

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	AGA: EUFMD/X/1995/INF.1
	联合国粮食及农业组织	
	FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS	
	ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE	
	ORGANIZACION DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION	

REPORT
of the
FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION
of the
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
of the
EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE CONTROL OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE
held at the
Federal Research Centre for Virus Diseases of Animals
Tubingen, Germany
1 - 2 March 1995

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 1995

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Item 2 A - Greece

- 1 - The Committee noted that in the absence of outbreaks the situation in Greece was now under control but expressed concern regarding the problem of interpretation of the serological survey.
- 2 - The Committee requested the Greek Veterinary Authorities to provide to the Thirty-first Session a detailed update on the FMD situation in Greece including action taken in those flocks/herds found positive by serology.
- 3 - The Committee requested the Research Group to prepare a paper outlining the usefulness of serology as a means for determining freedom from infection.

Item 2B (i) Report on Tripartite Meeting

- 1 - The Committee requested Bulgaria to provide a cost estimate in respect of the supply of diagnostic reagents.

Item 2B (ii) Phase II of FMD Control in Turkey

- 1 - The Committee emphasised the strategic role of Turkey for other member countries and the urgent need for agreement to be reached on the EC proposals to which the Turkish authorities have responded.

Item 3 - Report of the Executive Committee

- 1 - The Committee approved the Report of the Executive Committee and the work programme for 1995/96

Item 4 - Report on the activities of the Research Group

- 1 - The Committee recommended that the Session in Vladimir be held jointly with members of the FMD Sub-Group of the EC Scientific Veterinary Committee

Item 5 - Quality assurance in FMD National Laboratories

- 1 - The Committee agreed on the necessity for national laboratories to be in a position to assure prompt and accurate diagnosis in case of suspicion of disease
- 2 - The Committee requested the Secretary to draw up a list of FMD national laboratories and to determine which laboratory needs assistance for quality assurance.
- 3 - The Committee recommended coordination of EUFMD with the EC Phare project (i) for financing, and (ii) for harmonisation in FMD diagnostic laboratories in Europe and agreed that EUFMD would target laboratories in non-EU countries.

- 4 - The Committee recommended that an additional regional laboratory for Europe (eastern) should be designated.

Item 6 - Availability of vaccines for emergency vaccination in Europe

- 1 - The Committee expressed concern that some countries do not have access to a vaccine bank in emergency situations and recommended that adequate measures should be taken to find a solution to this problem.
- 2 - The Committee agreed that discussions with manufacturers should continue in order to investigate the availability of vaccine and antigen.
- 3 - The Committee while agreeing on the importance of research on new vaccines considered funding of research in this field inappropriate at this time.

Item 7 - (i) Risk assessment

- 1 - The Committee agreed on the proposal of EC that the Secretary participate in the EC Working Group and that coordination be established with both the EC and OIE.

- (ii) Certification

- 1 - The Committee expressed concern regarding the problem of false certification and smuggling and agreed that the Commission should support all action directed toward the improvement of export guarantees and the provision of a more reliable system of certification.
- 2 - The Committee recommended that any certification should be applied in accordance with OIE/EC models.

Item 8 - Contingency Plans

- 1 - The Committee agreed that an important task of the Secretary will be to assist member countries in drafting and implementing their Contingency Plans.
- 2 - The Committee underlined the importance of training and field exercises to validate the plans.

Item 9 - Criteria for determining scale of contributions

- 1 - The Committee recommended that for the period 1995-1997 FAO contributions and converted livestock population should be considered as criteria with equal value to fit new members into the present Categories.
- 2 - The Committee proposed that after approval by the Thirty-second Session in 1997
 - (i) the number of Categories be reduced to 4 with a range of contribution from 1 to 10;

(ii) the member countries be placed in the new system which will be based on contribution to FAO and converted livestock numbers;

(iii) a change of Category for a member country be reviewed at intervals of 6 years.

