

REPORT

Santiago,
Chile,
9-13 July
1990

Twenty-first FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

*FAO Member Nations served by the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
(as of 13 July 1990)*

Antigua and Barbuda	Dominica	Nicaragua
Argentina	Dominican Republic	Panama
Bahamas	Ecuador	Paraguay
Barbados	El Salvador	Peru
Belize	Grenada	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Bolivia	Guatemala	Saint Lucia
Brazil	Guyana	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Chile	Haiti	Suriname
Colombia	Honduras	Trinidad and Tobago
Costa Rica	Jamaica	Uruguay
Cuba	Mexico	Venezuela

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Latin America and the Caribbean

First	— Quito, Ecuador, 18-25 September 1949
Second	— Montevideo, Uruguay, 1-12 December 1950
Third	— Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1-10 September 1954
Fourth	— Santiago, Chile, 19-30 November 1956
Fifth	— San José, Costa Rica, 12-21 November 1958
Sixth	— Mexico, D.F., Mexico, 9-20 August 1960
Seventh	— Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 17-27 November 1962
Eighth	— Viña del Mar, Chile, 13-29 March 1965
Ninth	— Punta del Este, Uruguay, 5-16 December 1966
Tenth	— Kingston, Jamaica, 2-13 December 1968
Eleventh	— Caracas, Venezuela, 12-20 October 1970
Twelfth	— Cali, Colombia, 21 August-2 September 1972
Thirteenth	— Panama City, Panama, 12-23 August 1974
Fourteenth	— Lima, Peru, 21-29 April 1976
Fifteenth	— Montevideo, Uruguay, 8-19 August 1978
Sixteenth	— Havana, Cuba, 26 August-6 September 1980
Seventeenth	— Managua, Nicaragua, 30 August-10 September 1982
Eighteenth	— Buenos Aires, Argentina, 6-15 August 1984
Nineteenth	— Barbados, 5-13 August 1986
Twentieth	— Recife, Brazil, 2-7 October 1988
Twenty-first	— Santiago, Chile, 9-13 July 1990

REPORT OF THE
TWENTY-FIRST FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Santiago, 9 - 13 July 1990

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 1990

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SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Situation and Outlook of Food and Agriculture in the Region

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

1. sent a declaration to the Summit of the Seven Most Industrialized Countries, meeting at the same time in Houston, stating the need for all participants in the Uruguay Round to make every effort to achieve a gradual and substantial reduction in agricultural subsidies and protection and obtain the reform of world agricultural trade (para. 25);
2. urged all Member Nations, particularly the main contributor, to meet as soon as possible their commitment to pay their contributions to the FAO budget (para. 27);
3. indicated that efforts leading to promotion of agricultural development should be strengthened, in view of the importance of agriculture in the new strategies for growth of countries in the region (para. 28);
4. requested urgent support from the international community to face the serious financial problems affecting countries (para. 30);
5. pointed out that problems stemming from the unfair nature of world trade in agricultural commodities were one of the principal obstacles to the economic development of Latin America and the Caribbean, and that the present modalities of this market limited export expansion (para. 31);
6. stressed the urgency of reaching an agreement on agriculture in GATT that would facilitate a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round next December (para. 32);
7. pointed out that, in any process of liberalization of agricultural commodity trade, the establishment of equitable commercial relations should be taken into account as an indispensable requirement, to prevent this process becoming counter-productive, especially for countries concentrating on the export of one agricultural commodity only and those enjoying preferential treatment from some industrialized countries; it was recommended that the solution to this type of problem be sought through gradual and differentiated strategies (para. 33);
8. appealed to all countries to make the eradication of poverty their principal task (para. 35);
9. indicated that, in view of the urgency of the serious problem of poverty affecting the region, it was necessary to discriminate in favour of the most vulnerable groups, especially in the rural sector (para. 35);
10. confirmed the agreement at the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference on the Plan of Action for Agricultural and Rural Development adopted in Recife in 1988, in relation to the problem of poverty (para. 35);

11. stressed the gravity of the undernutrition and malnutrition suffered by broad sectors of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean (para. 36);

12. underlined the need for agricultural development policies and programmes to include, as far as possible, ecological components contributing to the achievement of environmental stability in fragile ecosystems (para. 37);

13. recommended that actions be undertaken to promote decentralization, based on regionalization and the development and strengthening of local authorities (para. 42).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

14. requested FAO technical collaboration, in the fields within its competence, to obtain financial resources from the international community to remedy the critical financial situation suffered by countries of the region (para. 30);

15. requested FAO to expand its programmes in relation to the problems of undernutrition and malnutrition (para. 36);

16. sought the support of FAO and, through that Organization, the active collaboration of Agencies in the United Nations System with national bodies responsible for formulating and executing rural development programmes (para. 39);

17. requested FAO technical collaboration for those countries that had resolved to strengthen their agrarian reform programmes (para. 40);

18. recommended that FAO expand its assistance to countries by actions to promote decentralization, based on regionalization and the development and strengthening of local authorities (para. 42);

19. requested the strengthening of existing mechanisms for coordinating agricultural and rural development technical cooperation and financing organizations in the region, particularly the World Bank, IDB and IMF (para. 44);

20. recommended the extension of experiences such as the PROCAPLAN and AQUILA regional projects and the implementation, at national level, of tripartite projects in which governments, FAO as executing agency and UNDP or other donor bodies worked hand in hand (para. 45);

21. indicated the urgency of maintaining and expanding FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (para. 47).

Report on FAO Activities in the Region during the 1988-89 Biennium,
especially the Measures adopted to Implement the Main Recommendations
of the Twentieth Regional Conference

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

22. stressed the importance of the intergovernmental groups on commodities and of the Subcommittee on Fish Trade, reminding the Common Fund for Commodities that the above-mentioned groups should be designated as international commodity bodies in accordance with the decisions taken by FAO Member Nations (para. 53);
23. emphasized the need for formulating and implementing extension and education programmes in such a way that they effectively reached farmers, and that technicians should also be teachers of end-users of the assistance;
24. expressed its support for the recently created Codex Group on Fruit and Vegetables and Fresh Vegetables, with headquarters in Mexico (para. 60);
25. mentioned the need to strengthen the Network for Food Quality, part of the Regional Centre for Training in Production and Quality Control of Meat and Meat Products (para. 60);
26. stressed the importance of coordination, cooperation and complementation among intergovernmental bodies at a regional and subregional level (para. 62);
27. attributed special importance to the full implementation of the Plan of Action for Women's Integration in Development (para. 63);
28. requested that, at the next Regional Conference, countries report on measures taken to ensure adequate follow-up of the technical assistance provided by FAO (para. 64).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

29. requested that FAO continue to provide assistance in the field of multilateral trade negotiations, especially at the Uruguay Round and GATT (para. 55);
30. recognized the assistance provided by FAO under the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), drawing attention to the support that could be provided by TFAP in the area of natural resource conservation (para. 56);
31. pointed out the need to give maximum dissemination to the Plan of Action adopted by the Twentieth Regional Conference, in particular to potential donors and development financing bodies (para. 57);
32. recognized the value and effectiveness of the Technical Cooperation Networks and the desirability of strengthening their activities through extra-budgetary resources (para. 59);

33. requested FAO to publicize the work of the Codex Alimentarius more widely and to strengthen regional information systems (para. 60);

34. requested FAO to seek ways of accelerating the introduction of the strategy and programmes of action which emerged from the World Fisheries Conference (para. 61);

35. called for closer involvement of FAO in the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (para. 62);

36. considered it desirable that FAO step up the identification, preparation and dissemination of ideas concerning regional and subregional projects, strengthen Investment Centre activities and intensify its cooperation in the field of trade and macro-economic policies, stressing in this connection the importance of the PROCAPLAN Regional Project activities (para. 64).

Sustainable Rural Development in Fragile Ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

37. emphasized that environmental deterioration also occurred in less fragile ecosystems as a result of inadequate farming practices (para. 72);

38. insisted on the need to achieve a high degree of congruence and compatibility between macro-economic policies and agricultural and rural development policies (para. 73);

39. emphasized the negative influence of external constraints on the development of the economies of the region, which hindered the achievement of sustainable development (para. 74);

40. highlighted the need for countries in the region to obtain external finance through loans with favourable differential treatment and no conditions, for priority programmes linked to sustainable development and the rehabilitation of deteriorated natural environments (para. 75);

41. stressed the need to introduce analytical instruments and procedures for the evaluation of the economic significance of the environmental impact of general economic policies and in particular agricultural policies and projects (para. 76);

42. emphasized the need to classify lands according to their carrying capacity and environmental stability, and to plan their use in a way compatible with this capacity, especially in the most fragile ecosystems (para. 77);

43. underlined the need for the combined use of biological and chemical techniques to reduce the negative residual effects of agro-chemicals (para. 78);

44. emphasized the need to link the solution of the problems of agrarian structure and migratory movements with the actual possibilities of preserving the environment (para. 79);

45. highlighted the need, for those countries in the region that considered it appropriate, to establish a legal and institutional framework for sustainable rural development that would serve as a basis for legislation, institutional policies and technical and administrative standards in matters of rural development and ecosystem conservation (para. 80);

46. appealed to developed countries to increase financial assistance to strengthen and regalanize national activities under the Tropical Forestry Action Plan and also to ensure the development of stable agro-silvo-pastoral systems (para. 81).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

47. expressed its agreement with the concept, analytical content and proposals for action in document LARC/90/3 (para. 71);

48. requested FAO to strengthen its technical collaboration in accounting for the national heritage of natural resources and in evaluating the environmental impact of agricultural development policies, programmes and projects (para. 76);

49. requested FAO to intercede with potential donor countries in order to intensify and expand the flow of financial and technical resources required for national activities under the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (para. 81);

50. requested FAO to expand intra-regional cooperation activities in matters related to sustainable agricultural development and acknowledged the support that FAO provided in this respect, particularly to the signatories of the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty (para. 82).

