
NERC/96/REP



REPORT

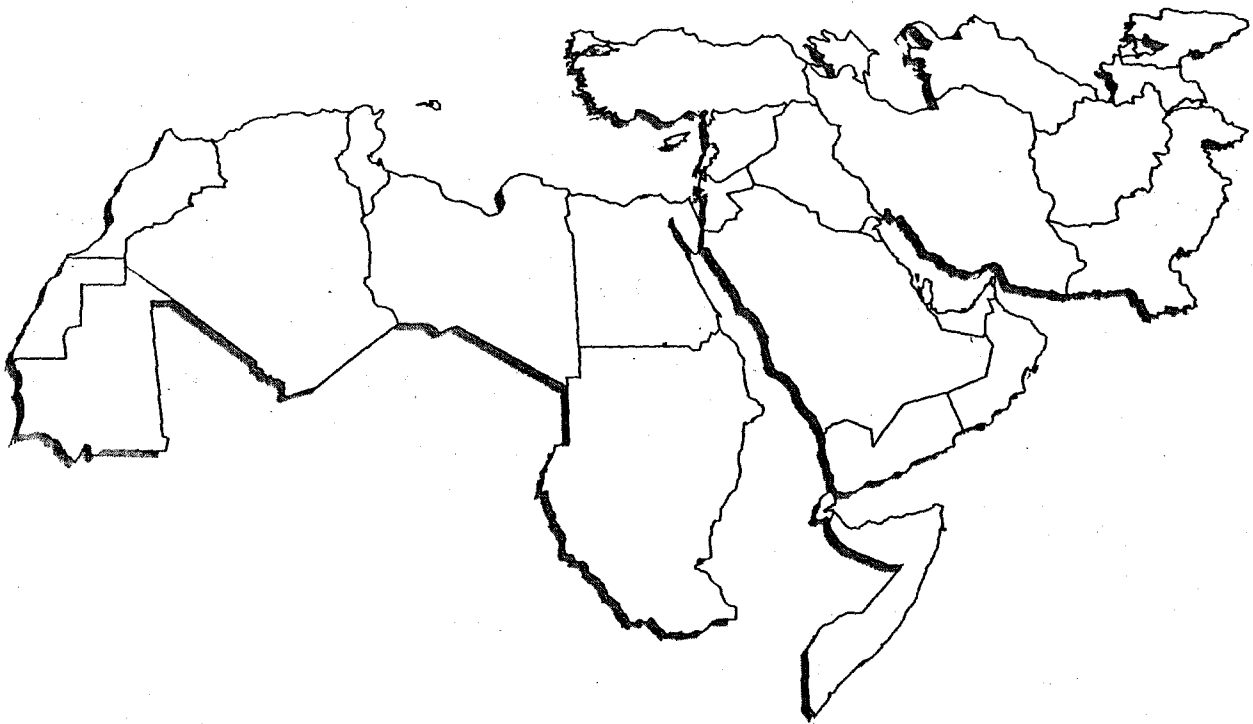
**TWENTY-THIRD FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR THE NEAR EAST**

Rabat, Morocco, 26-29 March 1996

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

*Regional Office for the Near East
Cairo, Egypt*

MEMBER STATES OF THE NEAR EAST REGION



**Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt,
Iran, Islamic Rep. of, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan,
Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman,
Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of,
Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan,
Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan,
United Arab Emirates,
Yemen**

NERC/96/REP
March 1996

REPORT
OF THE TWENTY-THIRD FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR THE NEAR EAST

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Rome 1996

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Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for the Near East

First	- Cairo, Egypt, 2-14 February 1948
Second	- Bloudane, Syria, 28 August - 6 September 1951
Third	- Cairo, Egypt, 1-9 September 1953
Fourth	- Damascus, Syria, 10-20 December 1958
Fifth	- Teheran, Iran, 21 September - 1 October 1960
Sixth	- Tel Amara, Lebanon, 30 July - 8 August 1962
Seventh	- Cairo, Egypt, 19-31 October 1964
Eighth	- Khartoum, Sudan, 24 January - 2 February 1967
Ninth	- Baghdad, Iraq, 21 September - 1 October 1968
Tenth	- Islamabad, Pakistan, 12-22 September 1970
Eleventh	- Kuwait, Kuwait, 9-19 September 1972
Twelfth	- Amman, Jordan, 31 August - 9 September 1974
Thirteenth	- Tunis, Tunisia, 4-11 October 1976
Fourteenth	- Damascus, Syria, 9-16 September 1978
Fifteenth	- Rome, Italy, 21-25 April 1981
Sixteenth	- Nicosia, Cyprus, 25-29 October 1982
Seventeenth	- Aden, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, 11-15 March 1984
Eighteenth	- Istanbul, Turkey, 17-21 March 1986
Nineteenth	- Muscat, Oman, 13-17 March 1988
Twentieth	- Tunis, Tunisia, 12-16 March 1990
Twenty-first	- Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran, 17-21 May 1992
Twenty-second	- Amman, Jordan, 3-6 July 1994
Twenty-third	- Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, 26-29 March 1996

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. World Food Summit

A. For the Attention of Member Nations and FAO:

The Conference:

- supported the Director General's initiative to convene the World Food Summit in November 1996, underlined the timeliness of this initiative and reiterated the full support of member governments to its success;
- supported the following recommendations relating to the Plan of Action in document NERC/96/3: to recognize the fight against poverty as essential to the goal of food security; to express or strengthen, in the objectives and actions at all appropriate levels, the necessary provisions to achieve gender equality and a better involvement of youth and women in enhancing food security; to mobilize public opinion and strengthen solidarity within and among countries in favour of food security; to consider positively the optimal use of marginal lands for food production and the need for reversing resource degradation; to ensure availability of appropriate inputs to farmers; to address the impact on food security of demographic pressures, unbalanced urban and rural development, unhealthy food consumption habits, and consumption patterns; to ensure proper substantiation of the relationships between food insecurity and transborder migrations where applicable;
- considered document NERC/96/4 as providing a sufficiently comprehensive and appropriate analysis of the essential issues and aspects of the food security situation in the Region; and section III of the document as a preliminary and indicative contribution to the regional dimension of WFS Plan of Action, and requested the annexation of this section to the Report (Appendix H).

B. For the Attention of FAO:

The Conference:

- agreed that the full report on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) consultation which was presented to the Conference be transmitted to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS);
- agreed that document NERC/96/3 was an appropriate basis for the finalization by CFS of the draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action to be submitted to the WFS; and recommended that the political nature of the Policy Statement be strengthened in particular para 3 to 11 and that the Plan of Action be more concise integrating the regional and sub-regional dimensions and indicating clearly with a consistent terminology the responsibilities for implementation including those of FAO as was done in paragraphs 72-74 of document NERC/96/4;
- decided that the Tunis Declaration on Food Security in the Arab World be annexed to the Conference report for transmittal to CFS for consideration (Appendix F);
- supported the launching of a campaign of International Decade for "Food for All" on the occasion of World Food Summit (Appendix G);

- agreed to transmit for CFS consideration the following amendments and additions in the document NERC/96/3: to include in Objective 1.1 "national" in addition to "universal" food security; to modify paragraph 59 so as to use the preparatory mechanisms of the WFS for the process of monitoring follow-up to the Summit, and 59-c so as to establish national level modalities for the review of policies and programmes as called for under Objective 7.2; to include in the global Plan of Action the actions contained in the following paragraphs of document NERC 96-4 (v to xi), 48 (i to iii), 56 (i, particularly at national level, and ii-iii), 59, 62, 68 and 69; to address the question of financial mechanisms and resources for implementation of the WFS Plan of Action and for alleviating the debt burden of the most affected developing countries; to avoid detailed and controversial prescriptions on macroeconomic, exchange rate and interest rate policies; to adapt the conditions and sequencing of structural adjustment programmes to the specific situation of each concerned country; and to strengthen cooperation on food trade issues between FAO and other international organisations and institutions (WTO, UNCTAD, etc.).

2. Country Statements and General Debate

For the Attention of Member Nations and the FAO:

The Conference called upon member governments to give emphasis to issues of common concern including water scarcity and management, increased desertification, transboundary pests and diseases, degradation of natural resources including fisheries and forestry and the deterioration of the environment, the role of women and youth in rural development, the problem of foreign debt, and the adjustment to international changes in the trade environment with emphasis on the Uruguay Round Agreement.

3. The Impact of the Uruguay Round Agreements (UR) in the Agricultural Economies of the Near East

A. For the Attention of Member Nations:

The Conference called upon member Governments to :

- i) review macro economic and sectoral policies and national food strategies, plans and programmes and adopt policies compatible with UR Agreements and improved competitiveness;
- ii) develop adequate national infrastructure, institutions, manpower and regulations for food safety, quality control and animal and plant quarantine to satisfy Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).
- iii) encourage involvement of private traders, NGOs other supporting services networks in fostering inter- and intra-regional trade and joint regional ventures; and
- iv) strengthen economic and technical cooperation in agricultural trade development through establishment of necessary institutions and mechanisms for systematic exchange of information and experiences.