Item 10 - Proposal for amendments to the Constitution

- 1 - The Committee agreed that the proposal for amendments to the Constitution be submitted for information and/or discussion to the Thirty-first Session and that its adoption be proposed at the Thirty-second Session in 1997.

Item 11 - Financial Report

- 1 - The Committee approved the financial report for submission to and adoption by the Thirty-first Session.
- 2 - Regrading of post of Secretary. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Thirty-first Session that the post of Secretary be regraded at P5 level on completion of the Secretary's first year of employment.

Item 12 - Any other business

- 1 - The Committee agreed:
 - the Agenda for the Thirty-first Session,
 - that all efforts should be made to encourage new membership
 - that SVD should not be included in reporting procedures
 - to recommend to the Thirty-first Session that membership of the Research Group be increased from 7 to 9.

INTRODUCTION

The Executive Committee of the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EUFMD) held its Fifty-seventh Session at the Federal Research Centre for Virus Diseases of Animals, Tübingen, Germany on 1 and 2 March 1995.

Members of the Committee present:

Dr. K.C. Meldrum (UK)	Chairman
Dr. B. Nordblom (Sweden)	First Vice-Chairman
Dr. E. Stougaard (Denmark)	Second Vice-Chairman
Dr. G. Bédès (France)	
Dr. N. Voetz (Germany)	
Dr. R. Marabelli (Italy)	

Observers

Dr. A.I. Donaldson (UK)	Chairman, Research Group
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Professor R. Ahl
 Professor and Director
 Federal Research Centre for Virus Diseases of Animals
 Tübingen, Germany

Dr. Helen Choudrukouki
 FMD Institute
 Athens, Greece

Dr. Tamas Fehervari
 Chief Veterinary Officer
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Department of Animal Health and Food Control
 Budapest, Hungary

Dr. Mustafa Imir
 Deputy General Director
 General Directorate of Protection and Control
 Ankara, Turkey

EC

Dr. B. Marchant
 Commission of the European Community
 Brussels, Belgium

FAO

Dr. Y. Cheneau
 Chief, Animal Health Service
 Animal Production and Health Division

Secretariat

Dr. Y. Leforban
 Secretary, EUFMD

Ms J. Raftery
 Administrative Assistant, EUFMD

Before the Session was opened by the Chairman, Dr. N. Voetz, CVO, Germany, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Borchert, Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry, welcomed the participants to Tübingen. He stated that it was a great pleasure to host the meeting at the Federal Research Centre for Virus Diseases of Animals which since the unification of Germany is the most important of Germany's three centres, the other two being Riems and Wusterhausen near Berlin. He outlined the structure of the research centres in Germany, wished the Committee a pleasant stay in Tübingen and a very successful meeting. He then invited Professor Ahl to give a brief outline of the work being carried out at Tübingen. Prof. Ahl, on behalf of Professor Moennig, President of the Federal Research Centre, welcomed the Committee and observers to the Centre and recalled the Session of the Research Group of the EUFMD which had been held in Tübingen in 1981. He informed the Committee that in the field of FMD, the Federal Research Centre is in charge of FMD diagnosis and virus strain identification. When there is suspicion of an outbreak samples from Landers in the east are sent to Riems and from the west to Tübingen. The Centre is also responsible for registration of FMD vaccine as well as testing and release of vaccine batches. Research in this field is mainly concentrated on vaccine development and analysis of the immune response to FMDV.

The Chairman, Dr. K.C. Meldrum, welcomed the members of the Committee and observers and extended thanks to Dr. Voetz and to Prof. Ahl for the excellent preparations they had made for the meeting. He welcomed Dr. Leforban as Secretary and wished him success in his new post. Before proposing the adoption of the provisional agenda, the Chairman requested the Committee to hold a closed Session to discuss, in conformity with Article X.3 of the Constitution, the action to be taken in respect of the two vacancies which had occurred in the Committee. Taking into consideration the proximity of the Thirty-first Session of the EUFMD, scheduled to be held in Rome from 5 to 7 April 1995, when the term of office of the present members will expire, the Committee agreed that it would not be necessary to appoint representatives to fill the vacancies for the remainder of the present term of office.

