

REPORT

San Salvador,
El Salvador,
29 August-
2 September
1994

Twenty-third 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 2 September 1994)*

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

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
Twenty-second	—	Montevideo, Uruguay, 28 September-2 October 1992
Twenty-third	—	San Salvador, El Salvador, 29 August-2 September 1994

**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

San Salvador, El Salvador, 29 August - 2 September 1994

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 1994

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Don Carlos Antonio Mejía Alférez
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Dr Armando Calderón Sol

SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Country statements and general debate on the state of food and agriculture in the region

For the attention of governments

The Conference:

1. Reaffirmed the notion that food should not be used as a political weapon to the detriment of national economies, and that each country had the sovereign right to pursue its social and economic development without any form of external interference (para. 18);
2. Emphasized the importance of programmes that were jointly agreed by the decentralized state structure, the communities, the private sector and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs); of grass-roots involvement in programme identification and implementation; and of the privatization of service activities in which rural organizations also had a crucial role to play (para. 19);
3. Laid particular stress on the need for the member countries to tackle common basic objectives for the region, such as: i) food security, nutritional well-being and economic development; ii) the modernization of the agricultural sector; iii) sustainable development and the conservation and integrated management of natural resources, especially soil, water, forests and fisheries; iv) the creation of farm and non-farm employment; and v) the improvement of the terms of world trade. The Conference pointed out that actions on various economic policy fronts were needed to attain these objectives, as was the establishment of juridical and institutional conditions that would protect such initiatives (para. 20).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

4. Called for FAO support in the formulation of policies, strategies, programmes and mechanisms that would facilitate sustainable development which took into account institutional, technical, social and economic aspects, with special concern being given to the small-farm and more deprived rural sectors (para. 23).

For the attention of governments and FAO

The Conference:

5. Stressed the fact that the problems of poverty had been compounded in the smallholding sector by its limited economic and entrepreneurial capacity. A greater share of state resources should therefore be geared towards the technical, productive and economic restructuring of this sector. It agreed on the need to formulate appropriate policies, to legislate for equitable access to resources, technology, inputs and services, to envisage food security, to alleviate poverty and to enhance living conditions (para. 18);

6. Drew attention to the need for more effective human resource development through agricultural, technical-cum-entrepreneurial and management education and training programmes, with a special emphasis on women. This would increase the efficiency of development programmes, provide openings for off-farm rural employment and boost participation in agricultural service administration programmes (para. 19).

Report on the activities of FAO in the region 1992-93

For the attention of governments and FAO

The Conference:

7. Expressed its satisfaction with the work carried out by FAO in the region. It suggested that future reports on FAO activities should include information on the resources earmarked for the region, the activities scheduled for the following biennium and an evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Networks (para. 33);
8. Endorsed the draft TCDC agreement and the use of local experts to reduce administrative costs (para. 34).

Outcome of the 106th Session of the Council and its implications for the present and future activities of FAO in the region

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

9. Several delegations requested that a subregional office for Central America be established, emphasizing the specific nature of the problems that affected Central America (para. 46).

For the attention of governments and FAO

The Conference:

10. Reiterated by acclamation its full support for the process of reinvigoration and decentralization of FAO that the Director-General had proposed at the 106th Session of the Council (para. 49).

Preparations for the World Food Summit of 1996

For the attention of governments and FAO

The Conference:

11. Expressed its full support for the convening of the World Food Summit. The delegation of Mexico offered to host the preparatory meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean member countries (para. 54).

New arrangements for agricultural and rural development in the region

For the attention of governments

The Conference:

12. Agreed that the private sector should continue to acquire complementary functions with regard to development, particularly the provision of services, while maintaining a balance between the public and private sectors (para. 66);
13. Urged the member countries to continue their efforts to lead and promote consultation, communication and training activities on administrative decentralization and programme and operational efficiency by providing assistance to universities, NGOs, cooperatives and local governments, for the direct benefit of the target population (para. 70).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

14. Requested that FAO provide assistance to ensure that particular attention was paid to the least-privileged sectors, particularly rural women, thus avoiding any negative impact of the institutional restructuring process (para. 67);
15. Called on FAO to identify modernization formats that would avoid distorting the vulnerable economies of the region and to provide legal and administrative training with regard to the institutional restructuring process (para. 70);
16. Urged that FAO lead and promote consultation and training activities on administrative decentralization and programme and operational efficiency (para. 70).

Follow-up to the Uruguay Round and possible FAO assistance in the region

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

17. Recommended that FAO and other international organizations coordinate quantitative and qualitative studies on the impact of GATT on the region so as to help shape national and regional agricultural policies and thus foster trade integration among the countries (para. 72);
18. Requested the reinforcement of agricultural research in biotechnology and agro-industrial processing programmes and the provision of assistance for the setting up of reference laboratories to determine the safety of products for human and animal consumption (para. 73).

Integrated natural resource management for sustainable development: the key role of land and water

For the attention of governments

The Conference:

19. Stressed the need to apply new soil and water conservation criteria in all the countries of the region, setting operational priorities for agro-ecologically fragile zones (para. 78);
20. Highlighted the need for the governments of the member countries to participate fully in the follow-up action to the UNCED and stressed the importance of implementing multidisciplinary actions for the protection of the environment (para. 84).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

21. Suggested that FAO examine new forms of agricultural research that took into account land-use management and soil and water conservation. It requested assistance to establish and/or reinforce bodies governing land and water resource management and control policies (para. 79);
22. Requested that FAO provide technical support to harmonize existing legislation on natural resource management and conservation (para. 80);
23. Recommended that FAO review research policies and strategies regarding the use of inorganic fertilizers, with a view to rationalizing the supply of plant nutrients (para. 82).

Cooperation between FAO and regional and subregional organizations

For the attention of governments

The Conference:

24. Stressed the urgency of establishing contact with international funding agencies so as to mobilize resources to energize the agricultural investment process (para. 95);
25. Underscored the need for each country to reinforce its internal mechanisms for the coordination of international technical assistance to ensure that this coincides with national priority needs (para. 98).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

26. Requested that FAO and IICA develop their coordination to include areas such as: sustainable agricultural development, the management of domestic animal genetic resources, policy analysis and integration models and trade agreements (para. 93);
27. Asked that the positive coordination experience so far registered with IICA be gradually extended to other organizations. It requested that, at its next Regional Conference, FAO submit a similar document on FAO/IDB cooperation with regard to agricultural investment and the identification of priority areas for joint action (para. 94);
28. Requested that FAO and IICA, together with other subregional organizations, prepare a study on the outlook for agricultural development in Central America, for the meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the subregion to be held in September 1995 (para. 97).

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

For the attention of governments

The Conference:

29. Selected unanimously El Salvador (Dr Francisco Roberto Arias, Executive Director of the National Centre of Agricultural Technology (CENTA)) to represent the region on the CGIAR in place of Trinidad and Tobago whose term would be completed at the end of 1994 (para. 101);
30. Approved the measures put forward by the Secretariat to facilitate the future selection of Regional Representatives on the CGIAR and the performance of their duties with regard to the CGIAR and the region's member countries (para. 102).

Report on the follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN)

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

31. Requested that FAO step up its technical assistance and identification of funds for the implementation of projects stemming from the plans of action in the areas of: household food security and community development, food quality and safety, micronutrient deficiency, food and nutrition education, and monitoring and evaluation of food and nutritional status (para. 109).

Other business

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

32. Recommended that FAO pay priority attention to the people of Haiti in view of the grave situation that the country was going through (para. 113).

Date and place of the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

For the attention of governments and FAO

The Conference:

33. Took note of the offer of the Delegation of Paraguay to host the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in 1996, and requested that the Director-General consider the unanimous endorsement of the offer of Paraguay and determine the date and place of the meeting after consultation with the Government of Paraguay and other member countries of the region (para. 114).

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in San Salvador, El Salvador, from 29 August to 2 September 1994. The Technical Committee met from 29 to 31 August.
2. It was attended by delegations from 28 FAO Member Nations of the region and by observers from countries of other regions, other United Nations agencies, regional and subregional bodies and institutions and non-governmental organizations. The list of participants appears in Appendix B.

Opening Ceremony

3. The Conference was formally opened in the presence of His Excellency the President of the Republic of El Salvador, Dr Armando Calderón Sol; the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador, Mr Carlos Antonio Mejía Alférez; the Ministers, Vice-Ministers, Heads and Members of the participating delegations, the Diplomatic Corps accredited to El Salvador; and observers from international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
4. The Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of El Salvador welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government and people of El Salvador. He underlined that meaningful efforts toward sustainable agricultural and fishery development called for immediate, intelligent, coordinated action on the part of governments, producers and international cooperation agencies in order to ensure that food was produced under environmentally-sound conditions and that the people of Latin America and the Caribbean had unrestricted access to food. The full text of the Minister's statement is given in Appendix D.
5. The Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf, expressed his profound appreciation to the Government and people of El Salvador for the warm welcome, courtesy and hospitality that had been extended to the representatives of member countries and FAO staff attending the Conference.
6. The Director-General referred to the outlook for regional development and how this affected the agricultural sector, to FAO's activities and cooperation initiatives in the region, to recent developments in the Organization and to forthcoming events. The complete text of the Director-General's statement is provided in Appendix E.
7. He stated that the focus of his proposals to strengthen FAO was a systematic effort to optimize the use of existing agricultural resources and provide an effective response to member country needs, thus enabling them to have sufficient food stocks at all times. To this end, the regional system of Technical Cooperation Networks, which constituted the main channel for the promotion of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), would be strengthened. He also intended to gradually strengthen the Regional Office, and to establish a Subregional Office for the Caribbean. He stated that the FAO Field Programme currently sponsored 163 projects in the region, for a total worth of approximately US\$137 million.
8. The Director-General drew attention to the fact that three extremely important events in the life of the Organization would take place in the next few years: the celebration in Canada of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization in 1995, the World Food Summit in the first quarter of 1996 and the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources in Germany, in June of the same year. In this connection, he urged the Member Nations to participate actively in the preparatory work for these events.