B. For the Attention of FAO:

The Conference recommended FAO to:

- i) provide, in line with FAO Conference C95/REP paragraph 59, technical assistance to member countries, particularly the least developed countries in assessing the need to review their food and agriculture strategies to meet policy commitment under Uruguay Round Agreement and in preparing for the next round of global trade negotiation on agriculture including possible new subjects notably, sustainability and environment; in line with FAO conference (C95/REP paragraph 59);
- ii) assist countries of the Region which had not yet become members of WTO with policy advice in assessing benefits and costs of joining WTO;
- iii) assist member countries in reviewing possibilities of intra regional trade agreements in the light of Uruguay Round;
- iv) support member countries, particularly the least developed, in their efforts for strengthening institutional, technical and manpower capabilities in the fields of food safety, quality control and quarantine at the national, sub-regional and regional levels; and
- v) encourage the removal of barriers to the transfer of technology to developing countries and the granting of preferential treatment particularly in services and investment fields to these countries.

4. Promoting Sustainable Utilization of Marginal Lands in the Near East Region

a. For the Attention of Member Nations:

The Conference called upon Member Governments to:

- a) develop a political commitment to land reform, including increasing security of tenure, equity and justice to affected people who should also take part in planning and implementation phases of marginal land projects;
- b) review national plans addressing land fragmentation problems with a view to strengthen farming associations/cooperatives and provide them with better access to credit and market facilities;
- c) identify national institutions and provide them with capable manpower having clear and coordinated responsibilities for streamlining project work with other stakeholders and governmental departments; and
- d) adopt policies to encourage community participation such as food-for-work, and cost-sharing, as well as promoting management options of low technology, small project staffing and affordable operational costs.

b. For the Attention of FAO:

- i) The Conference requested FAO to give due attention to the sustainable use of highlands, as well as arid and semi-arid zones considered as a main source of food security in these areas and provide the required technical assistance and field programmes to enable member countries develop such areas;

- ii) coordinate work with the CGIAR affiliated Centres in assisting member countries formulate programmes for the sustainable use of marginal lands;
- iii) promote the adoption of integrated farming system approach based on adaptive research undertaken by national, regional and international research centres and implement their results on marginal land development at both household and national levels; and
- iv) facilitate convening of scientific fora for key decision-makers, at regional and sub-regional levels for sharing experiences on marginal land management.

5. Representation of the Region in the CGIAR

For the Attention of Member Nations and FAO:

The Conference elected Syria (Mr. Ali Shafiq Shehadeh) to represent the Region in the CGIAR for the period 1997-2000.

6. Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO

For the Attention of FAO:

The Conference recommended that the Director-General, in consultation with the Member Nations, convene future ministerial meetings in conjunction with COFO and COFI sessions whenever appropriate. Full flexibility should be given to him with regard to the 1997 sessions.

7. Progress Report on the Reactivation of the FAO Near East Cooperative Programme (NECP)

For the Attention of Member Nations and FAO:

The Conference endorsed the alternative proposals formulated by RNE for reactivation of NECP and decided to request RNE to contact the new Bahraini Minister of Public Works and Agriculture to chair the High Level Committee (HLC) composed of representatives from Jordan, Morocco, Oman and Saudi Arabia and to take the necessary follow-up actions for reactivation of this programme.

8. National, Sub-Regional and FAO Programme for Desert Locust Control

a. For the Attention of Member Nations

The Conference called upon Member Governments to:

- i) establish specialized units for Desert Locust control and strengthen existing ones;
- ii) coordinate between Desert Locust control units and Meteorological Departments to facilitate the flow of meteorological data at both national and regional levels;
- iii) encourage joint survey expeditions at the regional level, and provide the necessary surveying equipment for intervening whenever needed; and
- iv) support the regional Desert Locust Commissions.

b. For the Attention of FAO

The Conference requested FAO to:

- i) provide assistance to national Desert Locust control units in acquiring the required surveying, monitoring and forecasting facilities needed;
- ii) assist in the speedy establishment of the emergency fund for Desert Locust Control, including the formulation of field intervention groups for immediate action;
- iii) assist in the formulation of appropriate strategies and plans for preventive control in the Region, including provision of the required communication equipment, manpower, as well as adequate and coordinated means compatible with the environment;
- iv) provide technical assistance for the safe disposal of the expired chemicals in storage in certain countries of the Region; and
- v) assist in urging donors for supporting countries affected by Desert Locust.

9. A Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conference Reports

The Conference approved the FAO proposal for shortening of Regional Conference Reports with its guidelines stated in NERC/96/9, and therefore decided to follow the new format for preparing the report of the present 23rd Session of the Regional Conference.

10. Date and place of the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East

The Conference welcomed the kind invitation extended by Syria to host the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East. The Conference requested the Director-General of FAO to take this kind invitation into consideration when deciding on the date and place of the Conference, in consultation with Member Governments of the Region.

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for the Near East was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Rabat, Morocco, from 26 to 29 March 1996, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Inaugural Ceremony

2. The Conference was inaugurated by His Excellency Abdelatif Al-Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The inaugural ceremony was attended by 22 Delegations. The Independent Chairman of the Council and Observers from other FAO Member Nations, regional, international governmental and non-governmental organizations were also present. The list of participants is given as Appendix B to this report. The ceremony was also attended by ministers, high-ranking state officials, heads and representatives of diplomatic and UN missions in the Kingdom of Morocco, as well as representatives of the news media.

3. His Excellency Al-Filali expressed his Government's deep appreciation and welcome to holding the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for the Near East in Morocco. He further indicated that the time of convening the Conference at this juncture was most opportune, particularly as the Near East was witnessing structural adjustment programmes coupled with food price increases and changing internal trade environment such as Uruguay Round Agreement (UR).

4. His Excellency drew the attention of the Conference to the need for intensifying national and regional efforts in effectively addressing the endemic problems of increased desertification, hazards of plant and animal pests and diseases and the deterioration of land, water and forest resources at rates that could endanger their sustainability. Over-exploitation of world fisheries resources was highlighted and FAO was requested to promote international regulations for responsible fishing.

5. The Prime Minister concluded by commending FAO role and efforts in bolstering agricultural development in countries of the Region and expressed his Government's support to the Director-General's call for convening the World Food Summit (WFS).

Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Appointment of the Rapporteur

6. His Excellency Hassan Abouyoub, Minister for Agriculture and Agricultural Development, of the Kingdom of Morocco, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Conference.

7. The Conference resolved that all other Heads of Delegations would be Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Nasreddine Rimouche (Algeria) was appointed as the Conference Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda

8. The Provisional Annotated Agenda was adopted as shown in Appendix A and the Provisional Timetable was also adopted after the following two amendments: NERC/96/INF/7-Rev.1 to be considered as a working document for discussion instead of being an information note, and that the closing session to be on the 29th March instead of the 30th March 1996.

Statement by the Director-General

9. In his statement, Dr. Jacques Diouf, the Director-General of FAO, expressed his profound gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the Twenty-third Regional Conference for the Near East and for the warm welcome he received together with all participants. (For The Director-General's Statement see Appendix D).

II. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

World Food Summit

10. The conclusions of the Expert Consultation on the World Food Summit were presented (see Appendix E). The Regional Conference then examined documents NERC/96/3, "World Food Summit: Draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action", NERC/96/4 "World Food Summit: Food Security Situation and Issues in the Near East", and NERC/96/4-Sup.1, "Food for All Campaign". As a further input to the Conference's debate, a spokesperson for the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) presented a summary report on the deliberations of the NGO's Consultation on the WFS, held by FAO in Rabat on 24-25 March 1996, at the invitation of the Moroccan Society for Nutrition. The Conference noted that the full report of the NGO's Consultation would be transmitted to the Committee on World Food Security.

11. With respect to document NERC/96/3, the Conference considered that it was an appropriate basis for the finalization by the CFS of the draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action to be submitted to the WFS. Some delegations announced their intention to prepare, in addition to their verbal observations, reflected hereafter, written comments which would be communicated later as inputs to the CFS work.

12. In considering document NERC/96/4, the Conference emphasized the following aspects of food security in the Near East: the critical role of water availability and its control for food security in the Region, and the need to promote exchanges of experiences on this matter; the food-deficit character of the Region and the expected negative impact in this respect of the Uruguay Round Agreement, the necessity to implement the Decision on Means Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least Developed and Net Food Importing Developing Countries and the need to foster food production development; the advantages to be gained from regional cooperation, particularly in consolidating regional capacity in genetic resources and biotechnology, in safety control and quality standards, and in the rehabilitation of grazing lands with international support; the seriousness of natural resources degradation, desertification and drought; the great variability of conditions among the countries of the Region, and the importance of poverty and demographic aspects as factors affecting regional food security.

A. For the Attention of Member Nations and FAO:

13. The Conference:

supported the Director General's initiative to convene the World Food Summit in November 1996, underlined the timeliness of this initiative and reiterated the full support of member governments to its success;

supported the following recommendations relating to the Plan of Action in document NERC/96/3: to recognize the fight against poverty as essential to the goal of food security; to express or strengthen, in the objectives and actions at all appropriate levels, the necessary provisions to achieve gender equality and a better involvement of youth and women in enhancing food security; to mobilize public opinion and strengthen solidarity within and among countries in favour of food security; to consider positively the optimal use of marginal lands for food production and the need for reversing resource degradation; to ensure availability of appropriate inputs to farmers; to address the impact on food security of demographic pressures, unbalanced urban and rural development, unhealthy food consumption habits, and consumption patterns; to ensure proper substantiation of the relationships between food insecurity and transborder migrations where applicable;

- considered document NERC/96/4 as providing a sufficiently comprehensive and appropriate analysis of the essential issues and aspects of the food security situation in the Region; and section III of the document as a preliminary and indicative contribution to the regional dimension of WFS Plan of Action, and requested the annexation of this section to the Conference Report (See Appendix G).