Malnutrition in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: Causes and Prevention

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

51. noted with concern that many countries in the region showed a negative trend in per caput food production (para. 89);

52. expressed its concern over the high rate of migration of rural people and drew the attention of governments to the need to provide infrastructure, services and incentives to the rural population to participate in the country's development, especially those living in fragile ecosystems (para. 90);

53. recommended facilitating the transition from subsistence production to a market economy, including the promotion of women's participation all along the food chain, and the promotion of fisheries and aquaculture (para. 91);

54. stressed the urgency of conducting special programmes for poor urban groups to alleviate growing malnutrition (para. 92);

55. recommended that countries conduct food and nutritional education programmes geared to consumers, strengthening food quality and safety control systems and encouraging the development of low-cost, easy methods and technologies (paras 93 and 94);

56. indicated the need for governments to include explicit nutritional objectives in their development policies and plans, strengthening the relevant institutions, encouraging intersectoral coordination and improving their food and nutrition planning capacity (para. 95);

57. recognized the importance of the Food and Nutrition Surveillance Systems as a way of identifying target groups and evaluating the impact of malnutrition prevention programmes (para. 97);

58. recommended that Member Nations participate actively in the Technical Cooperation Network on Food and Nutrition Surveillance Systems (para. 97);

59. highlighted the importance of protecting the nutritional status of vulnerable groups through interventions in this field (para. 98).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

60. expressed its general satisfaction with the diagnosis presented in document LARC/90/4 and adopted in general terms the conclusions and recommendations for the prevention and control of malnutrition in the region (para. 88);

61. sought FAO technical assistance in analysing the food and nutrition situation in the region (para. 88);

62. recommended that FAO extend to other countries the technical support activities it was conducting under special programmes on nutrition for poor urban groups (para. 92);

63. recommended that a Food Control Training Network be established for the region (para. 94);

64. recognized the importance of the Food and Nutrition Surveillance Systems, requesting that they be integrally reinforced by FAO (para. 97);

65. expressed unanimous support for the activities in preparation for the International Conference on Nutrition and recommended that the Regional Office draw up a programme aimed at obtaining the effective support of countries in the region for the organization and conduct of these preparatory activities (para. 99).

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

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

66. elected Trinidad and Tobago to represent the region in the CGIAR for the period 1991-1994 (para. 103);

67. agreed to recommend that Chile be appointed representative in 1992, replacing Brazil (para. 103);

68. recommended that CGIAR study the feasibility of including the Tropical Agricultural Research and Training Centre (CATIE) in the Research Institutions' Network to which this consultative group belongs (para. 104).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

69. requested FAO to increase its support for the Action Committee on Latin American Cooperation and Consultation on Plant Genetic Resources (CARFIT) and, jointly with LAES, to sponsor the Committee's consolidation (para. 105).

Date, Place and Provisional Agenda of the Twenty-second
FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

70. suggested studying the possibility of holding future Regional Conferences in two phases, the first at technical level, to be followed by another at ministerial level, with a total duration that would not exceed five successive working days (para. 106);

71. requested that the possibility be studied of holding future Regional Conferences in October to ensure full participation by the representatives of the various countries (para. 107);

72. welcomed the offer by the delegations of Uruguay and El Salvador to host the Twenty-second Regional Conference to be held in 1992 and requested the Director-General to determine, at the appropriate time and after consultation with the Governments of Uruguay and El Salvador and other FAO Member Nations in the region, the definitive venue for that Conference (para. 108);

73. suggested the following possible agenda items for the next Regional Conference:

- a) an analysis of the effects for the region of the unification of the European Market in 1992 and the impact of the political and trade opening up of Eastern Europe, both politically and commercially, and the results of the Uruguay Round;

- b) an analysis of the state of application of biotechnology in the region and the potential for its application;
- c) a continuation of the analysis of the item on environment in the region (para. 109).

Latin America and Caribbean Group

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

74. requested that the background document prepared by the representatives accredited in Rome of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) be distributed to all delegations at the Regional Conference (para. 110);

75. unanimously agreed to communicate to the Government of Chile its gratitude for the warm hospitality offered to all delegates and observers during their stay in the country, and its congratulations on the arrangements for hosting the Conference (para. 112);

76. agreed to send a message of thanks to the President of the Republic, Mr Patricio Aylwin Azócar, for his personal attendance and interest in the work of the Regional Conference (para. 112).

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Twenty-first FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Santiago, Chile, from 9 to 13 July 1990, at the Headquarters of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. The Conference was attended by Delegates from 23 Member Nations of the region, observers from 6 countries outside the region, and representatives from various United Nations Agencies, regional and subregional agencies and institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Agenda of the Conference, the List of Participants, the List of Documents, the Statement by the President of the Republic of Chile, the Statement by the Director-General of FAO and the Declaration sent by the Conference to the Summit Meeting of the Seven Most Industrialized Nations are included as Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F respectively to this Report.

Inaugural Ceremony

3. The Inaugural Ceremony consisted of a Solemn Act at the Municipal Theatre of Santiago and was attended by His Excellency, the President of Chile, Mr. Patricio Aylwin Azócar, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Agriculture of Chile, the Ministers, Vice-Ministers and Heads of Delegations, the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Santiago and observers from international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.
4. The Director-General of FAO, Dr Edouard Saouma, declared the Conference inaugurated, thanking the President of the Republic for his presence, and for the warm hospitality of the people and Government of Chile. He recalled the ancient democratic tradition of Chile and its transformation in the past few years into an international symbol of the aspiration of humanity to advance along the path of progress and freedom.
5. The President of the Republic welcomed participants on behalf of the Government and people of Chile and expressed his appreciation for the support which the holding of the Conference in this country represented for the process of bringing Chile back into the international community. At the same time, he thanked the Director-General of FAO for his generous words about Chile and his good wishes for its success in the democratization process.
6. He expressed the support of the Government of Chile for the important role to be played by the multilateral system of the United Nations and particularly by FAO. He paid tribute to FAO and its Director-General for the priority they assigned to the agricultural and food problems of developing countries. He recalled that Chile had had the honour of hosting the Regional Headquarters of the Organization since its establishment, and assured the Director-General that his government would continue to support it in the accomplishment of its tasks.

7. He mentioned that this Conference was being held in a difficult period for the Latin American and Caribbean countries, in which there were still great challenges pending, such as overcoming the serious indebtedness, the re-establishment of financial flows, the fight against inflation and, in general, the achievement of sustained economic expansion with an increasing degree of social justice. He added that economic growth and equity, and the consolidation and strengthening of democratic systems, appeared to be the core subjects of reflection for the future of the region.

8. He referred to the internal and external constraints suffered by the economies of the region during the past decade and the adjustment measures that countries had been obliged to take, which had, in many cases, broadened the gap between the living conditions of the richest and the poorest. Besides being unjust, this tended to create social and political tensions that hindered development and endangered social and political peace.

9. He indicated that the countries of the region were dismayed to see that, while they were endeavouring to balance their economies, some developed countries were stubbornly opposed to opening up their agricultural trade, seriously damaging the interests of Latin America and Caribbean countries.

10. He declared that the Government of Chile would support initiatives to structure open and fair international markets with all the resources available to it, expressing his Government's determination to denounce all protection mechanisms detrimental to our nations. Interpreting the feelings of countries in the region, he stated that he accorded major importance to the results of the Uruguay Round negotiations.

11. Referring to the case of Chile, he drew attention to the important productive development in the agricultural, fishery and forestry sectors. This had not been a balanced development since, side by side with modern holdings, concentrating investments and advanced technologies, and generating exports, others of a traditional nature, usually in the hands of smallholders, indigenous farmers and artisanal fishermen, were still excluded from growth and modernization. This required a serious effort to ensure that growth spread evenly throughout the various regions, favouring small and medium-scale farmers.

12. He referred to the discussions of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held in Rome in 1979, expressing his support for the Declaration of Principles and the Programme of Action, and announcing that the Government of Chile had withdrawn its reservations with regard to this Declaration and the Programme, adopting the so-called "Peasants' Charter".

13. The Director-General of FAO thanked the President of the Republic of Chile for his kind words. The full text of the statement by the President of the Republic is included as Appendix D to this report.

Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Drafting Committee

14. The Conference unanimously elected the Minister of Agriculture of Chile, Mr Juan Agustín Figueroa as Chairman. As Vice-Chairmen, the Conference unanimously elected the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries,

Lands and Housing of Antigua and Barbuda, Mr Hilroy Humphreys; the Under-Secretary of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries of Argentina, Mr Felipe Solá; the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries of Barbados, Mr Warwick Franklin; the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform of Brazil, Mr Antonio Cabrera Mano Filho; the Minister of Agriculture of Colombia, Mr Gabriel Rosas Vega; the Minister of Agriculture of El Salvador, Mr Antonio Cabrales; the Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development of Haiti, Mr Lionel Richard; the Secretary for Fisheries of Mexico, Ms María de los Angeles Moreno; the Minister of Agriculture of Nicaragua, Mr Roberto Rondón; the Minister of Agriculture of Peru, Mr Isaac Roberto Angeles Lazo; the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries of Suriname, Mr Saimin Redjosentono and the Minister of Food Production and Marine Exploitation of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr Brinsley Samaroo. The Conference agreed that the order of precedence of the Vice-Presidents would be the alphabetical order of the names of the countries.

15. The Drafting Committee was composed of representatives of Barbados, Ecuador, Mexico and Uruguay, and was open to participation by the delegates of all the Member Nations of the region participating in this Conference.