9. In his inaugural address, the President of the Republic of El Salvador stated that it was a high honour for his country to host such an event which would enable the survival of the peoples of the region to be examined and addressed with realism and foresight, and would involve governments and international organizations in their shared concern for the future of humanity, in terms of nutrition and health.

10. The President of the Republic stated that the fundamental problem common to all developing countries was the inappropriate use of natural resources and the employment of unsuitable technologies in agricultural work, which resulted in low levels of productivity. He pointed out that the gradual modernization of the economies of the region had - and still - called for agricultural policies and strategies that were consistent with each country's economic and social needs.

11. As regards El Salvador's difficulties concerning agricultural and rural development, he stated that gradual population growth within a restricted territorial area and inappropriate land use had led to serious environmental degradation. To come to grips with this imbalance, his government had started to implement its National Agricultural Development Plan which set out primarily to stimulate production in accordance with the precepts of ecological efficiency, modernity and viability.

12. Finally, he welcomed the presence of the Delegations as this provided an international setting for the identification of immediate and practical solutions to the problem of meeting peoples' food needs adequately, through the use of the most advanced scientific and technological means available. The full text of the President's address is given in Appendix F.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Appointment of Rapporteur

13. The Conference unanimously elected His Excellency, the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador, don Carlos Antonio Mejía Alférez as Chairman. The Conference also unanimously elected as Vice-Chairmen all the Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Agriculture present: Hon. Tennyson R. Wells, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Bahamas; Hon. Russell García, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Belize; His Excellency Oscar Campos Chavarría, Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica; His Excellency Abilio Manuel Cárdenas García, Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Cuba; His Excellency Alejandro Gutiérrez, Undersecretary of Agriculture of Chile; Hon. Maynard Joseph, Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Fisheries and Forests of Dominica; Dr Benjamín Tobar, National Director of Rural Development of Ecuador; His Excellency Luis Arturo del Valle García, Minister of Agriculture of Guatemala; His Excellency Ramón Villeda-Bermúdez, Minister of Natural Resources of Honduras; Hon. Seymour Mullings, Minister of Agriculture of Jamaica; His Excellency Carlos Torres Manzo, General Coordinator of the National Food Commission of Mexico; His Excellency Julio Rivera Valle, Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of Nicaragua; His Excellency Sergio Garay, Vice-Minister of Livestock of Paraguay; His Excellency Rodolfo Masuda, Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Peru; His Excellency Francisco González, Undersecretary of State for Agricultural Extension and Training of the Dominican Republic; Hon. Chiefton Allan Cruickshank, Minister of Agriculture, Industry and Labour of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and Sen. Stanford Callender, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources of Trinidad and Tobago. The Conference elected as Rapporteur the Alternate Head of the Delegation of Mexico, Mr Ricardo Velásquez Huerta, the Alternate Permanent Representative of Mexico to FAO, who had performed the same function on the Technical Committee.

14. The Conference decided to retain the Drafting Committee of the Technical Committee which was made up of Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago, with an open invitation extended to the other Delegations to participate.

Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

15. The Conference adopted, without modifications, the Agenda and Timetable which is given in Appendix A.

SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS

Country Statements and General Debate on the State of Food and Agriculture in the Region

16. All the Delegates of the member countries attending the Conference and several observers took the floor in the general debate and thanked the Government and people of El Salvador for their welcome and the facilities that had been made available for the proceedings.

17. The Conference highlighted the sweeping process of political, social and economic change that was taking place on account of technological developments, international trade, increased specialization, the transformation of the governmental structure and the greater intervention of the private sector in a predominantly democratic but highly competitive environment. Though these factors contributed toward raising productivity, they had also further accelerated environmental decline, natural resource degradation and migration, which seriously hampered capacity to raise agricultural production and therefore attain food security. In view of this, sustainability acquired ever-greater relevance to the satisfaction of present and future needs.

18. The Conference stressed the fact that the problems of poverty had been compounded in the smallholding sector, which was located in the more resource-poor and vulnerable areas, by its limited economic and entrepreneurial capacity. A greater share of state resources would therefore have to be earmarked for the technical, productive and economic restructuring of this sector. It agreed on the need to formulate appropriate agrarian policies, to design legislation that provided for equitable access to resources, technology, inputs and services, and to adopt an integrated natural resource management and conservation approach that would secure immediate social and economic benefits, achieve food security and nutritional well-being, alleviate poverty and enhance living conditions. The Conference reaffirmed the notion that food should not be used as a political weapon to the detriment of national economies, and each country's sovereign right to pursue its social and economic development without external interference.

19. Given the framework of economic liberalization and the marked influence of international trade, the Conference emphasized the need for programmes that were jointly agreed by the decentralized state structure, the communities, the private sector and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grassroots involvement in programme identification and implementation, and the privatization of service activities in which the rural organizations also played a crucial role. It drew attention to the need for more effective human resource development through agricultural, technical-cum-entrepreneurial and management education and training programmes, with a special emphasis on women, that would increase the efficiency of development programmes, provide openings for off-farm work in the rural sector and enhance participation in the administration of agricultural services.

20. The Conference laid particular stress on the need to tackle the common basic objectives of the region: (i) food security, nutritional well-being and economic development; (ii) the modernization of the agricultural sector; (iii) sustainable development and the conservation and integrated management of natural resources, especially soil, water, forests and fisheries; (iv) the creation of farm and non-farm jobs; and (v) the improvement of the terms of world trade. The Conference pointed out that the following actions would be necessary to achieve these objectives: the diversification of production, the stepping up of productivity, the transfer of technology, the reduction of subsidies and the provision of incentives, the mobilization and efficient administration of funds, the strengthening of the state's role as facilitator and arbiter, the conservation and management of natural resources and orderly access to these resources, democracy and participation in the production, processing and support arenas, and the establishment of a legislative and institutional framework that would protect such initiatives.

21. The Conference fully endorsed the process of reinvigoration and decentralization of FAO, which had been put forward by the Director-General at the 106th Session of the Council. In this connection, it noted in particular the strengthening of the Regional Office and Country Representations, the setting up of a Subregional Office for the Caribbean, the establishment of the Department of Sustainable Development, the implementation of the Special Programme on Food Production in Support of Food Security in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries and the reinforcement of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and of Technical Cooperation Network activities. It also took note of the position of the Latin American and Caribbean Group in Rome regarding measures needed to further the restructuring process, as outlined in the paper which this Regional Group had submitted to the 106th Session of the Council. Some Delegations asked FAO to look into the possibility of establishing a Subregional Office for Central America and offered to host its headquarters.

22. The Conference requested that FAO continue to support the agreements reached under Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and at the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), with a view to contributing toward the preparation and implementation of the respective Plans of Action.

23. The Conference called for FAO cooperation in the formulation of policies, strategies, programmes and mechanisms that would facilitate sustainable development which considered institutional, technical, social and economic aspects with special concern for the small-farm and more deprived rural sectors. It mentioned, in particular, the programmes that were geared toward ensuring access to production resources, environmental protection, the integrated management of soil, water, forest and fishery resources, increased productivity, the streamlining of domestic and external trade, as well as programmes that were directed toward effective coordination among the various sectors of development.

24. The Conference urged FAO to further its implementation of agreements and collaboration with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and all the regional and subregional bodies.

25. The Conference advocated closer Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and more emphasis on subregional and regional integration and bilateral agreements. It also singled out the role of the technical cooperation networks, which facilitated links between countries on the one hand and regional and global activities on the other.

Report on the Activities of FAO in the Region 1992-93

26. In presenting this item,¹ the Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Office and Deputy Regional Representative acknowledged that the region had certain special characteristics: its natural resources, its administrative and socio-economic structures and the fact that it had the highest incidence of rural poverty of all the regions in the developing world. These factors translated into the need for specially-targeted development strategies and programmes. This was why the FAO restructuring and decentralization policies now being put into effect by the Director-General were of the utmost importance.

27. He stressed that, as an international organization, FAO had taken special care to ensure that its programmes and activities provided truly regional coverage. For instance, during the previous biennium, experts from all the region's FAO Member Nations had been involved in technical activities, either as trainees or trainers, or in technical cooperation initiatives on subjects of interest

¹ LARC/94/2 and Appendix.

to the governments. He also referred to the significant output of the Regional Office in terms of publications, databases and audio-visual material.