B. For the Attention of FAO:

14. The Conference:

- agreed that the full report on NGO consultation which was presented to the Conference be transmitted to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS);
- agreed that document NERC/96/3 was an appropriate basis for the finalization by CFS of the draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action to be submitted to the WFS; and recommended that the political nature of the Policy Statement be strengthened in particular para 3 to 11 and that the Plan of Action be more concise integrating the regional and sub-regional dimensions and indicating clearly with a consistent terminology the responsibilities for implementation including those of FAO as was done in paragraphs 72-74 of document NERC/96/4;

decided that the Tunis Declaration on Food Security in the Arab World be annexed to the Conference report for transmittal to CFS for consideration;

supported the launching of a campaign of International Decade for "Food for All" on the occasion of World Food Summit;

- agreed to transmit for CFS consideration the following amendments and additions in the document NERC/96/3: to include in Objective 1.1 "national" in addition to "universal" food security; to modify paragraph 59 so as to use the preparatory mechanisms of the WFS for the process of monitoring follow-up to the Summit, and 59-c so as to establish national level modalities for the review of policies and programmes as called for under Objective 7.2; to include in the Global Plan of Action the actions contained in the following paragraphs of document NERC 96-4: 47(v to xi), 48 (i to iii), 56 (i particularly at national level, and ii-iii), 59, 62, 68 and 69; to address the question

of financial mechanisms and resources for implementation of the WFS Plan of Action and for alleviating the debt burden of the most affected developing countries; to avoid detailed and controversial prescriptions on macroeconomic, exchange rate and interest rate policies; to adapt the conditions and sequencing of structural adjustment programmes to the specific situation of each concerned country; to strengthen cooperation on food trade issues between FAO and other international organisations and institutions (WTO, UNCTAD, etc.).

Country Statements and General Debate

15. In their statements, the delegates commended the FAO Director-General's policies and unanimously welcomed his initiative for convening of the world Food Summit in Rome in November 1996. Other issues of common concern to member countries included water scarcity and management, increased desertification, transboundary pests and diseases, degradation of natural resources and the deterioration of the environment, the role of women and youth in rural development, the problem of foreign debt, and the adjustment to international changes in the trade environment with emphasis on the Uruguay Round Agreement.

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-1995

16. Dr. Atif Bukhari, ADG/Regional Representative for the Near East reviewed FAO activities undertaken in the Region during the 1994-95 biennium. He highlighted the implementation of reorganization and decentralization measures approved by the 106th Session of the FAO Council in May/June 1994 which entailed strengthening of the Near East Regional Office with a four-member Economic Policy Assistance Group and a Soils Officer.

17. The Conference was briefed on the Regional Office programme, led by the Regional Technical Officers and coordinated with FAO Technical Divisions, which included the organization of several national, sub-regional and regional meetings, seminars, workshops, training courses and technical publications in the fields of Land and Water Resources and Irrigation Development, Crop Production, Crop Protection, Range Management and Development, Animal Production and Health, Agro-industries and Research, Agricultural Marketing and Credit, Prevention of Post Harvest Losses, Agricultural Education, Extension and Training, Women in Agriculture, Rural Development and Agrarian Reform, Nutrition, Forestry, Wildlife and Protected Areas, Fisheries, and Agricultural Policy Analysis, Planning and Investment. Activities included also field missions to member countries and backstopping to FAO projects and national institutions, as detailed in the Doc. NERC/96/2.

18. The Conference was also informed of RNE's renewed cooperation with related Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and NGOs and continued coordination work through several Inter-Agency Task Forces (IATFs) established with the regional and international organizations concerned, aiming at increasing complementarity of action, optimizing the use of resources and providing needed technical assistance and advisory services. Among these Organizations: the World Bank, the Islamic Bank for Development, the League of Arab States, the Arab Organization for Agriculture Development, the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Areas (ACSAD).

19. The Conference took note that despite limited financial resources and unfavourable working conditions in many parts of the Region, a significant number of regional and sub-regional programmes and activities were implemented in a satisfactory manner, including the establishment of various networks, preparation of technical case studies/surveys, as well as facilitating the access to modern and digitized information systems needed for establishing national databases on agriculture.

20. The Conference noted with appreciation the important role of FAO and RNE in furthering agricultural development objectives in the Region and called for more attention to be given to improving agricultural and animal production, desertification control, monitoring and follow-up of the impact of UR on the food importing countries of the Region, as well as conservation and development of fisheries and forestry resources and the environment.

**The Impact of the Uruguay Round Agreements
on the Agricultural Economies of the Near East**

21. The Conference recognized that though UR Agreements were most comprehensive, they represented only partial liberalization of trade since a large part of existing distortion in world trade in agriculture had yet to be removed. In addition, the implementation of UR Agreements would have profound impacts on the economies of all countries, whether members or non-members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), however with varying degrees depending on trade situation, economic conditions, agricultural potential and policy environment of each country.

22. The Conference recognized the expected increase in import prices as a result of UR implementation would most likely have negative effects on the Near East food-importing countries, particularly the least developed.

23. The Conference supported UR recommendations on Food Aid and the Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effect of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed Countries and Net-food Importing Developing Countries and urged the formulation of specific mechanisms and working procedures for effective implementation of these recommendations.

24. The Conference took note of UR Agreements on the application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBA), and urged that these two agreements should not be made stricter than required by scientific evidence and should be guided by FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius and other related UN specialized commissions.

25. The Conference recognized that tariffication together with elimination of barriers would increase the scope for intra-regional trade, and emphasized the urgent need for promoting intra- and inter-regional cooperation including formation and/or strengthening custom unions, free trade areas and common markets.

A. Recommendations to Member Nations

26. The Conference called upon Member Governments to :

- i) review macro economic and sectoral policies and national food strategies, plans and programmes and adopt policies compatible with UR Agreements and improved competitiveness;
- ii) develop adequate national infrastructure, institutions, manpower and regulations for food safety, quality control and animal and plant quarantine to satisfy Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.
- iii) encourage involvement of private traders, NGOs other supporting services networks in fostering inter- and intra-regional trade and joint regional ventures; and
- iv) strengthen economic and technical cooperation in agricultural trade development through establishment of necessary institutions and mechanisms for systematic exchange of information and experiences.

B. For the Attention of FAO

27. The Conference recommended FAO to:

- i) provide, in line with FAO Conference C95/REP paragraph 59, technical assistance to member countries, particularly the least developed countries in assessing the need to review their food and agriculture strategies to meet policy commitment under UR Agreements and in preparing for the next round of global trade negotiations on agriculture including possible new subjects, notably sustainability and environment;
- ii) assist countries of the Region which had not yet become members of WTO with policy advice in assessing benefits and costs of joining WTO;
- iii) assist member countries in reviewing possibilities of intra regional trade agreements in the light of UR;
- iv) support member countries, particularly the least-developed, in their efforts for strengthening institutional, technical and manpower capabilities in the fields of food safety, quality control and quarantine at the national, sub-regional and regional levels; and
- v) encourage the removal of barriers to the transfer of technology to developing countries and the granting of preferential treatment to these countries, particularly in services and investment fields.

Promoting Sustainable Utilization of Marginal Lands in the Near East Region

28. The Conference noted with concern that the present overall per caput arable land was 0.22 ha and that it continued to shrink in most Near East countries due to urbanization and various land degradation factors, aggravated by limited water resources available for irrigation.

29. The Conference also recognized that some 60 percent of arable lands existed in four countries which faced limited access to capital investments while higher-income countries had much less arable areas available for development.

30. The Conference took note that over 50 percent of land degradation was due to water and wind erosion, and realized the need for a georeferenced information system like Global Assessment of Soil Degradation (GLASOD) and Soil and Terrain Data base (SOTER) for evaluating land resources potentials.

31. The Conference recognized that many past soil conservation schemes in the Region had less than expected impact due to rural exodus to urban areas, repeated droughts, over-grazing and deteriorating land productivity.

32. The Conference observed that the belated identification of the problem of marginal land and treating the soil and water conservation schemes as civil works projects led by government officials, with inadequate considerations to the farmers' needs and priorities and insufficient provision of project running costs and operational management, were behind the humble impact of such schemes.

33. The Conference emphasized that a new holistic approach with maximum landuser participation, integrating the socio-economic and human aspects within the engineering solution, was needed to ensure the sustainable management of marginal lands.

34. The Conference noted the relevance of the proposed FAO framework for the sustainable utilization of marginal lands based on the three elements of landuse planning, encouraging landuser participation, and the institution building. The latter element would normally include the development of necessary governmental institutions, enacting adequate legislation, and identifying research and manpower training needs, particularly required for applying new technologies.

A. Recommendations to Member Nations

35. The Conference called upon Member Governments to:

- i) develop a political commitment to land reform, including increasing security of tenure, equity and justice to affected people who should also take part in planning and implementation phases of marginal land projects;
- ii) review national plans addressing land fragmentation problems with a view to strengthen farming associations/cooperatives and provide them with better access to credit and market facilities;
- iii) identify national institutions and provide them with capable manpower having clear and coordinated responsibilities for streamlining project work with other stakeholders and governmental departments; and
- iv) adopt policies to encourage community participation such as food-for-work, and cost-sharing, as well as promoting management options of low technology, small project staffing and affordable operational costs.