Adoption of the Agenda

16. The Conference adopted the Agenda without change, and it is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Statement by the Director-General

17. The Director-General of FAO referred to the prodigious and rapid changes in the political and social situation in the world in recent times, which had created serious and complex problems. It was, however, undeniable that, in the space of a few months, the world in general and this region in particular had taken giant steps toward freedom, democracy and peace. He stated that FAO followed these processes in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with great interest, and would continue to assist them in their development efforts.

18. He then referred to the item: "Sustainable Rural Development in Fragile Ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean", drawing attention on the one hand to the threats facing the region's environment, some of which were characteristic of developed countries, and on the other, to the problems typical of developing countries, where population pressure linked to soil fragility led to soil exhaustion, deforestation and desertification.

19. He recalled that the study prepared by FAO on the Potentials for Agricultural and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, focussed particular attention on the subject and suggested various ways of ensuring sustainable development. He stressed that the Organization was reinforcing its activities on this subject in order to meet the countries' growing needs and contribute to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992. He indicated that it was important that the vital interests of agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry be well represented on that occasion by the countries' Ministries of Agriculture.

20. He drew attention to the stagnation and even decline of international aid to developing countries, pointing out that in 1989 the most developed nations spent five times as much money on protecting their agriculture as they allocated to official development assistance. With regard to the debt burden, he stated that the Brady Plan constituted the most far-reaching initiative, at least for those countries which accepted the adjustment programmes supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

21. He also pointed out the importance of trade in basic commodities for the regional economy and the paramount importance of the Uruguay Round negotiations, which it was hoped would lead to measures to strengthen the trading position of the developing countries, and also the possibilities that would open up to reduce the negative effects of sanitary regulations on trade in food and agricultural products, emphasizing that GATT had avowed its intention to call on FAO to act as adviser to help resolve any disputes that might arise on these matters. This action was complemented by the fact that the IMF had decided to call on FAO to give the countries concerned and the Fund itself the benefit of its experience in food and agriculture.

22. Stressing the Organization's concern over nutritional problems, he pointed out that the conclusions stemming from this Regional Conference on this item would be elements contributing to the International Conference on Nutrition to be held jointly by FAO and WHO in Rome in 1992.

23. As regards the financial situation of FAO, the Director-General emphasized that the Organization's activities and assistance were being seriously hindered by the precarious situation of resources. He appealed to all contributors to meet their commitments promptly and in full, while expressing his appreciation of the efforts many countries were making.

24. The full text of the Director-General's statement is given in Appendix E to this Report.

25. The Conference, in line with the opinion expressed by the President of the Republic of Chile concerning the problem of agricultural trade facing the region, issued a declaration that it agreed to send to the Summit of the Seven Most Industrialized Countries, meeting at the same time in Houston, stating the need for all participants in the Uruguay Round to make every effort to achieve a gradual and substantial reduction in agricultural subsidies and protection and obtain the reform of world agricultural trade. The complete text of the declaration, which is given in Appendix F to this report, was sent by the Chairman of the Conference to the Chairman of the Summit.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Situation of Food and Agriculture in the Region

26. In the general discussion, all delegations of member countries and various observers intervened, thanking the Government and people of Chile for their welcome and the facilities provided for the Conference.

27. The Conference expressed its fullest support for the objectives and activities of FAO and emphasized their importance for the region. It also recognized the serious financial situation which was considerably affecting the Organization's ability to serve the international community, particularly the countries of the region. Concerned about the financial crisis which affected all the activities of the Organization, the Conference urged all member governments, particularly the main contributor, to meet as soon as possible their commitment to pay their contributions to the FAO budget.

28. The Conference highlighted the importance of agriculture in the new strategies for economic growth of the countries in the region and therefore indicated that efforts leading to promotion of agricultural development should be strengthened.

29. The Conference reiterated that the heavy burden of external debt-servicing continued to be one of the main causes of the economic stagnation suffered by the region over the last decade, and drastically limited the possibilities of investment and therefore growth; in turn, it aggravated the situation of the poorest sectors, since it had involved a substantial reduction in resources earmarked for social programmes, such funds being diverted to external debt-servicing.

30. Various countries drew attention to the critical financial situation which they suffered and requested urgent support from the international community to face the serious problems affecting them. In this regard, they requested FAO technical collaboration, in the fields within its competence, in obtaining the necessary resources.

31. The Conference pointed out that problems stemming from the unfair nature of world trade in agricultural commodities were one of the principal obstacles to the economic development of Latin America and the Caribbean, and that the present modalities of this market limited export expansion, which was one of the cardinal components of the region's development strategy.

32. Among the causes of constraints on trade, various countries mentioned the protectionist agricultural policies of developed countries, mainly those in the European Economic Community and the United States of America and Japan, stressing two major factors: subsidies to the agricultural sector in these markets and the resulting "dumping" effects; and the tariff and non-tariff measures that were obvious barriers against the region's export products. The Conference stressed the urgency of reaching an agreement on agriculture in GATT that would facilitate a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round next December.

33. In the discussion, several countries pointed out that, in any process of liberalization of agriculture commodity trade, the establishment of equitable commercial relations should be taken into account as an indispensable requirement; if this were not done, the process might prove counter-productive, especially for countries concentrating on the export of one agricultural commodity only. Several countries of the Eastern Caribbean, who currently enjoyed preferential treatment in trade with some industrialized countries, mentioned the same point. It was recommended that the solution to this type of problem be sought through gradual and differentiated liberalization strategies.

34. The Conference considered that integration and economic cooperation at regional level had acquired special importance, not only because many of the problems were common to the countries in the region but also because of the significance of the redefinition of global economic and power blocks.

35. The Conference stated that poverty was the most serious manifestation of the problems that continued to beset the region, in terms of its characteristics and the number of people affected. It appealed to all countries to make the eradication of this phenomenon their principal task. It recommended that, in view of the urgency involved, there be discrimination in favour of the most vulnerable groups in the rural sector. In analysing this item, the Conference reiterated the views already agreed at the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference on the Plan of Action for Agricultural and Rural Development adopted in Recife in 1988.

36. The Conference emphasized the gravity of the under-nutrition and malnutrition suffered by broad sectors of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in those countries with fewer resources to deal with the problem. It also stressed, with concern, the fact that in the past decade this situation had not only failed to improve but had, on the contrary, been still further aggravated, as a result of the austerity measures faced by the region because of the enormous burden of external debt and the erosion of its capacity for obtaining financing. This was true not only in those countries that, in general, had deficits in food production but also in large areas of countries which normally did not have food deficits, or even produced surpluses. The Conference congratulated FAO on its activities regarding these problems and requested it to expand its programmes in this field.

37. The Conference considered the implications of the deterioration of ecosystems as a result of inappropriate economic exploitation - a joint and major concern of countries in the region - and stressed the need for agricultural development policies and programmes to include, as far as possible, ecological components contributing to the achievement of environmental stability in fragile ecosystems. Among the principal problems mentioned, it highlighted soil erosion and the resulting loss of fertility, water contamination by urban and industrial wastes and the toxicity of food due to the excessive use of agrochemicals.

38. Several delegations referred to the possibilities opening up in the technological field and pointed out that this was an area that should be given priority in the march toward development. They drew attention to two points of major interest: on the one hand, the essential role played by technical progress in sustaining increased productivity in the sector, in respect of production increase with improved competitiveness and, on the other hand, the fact that the technological option was directly related to the type and scale of the impact of human action on the ecosystem, which, nowadays, was a major concern. The Conference appreciated FAO's work in this field, both through the technological exchanges made possible by the Technical Cooperation Networks and activities in the areas of biotechnology, sustainable development and other fields of advanced technology.

39. The Conference indicated that rural development was still the best way to promote economic and social growth. In this respect, it requested the active collaboration of United Nations Agencies through FAO, the

system's lead agency in this field. More specifically, it requested FAO to support national bodies in charge of formulating and executing rural development programmes.

40. Some countries pointed out that agrarian reform, although it was no longer as widespread in the region as in past decades, continued to be used as a valid tool in those countries which still had agrarian structures hindering modernization and progress. In this context, having resolved to strengthen their agrarian reform processes while bringing agro-productive modernization and social and economic progress to large areas, they mentioned that they hoped to be able to rely on the collaboration of FAO, given its recognized world experience in that field.

41. Several delegations indicated the need for assistance so that their institutions would be adequate to support agricultural and rural development, stressing that institutional systems should meet the requirements of modern agricultural development, and take into account the challenges of technological change, production efficiency and international competitiveness, ensuring the participation of all sectors in the development process.

42. Likewise, the same delegations stressed that increased participation by the people directly concerned should be the guiding principle for future institutional systems. To this end, it was recommended that actions be undertaken to promote decentralization based on regionalization and the development and strengthening of local authorities. The Conference recommended that FAO extend its assistance in this field.

43. The Conference confirmed the importance of multilateral bodies, particularly FAO, as a viable way of coordinating efforts in several areas and receiving objective opinions at international level. It also pointed out that FAO's activities in the fields of scientific and technological development and agricultural information systems represented the best opportunity for the less developed countries to have effective access to change in the modern world.

44. The Conference appreciated the way FAO collaborated with other regional and subregional bodies and recommended the strengthening of existing mechanisms for coordinating agricultural and rural development technical cooperation and financing organizations in the region, particularly the World Bank, IDB and IMF, considering that the speed of change in the present world and the financial resources required by development efforts meant that these efforts were increasingly linked to external financing sources.