Item 1 - Adoption of Agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted as presented and the Committee agreed that observers could assist at discussions of all the agenda items with the exception of the Financial Report and membership of the Executive Committee and Research Group.

Item 1 - Adoption of Agenda

Item 2 - A - FMD situation in Europe and in other regions

Item 2 - B(i)- Report on Tripartite Meeting (Sofia, Bulgaria, 15 November 1994)

B(ii)- Implementation of Phase II of FMD Control in Turkey and Proposals for 1995/1996

B(iii)- Serosurveillance in Thrace (1995)

Item 3 - Report of the Executive Committee on the Commission's activities during the biennium 1993-1994

Item 4 - Report on the activities of the Research Group during the biennium 1993-1994

Item 5 - Quality assurance in the FMD National Laboratories; role of the WRL

Item 6 - Availability of vaccines for emergency vaccination in Europe

- EU vaccine bank

- other vaccine and antigen stocks available in Europe (manufacturers and member countries' stocks)

- Possibility of the Commission funding research on new vaccines

Item 7 - (i) Risk assessment

(ii) Certification within Europe

- Item 8 - Implementation of FMD Contingency Plans
- Item 9 - Discussion paper on criteria for determining scale of contributions
- Item 10- Proposal for amendments to the Constitution:
- EC Membership
 - Observer attendance at Executive Committee/Research Group Sessions
 - Amendment to Article XIII (7) Special Account
- Item 11 - Financial Report
- Status of Contributions
 - Accounts/breakdown of expenditure 1993/1994
 - Provisional Budgets 1995/1996
- Item 12 - Any other business:
- Agenda for the Thirty-first Session of the Commission
 - Venue for 1995 Session of Research Group (Vladimir)
 - Membership
 - Inclusion of SVD in reporting procedures
 - Membership of Research Group
- Item 13 - Adoption of Report
- Item 2.A - FMD situation in Europe and in other regions

The Secretary presented a report on the FMD situation in Europe and other regions during the biennium.

The FMD epidemic in Greece during 1994 was discussed in depth by the Committee. The observer from Greece informed the Committee that since 25 October 1994 no outbreaks had occurred and the lambing season had not given rise to any additional problems from which the Greek authorities had concluded that virus is no longer circulating. The difficulties related to interpretation of the results of the extensive serosurvey which had been carried out were due in part to the problems encountered by the Greek veterinary service with the identification of animal blood samples and in collecting adequate epidemiological information in the field. The observer from Greece stated that these problems had now been solved.

The Committee agreed that in the absence of outbreaks the situation in Greece was now under control but expressed concern about the measures taken by the Greek authorities in respect of flocks found positive by serology.

The Committee concluded that the results of the large-scale serological testing carried out in Greece had not proved as useful as expected in identifying carriers in herds/flocks and in assessing the absence of active infection.

The Committee requested the Greek veterinary authorities to provide an update on the FMD situation in Greece to the Thirty-first Session of the Commission to be held in Rome in April and in particular to inform the Commission on the action taken in the 630 herds found to be positive through serological testing.

The Committee requested the Research Group to investigate the usefulness of serology as a means for determining freedom from infection.

The Greek experience regarding serology should be taken into account in the future by the Commission when deciding under which conditions and for which purpose large-scale serological surveys should be undertaken.

Item 2.B - (i) Report on Tripartite Meeting (Sofia, Bulgaria, 15 November 1994)

The recommendations of the Tripartite Meeting were reviewed by the Committee. Recommendation 1 - concerning review of trade conditions after vaccination, was being implemented by EC. Regarding Recommendation 2 - compensation for slaughter, the Committee underlined the fact that any funding for compensation can only be decided by EC and the Commission would support its implementation through Trust Fund 911100. The Delegate of Bulgaria informed the Committee that Recommendation 7 - Sliven laboratory to be a National Centre for mass testing and collection of information, was no longer necessary as it had been decided that the national centre for FMD diagnosis and control should be in Sofia. As regards Recommendation 8 - assistance for the provision of diagnostic reagents, Bulgaria was requested to provide a cost estimate.