28. He drew attention to the actions that the Regional Office had been conducting in the Caribbean in tandem with the FAO Representations, such as support for the Caribbean Plant Protection Commission and direct assistance activities to help countries tackle and resolve the important issues of plant protection and quarantine, small-scale fisheries, agro-tourism, Exclusive Economic Zones, small agro-industries, tropical forests, watershed management and environmental degradation. He added that the establishment of a Subregional Office in the Caribbean would streamline Regional Office action in the subregion.

29. He stressed that one of the features of the decentralization process was to give the Regional Office the added responsibility of maintaining relations and coordinating with other regional organizations. In this connection, he underscored the progress that was being made in partnership with IICA in coordinating and dovetailing activities. He also highlighted collaboration with various international bodies and governmental and non-governmental organizations.

30. He emphasized that the Technical Cooperation Network system, which was sponsored by the Regional Office, had continued to serve as the main instrument to develop actions at country level to promote technical and economic cooperation among developing countries and to keep abreast of member countries' agricultural and rural development policies, strategies and programmes.

31. He referred to the effective support that had been given to incorporating women into the development process, mainly through the activities that had been conducted in the corresponding Technical Cooperation Network.

32. He drew particular attention to the fact that FAO had given strong support to the various subregional integration processes, particularly those being promoted through MERCOSUR, the Andean Group, CARICOM and the Central America Common Market. He also stressed FAO's involvement in the negotiations that the countries of the region had conducted within the context of the GATT Uruguay Round and in the alignment of their agricultural production and trade strategies to the outcome of these negotiations.

33. The Conference expressed its satisfaction with the work carried out by FAO in the Region. Some member countries suggested that, in future, the report on FAO activities should include information on the resources earmarked for the region and the activities scheduled for the following biennium as well as an evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Networks.

34. The Conference endorsed the draft TCDC agreement and the use of local experts in order to reduce administrative costs.

35. Some delegations expressed the need for FAO to evaluate the implementation of projects and other activities in coordination with the national bodies. They also requested that studies be conducted to determine fisheries potential in their respective countries.

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

36. Under this Agenda item,² the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council reported that the Session had been held in an extremely cordial atmosphere and that the contributions had been creative and cooperative. This had resulted in the unanimous approval of the Director-General's proposals for the review of FAO programmes, structures and policies, in accordance with Resolution 10/93 of the Conference. He emphasized that this successful outcome could be put down to the fact that the Director-General had taken care to frame his proposals as positive changes and reforms within the United Nations system, with broad-based Member State consultation and participation and transparency of Secretariat action.

37. He also referred to some of the comments and recommendations that had been made by the member countries during the Council's deliberations, which would be taken into account when the FAO transformations were put into effect. Among these, he stressed the importance of retaining the Organization's reputation as a centre of excellence, international appraisal and global reference, within its mandated fields of interest, and stated that the restructuring would not, therefore, affect its area of competence.

38. With regard to the special effort aimed at food security, he endorsed the Director-General's intention of combining extra-budgetary funds with catalytic Regular Programme funds, given that follow-up activities in this area should consider not only boosting production but also the issues of food availability and access and how these related to extreme poverty, inadequate economic growth, unemployment and the need to safeguard the environment.

39. As for implementation of the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases, he underlined the need for closer coordination with the appropriate national and international organizations and for FAO's modest budgetary contribution to be used as an incentive and spur for interested countries to reinforce and revitalize their collaborative relationships.

40. The Independent Chairman of the Council stressed that the proposals for the restructuring of FAO had also been enthusiastically received, particularly those regarding the strengthening of the Regional Offices and the establishment of new subregional offices. However, these decentralization proposals should not result in a dispersal or separation of policy-setting and operational activities, or in the loss of FAO's valuable central services.

41. Finally, he stressed that the decentralization policy vested the Regional Conferences with an additional dimension and importance, in that it required them to carefully fine tune FAO's policies and programmes to the capabilities and needs of each region or subregion.

42. The Special Adviser to the Director General/Assistant Director-General for Environment and Sustainable Development informed the Conference that the process of implementation of the Council decisions had been started and would have to be continued during and beyond the biennium, through the preparation of the 1996-97 Programme of Work and Budget. The major implications for the region were the decentralization of the Organization's activities. To this end, the Director-General had invited member country governments to indicate their priority needs so as to ensure that the decentralization process would bring the Organization closer and more immediately responsive to the member countries' demands. The role and functioning of the Organization's structures at Headquarters and at regional and country levels were being reviewed concurrently so as to ensure that the pattern of services and expertise available to member countries, at these different levels, better

² LARC/94/INF/8.

reflected the geographical distribution of priority requirements and the need for increased effectiveness. The same process of country consultations and priority analysis had also been used to determine the location of the Subregional Office for the Caribbean and its staffing, it being understood that this office would continue to rely on support from the Regional Office, to which it would report.

43. Decentralization was also aimed at ensuring closer interaction between FAO and regional and subregional institutions, as had already been started between FAO and IICA. The use of local expertise in the Country Offices would also facilitate relations with national institutions.

44. As regards the changes in the organizational structures at FAO Headquarters and the new programmes, as approved by the Council, the Special Adviser stressed that their major implication for the region was that they very closely paralleled the main thrusts of the national priorities and programmes that had been reported during the Regional Conference, thus accentuating the relevance of FAO activities to national policies, plans and programmes. He underlined, however, that FAO's basic functions would be maintained and that the main consequences of the Council decisions would be reflected more in how these functions were discharged vis-à-vis Member Countries than in substantive programme changes. Only a relatively small fraction of the Programme of Work and Budget for 1994-95 approved by the Conference had been affected by the changes decided by the Council.

45. In the following debate, the country delegations welcomed the decisions taken by the Council, particularly as regards decentralization and the creation of the Technical Cooperation Department and the Department of Sustainable Development, and expressed their support for and interest in the new programmes on food production for food security and prevention of diseases and pests. In reply to a request that countries be kept informed on progress in the implementation of the Council's decisions, so that they could better assess the implications for countries in the region, it was pointed out that they would receive the progress reports that were prepared for the Programme Committee, the Council and the Conference.

46. Several delegations stressed the special nature of the problems of the Central American subregion and requested that a Subregional Office for Central America be established.

47. The Director-General, Dr Jacques Diouf, intervened in reply to the suggestion by a delegation that further decentralization and a higher degree of autonomy in the management of and budgetary allocation to Regional, Subregional and Country Offices would be desirable.

48. While reaffirming his intention to implement fully the decentralization process approved by the Council, the Director-General forcefully expressed his conviction that universality, cohesion and unity should be maintained in the constituency, programmes and strategies of FAO. He warned against any excess of decentralization that could lead to conflicts of interest among member countries and regions regarding the Programme of Work and Budget of the Organization.

49. The Conference reiterated by acclamation its full support for the Council's and the Director-General's decisions.

Preparations for the World Food Summit of 1996

50. The Director of the Information Division presented this item ³ of the Agenda. He recalled the deep concern that had been expressed by the 27th Session of the Conference of FAO about persisting food insecurity in many countries, population increase and declining agricultural investment, as well as its request that immediate steps be taken to bring about food security.

51. The Conference noted that the Director-General had consulted a number of Heads of State and governments in all regions on these issues and had received their consensus to convene a World Food Summit as early as possible in view of their serious concern about food insecurity. The Conference took note of the Director-General's intention to call the Summit in early 1996. Saturday 9 March and Sunday 10 March were being viewed as tentative dates. The purpose of the Summit was to raise awareness and political will at the highest level, as well as in the realm of public opinion, on the inacceptability of continued food insecurity and on the need for global commitment and action to redress this problem. The Summit was expected to lead to the adoption of policies at international and national level, and to the adoption of a Plan of Action. There was no intention of proposing new organizational structures or additional financial mechanisms.

52. The Conference was informed that the preparatory process would be broad-based and would involve consultations with governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the UN system. The Secretariat would present the major issues relevant to world food security through a series of analytical background papers on past developments, the present situation and proposals for future action. The papers would mainly be based on "Agriculture: Towards 2010" and other studies conducted by the Organization. The Secretariat would also prepare a draft policy document for consideration by the Summit, in addition to a Plan of Action.

53. The Summit documentation would first be submitted to a special Ministerial Meeting in Quebec, Canada, (October 14-16, 1995) convened in connection with the commemoration of FAO's 50th Anniversary. Ministers of Agriculture and Development Cooperation would be invited to this meeting. Also, in the context of the Anniversary of the Organization, the Federal Government of Canada and the Government of the Province of Quebec would organize a three-day international symposium on food security-related issues, to be held in Quebec (October 11-13, 1995). The Symposium would be attended by representatives from governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Linkages between these two events would enable Symposium participants representing NGOs and the private sector to present their perspectives on food security issues at the ministerial meeting.

54. The Conference expressed its full support for the convening of the World Food Summit and Mexico offered to host the preparatory meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean member countries.

Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture

55. This item was also presented by the Director of the Information Division who informed the Conference that the Secretariat had prepared a draft "Declaration on Food and Agriculture"⁴ in response to Conference Resolution 4/93 on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization in 1995. In accordance with the resolution, a Draft Declaration would be submitted to all Regional Conferences in 1994. Member Governments were asked to submit their comments in writing before a given

³ LARC/94/INF/10.

⁴ LARC/94/INF/7.

deadline. In the case of the Latin American and Caribbean Region, the deadline for such comments was **2 November 1994**.

56. The draft would be revised by the Secretariat in accordance with the written submissions from member countries. The revised draft would be placed before the June 1995 Session of the Council for its consideration. It would then be further revised in the light of the Council's deliberations for submission to the Conference in November 1995. In accordance with the Conference Resolution, the final draft would also be submitted to the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Observance for endorsement.

57. The Regional Conference was further informed that the 50th Anniversary resolution adopted by the last Conference of FAO also called upon all member countries to observe the Organization's anniversary in a manner that befitted the importance of the event. Many activities were already under consideration. For example, more than 50 member countries had already decided to issue commemorative stamps and, so far, over 30 member countries had indicated that they would issue commemorative coins. In order to help member countries to plan suitable commemorative events, the Director-General had already decided on the World Food Day theme for 1995, which was also the theme for the Anniversary, this being "Food for All".

58. The Delegation of Canada informed the Conference about the events that were scheduled to take place in Quebec City to mark the 50th Anniversary of FAO in October 1995. The Governments of Canada and the Province of Quebec, and the City of Quebec were organizing an International Symposium from 11 to 13 October 1995 that would deal with a wide range of food security issues. The 50th Anniversary Observance would take place on 16 October at Quebec's Chateau Frontenac, the very site where FAO had been founded in 1945. The events would conclude with the endorsement of the "Quebec Declaration" - the 50th Anniversary Declaration on Food and Agriculture. The Government of Canada would also host the Ministerial Meeting that was being convened by the Director-General in preparation for the World Food Summit.

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Opening of the Technical Committee Meeting

59. The Officer-in-Charge of the Regional Office and Deputy Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean opened the Technical Committee meeting on behalf of the Director-General of FAO. He welcomed the delegates and observers and thanked the Government and people of El Salvador for their kind hospitality.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteurs

60. The Committee unanimously elected His Excellency, the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador, Don Carlos Antonio Mejía Alférez as Chairman. The Committee also unanimously elected as Vice-Chairmen all the Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Agriculture present: Hon. Tennyson R. Wells, Minister of Agriculture of Bahamas; Hon. Russel García, Minister of Agriculture of Belize; His Excellency, Abilio Manuel Cárdenas García, Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Cuba; Hon. Maynard Joseph, Minister of Agriculture of Dominica; Dr Benjamín Tobar, National Director of Rural Development of Ecuador; His Excellency Sergio Garay, Vice-Minister of Livestock of Paraguay; His Excellency, Rodolfo Masuda, Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Peru, His Excellency, Francisco González, Under-Secretary of State for Agricultural Extension and Training of the Dominican Republic; and Hon. Chiefton Allan Cruickshank, Minister of Agriculture, Industry and Labour of Saint Vincent. The Committee elected as Rapporteur the Alternate Head of the Delegation of Mexico, Mr Ricardo Velásquez Huerta, the Alternate Permanent Representative of Mexico to FAO.

61. The Drafting Committee was made up of Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago, with an open invitation to the other delegations to participate.

Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

62. The Committee adopted the Agenda and Timetable given in Appendix A.

New Arrangements for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Region

63. This item⁵ was presented by the Senior Officer from the Human Resources, Institutions and Agrarian Reform Division of FAO, who referred to how the participation element and the role of public institutions in agricultural and rural development had changed during the course of the last twenty or so years. He also mentioned the focus given to rural development in macro-economic models. He highlighted recent developments regarding the decentralization of the public sector, the emergence of new channels for economic and social initiatives and the role played by farmer associations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

64. He emphasized the need for closer examination of the role, structure and programmes of local governments and the privatization process. In this connection, FAO was in a position to step up its technical assistance to further the process of change methodically, and ensure it was monitored and evaluated.

65. During the ensuing debate, the Committee referred to the provisional nature of the document and the need for it to be supplemented with the member countries' views.

⁵ LARC/94/3.

66. The Committee drew attention to the recent changes in the role of the state, at its various levels, in development, to the relative decline in the role of the state in the management, operation and implementation of agricultural programmes and to the greater importance that was being attached to decentralization. This had raised the profile of local governments on account of their direct contact with the grassroots and rural organizations, and because of their status of intermediary between these and central government. The private sector had acquired complementary functions with regard to development, particularly in the service sector. The Committee called for this orientation to be pursued and gradually consolidated, with a balance being maintained between the public and private sectors.

67. The Committee agreed on the importance of supporting this orientation in such a way as to ensure that particular attention was paid to the least-privileged sectors of society - particularly rural women - and that their needs were identified through a process of participation, thereby reducing the potential negative impact of the new approach. FAO was asked to provide assistance in this connection.

68. Some delegations underscored the need to define the role of the state vis-à-vis the privatization process in order to avoid a concentration of responsibilities in the private sector. They pointed to the importance of maintaining a number of differentiated policies because of the present international trade context for the purpose of facilitating access to resources and to agricultural and social services.

69. The Committee referred to several of the factors that hindered the social, economic and cultural advance of the rural sectors of the countries of the region, particularly the increase in poverty, and the important role that FAO should play in rectifying this situation.

70. The Committee urged the member countries and FAO to continue their efforts to lead and promote consultation, communication and training activities related to administrative decentralization and programme/operation efficiency. Particular attention was drawn to legal and technical-administrative training of immediate benefit to the target population through the provision of assistance to universities, NGOs, cooperatives and local governments. Similarly, it called on FAO to identify modernization formats that would avoid distorting the vulnerable economies of the region. Particular concern was expressed regarding the needs of small island states.

Follow-up to the Uruguay Round and Possible FAO Assistance in the Region

71. With regard to this item,⁶ the Committee stressed the importance of FAO monitoring the impact of the outcome of the Uruguay Round on the countries of the region, including the strengthening of the multilateral system and measures against protectionist practices, greater transparency in trade negotiations, the ability of countries to apply the new regulations for international trade (either to benefit their domestic markets or in the promotion of their exports), the elimination of non-tariff barriers and distortions in world trade, with the view to achieving international trade that was fair, equitable and conducted in compliance with the Uruguay Round agreements.

72. The Committee recommended that FAO and other international organizations carry out quantitative and qualitative studies on the impact of the Uruguay Round on the region to help shape national and regional agricultural policies more efficiently, thereby enhancing the market integration of countries.

⁶

LARC/94/INF/9.

73. The Committee requested that FAO take concrete action to reinforce agricultural research in biotechnology and agro-industry processing programmes and that it provide assistance in the setting up of reference laboratories for the safety of products for human or animal consumption.

Integrated Natural Resource Management for Sustainable Development: the Key Role of Land and Water

74. The Technical Officer from the Land and Water Division who presented this item⁷ underlined the pressure that was being exerted on natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean from high population growth, soil fragility in unstable ecoregions, the many claims made on limited resources, rural poverty and insufficient institutional support. Broad effective action against the degradation of soil, water and plant nutrients was only possible if the land users themselves were to directly benefit from the conservation measures.

75. He mentioned that local farmer associations, the strengthening of local and national technical assistance institutions and regional and international agreements were fundamental to the exchange of information, training and technical assistance. He further stated that attitudes and priorities regarding agricultural research should be modified, with greater attention being given to land-use management that was conducive to soil and water conservation. Appropriate agricultural policies, legislation for equitable land distribution and viable soil conservation measures could eliminate the causes of inappropriate land use.

76. He concluded that the formulation and implementation of an integrated approach to soil and water conservation could offer additional social and economic benefits, in the form of increased farmer income, enhanced food security, reduced migration to urban areas and greater availability of better-quality water. Sound environmental management helped to further rural development, alleviate poverty and enhance general living conditions for the population as a whole.

77. During the debate, the Committee pointed out that while the interaction between population growth and rural poverty and the resulting imbalance in resource use was among the more prominent common causes of environmental degradation, other more general factors which had a direct negative impact on the environment should not be ignored: technology geared to increasing agricultural production and productivity; excessive subdivision of land and land tenure insecurity; macro-economic policies that put a burden on the rural sector in that they underestimated the real cost of land and water depletion, degradation and pollution, the reduction or loss of forest land and the loss of biodiversity.

78. The Committee stressed the need to apply new soil and water conservation criteria in all the countries of the region, setting priorities for action in agro-ecological zones in which there was a conflict between environmental protection and resource use, such as in arid areas subject to desertification.

79. The Committee suggested that FAO examine new agricultural research approaches that took into account land-use management and soil and water conservation as well as higher crop yield and productivity. It requested assistance to establish and/or reinforce bodies governing land and water resource management and control policies.

80. The Committee requested that FAO provide technical support for the harmonization of existing legislation with a view to establishing an appropriate framework for natural resource management and conservation.

⁷

LARC/94/4.

81. It also asked FAO to assess on-going and completed soil conservation projects in the region and to use the findings to improve future projects.