45. Regarding regional projects, the Conference appreciated what FAO was doing and made special mention of the PROCAPLAN and AQUILA regional projects, recommending the extension of this type of experience, which through horizontal cooperation schemes, brought together the efforts and capacity of countries of the region on the one hand, and the assistance of a developed country and FAO's capacity for technical and operational execution on the other. It supported the implementation of tripartite projects at national level in which governments, FAO as executing agency and UNDP or other donor bodies worked hand in hand.

46. In this connection, the Conference expressed its gratitude to Italy, requesting its continued support for these projects. It also noted the collaboration of other countries and extended its thanks to them.

47. The Conference stressed the importance of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme and its contribution to solving specific problems at national level and supporting cooperation among countries at regional and subregional level. The countries indicated the urgency of maintaining and expanding this programme.

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1988-89¹

48. The Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr Rafael Moreno Rojas, presented the item. He referred to the document "FAO Activities in the region 1988-89" which, for the first time, had been based on the main areas of the Plan of Action approved during the Twentieth Regional Conference held in Recife, Brazil, in October 1988.

49. He stressed that despite the precarious financial situation that FAO was facing, attention to and support for priority actions for the region had not diminished, but on the contrary, had been strengthened.

50. Referring to the Organization's Field Programme, he indicated that in mid-June 1990 there were 206 ongoing projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a total budget of US\$ 116.2 million. On the subject of mobilization of resources for special investment projects, he mentioned that the activities of the FAO Investment Centre in support of Member Nations during the 1988-89 biennium had resulted in ten investment projects being financed in countries of the region, which meant a total investment of US\$ 247 million. During that same period, work had been done on some 41 other projects which were in various stages of formulation, and sectoral and subsectoral studies had been concluded in four countries.

51. He also pointed out that the Regional Office was making further efforts to meet requests for technical assistance in a number of areas within the Organization's field of competence. For instance, major importance was given to the operation of the regional Technical Cooperation Networks, an idea which other developing regions were beginning to take up.

52. The Director of the Commodities and Trade Division reported on the negotiations being conducted on agriculture within the framework of the GATT Uruguay Round and on FAO's role in those negotiations. He also drew attention to the considerable support in information and documentation in agriculture, forestry and fisheries with which the Organization had provided GATT and the countries participating in the Uruguay Round, as well as to the technical support as regards sanitary and plant health regulations. FAO was the only international body in its sphere of competence called upon to participate in this process.

¹ LARC/90/2.

53. The Conference also stressed the importance of the intergovernmental groups on commodities and of the Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, reminding the Common Fund for Commodities that the above-mentioned groups should be designated as International Commodity Bodies in accordance with the decisions taken by FAO Member Nations.

54. A number of delegations stressed the need for formulating and implementing extension and education programmes in such a way that they effectively reached farmers, indicating that technicians should also be teachers of end-users of the assistance.

55. The Conference was grateful for the information provided by FAO on the GATT Uruguay Round and for its support to countries of the region during the course of the multilateral trade negotiations, and requested that assistance continue to be provided in this area. It stressed the importance of the Organization's assistance in the design of trade policies and recommended that regional cooperation activities be extended to cover trade negotiations. It also made reference to the need for follow-up in the eight areas of work identified in the FAO/ALADI Round Table on Activities for the Promotion of Intraregional Trade of Agricultural and Agroindustrial Products, held in Montevideo in September 1989.

56. The Conference noted with approval FAO's assistance to the countries of the region through the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP). It drew attention to the support which could be provided by the TFAP in the area of natural resource conservation, indicating that the Plan should therefore be given high priority.

57. With respect to the Plan of Action approved by the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean in Recife, Brazil, in 1988, the Conference pointed out that it should be disseminated as widely as possible, particularly to potential donors and financing bodies, with a view to obtaining funds for its implementation. It was suggested that it would be useful to continue following-up and assessing the activities carried out both by the countries and FAO.

58. The countries congratulated the Organization on the assistance provided under the Technical Cooperation Programme, making special mention of the Caribbean countries and member countries of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty.

59. The Conference recognized the value and effectiveness of the Technical Cooperation Networks in general and the need to strengthen their activities by assigning increased extra-budgetary resources to complement Regular Programme resources.

60. The Conference stressed the importance of the Codex Alimentarius, requesting FAO to publicize its work more widely and strengthen regional information systems to restrict "dumping" of the area's products and guarantee the quality of food for domestic consumption, including imported food. It expressed its support for the recently created Codex Group on Fruit and Vegetables and Fresh Vegetables, based in Mexico. It also requested that the Network for Food Quality, part of the Regional Centre for Training in Production and Quality Control of Meat and Meat Products, be strengthened.

61. In reiterating the need to help the countries of the region make better use of the fishery resources in their Exclusive Economic Zones, given their potential for food production and job and foreign currency generation, the Conference requested FAO to seek ways of accelerating the introduction of the strategy and programmes of action which emerged from the World Fisheries Conference.

62. The Conference stressed that it was important for intergovernmental bodies to coordinate their activities, cooperate and complement each other at regional and subregional level in order to avoid overlapping and enable funds to be used for the implementation of joint technical and financial assistance activities. It called for closer FAO involvement in the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, with headquarters in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, whose aims were the same as those mentioned above.

63. The Conference also attributed special importance to the full implementation of the Plan of Action for Women's Integration in Development.

64. It was requested that, at the next Regional Conference, countries of the region report on measures taken to ensure adequate follow-up of the technical assistance provided by the Organization. It was further considered useful that FAO step up the identification, preparation and dissemination of ideas concerning regional and subregional projects, strengthen Investment Centre activities, and intensify its cooperation in the field of trade and macro-economic policies. In this connection, the importance of the PROCAPLAN Regional Project activities was stressed.

65. A number of representatives of observer countries expressed their willingness to cooperate actively in agricultural development, particularly through assistance in the technological field, human resources training and research. They also expressed their concern with problems regarding international trade in agricultural products and emphasized the importance of multilateral international mechanisms, especially for dealing with the rapid changes occurring in the technological, environmental and socio-economic fields.

66. Attention was drawn to the similarity between the Plan of Action for Agricultural and Rural Development, approved by the Twentieth regional Conference, and the view of development proposed by ECLAC in the document "Transforming Production Equitably". It was pointed out that this clear convergence was the result of collaboration between FAO and ECLA through the Joint Agriculture Division.

67. The observer from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) made a detailed report on the Fund's activities and plans for the region. The Conference thanked the agency for its efforts and the information provided and trusted that IFAD would increase its support for the region.

Sustainable Rural Development in Fragile Ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean

68. This item was introduced by Mr Philippe Mahler, Assistant Director-General, Special Adviser to the Director-General, who referred to the mandate received by FAO to intensify its efforts in the designing of sustainable development policies and actions and the formulation of programmes and projects reconciling and harmonizing the needs of increased and diversified production with natural resource conservation.

69. He stressed that Regional Conferences of the Organization had included in their agenda items related to sustainable development. The results, together with other studies being carried out by FAO, would contribute to the elaboration of strategies and policy instruments for sustained agricultural development. These should be presented to the Conference that FAO was organizing, with the generous support of the Government of the Netherlands, to be held in Amsterdam in April 1991. This international technical consultation would provide inputs in the preparation of future FAO programmes and its contribution to the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in June 1992.

70. The introduction to the document summarized the conceptual and technical bases of sustainable rural development, indicating the relations of causality between structural factors and problems, productive processes and the orientations and impacts of public policies on the one hand, and the contraction of the resource base of fragile natural environments on the other; and indicated that the proposed policy framework included, in greater depth, the orientations and strategic and policy elements contained in the Regional Plan of Action adopted in Recife.

71. The Conference expressed its general agreement with the concept, analytical content and proposals for action in document LARC/90/3. This document provided important and useful contributions for a review of the subject at national level by every country in the region.

72. Delegations of member countries supplemented the content of document LARC/90/3 by giving information on the nature and dimensions of environmental problems in various ecosystems in different countries, on the policies and activities undertaken to tackle these problems, and on results obtained. They emphasized that environmental deterioration also occurred in less fragile ecosystems as a result of inadequate farming practices.

73. Various delegations insisted on the need to achieve a high degree of congruence and compatibility between macro-economic policies and agricultural and rural development policies, in view of the fundamental importance of general economic policies and inter-sectoral linkages in combining and achieving simultaneously the objectives of agricultural growth, mitigation of rural poverty and preservation of the environment.

² LARC/90/3

74. Emphasis was laid on the negative influence of external constraints on the development of the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, which hindered the efforts of countries in the region and limited their chances of achieving sustainable development, particularly through export crops.

75. The Conference highlighted the need for countries in the region to obtain external finance for priority programmes linked to sustainable development through loans with favourable differential treatment as regards repayment periods and financial costs. It also pointed out that the major multilateral and bilateral financing sources should consider additional unconditional grants to finance projects for the rehabilitation of deteriorated natural environments. In this respect, the Conference indicated that macro-economic adjustment programmes should give special consideration to policies that supported sustained development, giving them positive discriminatory treatment.

76. Stress was laid on the desirability for the countries of the region to introduce as early as possible analytical instruments and procedures for the evaluation of the economic significance of the environmental impact of their economic policies in general, and that of their agricultural policies and projects in particular. The Conference requested FAO to strengthen its technical collaboration to develop the required analytical instruments and to train the national professional officers responsible for accounting for the national heritage of natural resources and for evaluating the environmental impact of agricultural development policies, programmes and projects.

77. The need was emphasized to classify lands according to their carrying capacity and environmental stability, and to plan their use in a way compatible with this capacity. Attention was drawn to the importance of geographical information systems, of agroecological zoning and of land use planning and appropriate technology, particularly in the most fragile ecosystems, so that sustainable natural resource management may be possible.

78. The need for the combined use of biological and chemical techniques to reduce the negative effects of agrochemical residues was stressed.