B. Recommendations to FAO

36. The Conference requested FAO to:

- i) give due attention to the sustainable use of highlands, as well as arid and semi-arid zones considered as a main source of food security in these areas and provide the required technical assistance and field programmes to enable member countries develop such areas;
- ii) coordinate work with the CGIAR affiliated Centres in assisting member countries formulate programmes for the sustainable use of marginal lands;
- iii) promote the adoption of integrated farming system approach based on adaptive research undertaken by national, regional and international research centres and implement their results on marginal land development at both household and national levels; and
- iv) facilitate convening of scientific fora for key decision-makers, at regional and sub-regional levels for sharing experiences on marginal land management.

Representation of the Region on the CGIAR

37. The Conference took note of the FAO Director-General's stand that Member States in developing regions should have adequate and effective representation within the CGIAR. The FAO, in consultation with CGIAR, identified a number of areas for improvement of regional representation effectiveness and for closer interaction between regional representatives with Member States, as well as donors of the CGIAR (NERC/96/6).

38. The Conference was invited to select one regional representative for the period 1997-2000 to succeed the Islamic Republic of Iran which would complete its term in 1996. The Conference elected a 4-member Screening Committee which reviewed C.Vs received from Cyprus, Malta and Syria and approved the selection of Mr. Ali Shafiq Shehadah from Syria.

Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO

39. The Conference recommended the Director-General, in consultation with the Member Nations, to convene future ministerial meetings in conjunction with Committee on Forestry (COFO) and Committee on Fisheries (COFI) sessions whenever appropriate. Full flexibility should be given to him with regard to the 1997 sessions.

Progress Report on the Reactivation of the FAO Near East Cooperative Programme (NECP)

40. The Conference was informed of the agreement reached by the 22nd Session to establish a High-Level Committee (HLC) headed by H.E. Habib Ahmed Kassim the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture of Bahrain and composed of representatives from Jordan, Morocco, Oman and Saudi Arabia, to seek the views and positions of potential donors and recipients on the possible reactivation and replenishment of the NECP Programme. In mid-1995, a cabinet reshuffle took place in Bahrain and a new Minister was appointed.

41. The Conference was briefed on the alternatives and proposals formulated by the FAO Near East Regional Office and decided to request the Regional Office for contacting the new Minister for Agriculture and Public Works, His Excellency Majed Jawad Al-Jishi to chair the Committee and to take the necessary follow-up actions.

National, Sub-Regional and FAO Programme for Desert Locust Control

42. The Conference took note of document NERC/96/INF/7-Rev.1 and was informed that Desert Locust was a concern of all countries located in the recession and invasion areas. National strategies for combating desert locust differed according to available infrastructure and degree of Desert Locust threat to each country. The Sub-regional coordination and cooperation for desert locust control activities were undertaken by three FAO Commissions established in North West Africa, the Central Region and South West Asia, in addition to the Desert Locust Control Organization in East Africa (DLCO-EA) and the Organization Commune de Lutte Antiacridienne et de Lutte Antiaviaire (OCLALAV). FAO, within its mandate for global desert locust control, launched a Desert Locust Prevention Programme under the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES), which already started in the Central Region and was being extended to the Western Region.

43. The Conference commended the efforts made to combat Desert Locust invasions and called upon locust-affected member nations to maintain and update their national monitoring and reporting programmes during recession periods. It also called for developing contingency plans for Desert Locust Control and establishing adequate infrastructures and actively contributing to EMPRES Programme and to the Regional Commissions and Organizations. It further requested Member Nations to keep FAO updated on the Desert Locust situations in their respective countries.

A. Recommendations to Member Nations

44. The Conference called upon Member Governments to:

- i) establish specialized units for Desert Locust control and strengthen existing ones;
- ii) coordinate between Desert Locust control units and Meteorological Departments to facilitate the flow of meteorological data at both national and regional levels;
- iii) encourage joint survey expeditions at the regional level, and provide the necessary surveying equipment for intervening whenever needed; and
- iv) support the regional Desert Locust Commissions.

B. Recommendations to FAO

45. The Conference requested FAO to:

- i) provide assistance to national Desert Locust control units in acquiring the required surveying, monitoring and forecasting facilities needed;
- ii) assist in the speedy establishment of the emergency fund for Desert Locust Control, including the formulation of field intervention groups for immediate action;
- iii) assist in the formulation of appropriate strategies and plans for preventive control in the Region, including provision of the required communication equipment, manpower, as well as adequate and coordinated means compatible with the environment;
- iv) provide technical assistance for the safe disposal of the expired chemicals in storage in certain countries of the Region; and
- v) assist in urging donors for supporting countries affected by Desert Locust.

A Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conference Reports

46. The Conference considered the FAO proposal for shortening Regional Conference Reports in keeping with the recommendation of the 28th Session of the FAO Conference, October 1995, requesting the Director-General to make additional savings by reducing costs for governance.

47. The Conference approved the FAO proposal for shortening of the Regional Conference Report according to the guidelines stated in NERC/96/9, and therefore decided to follow the new format in preparing the report of the present Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East.

III. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Date and place of the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East

48. The Conference welcomed the kind invitation extended by Syria to host the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East. The Conference requested the Director-General of FAO

to take this kind invitation into consideration when deciding on the date and place of the Conference, in consultation with Member Governments of the Region.

Adoption of the Report

49. The Conference adopted the report, after introducing some minor amendments.

Closure of the Conference

50. On behalf of Dr. Jacques Diouf the Director-General of FAO, Mr. Atif Bukhari, ADG/Regional Representative for the Near East expressed his gratitude to His Majesty King Hassan II, the Government and the people of Morocco for hosting the Conference, for their generous hospitality and for the excellent arrangements and facilities which greatly contributed to the success of the Conference. He expressed his appreciation and thanks to His Excellency Abdelatif Al-Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation for inaugurating the Conference. He paid special tribute to the Chairman, His Excellency Hassan Abouyoub, Minister for Agriculture and Agricultural Development of Morocco, as well as the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur. He thanked the National Organizing Committee and the Secretariat for their efforts in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Conference.

51. Mr. Bukhari expressed his satisfaction at having had the opportunity to share with the delegates their concerns and assured the Conference that these concerns will form part of FAO's activities in the future. He praised the frankness of the delegates and assured them that FAO will take their advice and guidance into consideration when formulating its future programme of work for the Region.

52. On behalf of all the Delegates, the Minister for Agriculture of Jordan, His Excellency Mustafa Shnikat thanked the Government and people of Morocco and proposed sending a telegram of thanks and appreciation to His Majesty King Hassan II for the gracious hospitality received by all participants of the Conference.

53. In his closing statement, His Excellency Hassan Abouyoub, Chairman of the Conference reiterated his profound thanks and appreciation to the Director-General of FAO and to the Regional Representative for the Near East and his staff, for their continued efforts in making the Conference a success. He thanked Their Excellencies, the Ministers, and the Heads and Members of Delegations for their active participation and invaluable contributions. He paid special tribute to all those who took part in preparing and servicing the Conference.

54. The Chairman declared the Conference closed at 21:00 hours on Friday, 29/3/1996.

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Organization of the Conference
2. Inaugural Ceremony
3. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Appointment of the Rapporteur)
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Statement by the Director-General

II. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

6. World Food Summit
7. Country Statements and General Debate
8. Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-1995
9. The Impact of the Uruguay Round Agreements on the Agricultural Economies of the Near East
10. Promoting Sustainable Utilization of Marginal Lands in the Near East Region
11. Representation of the Region on the CGIAR
12. Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO
13. Progress Report on the Reactivation of the FAO Near East Cooperative Programme (NECP)
14. National, Sub-Regional and FAO Programme for Desert Locust Control
15. A Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conference Reports

III. CONCLUDING ITEMS

16. Date and place of the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East
17. Adoption of the Report
18. Closure of the Conference

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

NERC/96/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
NERC/96/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-95
NERC/96/3	World Food Summit: Draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action
NERC/96/4	World Food Summit: Food Security Situation and Issues in the Near East
NERC/96/5	The Impact of the Uruguay Round Agreements in the Agricultural Economies of the Near East
NERC/96/6	Representation of the Region on the CGIAR
NERC/96/7	Promoting Sustainable Utilization of Marginal Lands in the Near East Region
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STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In opening the Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for the Near East, may I express our profound gratitude to the Government and people of Morocco for their fraternal welcome: our Moroccan friends have received us with great warmth and care as befits this noble country's timehonoured tradition of hospitality.

This Conference will be reviewing the problems of agriculture, food and rural development within the region. It is unique, however, in that it will also be defining the regional stance vis-a-vis the World Food Summit to be held this November in Rome. Your contribution to the general debate is very important as this is the first of a series of five preparatory meetings and will thus serve as an example for the other regions of the world. At the very dawn of history, your region was instrumental in the birth and development of agriculture, harnessing and developing the great river basins of the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Nile. Irrigation was invented in the Near East, and up to the Middle Ages your agronomists had made greater strides than anyone in production techniques and the rational utilization and conservation of the resource base.

For many years the vicissitudes of history and climate shrouded this past splendour, but now we see a return to a time when government policies and the decisive action of the new generations of agronomists (but most of all the skills, age-old wisdom and patient courage of the region's farmers) have fostered an impressive renewal. This is manifestly clear from the sharply rising production and food supplies in the region in the last 20 or 30 years, which unhappily have been dogged by a sharp rise in the population.