The observer from EC informed the Committee that under the Phare Programme DG-I had earmarked 6 million ECU for the improvement of veterinary diagnostic facilities in 10 eastern European countries over a five-year period. Coordination of EUFMD with EC action in these countries was recommended.

Item 2.B (ii) Implementation of Phase II of FMD Control in Turkey and Proposals for 1995/1996

Following general discussion on this item, the Secretary outlined the EC proposal made in January 1993. Dr. N. Güvener, General Director, General Directorate of Protection and Control, had replied to Dr. Janssen but the Ministry of Agriculture had not yet officially accepted the EC proposal. The Committee emphasised the strategic importance of Turkey for all other member countries and, therefore, the urgent need for an agreement to be reached on the EC offer. The observer from the EC said that support to Turkey was under review but no commitment could be given at present. The Committee recognised that in the absence of a clear commitment from Turkey it would be difficult to go forward. The representative of the WRL informed the Committee that despite the lack of a formal agreement between the EC and Turkey, the WRL has maintained informal links with the SAP Institute, arrangements are under way for some training and the WRL had encouraged the Turkish authorities to send more samples from Anatolia for typing.

Item 2.B (iii) - Serosurveillance in Thrace (1995)

The representative of the WRL informed the Committee that the survey in Thrace planned to take place in May/June 1995 would be coordinated by the WRL with the Turkish authorities and the GTZ Project.

It would be aimed at the identification of the presence of virus. Due to the possibility of vaccination in some cattle herds and to the possible introduction of vaccinated animals from Anatolia, the survey would be focused on sheep and goats.

The representative of the WRL, taking into account the latest OIE recommended terminology, stated that the Western Buffer Zone should be regarded as a Strategic Vaccination Area and Thrace as an FMD Free Surveillance Area.

Item 3 - Report of the Executive Committee on the Commission's activities during the biennium 1993-1994

The Secretary presented the Report on the Commission's activities during the biennium and outlined in particular the workplan for 1995/1996. The Committee approved the Report and proposed work programme as presented.

Item 4 - Report on the activities of the Research Group during the biennium 1993-1994

The Chairman of the Research Group presented the activities of the Group for the period under review. He briefly outlined the excellent scientific discussions which had taken place at the Session held at the Federal Institute for the Control of Viral Diseases in Livestock, Vienna, from 19 to 22 September 1994.

He informed the Committee that (i) the next Session of the Group (closed) would be held at the Vladimir Institute, Federation of Russia, in September 1995, and (ii) an informal invitation had been extended to the Group to hold the next open Session in Israel in 1996. The Committee recommended that the Session in Vladimir be held jointly with the FMD Sub-Group of the EC Scientific Veterinary Committee.

Item 5 - Quality assurance in the FMD National Laboratories; role of the WRL

The Committee agreed on the necessity for national laboratories responsible for FMD diagnosis to be in a position to provide accurate and prompt diagnosis in case of suspicion of the disease.

The Committee requested the Secretary to draw up a list of member countries of the EUFMD who have national laboratories and to determine which laboratory needs assistance for quality assurance. The assistance of the WRL is available for these activities.

Coordination with EC would be advisable in order to harmonise the quality assurance programmes in all European FMD laboratories.

The Delegate of France in referring to national laboratories, regional laboratories and the World Reference Laboratory reiterated the importance of ascertaining which countries have national laboratories and what is their diagnostic capability.

Item 6 - Availability of vaccines for emergency vaccination in Europe

- EU/International vaccine banks

The Committee expressed concern that there are still some countries which do not have a national vaccine bank and have no access to either the international bank or the EU bank in an emergency situation.

- other vaccine and antigen stocks available in Europe (manufacturers and member countries' stocks)

The Committee agreed that contacts with manufacturers should continue in order to investigate the suggestion arising out of the discussions that manufacturers carry a minimum stock of antigen for use in an emergency.