79. It was pointed out in the debate that in addition to the ecological fragility of land, there were social variables stemming from agrarian structures and from land tenure, thus creating extremely serious socio-ecological situations and reinforcing the vicious circle between rural poverty and environmental deterioration. The need was emphasized to link the solution of the problems of agrarian structure and migratory movements with the actual possibilities of preserving the environment.

80. The Conference stressed the need to establish a legal and institutional framework for sustainable rural development which would serve as a basis for environmental legislation and for policies, institutional organization, coordination authorities and bodies and, at local level, for the strengthening of such technical and administrative structures as each country deemed necessary and appropriate.

81. The Conference appealed to developed countries to increase the financial assistance required to strengthen and regalanize national activities under the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, and also to ensure the

development of stable agro-silvo-pastoral systems. The needs far exceeded the operational capacities of developing countries and FAO was therefore requested to intercede with potential donor countries in order to intensify and expand the flow of financial and technical resources.

82. The Conference underlined the importance of subregional and regional cooperation in sustainable agricultural development and acknowledged the support that FAO provided for countries in the region, particularly the signatories to the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty. It requested the Director-General of FAO to expand intra-regional cooperation activities in matters related to sustainable agricultural development.

83. Fisheries integration in the region was dealt with by the Secretary of Fisheries of Mexico, in her capacity as President of the Latin American Organization for Fisheries Development (OLDEPESCA). She drew attention to the considerable potential of fisheries in the region and the opportunities for integration. This was a task on which OLDEPESCA was focussing its efforts, in order to achieve a common base for policy negotiation and the promotion of technical and economic cooperation and thus obtain the benefits of making optimum use of the resources in the region's Economic Exclusive Zones in line with the principles governing CONVEMAR. She referred to FAO's invaluable role in convening the World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, held in Rome in 1984, which gave rise to a Strategy whose principles and orientations took national sovereignty fully into account, since they were flexible enough to meet the various countries' needs. This strategy was complemented by five Programmes of Action which met international cooperation requirements in support of the developing countries. In this connection, she again thanked FAO and requested that the Fisheries Department continue to accord priority to these objectives.

84. She also stressed the importance of planning and management in the rational use of fisheries resources, and of lending particular attention to the rich but fragile coastal ecosystems. She referred to the need to strengthen the countries' capacities in research, fishing gear and method development as well as in handling, on-board conservation, fish processing and marketing, and highlighted the importance of technological progress and the risk of over-exploitation of stocks. For this reason it was important to continue striving toward consolidating a development strategy in line with the actual situation and meeting the requirements of cooperation and solidarity. Lastly, she referred to the need to achieve a reasonable balance between resource conservation, economic development and national sovereignty. A joint effort should be made to obtain greater international cooperation - both bilateral and multilateral - in ways appropriate to regional and subregional needs.

Malnutrition in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: Causes and Prevention³

85. The Director of the FAO Food Policy and Nutrition Division introduced this document and informed the Conference that, according to FAO estimates, the total number of undernourished people in the region had, due to population growth, among other factors, risen from 56 to 59 million in the last ten years, and it was forecast that this figure would reach

³ LARC/90/4

62 million by the year 2000. There had been considerable economic development in the region during the decades from the 1950's to the 1970's, which had benefited the majority but not all population groups. The situation had changed when, at the end of the 1970s, the economic crisis had led to cuts in social programmes such as health, education and nutrition. As a result of the crisis and adjustment policies, the nutritional situation had worsened appreciably in both rural and urban areas, mainly affecting the lowest income groups of the population.

86. To solve this problem, it was necessary to consider nutrition as an integral part of economic development plans to improve living standards, income and working conditions. The growing migration from the countryside to the towns and the unfavourable terms of economic and trading exchange between the two sectors required the implementation of a policy taking into account urban/rural interactions as regards food supplies and food and nutritional security, at both national and family levels.

87. The PAHO/WHO Representative a.i. in Chile made a statement on behalf of her Organization with regard to the International Conference on Nutrition, to be organized jointly by FAO and WHO and held in Rome in December 1992. Among other aspects, she stated that the principal purpose of the International Conference was to call attention to the extension and scale of malnutrition in the world today, and especially to its shifting patterns as a result of socio-economic change. Through this Conference it was hoped to alert countries to the dangers of malnutrition and to motivate potential donors to assist countries in overcoming the problem. She also sought the participation and support of member countries in the activities being conducted by PAHO/WHO and FAO.

88. The Conference expressed its general satisfaction with the diagnosis presented in the document and adopted globally the conclusions and recommendations for the prevention and control of malnutrition in the region. It was pointed out that the analysis of malnutrition in island states should be strengthened and also that analysis of the food and nutrition situation in the region should be based on up-to-date information, to which end FAO should provide technical assistance.

89. The Conference noted with concern that many countries in the region showed a negative trend in per caput food production. Migration to the towns was the main constraint on rural population growth, for which the rate was nearly zero, and it was forecast that it would be negative in the 1990s. The exodus of young and qualified people also explained the fall in per caput food production in the past decade.

90. The Conference appreciated the words of His Excellency the President of Chile, who had, in his inaugural address, expressed his concern over the high rate of migration of rural people, who lacked the means for a worthwhile existence. In this connection, the Conference drew the attention of governments to the need to provide infrastructure, services and incentives to the rural population to participate in the country's development; in particular, the rehabilitation of the productive capacity of poor rural people, especially those living in fragile ecosystems, was a prerequisite for increasing staple food production at national level.

91. To achieve optimal integration of these people in the productive effort of the region, the Conference recommended facilitating the transition from subsistence production to a market economy. In this

process, it was necessary to encourage women's participation all along the food chain, through training and increasing the number of income-generating activities. In order to diversify the economic and nutritional alternatives in the popular diet, the Conference highlighted the promotion of fisheries and aquaculture, particularly as regards high-potential species.

92. The Conference stressed the urgency of conducting special programmes for poor urban groups to alleviate growing malnutrition, especially among pre-school children, and pregnant and nursing mothers. Certain activities were being carried out successfully in the urban areas of some countries of the region, with FAO assistance. It was recommended that the Organization extend this cooperation to other countries.

93. The prevalence of diseases caused by inappropriate food consumption, including overeating, was giving rise to concern due, inter alia, to distortions in commercial advertising on eating habits and the irrational use of income, especially by the poor sectors. In order to remedy this situation, the Conference highlighted the need for countries to develop food and nutritional education programmes geared to consumers.

94. In view of the increased intake of low nutritional-level manufactured and street foods, often the cause of food-borne diseases, the Conference stressed the need for governments to strengthen food quality and safety control, encouraging the development of low-cost, easy methods and technologies. It was recommended that FAO establish a Food Control Training Network for the region.

95. To overcome malnutrition in the region, the Conference recommended that governments, guided by a strong political will, should include explicit nutritional objectives in their development policies and plans and adopt measures to strengthen the relevant institutions, encourage intersectoral coordination and improve their food and nutrition planning capacity.

96. To ensure a timely and efficient response to the needs expressed at intermediate and community level, it was necessary for governments to launch an effective decentralization policy and promote the active participation of the communities.

97. In this context, the Conference recognized the importance of the Food and Nutrition Surveillance Systems (SISVAN) as a way of identifying target groups and evaluating the impact of malnutrition prevention programmes in rural and urban areas. It also stressed the major role of the Technical Cooperation Network on Food and Nutrition Surveillance Systems (SISVAN Network), sponsored by the FAO Regional Office, and recommended that Member Nations participate actively in it and that it be integrally reinforced by FAO.

98. The Conference highlighted the importance of protecting the nutritional status of vulnerable groups through interventions in this field such as supplementary feeding projects, the provision of certain nutrients and food fortification to prevent micronutrient deficiencies.

99. The Conference expressed its satisfaction at the example set by FAO and WHO in cooperating on the organization of the International Conference on Nutrition, and stressed the need for active participation by the other international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies, as

well as assistance from financing institutions in preparing and following-up this event. In expressing the unanimous support of the countries of the region for the activities in preparation for the International Conference on Nutrition, the Conference recommended that the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean draw up a programme aimed at obtaining the most effective support of countries in the region for the organization and conduct of these activities.

OTHER BUSINESS

Representation of the Region in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)⁴

100. The Secretariat presented this document which described the status of agricultural research in the region, recent developments in the CGIAR System and the criteria for selecting member countries and their responsibilities.

101. During the debate, information on the position of Brazil both as a donor and as CGIAR Regional Representative was requested. The Delegate of Brazil told the Conference that his country has resigned as donor and would continue as Regional Representative until December 1992.

102. Chile and Trinidad and Tobago were proposed as possible candidates to represent the region in CGIAR once Venezuela ended its term in December 1990. Indicating that the Caribbean subregion should be represented in CGIAR, Chile withdrew its candidacy and supported that of Trinidad and Tobago. Chile expressed its willingness to replace Brazil when its term of office ended.

103. The Conference unanimously elected Trinidad and Tobago to represent the region in the CGIAR and agreed to recommend that Chile be appointed representative in 1992, replacing Brazil.

104. In view of the many years of experience and existing infrastructure of the Tropical Agricultural Research and Training Centre (CATIE), the Conference recommended that CGIAR study the feasibility of including this Centre in the Research Institutions' Network to which this Consultative Group belonged.

105. In view of the progress made by the Action Committee on Latin American Cooperation and Consultation on Plant Genetic Resources (CARFIT) and the fact that this was the regional branch of the International Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, the Conference requested FAO to increase its support and, jointly with LAES, to sponsor the Committee's consolidation, including the required technical capacity, the Secretariat functions and the necessary fora to carry out its task at regional level.