82. Finally, it recommended that FAO review policies and research strategies, mainly regarding the biological fixation of nutrients and/or symbiotic interactions with the use of inorganic fertilizers, with a view to rationalization in order to upgrade the efficiency of plant nutrient supply - a step which would also raise farmers' incomes.

83. The Special Adviser/Assistant Director-General for the Environment and Sustainable Development informed the Committee⁸ of recent international developments in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and underlined the active participation of FAO in the implementation of the UNCED agreements, particularly Agenda 21. He stated that in 1995 the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) would review the progress made by Member Nations and international organizations in several areas of interest to the agriculture and forestry sectors, and recognized the need for the Ministries responsible for these sectors to take part in the preparation of the national reports to the CSD and in its meeting in April 1995. He mentioned that FAO, in its capacity as Task Manager in these areas, was responsible for facilitating a coordinated UN system response to the relevant UN agreements and for reporting to the CSD on the progress made by the international organizations in this respect.

84. The delegations reported on the activities that had been implemented in their respective countries in compliance with Agenda 21, and mentioned the need for further coordination of action so that these agreements could be brought to full fruition, expressing the appropriateness of each country drawing up its national Agenda 21. With regard to forests, the Committee highlighted the need for the governments of the member countries to participate fully in follow-up action to the UNCED. It also emphasized the need to implement multidisciplinary action for the protection of the environment.

85. The Committee supported the initiatives taken by the Director-General in relation to the UNCED follow-up, in particular the establishment of a new Department for Sustainable Development and, in preparation for the CSD meeting in 1995, the meeting of experts, followed by the meeting of ministers responsible for forestry. It expressed its satisfaction with the role played by FAO in ensuring an adequate balance of regional interests in the successful negotiation of the Convention for Combating Desertification and Drought and in the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, in harmony with the International Convention on Biological Diversity. It underlined the major interests of the region in the forthcoming FAO Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, to be held in 1996, and in the establishment of a Plan of Action that was geared towards projects designed to effectively protect the plant genetic resources of the region. It also referred to the urgent need for an early conclusion of the International Code of Conduct on Responsible Fishing. The Committee also stressed the importance of the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994, and mentioned the follow-up Second Interregional Conference of Small Island Developing States scheduled for early next year.

Cooperation between FAO and Regional and Subregional Organizations

86. This item⁹ was presented by the Chief of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Development Department. He outlined the reasons behind the decision to include this topic as a separate item on the Agenda of the Conference, in contrast to practice in other biennia.

87. He stated that FAO maintained formal relations with most of the regional and subregional organizations that were active in the promotion of agricultural and rural development, among other areas, in Latin America and the Caribbean. He reported that FAO also cooperated on a special basis with organizations with which it had not entered into formal work relations.

88. He described the type of activities that were pursued with these organizations in the fields of competence of FAO and of each organization. He stated that the extent of this cooperation was currently reflected in the implementation of nine regional and subregional projects, with a total budget of about US\$7 100 000, in technical areas connected to the priority concerns of the member countries.

89. He emphasized that FAO was fully convinced of the justification for maintaining close relations and collaborating with regional and subregional organizations, not only to secure access to a broader range of human resources and technical expertise and to facilitate the technical support that was needed by the member countries of the region, but also to supplement the actions it undertook with Regular Budget or extra-budgetary funding.

90. In the particular case of cooperation between FAO and IICA, he referred to the Memorandum of Understanding that had been signed on 3 February 1994, which amounted to a work arrangement between IICA and FAO that would lay solid foundations for greater mutual cooperation for the benefit of the member countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

91. He stated that as a result of the implementation of this understanding, a Basic Programme of FAO/IICA Collaboration now existed for the period July 1994 - December 1995, featuring the most relevant activities to be conducted.

92. Finally, he stated that though the reactivation of IICA and FAO efforts to deploy their limited resources efficiently for the agricultural development of the region was well under way, translating into practice the broad potential for collaboration and complementarity of action would require a gradual process of rapprochement and increased mutual understanding, as well as sound examples of cooperation which directly addressed the technical assistance and advisory needs identified as priorities by the Member Nations.

93. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the efforts that had been made by FAO and IICA to coordinate their activities in the region, as detailed in the document submitted for the consideration of the member countries. It requested that FAO and IICA further their coordination effort by including other initiatives in the areas of sustainable agricultural development, the conservation and management of domestic animal genetic resources, policy analysis, integration models and trade agreements. It also recommended the adoption of an approach that recognized subregional differences.

94. The Committee asked FAO to gradually extend its hitherto positive experience with IICA to other regional and subregional organizations, including IDB, CORECA and OLDEPESCA, with particular reference to themes such as integration, trade and fisheries. In the case of the IDB, the Committee requested that, at its next Regional Conference, FAO submit a document similar to that

⁹ LARC/94/INF/11 and LARC/94/2 (pages 14 -17).

on FAO/IICA cooperation on the subject of agricultural investment, with identification of priority areas for joint action.

95. The Committee stressed the urgency of establishing contact with international funding agencies to mobilize the resources needed to activate the agricultural investment process and help member countries in the preparation of the corresponding investment programmes and projects in the region.

96. The Committee recommended that FAO draw up a report on its relations with regional and subregional organizations for each Regional Conference, with details of the work these organizations undertook in areas touching on FAO's technical fields and with particular emphasis on themes which had been targeted by coordinated action. The Committee considered that such a report would provide the Regional Conference with a clearer overall perspective of its operations and would help it to formulate recommendations.

97. The Committee requested that FAO and IICA, together with other subregional organizations, prepare a study on the outlook for agricultural development in Central America, to be presented to a meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the subregion in September 1995.

98. The Committee underscored the pressing need for each country to reinforce its internal mechanisms for the coordination of assistance provided by international, regional and subregional organizations to ensure that this assistance effectively corresponded to each country's priority needs.

99. IICA fully endorsed the document in question and stated that a similar report would be considered at the next meeting of its Executive Committee. It also reiterated its firm commitment to implementing the basic programme of collaboration that had recently been drawn up with FAO.

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

100. In presenting this item of the Agenda¹⁰ the Special Adviser/ADG for Environment and Sustainable Development recalled that FAO, as co-sponsor of the CGIAR together with UNDP and the World Bank, was responsible for ensuring that the developing countries were represented on the Consultative Group. Such representation assumed all the more importance at a time when the CGIAR system had embarked on a process of reorganization as a result of the increasing number of international agricultural research centres and because of growing financial difficulties. Proposals were therefore submitted to the Conference with a view to making the developing countries' representation in the CGIAR more effective.

101. The Committee noted that, in accordance with normal practice, Chile's mandate as representative of the region would continue for another biennium until 31 December 1996, while Trinidad and Tobago completed its term at the end of 1994. The Delegation of El Salvador submitted the candidature of Dr Francisco Roberto Arias, Executive Director of the National Centre for Agricultural Technology (CENTA), under the El Salvador Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. After having examined the candidate's outstanding merits and wide experience, the Committee unanimously elected Dr Arias as Regional Representative on the CGIAR for the next biennium.

102. The Committee approved the measures put forward by the Secretariat to facilitate the selection of future Regional Representatives on the CGIAR and the performance of their duties with regard to the CGIAR and to the region's member countries.

¹⁰ LARC/94/5.

Report on the Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN)

103. The Regional Officer for Food Policy and Nutrition reported¹¹ on the activities undertaken by the member countries of the region and by FAO in implementation of the recommendations of the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), held in Rome in December 1992. At that Conference, the governments had endorsed the World Declaration and the Plan of Action for Nutrition, aimed at combating hunger and all forms of malnutrition. To that end, they undertook to prepare or revise, before the end of 1994, National Plans of Action for Nutrition based on the principles and strategies set out in the above documents.

104. He stressed that the success of the Plans of Action would largely depend on the priority that each country gave to nutrition, coordination among the various sectors involved, the funds that could be mobilized for programmes, the institutional capacity to implement the identified actions, and the capacity of the food and agricultural sectors to play their rightful roles in promoting nutritional well-being.

105. He highlighted the activities FAO had carried out to assist the member countries of the region in preparing their Plans of Action: the publication and dissemination of guidelines, subregional workshops, technical assistance through consultants, Associate Professional Officers and cooperation projects, and the coordination of activities in conjunction with the governments, NGOs, other UN agencies and international donors.

106. He mentioned that FAO had reviewed the follow-up to the ICN at the meetings of the Committees on Forestry, Fisheries and Agriculture, and the Council and Conference of FAO. In accordance with the recommendations of the ICN, FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) would ask Member Nations to provide updated information to enable them to prepare a joint UN agency report to be submitted to the 1995 FAO Conference with the objective of reviewing progress made toward achieving the ICN goals.

107. The Committee stressed that nutrition had to be at the centre of the countries' social and economic development efforts, and acknowledged the usefulness of the activities that FAO and other UN agencies were undertaking for the preparation of the National Plans of Action for Nutrition.

108. Some member countries provided information on recent progress made in the preparation of their Plans of Action, highlighting the inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and expressed their gratitude to FAO for its support. Other countries reported that they had completed their Plans of Action.