Progress in food production in the region is bound to have a strong impact on the work of the Summit, whose basic goal is to enlist a top-level commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and to take specific action through combined world, regional and national efforts to ensure food security for all.

What is the rationale for such a Summit, when FAO itself, the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, the two World Food Congresses of 1963 and 1970, the World Food Conference in 1974, and the more recent International Conference on Nutrition in 1992 all sprang from this same underlying concern?

The main answer is that this will be the first meeting since FAO was founded 50 years ago to be held at the very top level: Heads of State and Government. It was unanimously approved by the Conference of FAO and the United Nations General Assembly because the world food problem is now considered to be so serious. And it is FAO's fundamental responsibility to alert world opinion and world leaders to the deteriorating world food situation before it attains catastrophic proportions.

Furthermore, while our mandate has not changed from that laid down by the founding fathers in FAO's Constitution, the sheer size and the nature, even, of the problems we face have evolved at a speed typical of the century in which we live.

There has undoubtedly been prodigious progress in the realms of technology and know-how, as exemplified by the Green Revolution, and there is no question that the transformation in plant and animal production, the knowledge and use of inputs, water management, and progress in conservation, storage and processing techniques have revolutionized the rural and agricultural sector.

And yet at the same time, there are more than twice as many mouths to feed, and as their number continues to grow, available per capita farmland diminishes. Intensive exploitation (particularly as practised in the most developed countries) degrades the environment. In the poor countries, forest cover is shrinking fast while increasingly marginal land is being brought under the plough, accelerating the pace of erosion. Fishery resources are overexploited and in this as in many other domains, nature can no longer regenerate its resources as fast as people destroy them.

Additionally, even though there is now enough food to feed everyone in the world, its distribution remains terribly skewed both within and between countries, and from one region to another. The poverty of people, households, social groups and nations is driving a terrible wedge, a situation further aggravated by political upheaval, conflict, and the growing plethora of refugees and displaced persons. In the developing countries nearly 800 million people suffer from chronic undernutrition, and nearly 200 million children under the age of five are affected by severe or chronic protein-calorie deficiency. We are really very far from the vision of FAO's founding fathers. And more than 20 years after the 1974 World Food Conference, the goal of "eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition within a decade" remains stubbornly beyond our grasp.

And yet the right to food is the first and foremost human right, without which all the others are empty and without resonance. How can a hungry person be expected to exercise his or her right to education, work and culture, and to participate fully in the political and social life of the community? Food and water loom prominently among the major world challenges as we enter the third millennium. The dimensions of the problem are ethical, political and strategic, and may well lead to extremely violent and serious conflict unless we put things right.

FAO is so keenly aware of the need for strong and immediate action that it has launched a Special Programme on Food Production in Support of Food Security in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries without awaiting the world-level decisions that will be taken by the Summit. I do not need to spell out the details of this well-known Programme, but its approach might serve as a source of inspiration in shaping the Policy Statement and Plan of Action that will be submitted for Summit approval.

This Programme addresses the challenge of food insecurity from different angles:

The main thrust is to work on a specific and daily basis with farmers, livestock owners, forest workers, fishing communities and fish farmers to sustainably increase their productivity and thus combat poverty. Programme activities include the demonstration of improved techniques in the farmers' own fields. Identification, implementation and evaluation are all done by those most directly involved: the farmers themselves.

This last point leads into a second characteristic of the Programme: the strong emphasis on people's participation, particularly that of women. Women indeed play a predominant, multifaceted and totally irreplaceable role in feeding the household and community: in many regions, women are the main providers of food which they grow, prepare and store. They are responsible for the children's education and handing down cultural values and know-how related to food. Without broad-based people's participation, particularly of the feminine population, there would be no momentum or spillover effect, no continuity, and no universal adhesion to a joint undertaking: this could easily cost the Programme its impetus and impact.

A third and parallel aspect of the Programme is the immense effort of cooperation and consultation at all levels: the recipient countries, FAO and donors; the recipient countries and developed countries offering bilateral aid; and South-South exchanges in the spirit of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. The philosophy behind the Programme, now in its pilot phase in about 15 countries and showing promising results, will help to chart the major orientations of the Summit.

The focus will also be on meaningful sustainable action. In the spirit of UNCED's Agenda 21 Programme, rather than relentlessly pushing out agricultural boundaries and jeopardizing fragile ecosystems, efforts will centre on high-potential areas where productivity can be increased by intensifying farming practices with, in particular, the conservation, collection and harnessing of water for better water management. However, where this is not a feasible option, as in several

countries in your region, marginal lands will have to be developed sustainably without causing environmental damage - hence this special item on your agenda. The aim, in both cases, is to increase output sufficiently to cater for population growth and raise nutritional levels where serious food deficiencies exist. However, increasing output is only part of the equation; we need to ensure that the benefits from national efforts reach all members of society and particularly its poorest members. Measures will therefore be needed for more equitable access to food for all, more efficient distribution and far fewer food losses.

Public opinion and the media will have to be mobilized, with world political leaders setting the guidelines for resolute and vigorous food policies and solid sustained action. The general debate on food will also address the problems of investment and trade, and, in this connection, your agenda includes an item on the impact of the Uruguay Round agreements on the agricultural economies of the region.

Beyond the Summit itself, what is needed is a truly global campaign, with cooperation and consultation at all levels. Following in the footsteps of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, its theme would be "Food for All", which is the slogan FAO has adopted for the forthcoming years. This "Food for All Campaign" would be driven by National Committees with the participation of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, women and youth groups and civil society in general. It would ensure the continued support and awareness necessary for an endeavour requiring long-term commitment and resources in order to be successful. The mandate and objectives of this "Food for All Campaign" would be decided by the Summit, while its structure would be adapted to the specific situation of each country. This mechanism would complement the governmental FAO National Committees existing in member countries. A document on this subject is before you and you may consider recommending that such a Campaign be launched by the Summit.

How will this Summit differ from the many past attempts to combat hunger and malnutrition? Is this initiative more likely to succeed than all its predecessors?

One original concept in the preparation of the Summit is that no costly special meetings have been required, with all necessary consultations being held during the course of regular sessions of the Organization's Statutory Bodies. Thus, at its Twenty-first Session a few weeks ago, the Committee on World Food Security initiated discussion of the multiple facets of the draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action that the Summit is to adopt. The text before you is therefore no longer a first draft and will be further refined in the light of your comments. The Summit will be held at FAO Headquarters. Every effort is being made to involve the private sector, NGOs, parliamentarians, researchers and academics and young people in its preparation and to promote all initiatives that will help ensure its success.

The World Food Summit differs in many respects from previous events addressing the problem of world food security.

In contrast to recent high-level meetings, the Summit has been convened by a body that was specifically set up to deal with food and agricultural development, and which therefore has a solid base and the human and material resources to implement its programmed. Furthermore, two key practical initiatives are already in train to achieve food security for all and the Summit will be able to take concrete decisions so that these are effectively and globally implemented.

The challenge before the World Food Summit is not unprecedented, for much has been done to overcome hunger and malnutrition, to bolster agricultural growth and to ensure that food is distributed more equitably. But past actions have for the most part been one-off, uncoordinated efforts, while what are now required are articulated actions that will target every country where the need to secure or consolidate food security is becoming increasingly acute. The many implications of this huge undertaking will all have to be squarely faced for they are all interlinked: production, conservation of the resource base, investment and infrastructure, social and economic policies to guarantee fair distribution of food, not to mention the thorny issue of international trade. This is indeed a momentous challenge: how are we to change everything that needs changing in the world food situation; how are we to feed the hundreds of millions of our fellow human beings who must finally, in one way or another, be assured regular access to an adequate diet?

FAO has not stood still on the long journey towards success. It has done—and done well— everything that it has been asked to do. It has done much solid work, such as furthering the international standards in force on pesticides, plant genetic resources and other matters. But has this really changed life in the resource-poor villages of the Third World? Has productivity increased in the least-developed countries? Has the use of fertilizers and other inputs and the biological control of pests and diseases been enough to raise production to the required level without harming the environment? Has definitive progress been made against hunger, malnutrition and the poverty of individuals and nations?

Unhappily, the answer is all too clearly no. There must be a way of doing more and doing better, of pooling our random efforts and mounting an all-out attack on hunger from all sides, for the good of future generations and for the very survival of the human race.

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

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

Paradoxically, however, this could prove to be the salvation of this and future generations, if only we can read the signs of the times and rise to the occasion. Untold clarity of mind, imagination, courage, patience and tenacity will be required, as will concerted mobilization on a scale largely unparalleled in human history. Citizens of all countries and ranks, of all ages and religions; associations and groups of all kinds; professionals from all sectors; community leaders in all walks of life, whether intellectual, social, economic, political or spiritual; government officials and representatives of all levels, men and women from the smallest village to the largest international organization will all have to marshal their forces and rally together for an all-out joint effort.

Are there sufficient resources for a such vast undertaking? Will the interdependence of our global village outweigh the narrow short-term interests that divide it? I hope with all my heart that this is so. The fact that so many nations have come together today at this meeting, out of solidarity and a desire for justice, can only reinforce my conviction that the harder and more serious the situation is, the more we can depend on human ingenuity.

It is therefore with full confidence that I wish you every success in your meetings.