Date, Place and Provisional Agenda of the Twenty-second FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

106. In the discussion of other business, some delegations suggested that the Secretariat study the possibility of holding future Regional Conferences in two phases: the first at technical level, to be followed by another at ministerial level. In the exchange which followed this proposal, it was indicated that the total duration of Regional Conferences should not exceed five successive working days, since it was difficult for countries of the region to keep high-level officials away from their work places for longer periods.

107. With regard to the tentative dates for future Regional Conferences, some delegations suggested that the possibility be studied of holding them in October, to ensure full attendance by the representatives of the countries.

108. In discussing the possible venue for the Twenty-second FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, the delegations of Uruguay and El Salvador offered their respective countries as hosts. The Conference requested the Director-General to determine, at the appropriate time and after consultation with the various governments, the definitive venue for that Conference.

109. The following possible agenda items were suggested for the next Regional Conference:

- a) an analysis of the possible effects for the region of the unification of the European market in 1992, including agricultural exports and imports and the tariff and non-tariff barriers that could effect this trade, including in such analysis the impact on the region of the opening up of Eastern Europe, both politically and commercially, and the results of the Uruguay Round;
- b) an analysis of the state of the application of biotechnology in the region and the potential for its application.
- c) a continuation of the analysis of the item on environment in the region.

Latin American and Caribbean Group

110. During the discussion, various delegations referred to the background document prepared by the representatives accredited in Rome of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), which the Secretariat was requested to circulate to all delegations at the Regional Conference.

Adoption of the Report

111. The Chairman presented for the consideration of the Conference, the Provisional Report prepared by the Drafting Committee with the support of the Secretariat. The Conference, after examining each point of the Provisional Report and introducing the amendments it considered pertinent, unanimously approved it.

Closure of the Conference

112. The Conference unanimously agreed to communicate to the Government of Chile its gratitude for the warm hospitality offered to all delegates and observers during their stay in the country, and its congratulations on the arrangements for hosting the Conference. It was agreed to send a message of thanks to the President of the Republic, Mr Patricio Aylwin Azócar, for his personal attendance and interest in the work of the Regional Conference.

113. The Conference unanimously expressed its congratulations and appreciation to its President, the Minister of Agriculture of Chile, Mr Juan Agustín Figueroa, for the efficient and dedicated manner in which he had presided over its debates and other activities.

114. The Conference expressed its complete satisfaction at the way in which the Secretariat had organized the Twenty-first Regional Conference. It agreed to congratulate the Director-General and, in particular, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the excellent manner in which this event was conducted.

115. The Chairman declared the work of the Conference concluded.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region
6. Report on FAO Activities in the Region, 1988-89

III. SELECTED ISSUES OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

7. Sustainable Rural Development in Fragile Ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean
8. Malnutrition in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: Causes and Prevention
9. Representation of the Region in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

IV. CONCLUSION

10. Any other business
11. Date, Place and Provisional Agenda of the Twenty-second FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
12. Adoption of the Report
13. Closure of the Conference

APPENDIX B
ANNEXE B
APENDICE B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE
BUREAU DE LA CONFERENCE
MESA DE LA CONFERENCIA

Chairman
Président
Presidente

Juan Agustín Figueroa (Chile)

Vice-Chairmen
Vice-Présidents
Vicepresidente

Hilroy Humphreys (Antigua and Barbuda)
Felipe Solá (Argentina)
Warwick Franklin (Barbados)
Antonio Cabrera Mano Filho (Brazil)
Gabriel Rosas Vega (Colombia)
Antonio Cabrales (El Salvador)
Lionel Richard (Haití)
M. de los Angeles Moreno (México)
Roberto Rondón (Nicaragua)
Isaac R. Angeles Lazo (Perú)
Saimin Redjosentono (Suriname)
Brinsley Samaroo (Trinidad and Tobago)

Drafting Committee
Comité de rédaction
Comité de Redacción

Barbados
Ecuador
México
Uruguay

Independent Chairman of the
FAO Council
Président indépendant du
Conseil de la FAO
Presidente Independiente del
Consejo de la FAO

Antoine Saintraint

MEMBER NATIONS SERVICED BY THE REGIONAL OFFICE
PAYS MEMBRES DESSERVIS PAR LE BUREAU REGIONAL
ESTADOS MIEMBROS ATENDIDOS POR LA OFICINA REGIONAL

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

ANTIGUA-ET-BARBUDA

ANTIGUA Y BARBUDA

Head of Delegation

Hilroy Humphreys

Minister of Agriculture, Lands,
Fisheries and Housing

St. John's

Alternate

Lenox Weston

Economist

Ministry of Agriculture, Lands,
Fisheries and Housing

St. John's

ARGENTINA

ARGENTINE

Jefe de Delegación

Felipe Solá

Subsecretario de Agricultura,
Ganadería y Pesca

Buenos Aires

Suplentes

Marcelo Regúnaga

Asesor de Gabinete

Subsecretaria de Agricultura,
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Buenos Aires

Arturo G. Bothamley

Ministro Plenipotenciario

Ministerio de Relaciones

Exteriores y Culto

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Sra. Mónica Deregibus

Representante Permanente Alterno

Representación de Argentina

ante la FAO

Roma

Oscar Contreras

Subsecretario

Ministerio de Asuntos Agrarios
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Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires

Gustavo Infante

Secretario de Embajada

Embajada de la República Argentina
en Chile

Santiago

Daniel Raimondi

Secretario de Embajada

Embajada de la República Argentina
en Chile

Santiago

BARBADOS

BARBADE

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Minister of Agriculture, Food
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Bridgetown

Alternate

Ruall Harris

Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Agriculture, Food
and Fisheries

Bridgetown

BOLIVIA

BOLIVIE

Jefe de Delegación

Gerardo Aguirre

Subsecretario de Recursos Naturales
Renovables y Medio Ambiente

Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos
y Agropecuarios

La Paz

BRAZIL

BRESIL

BRASIL

Head of Delegation

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Minister of Agriculture and
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CHILI

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Suplentes

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Asociados

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Ministerio de Agricultura
Santiago

Hiram Grove
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Rafael Asenjo
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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

LARC/90/1-Rev.1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
LARC/90/2	Report of FAO Activities in the Region 1988-89
LARC/90/3	Sustainable Rural Development in Fragile Ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/90/4	Malnutrition in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: Causes and Prevention
LARC/90/5	Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

INF SERIES

LARC/90/INF/1	Information Note
LARC/90/INF/2-Rev.3	Provisional Timetable
LARC/90/INF/3-Rev.2	Provisional List of Documents
LARC/90/INF/4	Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the Twentieth Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/90/INF/6-Rev.2	Provisional List of Participants

OD SERIES

LARC/90/OD/1 to LARC/90/OD/5	Orders of the Day
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REP SERIES

LARC/90/REP	Provisional Report
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STATEMENT
BY
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE
HIS EXCELLENCY MR PATRICIO AYLWIN AZOCAR
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE TWENTY-FIRST FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Mr Director-General of FAO,
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Honourable Ministers and Under-Secretaries,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and people of Chile, I am pleased to extend to you our very cordial greetings and a warm welcome to our country at this inaugural ceremony of the Twenty-first FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

We see this event as an important endorsement of the process of bringing Chile back into the international community, which is one of the priority objectives of our Government.

I thank you, Mr Director-General, for your generous words about our country and your good wishes in the task of democratization on which we have embarked. We understand this process not only in the context of national interests, but also as part of the great changes that are bringing the whole world closer to a new era of freedom and peace.

We realize that this evolution is a task for all nations, from which no country can exclude itself or be excluded, and in which mechanisms for meeting and coordination at international level are indispensable. My Government supports the highly important role to be played in this respect by the multilateral United Nations System, particularly FAO.

We recognize the valuable contributions made by this Organization throughout its history, in its tireless struggle to put an end to the scourges of hunger, malnutrition and poverty. FAO has to its credit a remarkable record of activities on behalf of Third World nations, through the information it supplies to countries, the emergency measures it takes to help them face periods of food crisis and the projects under which it extends its valuable technical assistance to developing peoples. This is a suitable occasion to express formally our gratitude for such important work.

Chile has the great honour of having hosted the Regional Headquarters of the Organization since the establishment of the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1950s. This has facilitated the maintenance of fruitful relations between the Organization and our country, which have on many occasions led to mutually beneficial action. I should therefore like to assure you, Mr Director-General, that we shall continue to support FAO, its management and its Office in Chile, in the accomplishment of its tasks.

This Twenty-first Regional Conference is being held at a time of great change, marked by the collapse of the concept of a world divided into two hemispheres, and increasing appreciation of the most varied social statements which, although with only fragmentary visions of humanity's development, have had the merit of moving toward a more tolerant and universal development, one of dialogue and participation. From our point of view, this Conference is being held in a difficult period for the Latin American and Caribbean countries, which are still facing serious problems such as overcoming indebtedness, the re-establishment of financial flows, the fight against inflation and, in general, the achievement of sustained economic expansion with an increasing degree of social justice.

Economic growth and equity, and the consolidation and strengthening of democratic systems, are the great challenges for the region's future. In this context, it is particularly important to study the role to be played by the rural sector in the definition of new styles of development for Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is a quarter of a century since the last occasion when the FAO Regional Conference was held in Chile, namely its Eighth Session in 1965. Since then there have been far-reaching changes throughout the world in politics, in the technological field, in social and economic relations and in cultural attitudes.

During this period, world population increased by 3 300 million to almost 5 300 million, and this rise has been even faster in Latin America and the Caribbean - from 249 million to almost 450 million.