109. The Committee asked FAO to strengthen technical cooperation and to seek funding for the implementation of the projects stemming from the Plans of Action, particularly in the areas of household food security and community development; food quality and safety; micronutrient deficiencies; food and nutrition monitoring, particularly to prevent critical shortfalls; and food and nutrition education to promote the consumption of local products, improve household food distribution, encourage breast-feeding and support home-based income-generation activities for women.

Other Business

110. No points were raised by the delegations under this item of the Agenda.

¹¹ LARC/94/INF/5.

Adoption of the Report

111. The Committee adopted the report after introducing the necessary amendments.

Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting

112. The Chairman of the Technical Committee thanked the delegations and the Drafting Committee and brought the meeting to a close.

FINAL ITEMS

Other Business

113. The Conference recommended that FAO give priority attention to Haiti in the form of a Plan of Action with sustainable impact, in view of the grave situation prevailing in that country.

Date and Place of the 24th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

114. The Conference took note of the offer made by the delegation of Paraguay to host the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in 1996, and requested that the Director-General decide on the date and place after consultation with the Government of Paraguay and other member countries of the region.

Adoption of the Report

115. The Conference adopted the report, which included the report of the Technical Committee, after introducing the necessary amendments. The report represented a collective effort to include the points of view of the participating member countries.

Closure of the Conference

116. The Conference thanked the people and Government of El Salvador for their warm welcome and for the excellent organization of the meeting.

117. The Conference thanked the Director-General for his presence and congratulated the Rapporteur, the Drafting Committee and the Secretariat on their excellent work.

118. The Director-General expressed his satisfaction with and appreciation of the high dedication shown by the delegations in their analysis of the major issues affecting agricultural development in the member countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. He stressed that implementation of the recommendations of the Conference would require a combined effort on the part of FAO, the national institutions and the regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations if steadfast progress was to be made in achieving the common objective of alleviating rural poverty and enhancing food security in the member countries of the region. He also thanked the Conference for its favourable response to the measures for the restructuring and decentralization of the Organization.

119. He concluded by thanking the Minister of Agriculture of El Salvador for his masterful chairing of the proceedings and expressed his gratitude to the National Committee for its important contribution to the success of the meeting.

120. The Chairman closed the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean by thanking the delegations for their active participation and for the high level of the technical discussions which had centred primarily on satisfying the needs of the poorest sectors of the population.

APPENDIX A

AENDA OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

(29-31 August 1994)

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. TECHNICAL ITEMS

4. New Arrangements for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Region
5. Integrated Natural Resource Management for Sustainable Development: the Key Role of Land and Water
6. Cooperation between FAO and Regional and Subregional Organizations
7. Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
8. Report on the Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN)
9. Other Business
10. Adoption of the Report
11. Closure of the Technical Committee

AGENDA OF THE PLENARY SESSIONS

(31 August - 2 September 1994)

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. DELIBERATIONS

4. Country Statements and General Debate on the State of Food and Agriculture in the Region
5. Report on the Activities of FAO in the Region 1992-93
6. Outcome of the 106th Session of the Council and its Implications for the Present and Future Activities of FAO in the Region
7. Preparations for the World Food Summit of 1996
8. Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture

III. FINAL ITEMS

9. Other Business
10. Date and Place of the 24th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
11. Adoption of the Report (including the Report of the Technical Committee).
12. Closure of the Conference

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

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

Chairman:	Carlos Antonio Mejía Alférez (El Salvador)
Président:	
Presidente:	
Vice-Chairmen:	Tennyson Wells (Bahamas)
Vice-Présidents:	Russell García (Belice)
Vicepresidentes:	Alejandro Gutiérrez (Chile)
	Oscar Campos Chavarría (Costa Rica)
	Abilio Manuel Cárdenas García (Cuba)
	Maynard Joseph (Dominica)
	Benjamín Tobar (Ecuador)
	Luis Arturo del Valle García (Guatemala)
	Ramón Villeda Bermúdez (Honduras)
	Seymour Mullings (Jamaica)
	Carlos Torres Manzo (México)
	Julio Rivera Valle (Nicaragua)
	Sergio Garay (Paraguay)
	Rodolfo Masuda (Perú)
	Francisco González (República Dominicana)
	Ira d'Auvergne (Santa Lucía)
	Chiefton Allan Cruickshank (San Vicente y las Granadinas)
	Stanford Callender (Trinidad y Tabago)
Rapporteur:	Ricardo Velázquez Huerta (México)
Relator:	
Drafting Committee:	Brasil
Comité de rédaction:	Cuba
Comité de Redacción:	Ecuador
	El Salvador
	Haití
	Trinidad y Tabago
Independent Chairman of the FAO Council:	José Ramón López Portillo
Président indépendant du Conseil de la FAO:	
Presidente Independiente del Consejo de la FAO:	

OFFICERS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
BUREAU DU COMITE TECHNIQUE
MESA DEL COMITE TECNICO

Chairman: Carlos Antonio Mejía Alférez (El Salvador)
Président:
Presidente:

Vice-Chairmen: Tennyson Wells (Bahamas)
Vice-Présidents: Russell García (Belice)
Vicepresidentes: Abilio Manuel Cárdenas García (Cuba)
Maynard Joseph (Dominica)
Benjamín Tobar (Ecuador)
Sergio Garay (Paraguay)
Rodolfo Masuda (Perú)
Francisco González (República Dominicana)
Chiefton Allan Cruickshank (San Vicente y las Granadinas)

Rapporteur: Ricardo Velázquez Huerta (México)
Relator:

Drafting Committee: Brasil
Comité de rédaction: Cuba
Comité de Redacción: Ecuador
El Salvador
Haití
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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

LARC/94/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
LARC/94/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93
LARC/94/3	New Arrangements for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Region
LARC/94/4	Integrated Natural Resources Management for Sustainable Development: the Key Role of Land and Water
LARC/94/5	Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

INF Series

LARC/94/INF/1	Information Note
LARC/94/INF/2	Povisional Timetable
LARC/94/INF/3-Rev.1	Provisional List of Documents
LARC/94/INF/4	Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 22nd Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean
LARC/94/INF/5	Report on the Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN)
LARC/94/INF/6	Director-General's Statement
LARC/94/INF/7	Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture
LARC/94/INF/8	Outcome of the 106th Session of the Council and its Implications for Present and Future Activities of FAO in the Region
LARC/94/INF/9	Follow-up to the Uruguay Round and possible FAO assistance in the Region
LARC/94/INF/10	Preparations for the 1996 World Food Summit
LARC/94/INF/11	Cooperation between FAO and regional and subregional organizations
LARC/94/INF/12	Follow-up to UNCED

APPENDIX D

**ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND
LIVESTOCK OF EL SALVADOR, DON CARLOS ANTONIO MEJIA ALFEREZ**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have followed with great interest and genuine hope, together with the honourable representations of the countries of the region, each of the reports and proposals put before the Technical Committee. We have considered and evaluated these carefully, knowing how important they are for the future of over 530 million fellow inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean with whom we are united not only by physical geography, regional identity and the sharing of historical moments as we have struggled for freedom but today, in particular, on account of the unacceptable hardship, poverty and hunger that affect over 200 million of our brothers and sisters.

For us, the genuine quest for sustainable agricultural and fisheries development calls for a series of urgent, thoughtful and coordinated actions by governments, producers and international cooperation agencies that will not only satisfy but also secure our food needs and that will provide the Latin American and Caribbean community with an orderly, sustainable environment.

Such has been the objective toward which we and all the delegations have striven during the course of this Conference.

On this historical occasion, with all the hope it bears for our peoples, we extend to His Excellency the President of the Republic, Dr Armando Calderón Sol, to His Excellency the Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf, and to you fellow Ministers, our warmest welcome and urge you to join us as we forge our hopes for the future.

I should like to finish by mentioning the particular importance of this Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean to the Government and people of El Salvador.

It is a high honour, for our country, to be able to act as host to such a distinguished and select group of delegates, observers and FAO personnel, whom we should like to thank for their gracious visit.

Thank you very much.

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY DR JACQUES DIOUF, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

*Mr Chairman,
Mr Independent Chairman of the Council,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations, Delegates, Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I wish to express my profound appreciation to the Government and people of El Salvador for the warm welcome, courtesies and hospitality which have been extended to representatives of member countries and the staff of the Organization attending this Twenty-third Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean. El Salvador is a country with an enormous heart, and one that can appreciate the importance of economic and social recovery after many years of strife.
2. I also take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Carlos Rafael Mejía Alférez, Minister for Agriculture and Husbandry of the Republic of El Salvador, upon his having been unanimously elected to the position of Chairman of the Conference. May I extend my best wishes to you, Sir, as you take charge of these proceedings which I have no doubt, will benefit tremendously from your expert guidance. Permit me, Mr Chairman, to welcome the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in this Opening Session of the Regional Conference. Their presence will contribute to this Conference being a milestone in our regional response to the very important issues of food security and sustainable economic development.