- Possibility of the Commission funding research on new vaccines

The representative of the WRL stated that research on new vaccines would be desirable because of the deficiencies in existing vaccines which although very good for cattle are less satisfactory for early protection in pigs.

The Committee while agreeing that research on new vaccines is an important issue to be considered for improving the method of control of FMD especially in densely populated zones, did not consider funding of this research by the EUFMD as being appropriate at this time (i) because of the high cost involved, and (ii) the uncertainty of success.

Item 7- Risk assessment, trading guarantees and certification within Europe

(i) Risk assessment

The Delegate of Denmark underlined the importance for Europe to take an active part in the risk assessment system which is being set up by OIE for international trade in animals and animal products.

The observer of the EC proposed that the Secretary participate in the EC Working Group on Risk Assessment and that coordination be established both with the EC and OIE.

(ii) Certification

As mentioned in the working document on this Item, most of the outbreaks which occurred in Europe during the biennium under review were related to false certification or to smuggling.

Nevertheless the Committee agreed that the Commission should support all action directed toward a more reliable system for the provision of veterinary export certification.

It was emphasised that confidence in the veterinary infrastructure and laboratory capability of the exporting country are essential to the reliability of certification.

It was also stated that it was considered unacceptable that, under the new SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures), one particular country could not avoid importing from another country which claims free status of particular diseases, even if no disease surveillance system exists in that country.

The Committee recommended that certification should be drawn up and signed in accordance with the UK/OIE/FVE twelve principles and agreed that these issues would be discussed in more detail at the Thirty-first Session.

Item 8 - Implementation of FMD Contingency Plans

The Secretary introduced this Item and circulated a draft working document to the members of the Committee. The Committee stated that in some countries the new concept of control of the disease by stamping out without vaccination is not clearly understood as the former approach consisting of blanket vaccination coverage did not necessitate tracing movements of animals and people which is now an essential part of the control system. Under the non-vaccination situation, preventive measures must be taken before the appearance of clinical signs of the disease.

Priority for the Secretary will be to assist member countries in drafting and implementing their Contingency Plans bearing in mind that they should be specifically adapted to the conditions of the individual countries and not simply a copy of other countries' plans. Training and field exercises to physically test the validity of the Plans were considered to be essential.

In addition, the Commission should be willing to provide expert advice should outbreaks occur and should a member country ask us to do so.

Item 9 - Discussion paper on criteria for determining scale of contributions

The Secretary presented a proposal for new criteria for calculation of the annual scale of contributions of the member countries. The different possibilities suggested by the Secretary were discussed in depth and the Committee agreed that:

- there is a need for a clear and unambiguous basis for calculation of the annual scale of contributions;
- the criteria taken into account must be objective;
- the level of contributions must express a certain solidarity between the members.

The Committee recommended that for the period 1995-1997

- FAO contributions and converted livestock population should be considered as criteria with equal value to fit new members into the present Categories.
Following approval by the Thirty-second Session
- the number of Categories to be reduced to 4 instead of 5 with a range of contributions from 1 to 10 (US\$2,600 - US\$26,000) instead of 1 to 20 (US\$1,300 - US\$26,000),
- to place all countries in the new system,
- the change of Category to be reviewed at intervals of 6 years or at the request of the member country for exceptional reasons.

Item 10 - Proposal for amendments to the Constitution:

- EC membership
- Observer attendance at Executive Committee/Research Group Sessions
- Amendment to Article XIII (7) Special Account
- Reprinting of the amended Constitution

The Committee took note of the proposals for amendments to the Constitution which would allow for greater flexibility in the carrying out of the Commission's activities. The Committee agreed that the proposals should be submitted for information and/or discussion to the Thirty-first Session bearing in mind that their adoption could only be considered by the Thirty-second Session in 1997, i.e. in conformity with Article XIV.3 of the Constitution which stipulates: *"No proposal for the amendment of the Constitution shall be included in the agenda of any Session unless notice thereof has been received by the Director-General of the Organization at least 120 days before the opening of the Session"*. The Secretary noted the Committee's request to have the relevant working document presented in such a way that Delegates to the Thirty-first Session would have no difficulty in understanding the implications of the proposed amendments. The Committee agreed that the Constitution should not be reprinted until any amendments had been agreed and incorporated in 1997.