Thank you.

**SUMMARY OF THE EXPERT CONSULTATION
ON
THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT**

Mr. Abdellatif Guedira, Morocco, was elected Chairman.

The Secretariat presented the process of preparation of the World Food Summit (WFS), in particular the modalities of work of the Committee on Food Security (CFS) and of the Intersessional Working Group it established at its 21st Session especially to advance the preparation of the Summit Documents.

Participants in the Expert Consultation addressed first the question of how the outcome of the Regional Conference's debates on item 7 would be used in subsequent steps of the Summit preparatory process.

It was clarified that the FAO Conference, in deciding that the subject should be placed on the agenda of each of the FAO Regional Conferences in 1996, had seen these Conferences as a source of the essential regional perspective for the Summit documents to be adopted by Heads of State or Government.

At the same time the Conference had requested the CFS to act as focal point for Summit preparations, synthesizing the contribution of the 5 Regional Conferences to the Global Plan of Action and taking into account the views of the regions in finalizing the text of the policy statement for submission to the Summit.

The Consultation agreed that it was important that the Regional Conference give, as part of its report, a clear expression to this regional perspective of the Near East as an input to the preparation and finalization of the documents.

With respect to Section III of document NERC/96/4 (The draft Contribution of the Near East Regional Conference to the Global Plan of Action), which was presented to facilitate discussion on the regional perspective, the delegates appreciated the relevance of its contents. It was recommended that the clear indication of responsibilities by the Inter Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and FAO in particular be similarly presented in the draft Global Plan of Action.

Clarification was requested and provided on quantitative targets for reduction of undernutrition and for agricultural investment. The following aspects were emphasized: the critical role of water availability and control for food security in the region; and the need for exchanges of experiences on this matter, the seriousness of natural resources degradation and desertification in particular; the food-deficit character of the Region, and therefore the impact of the Uruguay Round Agreement on countries of the Region and the importance of fostering food production development; the consolidation of the regional capacity and cooperation in genetic resources research and biotechnology, safety control and quality standards; the differences in countries' situations in the region, and the significance of growing population pressure.

**THE TUNIS DECLARATION
ON
ARAB FOOD SECURITY**

We, the Arab Ministers of Agriculture, members of the General Assembly of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, attending its twenty-fourth session convened in Tunis during the period 13-15 January 1996:

* Recognize with utmost concern and sense of responsibility the significance and gravity of the present situation of food security in the Arab World. For despite national efforts for the development of Arab agricultural sectors within the framework of comprehensive economic development plans and programmes in these countries, and despite the various growth rates achieved by them, growth rates for food production continue to fall short of matching the increases in consumption rates arising from population growth, and as a result of changes in consumption habits which induced relative improvement in individual incomes. The Arab region, thus, remained a region of huge deficit in most major foodstuffs, especially cereals, with all the consequent social, economic and political implications for the Arab nation as a whole.

* Considering that the concept of "Arab Food Security" means that adequate food in terms of quantity and quality, necessary for an active and healthy life, is ensured to all persons at all times, founded first and foremost on food self-sufficiency, and the comparative advantage of the production of foodstuffs in each Arab country, and made available to Arab citizens at prices commensurate with their incomes and financial abilities.

* Confident of the Arab World endowment in material and human resources, capable of optimal utilization of agricultural natural resources for achieving Arab food security.

* For achieving this goal, We, hereby emphasize the following necessary actions:

1. Undertake actions and develop policies leading to enhanced self-sufficiency in food production, as a strategic goal that the Arab Countries will endeavour in order to fend off the dangers and consequences of the use of food as a tool for political or economic pressures, or to counter the sharp rise in the prices of imported foodstuffs which burden the balances of payment of Arab countries.
2. While food security is essentially a national concern, a pan-national perspective of this question ensures its optimal solution within a framework of Arab integration, and on the basis of the respective comparative advantage of each individual country.
3. The formula of joint ventures in production and services fields related to the availability of food supplies for all people in the Arab World, is deemed the appropriate means for ensuring the optimum utilization of agricultural, human and financial resources available to Arab countries.
4. The management of Arab agricultural sector, given the changing regional and international conditions, necessitates the enhancement of people and rural community organizations' participation in and contribution to all decisions and measures affecting food security.
5. In recognition of the importance of the Arab food security issue, it is imperative to involve all developmental parties and hence, strengthen coordination and ties between specialized developmental organizations and institutions, and related financial agencies for the benefit of Arab countries and further allowing for a greater future role for the Arab private sector.
6. Arab economic integration is a necessity made inevitable by the changes and developments in both the Arab world and the international arena. Furthermore, the creation of such a grouping would facilitate drawing greater benefits and advantages from international

agreements, augment negotiation power to deal with international blocks and agreements, and contribute to the establishing of better conditions for Arab countries to obtain preferential treatment in these dealings.

In light of the above, the achievement of Arab food security would be conditioned by the development of appropriate policies and mechanisms allowing for:

1. emphasis on technical development programmes and projects in agriculture, to increase productivity per hectare and animal unit through scientific research, implementation of integrated pest management and disease control programmes, and the development and application of technologies adapted to Arab agriculture.
2. Better use of water resources to optimize benefits from available resources and development of drought-resistant crop varieties and of irrigation techniques for promoting efficient use of water.
3. Pay greater attention to overall investments in the agricultural sector with a view to directing larger share of public investment to improve agricultural infrastructure and research, and emphasize human development in rural sector so as to enhance its capacities to apply modern technologies.
4. Encourage countries endowed with vast natural agricultural resources to provide guarantees and streamline procedures to attract Arab investments in food production projects, and announce these measures to investors with the aim of encouraging the private sector to participate in productive projects.
5. Give due importance to agricultural resources and to the protection of environment in order to help sustainability, maintain productivity, and ensure increasing and continued food production.
6. Give emphasis to agricultural education, in particular and to improvement of education in rural areas, in general, so as to eradicate illiteracy in the Arab countryside, promote nutritional awareness and increased food production.
7. Emphasize human development and integrated rural development programmes with particular attention to the role of rural women in food production and marketing.
8. Develop the appropriate formula for building emergency reserves of major foodstuffs, especially cereals.
9. Develop mechanisms and processes to ensure the participation of people's and community organizations in agricultural sectors.
10. Give special attention to creating a favourable investment environment which facilitates movement of capital, promotes inter-Arab agricultural trade, sustains efforts to liberalize agricultural products trade and eliminates trade and financial restrictions, and encourage investment and participation of private sector within the framework of structural adjustment programmes in Arab agriculture.
11. To intensify efforts by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in promoting meetings of Arab investors and businessmen to review projects and available resources in Arab countries, coordinate integration of capacities and overcome difficulties relating to investment in countries with greater resources, with the overall aim of achieving the objective of Arab food security, and building on previous efforts by the organization through establishment of a clear vision and detailed programme for Arab food security.

* In reaffirming our support for the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, it being the Pan Arab organization entrusted with the mission of achieving the objectives of Arab food security, and which continues its undertaking in the elaboration of integrated programmes of action, determine opportunities and promote projects for national and joint agricultural investment, call upon Arab financial institutions to support the efforts of the Organization, and cooperate with it in furthering the cause of agricultural development, facilitate the financing of projects prepared by the Organization and assist in its endeavours to improve and increase food production in the Arab World.

* We affirm our support for the World Food Summit to be convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in November 1996, with the aim of ensuring that developed countries assist developing ones in improving their agricultural sector, provide investment and create necessary conditions for increased food production. We emphasize the importance of the active participation of all Arab countries in the Summit.

* We, the Arab Ministers of Agriculture, in making this Declaration, call upon all parties concerned to join in working for the achievement of its objectives.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE 23RD FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR THE NEAR EAST TO THE DRAFTING OF
THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT DOCUMENTS
Rabat, Morocco, 26-29 March 1996

FOOD FOR ALL CAMPAIGN

1. In deciding to convene a World Food Summit at the level of Heads of State or Government in Rome from 13 to 17 November 1996, the FAO Conference in its Resolution 2/95, adopted on 31 October 1995, reaffirmed the "inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition" as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition adopted by the World Food Conference in 1974. It also reaffirmed the need to achieve food security for all, as included in the Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration on Food and Agriculture. The Conference took into cognizance the fact that hunger and malnutrition could constitute a threat to the security of nations, regions and the global community. It also recognized that activities to ensure food security at all levels, in particular at the household level, should be carried out within the framework of sustainable development as defined in Agenda 21.
2. In deciding on the objectives of the Summit, the Conference stated inter alia that the World Food Summit would raise global awareness of the food security problem and promote the search for solutions, and would establish a policy framework and adopt a Plan of Action for implementation by governments, international institutions and all sectors of civil society to achieve sustained progress towards universal food security.
3. The Conference recognized the role of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions, the media and other groups in international conferences and initiatives. In this connection, while inviting countries to participate actively in the preparations and follow-up activities, the Conference encouraged the participation of these sectors of society in the preparatory process, in the Summit itself as appropriate, and in follow-up actions.
4. In order to make the Summit and its outcome a success and to ensure that Food for All is an achievable campaign, it is essential that follow-up actions to the Summit are carried out in a concerted and coordinated manner at the country level with the participation not only of the government, but also of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions, women, youth groups and civil society in general. Such participation by different segments of society could be promoted through a mechanism set up at the country level which would act as a mobilizing body in pursuing the goal of achieving food for all at national and international levels. This mechanism would function as a driving force of a "Food for All Campaign", which could be launched by the World Food Summit in order to sustain the momentum generated by it, support its work and ensure success of the follow-up activities.
5. The "Food for All Campaign" could strive to create a movement of informed public opinion about the key issues concerning food security and their solution; promote development and implementation of solutions to the food production and security constraints; and facilitate dialogue and collaboration among governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the civil society at large. The Campaign could play a key role in facilitating the implementation of the follow-up actions to the World Food Summit. This national mechanism, which would be an important vehicle for the Food for All Campaign, could be led by the non-governmental sector in order to bring in flexibility and innovation, as well as to supplement the governmental FAO national committees with which it will have to develop strong links.
6. The Regional Conferences could consider recommending that the "Food for All Campaign" be launched by the World Food Summit itself with an indication of the mandate and objectives. The structure to sustain it would have to be adapted to the specific situation of each country.