REGIONAL OUTLOOK AND EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

3. Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ten years ago, several of our Central American Member Nations were afflicted by civil unrest. Today, I am happy to say that these Member Nations, including our host country, are at peace. Ten years ago, many of the Member Nations in the Latin America and Caribbean Region faced severe debt crises which constituted an enormous drain on their resources and a serious impediment on their growth and development. External indebtedness is still a major impediment to full recovery, but its impact has been somewhat abated through debt reduction and debt-restructuring, and the general decline in interest rates since the early 1990s. In addition, a number of countries have sought to create favourable conditions for investment and growth. A new climate of confidence in the region has given rise to significant inflows of investment capital in many Member Nations, reversing trends during the 1980s. In the same period, foreign trade has grown rapidly with imports growing faster than exports in large measure because of investment requirements of capital goods. Regional integration has also gained significant momentum, as countries of the region seek the benefits of larger internal markets, and a countervailing response to other regional groupings.
4. The first four years of the 1990s have been years of economic recovery for most countries of the region. At 3.2 percent in 1993, growth was significant confirming the pattern of the previous two years but still well below performance of the 1960s and 1970s. In some countries, the short-term impact of macro-economic reforms has been particularly severe, heightening the plight of the poor, and more particularly, the rural poor. Indeed, the United Nations estimate that some 13 percent (59 million) of the regional population suffer from chronic malnutrition, and 4 percent (18 million) from acute malnutrition.
5. Favourable comparisons across regions notwithstanding, these are sobering statistics in a region more than capable of feeding itself. Obviously, major efforts still remain to be made in broadening the base for economic recovery and extending its benefits to the large segments of society who

continue to live in extreme poverty. It is hoped that structural adjustment measures will in the medium and longer terms yield growth and stabilization dividends, and allow governments in the region to move from crisis management to more structural and social concerns.

6. Compared to that of other sectors, the performance of regional agriculture has not been outstanding. Regional agricultural production between 1990-93 rose by an average 1.2 percent, about half of the average growth rate of the previous decade. In fact, in 1993, the index of agricultural production declined by almost 1 percent relative to the previous year.

7. The sector continued to be strongly affected by the overall macro-economic environment. Implementation of stabilization measures has reduced the capacities of governments for supportive intervention and thereby affected the productive and export capacity of the sector. Other factors include: overvaluation of currencies resulting in loss in competitiveness; depressed demand conditions for agricultural products; and unabated protectionism in the main export markets of the region.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

8. The Latin America and Caribbean Region, as a whole, is richly endowed with natural resources and the potential to satisfy both aggregate regional food needs and substantial surpluses for export. The performance of the agricultural sector in recent years, however, is indicative of the extent to which this potential could be further exploited.

9. The agricultural setting in the region is one of great contrasts. While some countries have made significant strides in production and exports, others have lagged behind, and in some the sector has actually declined. Despite a relatively high level of technological advance in the region as a whole, its widespread application is still extremely difficult. Within individual sectors, there is the growing dichotomy between high technology, capital-intensive, export-oriented enterprises on the one hand, and the traditional, small-scale, low-technology, domestic-oriented farm sector on the other. These structural characteristics result in benefits from technological innovations and consequent increases in productivity often reaching only a fraction of the rural population. Undoubtedly, government support services to small farmers and small-scale fishermen, including credit, need to be improved in many Member Nations. This sector, however, will remain critical to efforts at achieving and maintaining food security.

10. To the traditional problems of structure must be added new pressures on the sector induced by macro-economic adjustment policies and changes. The imperatives of these policies include deregulation of markets; removal of subsidies; and removal of barriers to incoming trade. Adequate sectoral policies are required to counter or mollify the short-term impact of these actions on the sector, and lead to its longer-term transformation.

11. The conclusion of the Uruguay Round Agreement of the GATT has raised hopes of some improvement in the international policy framework for agricultural trade in the coming years. In this context, the recent strengthening of agricultural prices for some of the main export products of the region is encouraging. While the removal of tariff barriers offers the opportunity for the region to establish and prove its competitiveness on world markets, one of the risks is that other forms of protectionism may arise, especially in the use of non-tariff barriers.

12. Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, this region is one of the few remaining agricultural frontiers in the world and the repository of a great wealth of genetic resources. The region's potential contribution to the maintenance of biodiversity is only recently receiving the attention it deserves, and it is expected to provide lessons on achieving an effective balance between agricultural production applications and the imperative of conservation.

13. The major regional challenge therefore, is not only how to achieve growth with equity, but also to ensure that economic growth and environmental sustainability variables are properly balanced. Since poverty in general, and rural poverty in particular, is a primary cause of natural resource depletion, policies must therefore redress income distribution and quality of life concerns for rural populations, through the utilization of those technologies which contribute to conservation of soil and water, of forests and of biodiversity. The sustainable exploitation of marine resources, both within the exclusive economic zones as well as in the high seas, must also be a major imperative.

FAO ACTIVITIES AND COOPERATION ENDEAVOURS IN THE REGION

14. FAO wishes to continue to play a major role in the creation of regional and national strategies to meet food security needs, and to promote policies that are conducive to sustainable agricultural and rural development. At the heart of my proposals for a newly invigorated Organization is a systematic effort aimed at optimizing the use of existing agricultural resources and at providing effective responses to the need of ensuring availability of food supplies at all times for all member countries.

15. The achievement of important technological breakthroughs in certain countries in the region, combined with highly trained cadres of professionals and technicians, and numerous institutions of excellence in agriculture and related fields, provides a fertile ground for TCDC initiatives. Here, the Organization has continued to promote technical exchanges through national institutions capable of generating and/or adapting environmentally-safe technologies.

16. I am happy to say that the regional system of technical cooperation networks, constituting the main channel for promotion of TCDC, will be strengthened through the recently proposed FAO scheme for TCDC. I trust that the text of the proposed agreement has the fullest endorsement of your governments, so that the Organization can initiate collaboration between Member Nations by implementing projects under the terms indicated therein.

17. FAO has applied itself with dedication to the following: the relation between macro-economic and sectoral policies; food security; the role of the state; and agricultural planning and policy formulation. It has provided technical advice to many Member Nations of the region regarding the introduction of nutritional components into agricultural and rural development programmes and projects; the institutionalization of food quality control criteria and street food systems; the enhancement of women's participation in the development process; the creation of population and human settlement programmes; the promotion of income-generating activities in rural areas; the prevention of post-harvest losses; access to markets and credit by small farmers; and the organization of adequate support services to small farmers and small-scale fishermen.

18. FAO has provided technical assistance to Member Nations of the region to develop policies aimed at facilitating uninterrupted exports of fishery products, thus maintaining the significant foreign exchange earnings derived therefrom. Within the context of the GATT, as an impetus for fish-importing nations to adhere to GATT rules governing international trade, FAO is also now about to include a chapter on post-harvest practices and trade in its Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing. Towards more effectively conserving and managing fish stocks nationally and regionally and the discouraging of overexploitation, FAO is supporting the Latin American and Caribbean countries in actively participating in the current discussions at the UN Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. It will also continue to support INFOPESCA, now an autonomous intergovernmental organization headquartered in Montevideo, Uruguay, with information regarding international market prospects for fish.

19. Pursuant to UNCED recommendations, FAO has initiated a number of activities dealing with the conservation and sustainable exploitation of forest resources; desertification control; conservation and rational utilization of animal and plant biodiversity; applications of biotechnology; water quality

for agriculture; and sound management practices of inland and marine water resources. The Eighteenth Session of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (Maldonado, Uruguay, 6-10 December 1993), placed the principal responsibility for implementing the UNCED recommendations on governments, and suggested that they mount vigorous campaigns regarding the sustainable utilization of forests in conserving the ecosystem. FAO, in its role as Task Manager for the Agenda 21 chapters dealing with forestry-related UNCED follow-up activities will assist in these efforts. In particular, FAO will convene the six regional forestry commissions prior to the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD) meeting in 1995 to discuss regional perspectives on the issues involved. A review of the Organization's role in sustainable forest management, and in the promotion of UNCED tenets, has evoked preparations for strengthening FAO's Forestry Programme.

20. The globalization of world trade, the opening of Eastern European markets, the European Common Market, NAFTA, bilateral and multilateral trade agreements and integration schemes, have raised burning issues of competitiveness affecting domestic and external trade in primary and processed agricultural products. FAO will continue to assess the impact of these trading regimes on Member Nations' agriculture, and means of improving commodity competitiveness.

21. I am pleased to inform you that FAO's Field Programme currently sponsors 163 projects in the region for a total worth of approximately US\$136.6 million, (up from US\$126.7 million in 1992). Fifty percent of these projects for a value of US\$13.3 million are funded by FAO's own Technical Cooperation Programme. Trust Fund projects are now worth some US\$103 million, more than five times the level of those financed under the UNDP/FAO Programme. The increasing share of Trust Fund projects is a healthy sign for the future, given the decline in projects executed by specialized agencies upon implementation of the new support costs arrangements introduced by UNDP. It also indicates, I trust, a greater willingness of Member Nations to deepen direct cooperation with the Organization.

22. Institutional cooperation efforts facilitate the mobilization of technical, financial and infrastructural resources. FAO is convinced of the utility of these efforts not only in permitting access to a broader spectrum of human and specialized expertise, but also in complementing Regular Programme and extra-budgetary resources. FAO has therefore been very active in establishing close working relationships with major regional intergovernmental, and professional/specialized non-governmental organizations involved in agricultural development. The Organization has been represented over the past two years at meetings and events convened by the Organization of American States (OAS), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Latin American Economic System (SELA), Tropical Agricultural Research and Training Centre (CATIE), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Latin America Integration Association (ALADI), Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), Cartagena Agreement Board (JUNAC) and others.