This demographic growth has generated increasing pressures on the natural resources that feed humanity and also on other assets that are basic to the general welfare. This pressure on land, forests, the sea, water and even the air we breathe, has been a major factor in the current concern for proper management of the ecosystems, on whose preservation in the immediate future depends the destiny of many generations.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, this situation is exacerbated by the increasing migration of those who have no means of living a worthwhile life in the rural sector and shift their expectations toward large urban concentrations where these expectations are not fulfilled, and the migrants often face unemployment and income levels just as low as those they had before.

The internal and external constraints that have hit the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean in the past decade and the adjustment measures that countries were obliged to take, have, in many cases, broadened the gap between the living conditions of the richest and the poorest. Apart from its injustice, this phenomenon creates tensions that hinder development and endanger social peace and political stability.

In these same years and despite finding themselves affected by the economic crisis, the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors have shown a surprising vitality of which many people were unaware. This has been apparent both in the capacity to increase the supply of traditional products at competitive costs in markets that were depressed or unjustly discriminated against, and in the generation of new products, the fruit of new technologies and ways of using resources. This has, at least partly, mitigated the effects of the crisis.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are dismayed to see that, while they are making enormous efforts to balance their economies and the pressures and requirements for opening their markets, some developed countries are stubbornly opposed to opening up their agricultural trade, seriously damaging the interests of countries in the region.

The Chilean Government will support, with all the efforts available, the initiatives tending to structure open and fair international markets. In the same way, we will be rigorous in denouncing all those mechanisms used against a transparent market which may be detrimental to our nations. In the belief that I interpret the feelings of the countries of the region, I assign special relevance to the results that may be achieved in the multilateral negotiations of GATT and the Uruguay Round. I trust that this concern, which will affect the economic future of the region, will be shared in the discussions of this Conference, and in the debates and actions that will follow it.

Allow me to refer now to the case of Chile, a country in which there have also been profound changes over the past 25 years, which we think should be mentioned today, as the democratic process starts afresh.

After the structural changes in the 1960s and the adjustments made at a high social cost under the last Government, we can claim to have made considerable progress, despite some disturbing problems.

Chile has achieved remarkable advances in the agricultural, fisheries and forestry sectors; this development has not, however, been balanced. Side by side with modern holdings, based on heavy investment and advanced technology and making increasingly large contributions to the country's exports, there are others, usually in the hands of smallholders, indigenous farmers or artisanal fishermen, that are still excluded from growth and modernization.

This requires a serious effort to ensure that any rise in production not only remains high and sustained but is also spread evenly throughout the various regions of the country. It is therefore essential to devote special attention to small and medium-scale farmers and the communes living in the most deprived conditions.

The reconstruction of our democratic life together is a collective task that requires the participation of all social sectors, especially those that have suffered worst from exclusion from the country's political, economic and social life. Discrimination against the rural sector in favour of urban areas must end, and the bases be laid for the rural population to have access to the goods and services needed to live a worthwhile life. Once and for all, the very real contribution of the work and culture of rural men and women to the country's economic and social progress must be recognized.

It will therefore be necessary to promote and encourage the reconstruction of the social fabric in rural areas, creating legal forms of expression and institutional instruments that will provide an opportunity for trade unions, small farmers' associations, cooperations and other forms of organization of the rural population to be constituted and developed.

It is of the utmost importance that rural development be understood as growth that ensures the continuous satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. The environmental problems of Chilean agriculture, reflected mainly in vast areas of erosion and desertification, the hydrological imbalance of watersheds and flooding, contamination of food, water and soil through undue use of agrochemicals, the loss of plant and animal genetic resources, have, among other things, obliged us to reorient agricultural and rural development modalities toward sustainable methods, bearing in mind that many of the problems of the great cities originate in lack of attention or the inadequate way in which rural problems have been dealt with. This development perspective is especially important for country people for whom, because of their marginality, the fragility of the ecosystems they occupy and production costs, agro-ecological proposals represent a real chance to prosper.

Turning to considerations of another order, we are concerned with the need to improve plant and animal health systems, both by eradicating the pests and diseases that threaten production and by eliminating the harmful effects of chemicals used without due care. We have also embarked on the task of planning policies to rationalize the exploitation of our marine resources, harmonizing their optimal utilization with the essential requirement of preserving stocks. In the field of forestry too, we need to develop policies to defend the forest heritage and protect and encourage new plantations, including efficient use of native species.

Finally, I take this opportunity to recall the discussions of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held in Rome in 1979 and, sharing the view put forward there by the great majority of countries in the world, to adhere to the Programme of Action and Declaration of Principles adopted there. In so doing, I wish to announce that the Government of Chile now withdraws its reservations with regard to this Programme of Action and Declaration of Principles and adopts what the Director-General of FAO called the Peasants' Charter. We recognize that the fundamental purpose of rural development is to transform permanently life in the countryside from the economic, social, cultural, institutional, environmental and human viewpoints, aiming for growth with equity and the active participation of the entire rural population.

To achieve these goals, my Government wishes to include effectively in the agricultural and rural development of our country those segments of society that have been marginalized for many years. We want a country in which entrepreneurs, technicians, professionals, small farmers, labourers, women and young people work together to achieve a balance between economic progress, social justice and political stability.

I firmly believe that, although the past decade has been so difficult for our countries, it helped us to understand that Latin America and the Caribbean will never see development or continuous modernization if there are no cooperation strategies to meet common problems in a spirit of solidarity. Against this background, the integration of the countries forming the Latin America and Caribbean region becomes a matter of desperate urgency. With this in mind, I trust that we may be capable of making decisions in this important regional forum that open effective pathways for regional concertation and the strengthening of international cooperation.

As you start this Conference, please accept the warmest wishes of your host country and its Government that your work may bear fruit. I am sure that the experience and clear-sightedness of participants here are a guarantee that the results of these days of discussion will be highly useful and important in the endeavour to move forward to a new stage of development and prosperity for agriculture, for rural areas and for all the peoples of the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

9 July 1990

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The face of our world is changing. Just in the two years since your Twentieth Regional Conference, we have witnessed a prodigious transformation. It is as if the pulse of history had suddenly quickened, and for once in a way which is essentially positive and liberating. Of course change as rapid as this causes serious and complex problems. Nevertheless, in the space of a few months, the world in general and your region in particular have taken giant steps in the direction of freedom, democracy and peace.

Given the importance of these events, which have had such a profound and beneficial impact on the immense region of Latin America and the Caribbean, you can well imagine my joy at finding myself amongst you again and welcoming you here in this beautiful and noble city of Santiago.

You may rest assured that FAO is not only following developments in your continent and your islands with intense interest but is also actively assisting you in your endeavours. One clear indication of this is my recent choice of Mr Rafael Moreno Rojas to fill the post of Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean. He is a competent and loyal colleague as well as a worthy son of this continent and a true symbol of the Chilean renewal.

He faces a difficult task. The situation of the economy, agriculture, trade and nutrition raises problems of alarming proportions throughout the region. These subjects will form the core of your discussions, which I do not intend to anticipate. Allow me nevertheless to share with you some of the thoughts, the concerns and also the hopes that this situation arouses in me.

Environment and sustainable development

The word which repeatedly comes to my mind, like a leitmotiv, is "fragile". This notion is expressly included in the title of one of the major items on your agenda, "Sustainable Rural Development in Fragile Ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean". How can we prevent environmental degradation while safeguarding the livelihood of an expanding population? This is perhaps the most fundamental problem of agriculture throughout the world today.

In developed countries, as can be seen in parts of Europe, the desire for maximum profit in the minimum time constitutes the most serious threat to the natural environment - soil, water and climate. Industrial effluents generate acid rain and chemical, thermal and even nuclear pollution. Intensive agriculture and animal husbandry also play their part. In many developing countries, excessive population pressure and soil fragility are combining to create land-devouring agriculture, leading to soil exhaustion, deforestation and desertification.

The Latin American and Caribbean Region is faced by similar threats, compounded by economic problems and a heavy external debt burden. Environmental degradation is partly due to rapid modernization which represents the biggest opportunity and also the greatest risk for the region. It is also due to extreme poverty, which induces small farmers to cultivate more and more marginal land. It takes only a few years' farming to turn this into barren earth, drastically eroded, with no hope of regeneration. But, whatever the cause, the effects of this degradation are heightened by the fragility of the ecosystems, however different, which predominate in the region: humid tropics, high mountains, arid and semi-arid lands, mangrove and other swamps, small islands and even cool temperate zones.

The in-depth study prepared by FAO at your request on the potential for agricultural and rural development in the region devoted much space to the problem of ecology and sustainability, as you will remember. Conducted in close consultation with your countries and with many regional organizations, it started from concrete realities to identify options for halting the race to the brink and for starting again on a sound basis for sustained and balanced development. I will merely recall here the overriding importance accorded in this context to land-use planning (with special emphasis on small and medium-sized holdings), to training of farmers and to the infrastructure needed to enable them to make a profit from agriculture without damaging the resource base essential for lasting economic and social development.

At the request of the last general Conference of FAO, we are now strengthening the Organization's activities in the area of sustainable development, in order to step up our response to your growing needs in this field. This action will also contribute to the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held, I am glad to see, in your region, in Brazil, in 1992. It seems to me essential that the vital interests of agriculture, food, forestry and fisheries be well represented at this Conference, not only by FAO but also at the national level by your Ministries.

Economic situation of the region

The region's economy also is weakened by a whole series of circumstances. It remains based above all on trade in primary products, mainly agricultural commodities. But, be these tropical products, or products such as sugar, cereals, soybeans and meat which face competition from the developed countries, it seems that everything conspires to prevent the countries of the region from achieving stable prosperity. The prices of many commodities are still so depressed that sometimes they no longer cover even production costs, while protectionism in developed countries both curbs access to their markets and leads to unfair export competition in third markets. Indeed the value of the region's exports at present remains less, even in nominal terms, than what it was a decade ago, and its share of world trade has fallen sharply in recent years.

