accruing from these proposals and on their tangible and non-tangible costs. It was acknowledged that, in line with the budgetary restrictions, the funds to be reallocated to implement the proposals accounted for 4.5 percent of the approved budget for the biennium (slightly under US\$30 million).

Mr Chairman, the observations and recommendations made by the Member States during the deliberations, as included in the report, indicate that the Council approved the body of proposals that had been put forward by the Director-General, who, in turn, took careful note of the Council's deliberations and stated that he would bear them very much in mind when implementing the FAO transformation process.

By way of example, allow me to mention some of the observations and recommendations that were put forward by the members of the Council.

There was a general emphasis on the importance of FAO maintaining its role as centre of excellence, international evaluation and world reference within the areas of its mandate. FAO's restructuring, therefore, did not imply changing its mandate.

With regard to the attainment of food security in low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) and achieving adequate production to feed a growing population, attention was brought to FAO's extensive conceptual and empirical efforts in this area and to the complexities involved. Particular emphasis was paid to the importance, not only of food production, but also of food availability and access and to how these factors were generally affected by extreme poverty. Stress was also laid on the use of marginal lands and on avoiding short-term food self-sufficiency solutions or repeating the negative effects of the green revolution.

It was important to apply technologies with proven results, to integrate farmer and local extension staff experiences as far as possible and to foster TCDC exchange. Efforts should be made to ensure that production systems were compatible with social structures and cultural factors, and projects should be economically viable.

The Council agreed with the Director-General that the extraordinary effort needed for food security should combine extra-budgetary financing with catalytic funds from the Regular Programme and that assistance should be given in particular to the African continent where a majority of the world's 800 million people living in degrading despair were to be found.

With regard to implementation of the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases, there was call for greater coordination between the relevant national and international organizations and for the use of modest contributions from FAO's budget as an incentive and catalyst so that the countries concerned would strengthen and revitalize their collaborative efforts.

The proposals for the restructuring of FAO were also enthusiastically received. As regards management and administration, appropriate measures should be adopted for the delegation of authority, the decentralization of functions, the streamlining of accounts and enhanced communication and access to information so that the new FAO structure might be rendered more effective and transparent.

The proposal for decentralization was firmly endorsed, with the proviso that this should not lead to a dispersal or separation of normative and operational activities or to the loss of FAO's invaluable central services. A careful step-by-step approach was therefore required when distinguishing between these two activities.

This policy of decentralization adds weight to FAO's Regional Conferences in that it requires them to ensure that the Organization's policies and programmes truly reflect the potentials, problems and needs of each region.

The Technical Cooperation Department should, among other matters, lead to more active cooperation with multilateral and bilateral agencies and with the private sector and non-governmental organizations, with a view to encouraging assistance and increasing the availability of funds to boost FAO's policies and catalytic activities.

The new Department of Sustainable Development would give greater visibility and provide for better coordination and support for the promotion of sustainable agricultural, fishery and forest development, in accordance with UNCED and Agenda 21. The Council, however, recommended that care be taken to ensure that these aspects concerned all the Organization's normative and operational activities and that efforts be made to avoid duplication of normative and promotional activities.

Emphasis was laid on the importance of securing the preparatory process for the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, which is to be held in Germany, and for the full development of the global system established by FAO, under the supervision of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. Proposals were also advanced that animal genetic resources be dealt with in the same way and even that a Commission on Biodiversity be set up.

These, Mr Chairman, were some of the observations made by the Council.

Allow me to conclude by stating that the Director-General was given a clear mandate in support of his sound proposals, in a conducive cordial and creative atmosphere.

APPENDIX G

Extract from Document ERC/94/5-Sup.1 on the Effectiveness of Representation on CGIAR

Identification of suitable candidates

6. While experience has shown that the Regional Conferences have in the past elected a number of outstanding persons who have represented their regions with distinction, it is necessary to ensure continuing high technical standards. One possible way by which to draw on the wide range of talents in the region is to invite, prior to the Regional Conference, nominations, including CVs of proposed candidates, from all member countries. A sub-committee of the Conference could screen the proposals and make recommendations for final endorsement.

Better briefing of the Regional Representatives

7. The agenda and topics discussed at the CGIAR meetings are becoming increasingly complex and numerous. Some of the major documents are not always available sufficiently ahead of time. The Regional Representatives should arrive two days ahead of the CGIAR meetings for reading/preparing themselves for the meeting. The FAO and CGIAR and TAC Secretariats should continue to brief the RRs as required and deemed necessary by them.

Better interaction with their constituencies


8. One of the prerequisites for the success of the mission of the Regional Representatives is their ability to solicit the views and comments of NARS in their regions and to provide feedback to them on the outcome of the CGIAR meetings. In this regard a number of steps are under consideration including the following:

- a) The current thinking is to hold all CGIAR Mid-Term Meetings in developing countries. A workshop on topics relevant to the region where the meeting is taking place will be arranged, inviting NARS from the region. This will offer a forum for the RRs to interact with their colleagues from the region and for the CGIAR Members to interact with the NARS in the region.
- b) Regional Representatives will be assisted by FAO Regional and Country Offices to communicate with NARS in the region.
- c) The Regional Representatives should be given the opportunity to report to the Regional Conferences when the item on the Regional Representatives is being discussed. This is best accommodated by them being included in their countries' delegation, but other arrangements could be made.

Better interaction with members/donors of the CGIAR

9. It is realized that the CGIAR meetings, because of their size and heavy agenda, are not always conducive to closer interaction between the Regional Representatives and other members of the Group, particularly the donors from developed countries. One way of ensuring closer interaction is by holding regular meetings, prior to or during the CGIAR meeting. It is hoped that this will assist in forging better two-way understanding between donors and Regional Representatives and allow informal discussions of proposals and new ideas before they are brought to the full CGIAR meeting. Also, in finalizing the agenda for the CGIAR regular meetings, provisions should be made for the Regional Representatives to report on matters of concern common to the region and the CGIAR.

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