III- ACTIONS TO ADDRESS REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

[The Conference is invited to review the following text and may wish to recommend to the Director-General its transmission to the Committee on World Food Security as the regional contribution to the World Food Summit Plan of Action].

Draft contribution of the Near East Regional Conference to the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit

42. The overall goal for the region would be to reduce the level of undernutrition by a significant margin. FAO considers feasible a reduction in the rates of the undernourished from 16 percent of the total population in 1990-92 to 11 percent by the year 2010. This level of achievement would still leave several countries with high proportions of their populations undernourished (40 or 50 percent in countries like Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan), and special efforts would be needed in these countries in order to achieve sharper reductions in the numbers of their undernourished people. This would require a further increase in the annual growth rate of food production in the region as a whole (3.1 percent at a minimum, instead of 2.9 percent), but a strong and difficult acceleration in the countries with the highest levels of undernutrition.
43. It is estimated that the total gross investment for primary agricultural production would have to reach about US\$18 billion (1993 United States dollars) annually, of which some 30 percent would be concentrated in the countries with otherwise average food availability below 2 700 calories by the year 2010. To this US\$5.0 billion gross of post-production investments should be added, and a further US\$6.2 billion would be needed for supporting rural infrastructure and services, which is roughly equivalent to present levels.
44. Within the framework of the draft Global Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, the priority, regionally-specific actions to achieve such a significant improvement of food security in the Near East and North Africa are as follows:

1. Enhancing domestic food supply capacity

Basis for action

45. There is considerable scope for improving overall productivity, reducing annual and intercountry production variabilities as well as for diversification in crop production. In particular, 14 countries in the region are LIFDCs, for which increasing domestic food production is essential for enhanced national or regional food security.

Objectives

46. i) expand and diversify food production, especially in the areas with high potential, at least to achieve a 68 percent production increase for the main food crops by 2010 for the region as a whole, and at least by 75 percent for the countries with higher rates of undernutrition (Afghanistan, Mauritania, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen);
- ii) strengthen the sustainable management and use of the natural resources, so as to be able to expand areas for crop production by a further seven million hectares (net increase of 7 percent) by 2010; and
- iii) enhance the effective, self-reliant participation of farmers and producers in the agricultural and rural development process.

Actions to be taken

at the national level

47. i) secure adequate infrastructural and service support to increase the productivity and output of food crops, especially in the short term, in the high potential areas with irrigation and adequate rainfall;
- ii) in all the LIFDCs in the region, but with priority for those with food availability below 2700 calories per caput/day, launch by the year 2000 programmes targeted at the substantial reduction of the undernourished, including expansion of cereal production by at least 75 percent by 2010;
- iii) intensify and diversify food and agricultural production, including cash and fodder crops, livestock and fish culture; the yields of the main cereal crops should increase by at least 44 percent, to over 2.3 tons/ha by 2010. In the countries with food availabilities below 2 700 calories/day, cereal yields should increase to at least 1.8 tons /ha, up from current levels of about 1.3 tons/ha;

- iv) expand the reliable availability, to farmers and producers, of an improved quality of production inputs, including irrigation (with an expansion of the irrigated area of at least 10 percent overall, and of 90 percent in countries below 2 700 calories daily intake, by 2010), seeds, plant nutrients (at least doubling chemical fertilizer use by 2010), and postharvest processing and storage;
- v) enhance support services for extension and rural communication, credit and marketing, as well as prevention and control of plant pests and animal diseases;
- vi) enhance land tenure arrangements and participatory organizations for farmers, not only for higher productivity but also for more self-reliant management of natural resources for sustainable use;
- vii) strengthen national capacity in agricultural research, extension and technology dissemination, especially to support farmers in sustainable technologies for intensification and diversification of production;
- viii) promote self-reliant participation by all segments of farmers and producers, both at the national and local levels, with particular attention to poor farmers, and especially women producers;
- ix) expand fish production, especially to meet the expected 70 percent increase in demand by 2010 among countries in the North Africa sub-region, by promoting aquaculture and by the better utilization of small pelagic fish for food;
- x) protect, conserve and manage natural resources (soil, water, plant and animal resources), especially through integrated pest management and plant nutrition, by integrating forestry into land management, managing and protecting aquatic environments and fisheries resources. Similarly, monitor and assess the environmental effects of agricultural activities; and
- xi) strengthen national capacity for developing and executing policies, plans, programmes and projects with a view to realizing sustainable and participatory agricultural and rural development.

at sub-regional and regional levels

- 48. i) expand and intensify cooperation, in collaboration with the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), in exchanging appropriate technologies and approaches to food production and agricultural rural development, especially in irrigation, crop production technologies and integration of crop production and livestock;
- ii) collaborate effectively in establishing and operating joint programmes addressed to transboundary plant pests and animal diseases, such as desert locusts and rinderpest; and
- iii) cooperate in the joint management of shared resources, especially by proactive participation in the *International Code of Conduct on Responsible Fisheries*.

2. Managing water resources

Basis for action

- 49. The region's land resources are predominantly characterized by arid or semi-arid conditions, which makes water a critical factor. Low and erratic rainfall severely limits food crop production and causes wide year-to-year variations in agricultural output. The presence of potentially competing claims to transboundary water resources makes a regional approach to water development an imperative for many countries of the region.

Objectives

- 50. To ensure sustainable and cost-effective use of water resources between various sectors, including an at least 20 percent improvement in the efficient application of water for irrigation and other agricultural purposes by 2010; and to facilitate harmonious management of the transboundary water resources for sustainable use by the riparian countries and peoples.

Actions to be taken

at national level

- 51. i) review and reform national water policy and formulate comprehensive strategies for the sustainable use and management of the water resources for various purposes, including the monitoring of water quality and cost-efficiency;
- ii) increase the efficiency of water use in agriculture, especially to improve irrigation efficiency through appropriate irrigation technologies, effective water management by farmers, proper usufruct rights and appropriate systems of fees and charges reflecting the true cost of water;
- iii) selectively expand irrigation by at least 90 percent by the year 2010 in the countries having a high incidence of undernutrition, and develop low-cost irrigation methods and production techniques with the active participation of farmers;

- iv) monitor and survey waterlogged and salinized lands, and reclaim at least 50 percent of these lands;
- v) explore the feasibility of, and implement, re-use and ensure the safe disposal of 60-70 percent of municipal and drainage effluent for agricultural production, ground water recharge and desertification control; and promote forestry as part of the strategy for water conservation and land use.

at regional and sub-regional levels

- 52. i) expand and strengthen inter-country cooperation for the exchange of technologies and methods for more efficient use of water for food and agricultural production;
- ii) promote inter-country negotiation and cooperation in the management of water resources to prevent conflict and uncontrolled ecological damage; and
- iii) review and enhance the effectiveness of transboundary river basin agreements and mechanisms.

3. Meeting food import requirements

Basis for action

- 53. The region depends heavily on commercial imports, and several countries on food aid, to meet rapidly expanding food needs.

Objectives

- 54. To enhance the capacity of financing food import needs; to balance food import dependence on the one hand, and domestic conditions, cost-efficiency and environmental considerations on the other, including the need to minimize problems linked to supply and price instability through market stabilization mechanisms and market information and early warning systems.

Actions to be taken

at the national level

- 55. i) in order to enhance food import capacity, pursue diversified economic growth;
- ii) liberalize trade in line with the provisions of the Uruguay Round agreement.

at sub-regional and regional levels

- 56. i) develop cost-efficient stabilization mechanisms at national and regional levels, including national food stocks; promote early warning and market information systems;
- ii) pursue, at the international level, the implementation of the Uruguay Round *Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least Developed and Net Food-Importing Countries*; and
- iii) ensure adequate supplies of food aid to food-deficit countries that would otherwise encounter major difficulties in financing the food imports they need.

4. Pursuing and deepening market liberalization and private sector involvement

Basis for action

- 57. Although market-oriented reforms are being pursued in many countries in the region, the process of market liberalization, overall and in agriculture, has been uneven. The reduction or elimination of previously high levels of input and food price subsidization has encountered considerable political and social obstacles, as significant segments of population suffered from the immediate consequences of such measures.

Objectives

- 58. i) provide an economic environment conducive to sustained and equitable growth, by stabilising the economies and eliminating costly and distortive interventions and regulations affecting production, marketing and trade; and

- ii) ensure an adequate presence of the State in the supply of public goods, infrastructures and social services and in the regulation of competition.