The sequence of events is all too clear: a rapid deterioration in the terms of trade; mounting debt, which has taken on monstrous proportions; galloping inflation and the ensuing fall in the real value of wages; and impoverishment of the masses, particularly rural people.

The governments of your countries have responded vigorously and firmly, defining strategies and seeking new ways of emerging from this slump. In most cases, however, attempts to overhaul the economy through structural adjustment programmes have rebounded against the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population - women and children. No really satisfactory way has been found so far to ensure that it is not the poor who have to make the sacrifices needed for the country's economic health. Against this background, I am pleased to see that Argentina and Brazil are planning a common market. This is a concrete example of that integration and regional cooperation which is vital if the voice and the role of the region in world trade are to be strengthened.

Nutritional problems

One of the most unfortunate consequences of this state of affairs is that the nutritional situation, which had made remarkable progress between 1950 and 1980, seems to be deteriorating again. The vicious circle threatens to reappear: when people have less to eat and poor-quality food at that - this applies particularly to pregnant women and young children - physical and mental development is impaired, the possibilities of acquiring an education and qualifications diminish, and the chances of finding worthwhile and rewarding work fade or disappear completely.

It cannot be said too often - the problems of hunger and malnutrition do not spring from a shortage of food. Admittedly, the region includes a few countries that are not in a position to meet their people's needs. On the whole, however, the region is a net exporter of agricultural commodities, and in any event, the world produces enough food for everyone. If the malnourished and underfed number in the hundreds of millions, it is because they are too poor to buy the food they need.

Possible solutions

It is obvious that the only real solution is to attack the evil at its roots. If the countries and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean are to improve their economic situation, they certainly need far more aid from the international community. Aid alone, however, cannot solve the problem. The region also needs, first and foremost for its economic expansion, a fair, rewarding and revitalized share in international trade.

How do things stand? What is being done now, and what are the prospects in the various fields I have just mentioned?

Development assistance

Aid is stagnating or even declining. In 1989 the developed countries spent five times as much money on supporting their own agriculture as they allocated to official development assistance. For the OECD countries as a whole, development assistance amounted to only 0.33 percent of their GNP, the lowest ratio since 1977, and under one-half of the internationally accepted objective of 0.7 percent.

The Brady Plan

The reduction in arms expenditure that may now be hoped for should release new funds for development assistance. But the international community has not so far taken action on a large enough scale to help the

countries of the region. While recognizing the generous efforts of some creditor countries to alleviate the debt burden, we cannot pretend that these isolated gestures have done more than scratch the surface of the problem. The Brady Plan constitutes a more far-reaching initiative and sets itself more ambitious targets, since it aims at a faster reduction of the burden represented by debt and debt servicing for developing countries - or at least for those which accept the economic adjustment programmes supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). But for the time being, implementation of this plan is still in the experimental stage. Mexico is the only country in the region that has come to a final agreement; some arrangements for Costa Rica and Venezuela have been agreed in principle; others, with Brazil and Argentina, are still in the negotiation stage. However interesting this initiative may be, and it is certainly a step in the right direction, it appears to be coming up against many difficulties. Let us hope for decisive results; we shall have to follow closely what happens in Mexico, which will be something of a test case. In the meantime, apart from the Brady Plan, some recent developments in this field may, it is to be hoped, produce concrete results that will benefit the region. But it seems to me wiser not to indulge in undue optimism.

Multilateral trade negotiations

Trade in the basic commodities is of paramount importance for the region's economy. Growth and stability in this sector demand maximum attention and effort. These aims were uppermost in the minds of the promoters of the Common Fund for Commodities, launched by UNCTAD in 1976. The original idea, however, has failed to materialize and a solution within the foreseeable future cannot, therefore, be expected from this quarter.

More hopeful signals are coming out of the multilateral trade negotiations known as the Uruguay Round. For the first time, agriculture is a leading topic. It is particularly encouraging, therefore, that so many countries of the region are playing an active role in the negotiations. Despite slow progress, it may reasonably be expected that in the end these negotiations will produce a set of measures to strengthen the fragile trading position of developing countries, primarily those of Latin America and the Caribbean. FAO is making every effort to facilitate the success of the negotiations, by supplying on request the maximum of information and technical advice.

Cooperation with GATT and the IMF

In this connection, I see a particularly promising possibility opening up. The objectives of the Uruguay Round include minimizing the negative effects of sanitary and phytosanitary regulations on trade in food and agricultural commodities. GATT now has the avowed intention of calling on our Organization for scientific and technical advice to help resolve agricultural trade disputes between Member Nations. We are pleased to see the irreplaceable role of FAO recognized in this way, but still more so to be able to provide useful assistance to our Member Nations in this field.

Similarly, we can only be delighted at one of the IMF's recent decisions, in view of the Fund's cardinal role in structural adjustment programmes. The IMF wishes FAO to give the countries concerned and the IMF itself the benefit of its expertise and experience in food and agriculture, particularly as regards food security, nutrition, the eradication of rural

peverty, marketing and credit. It goes without saying that, here again, we shall do everything possible to assist our Member Nations and to ensure that structural adjustment programmes do not make life still more intolerable for the poor.

International Conference on Nutrition

I have told you how concerned we are about the region's nutritional problems. It is in response to this that your agenda includes an item expressly devoted to the prevention and control of malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean. Your debates will not fail to clarify the different aspects of the situation, and the ideas and experiences exchanged will certainly stimulate action in each country, as well as regional and sub-regional coordination of work on nutrition.

At the same time, as requested by the FAO Conference at its Twenty-fifth Session, your comments and conclusions will constitute the region's specific contribution to the major International Conference on Nutrition to be held in Rome in 1992. As you know, the purpose of this world assembly, organized jointly by FAO and WHO, is to identify problems, to raise public awareness, to draw up a strategy, to mobilize the necessary resources and to set up a world information system on these problems. The contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean will be of cardinal importance.

Role and financial difficulties of FAO

Promotion of sustainable development that respects the environment; action to revitalize commodity markets and ensure fair and stable trade; finding ways of easing and eventually overcoming the crushing debt burden; the organization of effective action to improve nutrition: these are only a few of the fields in which FAO will endeavour, side by side with you, to play its essential role in assisting the region to escape from the crisis in which it finds itself today.

Unfortunately, the action so badly needed from our Organization is constrained by our financial situation, which is still extremely precarious. You know the reasons - or rather, the only reason: delays in the payment of contributions, which have curtailed our resources alarmingly and obliged us to reduce our services to Member Nations. I renew my appeal to all contributors to meet their commitments to the Organization promptly and in full. Many of the countries in the region are finding this very difficult.

I am all the more grateful to them for the efforts they are making to avoid accumulating arrears, and I urge them to continue to do everything possible in this regard. This is only one aspect, however crucial, of the determined support which countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are unanimously showing for FAO, and which has frequently proved a source of strength for me in critical situations.

I seize the opportunity to acknowledge the very active and positive role of the region in the work of FAO's governing bodies, particularly the Council, the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee.

Conclusion

Much more could be said on many specific problems. I do not, however, wish to delay still further the opening of your debate. I will close with one further thought. We may - and do - have serious worries about the present situation. But let us remain confident for the future. Your region is a reservoir, with natural and human resources still to be tapped. Despite the prolonged crisis afflicting it, despite the serious difficulties it faces, Latin America and the Caribbean can find in their physical heritage, and still more in their people, genuine grounds for hope.

Your Conference will be aiming to help realize this hope, and I wish you every success in your work.

Thank you.

APPENDIX F

DECLARATION SENT BY THE CONFERENCE TO THE SUMMIT MEETING
OF THE SEVEN MOST INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS

The Ministers of Agriculture and representatives of 33 countries of the Latin American and Caribbean Region, meeting in Santiago, Chile, under the aegis of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in order to discuss the problems of their agricultural and rural development, fully conscious of the responsibility and role of the Summit of the seven most industrialized countries in the world concerning the agricultural trade of the countries of the region, express the wish that the Houston Summit will pay due attention to ways and means of reaching a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round, particularly in agriculture and with full regard to the needs of Latin America and the Caribbean.

To this effect, the Ministers adopted the following declaration:

The Ministers of Agriculture and representatives of the region wish to draw attention to the address of the President of the Republic of Chile, Mr Patricio Aylwin Azocar, delivered on 9 July at the opening of the Twenty-first FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean. In his address, President Aylwin Azocar stressed that "the Chilean Government will support, with all the efforts available, the initiatives tending to structure open and fair international markets. In the same way, we will be rigorous in denouncing all those mechanisms utilized against a transparent market which may be detrimental to our nations. In the belief that I interpret the feelings of the countries of the region, I assign special relevance to the results that may be achieved in the multilateral negotiations of GATT and the Uruguay Round".

In addressing the Heads of State and Governments of the Houston Summit, the Ministers and representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean stress that their agricultural and rural development and overall economic situation have deteriorated due to the excessive burden of foreign indebtedness, low commodity prices on international markets, negative terms of trade affecting them, limited access to new technologies, and difficulties in obtaining access to markets for their export products. They, further, find it intolerable that their efforts to achieve an adequate level of economic and social development are thwarted by the large export subsidy programmes of certain industrial countries.

The Ministers and representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean therefore express their expectation that the participants in the Uruguay Round will make maximum efforts to ensure the substantial, progressive reduction in agricultural support and protection and obtain the reform of world agricultural trade, fully in line with the solemn agreement reached in April 1989 in the Mid-Term Review of the Round. They wish to stress that the objectives addressed should be compatible with the differentiated treatment that should be given to developing countries, whether or not they are single-crop exporters.