23. FAO staff members, consultants and trainees have provided technical support for a number of joint activities that have emanated from cooperation agreements already in effect with some of these institutions. The Organization has also participated in their sponsored technical events, for example, by arranging for national expert consultations on specific problems and proposed solutions, as well as by joint publication of documents and studies.

24. I am aware of increasing partnerships between NGOs and IGOs, both within and outside the United Nations system. I am guided by these developments in my intention to make effective use of existing cooperative mechanisms between IGOs, NGOs and the private sector in implementing FAO's programmes throughout the region.

25. Distinguished Delegates, I particularly invite your attention to the signature of a Note of Understanding which aims at strengthening cooperation endeavours between FAO and IICA in matters

related to agricultural development. Document LARC/94/INF/11 fully illustrates the process which has been pursued to this effect, and the outcomes so far achieved.

26. I am also happy to say that the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has demonstrated an interest in revitalizing its cooperation activities with FAO. A new draft agreement is currently being prepared, to expand collaboration both in policy areas and in the preparation of investment projects.

27. The Andean Development Corporation (CAF) has requested FAO's assistance in finalizing a study on lending to agriculture in the Andean-Pact countries. A joint work programme has been initiated, focusing on one Central American country this year, with other joint activities envisaged throughout the coming year.

28. The Caribbean Community has also been the object of FAO's interest. FAO intends to work jointly with the Caribbean Development Bank on project formulation for agricultural diversification, as well as on subsector studies on water resources, land management and sustainable development.

29. Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, if I have dwelt for a moment too long on this panorama of enhanced partnerships and collaborative efforts, it is to share with you the sense of promise and opportunity for a reinvigorated FAO to be more active; more effective; and more responsive to the needs of its Member Nations, working with other organizations which are also your organizations.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FAO AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

30. The endorsement by the 106th Session of the Council of my proposals for a reinvigorated and more effective Organization was governed by the following principles: the strengthening of FAO as a centre of excellence; the pursuit of greater decentralization; the rationalization of operational activities through appropriate structural arrangements; a drive towards more efficiency and less expensive modalities of action; and a refocusing of priorities. Document LARC/94/INF/8 contains the conclusions adopted by the Council.

31. You will no doubt appreciate that the implementation of these measures will be a complex operation and will need to be spread over carefully articulated and planned phases. I intend to implement a first set of measures during the current biennium, while others will be continued in the framework of the Programme of Work and Budget to be proposed for 1996-97 and of the next Medium-term Plan, the formats of which will be adjusted accordingly.

32. As regards the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, I intend to gradually and progressively strengthen its human and financial resources towards a multidisciplinary team covering pertinent technical areas, and thus providing a critical mass of expertise to that office. A subregional office for the Caribbean will also be established, comprising a team of technical officers and geared to the subregion's specific requirements. The location of this subregional office has been the subject of consultations with the countries directly concerned.

33. I reiterate my intention to arrange the redeployment of FAO staff of the Joint FAO/ECLAC Agricultural Division. This will enable me to augment the staff resources available and to strengthen our regional and subregional structures.

34. During the interim period, while the restructuring process is being implemented, FAO, through its Regional Office, will continue to carry out its programmes in the region.

35. I should also like to draw your attention to the fact that during the next three years, three extremely important events in the life of the Organization will take place. The first will be the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization in 1995, to be celebrated solemnly at Château Frontenac in

Quebec, the site of the founding of the Organization on 16 October 1945. I wish to express my thanks to the Government of Canada which, in conjunction with the Government of the Province of Quebec, has offered to host and to organize this event. I invite your attention to Document LARC/94/INF/7 which includes the draft Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration. You may recall that FAO Conference Resolution 4/93 requested me to submit this draft Declaration, for appropriate comments, to all the Regional Conferences in 1994, as well as to the June 1995 Session of the Council. It will also be submitted to a Ministerial Meeting which will take place in Quebec in October 1995, and subsequently to the Twenty-eighth Session of the Conference in November 1995 for final adoption. I will appreciate your comments and suggestions on the draft Declaration contained in Document LARC/94/INF/7.

36. During the first quarter of 1996, I intend to convene a World Food Summit. Despite the fact that considerable progress has been made towards improved food security, as demonstrated by the substantial aggregate increases in both global and national supplies, the world is still faced with the unacceptable human tragedy whereby 800 million people do not have adequate access to food. About 192 million children below the age of five years suffer from acute or chronic protein and energy malnutrition. I am therefore convinced that the time has come, more than twenty years after the World Food Conference, for an in-depth examination of the reasons for the present disequilibrium. This Conference will also provide the opportunity to seek collective solutions to ensure that hunger and malnutrition will be eliminated for the 5.5 billion persons living today, and for the 9 billion that will be living by the year 2030. The objectives of the Summit as well as plans for the consultative process are indicated in document LARC/94/INF/10. I particularly welcome your views and comments on this document.

37. Finally, preparations are under way for the FAO-sponsored Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, which will be held in Germany in June 1996. This has been made possible through the generosity of a number of governments and will lead to the production of a major report on the State of the World Plant Genetic Resources and the costed global Plan of Action. The preparatory process of this report is a major component of FAO's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is designed to be participatory and country-driven and will help transform relevant parts of the UNCED process (including Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity) into an action-oriented comprehensive programme. The active participation of all countries in this FAO endeavour is essential and is strongly encouraged.

38. Mr Chairman, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates, you would, I am sure, permit me to thank you for your attention in listening to my presentation. I wish you good luck in your deliberations throughout the course of this Regional Conference. I look forward to receiving the outcome of your deliberations with a total commitment to, and a strong confidence in our combined efforts.

I thank you.

APPENDIX F

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
EL SALVADOR, DR ARMANDO CALDERON SOL**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of El Salvador, it is my great pleasure to extend a warm and hearty welcome to Their Excellencies the Ministers and Vice-Ministers of Agriculture of our partner countries and to the distinguished personalities representing the international organizations participating in the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This extraordinary event, under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, is for our country a high honour and a particularly significant occasion as it will enable the survival of our peoples to be examined and confronted with realism and foresight.

I should like to begin by manifesting on behalf of the Government and people of El Salvador our sincere gratitude to FAO for having helped us to undertake important development projects for the whole of the population.

We share the concern of the governments and international organizations over the future food and health situation of humanity.

The basic problem which is common to all developing countries is the inappropriate use of natural resources and the use of unsuitable technologies for agricultural work which result in low levels of productivity.

This together with population growth and therefore higher food demand results in an explosive situation which can only be overcome by a combined effort on the part of countries and international organizations such as FAO.

There is no doubt that thanks to technical assistance received from FAO and other international organizations our countries have managed to introduce substantial changes that have opened the way for agricultural development.

The gradual modernization of our economies has called for and still requires the restructuring of agricultural policies and strategies in line with the social and economic needs of each country.

At this point I should like to briefly refer to the Salvadorian situation in the context of agricultural and rural development.

The main conditioning factor is that we have a population of 5 million inhabitants within a limited area that is not all suitable for agriculture.

Gradual population growth which has produced a population density of more than 250 inhabitants for each square kilometre, and inappropriate land use have led to serious environmental degradation.

The clearing of extensive woodlands for agriculture and stock farming has caused water sources to dry up and has reduced production activities particularly in the major urban areas.

Our Government has started to implement its National Agricultural Development Plan which aims mainly to stimulate production while adhering to the concepts of ecological efficiency, modernization and profitability, in an effort to redress the imbalance that exists between agricultural development and environmental conservation.

We are also strengthening the juridical framework and institutional efficiency of the Government and the private sector so as to develop and consolidate the concept of technological revolution in Salvadorian agriculture.

Our intention is to diversify the agricultural production base by adopting alternative production systems that will satisfactorily meet the population's food requirements.

We are also engaged in the rational use of the country's national resources and in protecting its ecological heritage. We are aware that there can be no economic development if this is at the expense of the environment. We are therefore reinforcing the institutional infrastructure to enable us to develop special environmental protection and rehabilitation programmes that will permit us to achieve the sustainable development that is so important to us.

With our Agricultural Development Plan, we intend to build up sectoral capacity and to make it more competitive within the framework of the opening up of trade that is gradually taking place both within Central America and outside the region.

Distinguished friends, it is highly significant that this Twenty-third Regional Conference should take place in a country of Central America for the people and governments of this region are actively pursuing a process of regional integration.

It is also significant because our country is in the process of firmly establishing democracy on the foundations of peace and is also working hard to eliminate the root causes of extreme poverty and social alienation.

We are delighted to host this international gathering that will seek the more immediate and practical solutions to adequately meet people's food requirements through the use of the most advanced instruments of science and technology.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of El Salvador I have the honour and privilege of solemnly declaring open the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

I should like to congratulate the Technical Committee for their excellent preparatory work and hope that this meeting will be fruitful for all the countries.

Thank you very much.

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