Actions to be taken

- 59. i) pursue and intensify market-oriented reforms that address stabilization and growth objectives while also incorporating social and environmental concerns;
- ii) create the conditions for a better supply response to price incentives, through improvements in agricultural infrastructure, training and education and technical support and services to agricultural production;
- iii) create an environment conducive to private enterprise development and competitive growth; and
- iv) promote private sector investment and broad-based participation in overall and agricultural development.

**5. Enhancing agricultural production and productivity in highlands
and arid and semi-arid areas**

Basis for action

- 60. Some 70 percent of the areas of the region are arid or semi-arid where low and erratic rainfall severely restrict food crop production and cause production instability. The inhabitants in these areas represent a significant part of the rural poor and are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. At the same time, the relatively adverse and fragile agro-ecological conditions demand that food and agricultural development in these areas must be built on sustainable management of the natural resources. These are the challenges confronting most countries in the region, and especially the 14 LIFDCs.

Objectives

- 61. To improve the food security of the populations in highlands and arid and semi-arid areas through enhanced, more stable, diversified and sustainable crop and livestock production as well as through development of the off-farm economy.

Actions to be taken

at national level

- 62. i) develop and introduce farming systems and technologies adapted to more stable, sustainable production in highlands and low rainfall areas, including the use of more drought and disease resistant varieties of food crops;
- ii) promote and introduce more sustainable and effective management systems for extensive grazing land, including production of higher-quality fodders within the traditional farming systems;
- iii) integrate practical management practices for the protection and conservation of land and water resources, including integration of forestry and trees against desertification;
- iv) improve the system for early warning on food shortages and strengthen measures to prevent and control pests and diseases;
- v) strengthen agricultural research to provide appropriate technologies for the production systems in these areas, especially to enhance production stability under low-input systems and to enhance sustainable management of land and water;
- vi) expand and intensify services for extension and the provision of improved seeds and other inputs;
- vii) promote and implement agricultural and rural development schemes targeted at increasing on-farm and off-farm employment, infrastructure for improved services and marketing, as well as at addressing property rights, land use arrangements and participation of poor farmers;
- viii) monitor and review the environmental effects of agricultural and rural development, and incorporate lessons in developing strategies and programmes in these areas.

at sub-regional and regional levels

63. i) exchange and transfer improved technologies and lessons on common problems in enhancing food and agricultural production in the highlands and low rainfall areas; and
- ii) cooperate in preventing and controlling outbreaks of transboundary pests and diseases, as well as early warning on food shortages.

6. Addressing population and urbanization issues

Basis for action

64. Population growth rates in the region are among the highest in the world, implying that only modest gains in per caput food production have materialized over the last two decades. This has been accompanied by rapid rates of urbanization. Even in those countries of the region where aggregate dietary energy supplies are currently adequate, there are sizeable population groups facing food insecurity problems. Considerable scope exists for enhancing broad social participation, particularly for women, in activities relating to food security.

Objectives

65. i) maintain population and urbanization growth at rates compatible with the objectives of food security for all;
- ii) ensure adequate living conditions and food supplies in urban areas;
- iii) ensure access by all groups - including the poorest and most vulnerable - to food necessary for a healthy life; and
- iv) create an environment that will enable people to achieve social development in conformity with the principles adopted by the World Summit for Social Development.

Actions to be taken

at the national level

66. i) actively pursue the strategies defined at the Cairo Population Conference and Beijing Conference on Women, as applicable to the country;
- ii) provide urban infrastructures and services to ensure that adequate, stable and reasonably priced flows of food reach urban areas;
- iii) devise and implement policies to foster employment and access to productive resources by the urban poor, including food-for-work programmes;
- iv) provide nutritional assistance and education to the poor segments of the population and those at nutritional risk; and
- v) ensure an adequate involvement and empowerment of women in decisional and operational activities related to food supply and distribution.

7. Promoting regional integration

Basis for action

67. The region is rich in human capital, physical capital and agricultural resources, but these assets are unevenly distributed. Such disparity of resource endowment offers wide areas of resource complementarity and commonality of interests among countries in the region. Nevertheless, progress in implementing regional integration and cooperation schemes has been generally slow and uneven.

Objectives

68. To exploit the potential for enhanced welfare and food security arising from the complementarity of resources amongst countries in the region by liberalizing and intensifying intra-regional trade, in particular of food products, as well as capital and labour flows.

Actions to be taken

69. i) pursue regional cooperation and integration efforts aimed at enhanced food security, in particular for intra-regional trade in food products and mobility of factors of production;

- ii) ensure that regional financial and technical institutions earmark adequate resources for programmes aimed at the improvement of regional food security;
- iii) strengthen regional research activity on food production technologies and systems adapted to the conditions of the region; and
- iv) foster exchange in technology, know-how and human skills development within the region and in a transmediterranean context.

8. Responsibilities for implementing priority actions

70. The national governments have the primary responsibility for creating the conditions required for food security in their countries, through the implementation of the priority actions outlined above. In addition, they have shared responsibilities with other countries within and outside the region, international and non-governmental organizations and civil society at large, in the pursuance of food security goals.

at the regional and sub-regional level

The governments of the region should:

71. i) promote cooperation among themselves in the exchange and transfer of appropriate technology and approaches, including the establishment of technical cooperation networks among their institutions and exports;
- ii) strengthen the cooperation in identification and dissemination of appropriate methods and techniques for cost-effective use of water for agriculture;
- iii) share appropriate technologies and approaches for sustainable food production and rural development in highlands and arid and semi-arid areas;
- iv) jointly manage shared water resources in the river basins and honour the international agreements they enter for this purpose;
- v) extend the scope of national information and early warning systems into a regional network that provides crop and market outlook information;
- vi) reinforce regional cooperation mechanisms for food security; and
- vii) regional financial, technical assistance and research institutions have responsibility for focusing their activities in favour of regional food security. In particular, regional banks and funds, together with international lending agencies should provide adequate financial support to food-deficit countries in the region that face serious difficulties in financing the food they need.

at the international level

The international organizations and the donor community should:

72. i) promote and support the national governments and institutions in the planning, execution and reviewing of programmes and projects for food production and agricultural and rural development through technical cooperation and investment;
- ii) support, through technical cooperation and investments, national programmes for water resource management as well as inter-country cooperation in water management at the sub-regional and regional level;
- iii) support national governments in designing and implementing policies and programmes to control population growth and urbanization, to enhance food access of poor and vulnerable groups and to provide them with nutritional assistance and education;
- iv) contribute where needed, funds for investment particularly in urban infrastructure necessary for food supplies;
- v) assist in regional cooperation and integration mechanisms, in particular by facilitating the exchange of expertise and know-how;
- vi) promote and support national and regional efforts for enhancing food security in highlands and semiarid areas. Institutions such as CGIAR will play an important role in fulfilling this need; and
- vii) the members of the World Trade Organization should ensure, within the institutional and regulatory framework provided by that body, the implementation, as applicable to the region, of the Uruguay Round *Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Countries*.

The international lending agencies in particular should:

73. i) provide adequate financial support to food-deficit countries in the region that face serious difficulties in financing their food needs;
- ii) assist national governments to pursue and intensify macroeconomic and sectoral economic reforms that pursue stabilization and structural adjustment along with social objectives.

FAO will play a leading and catalytic role in:

74. i) providing technical advice and technical cooperation support for expanded food production. It will mobilize its extensive network of cooperation with other international organizations and financial institutions in support of improved food security of the countries in the region;
- ii) providing appropriate technical support in the development of policies, strategies and programmes for the agricultural use of water and the related institutional capacity building as well as in the promotion of appropriate technologies in irrigation and technologies for reclaiming water-logged and salinized lands;
- iii) assisting, along with other international organizations, in the pursuance of economic reform objectives by providing technical assistance in areas such as: formulation and implementation of policies, strategies and projects for agricultural and rural development in the context of overall reform programmes; building of institutional capacity for policy formulation and implementation; evaluation of the effects of reform programmes on the agricultural sector and the rural poor; financial evaluation of needs involved in reform-related activities;
- iv) providing technical advice and cooperation in enhancing sustainable agricultural production and productivity in highlands as well as arid and semi-arid areas by mobilizing programmes covering the broad range of issues involved; and
- v) providing and channelling technical assistance in the fields of nutritional assessment as well as in services for marketing and supply of food products.

Expected role of civil society

75. The private sector is expected to play an increasingly important role in taking over functions no longer assumed by the State, in particular activities relating to investment, agricultural production, marketing and trade as well as the provision of inputs. The new emphasis on broad-based development implies added responsibilities on the part of previously marginalized segments of society, in particular women, smallholders and the poor.
76. The private sector, non-governmental organizations and interest groups have important roles to play in:
 - i) technology transfer, investment and skills development through commercial activities;
 - ii) promotion of, and compliance with, major international agreements such as the International Plant Protection Convention;
 - iii) sustainable water resources management; in particular the private sector plays a key role in investing in irrigation development;
 - iv) providing farmers with inputs, services and marketing;
 - v) undertaking private investment and commercial activities for ensuring adequate and stable food supplies to urban areas;
 - vi) promoting and supporting programmes catering for the development of arid and semi-arid areas. In particular, non-governmental organizations have many advantages in working with the local populations for their participatory development for food security;
77. Society at large, including community institutions and local government and non-governmental organizations, has a responsibility for ensuring the involvement and empowerment of women in decisional and operational activities of importance for food security.

Food for all



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