Item 11 - Financial Report

The Secretary presented the Financial Report and drew the Committee's attention to the Financial Report and Statements issued by the Organization's Financial Services Division and the breakdown of expenditure for 1993/1994, revised budget for TF904200 for 1995, provisional budgets for TFs 91100/9097 for 1995 and for TF904200 for 1996 prepared by the Secretariat.

With regard to Statement 2, Status of Contributions as at 31 December 1994 (TF 904200), the Committee agreed the following points in connection with *outstanding arrears*:

- Albania should be requested to pay for 1995; arrears at 31/12/1994 would be discussed at a later stage.
- Bulgaria - on behalf of the Commission, the Chairman would write to the authorities concerned urging them to meet their financial obligations to the Commission as soon as possible.
- former Czechoslovakia the outstanding amount of US\$ 298.08 should be regarded as uncollectable.
- Czech Republic FAO Financial Services Division had called for a contribution for 1995; however, as there was now clear legal evidence that the Czech Republic was a member of the Commission also in 1994, the Secretary should ask Financial Services Division to request payment of arrears for 1994.
- Hungary the outstanding amount of US\$1,652.80, representing a difference in exchange rate, should be considered as uncollectable.
- Romania on behalf of the Commission, the Chairman would write to the Romanian authorities urging them to meet their financial obligations as soon as possible.
- Yugoslavia - in view of the changed circumstances of this member country, the Committee recommended that the Secretary propose a recalculation of the annual contribution with a view to making a proposal to the Thirty-first Session for Yugoslavia's contribution for 1995; arrears would be treated as a separate issue.

Contributions of new members

Croatia joined the Commission in January 1995. The Commission agreed that its contribution be set at US\$1,300.01.

During discussion of the revised budget for 1995 for TF904200, the Committee noted and approved the proposal to raise the annual contribution of the EUFMD to the WRL from US\$15,000 to US\$20,000. The observer from FAO, Dr. Y. Cheneau, informed the Committee that the annual contribution of the Regular Programme of FAO to the WRL would be increased from US\$10,000 to US\$20,000. The representative of the WRL expressed appreciation to the Committee and to FAO for the proposed increases. During discussion of the provisional budget for TF911100 for 1995, the representative from EC agreed that Component 2000-Duty Travel should carry a provision for travel and per diem for the EC members of the Research Group who would attend the Session of the Group to be held in Vladimir, Federation of Russia, from 30 August to 1 September 1995.

The Committee discussed the grading of the Secretary's post and agreed to recommend to the Thirty-first Session that it be regraded at P5 level on completion of his first year of employment in this post. The Chairman requested the representative from FAO to provide information on the cost implications of this regrading over the next four years.

Following review of the breakdown of expenditure for 1993 and 1994, the revised budget for TF904200 for 1995, the provisional budgets for 1995 for TFs911100/TF 909700, and the provisional budget for 1996 for TF 904200, the Committee approved the Financial Report for submission to and adoption by the Thirty-first Session.

Item 12 - Any other business

- Agenda for the Thirty-first Session of the Commission

The Agenda was agreed with some minor amendments. The Chairman informed the Committee that U.K. MAFF would be willing to provide the services of a Rapporteur for the Thirty-first Session. This was agreed.

- Venue for 1995 Session of Research Group

FAO has agreed that the next Session of the Research Group be held at the Vladimir Institute, Vladimir, Federation of Russia, from 30 August to 1 September 1995.

- Membership

The Committee agreed that every effort should be made to encourage membership of the Commission and was pleased to note that Croatia had joined in January 1995.

- Inclusion of SVD in reporting procedures

The Committee was unanimous in agreeing that SVD should not be included in the reporting procedures.

- Nomination of Research Group

The Chairman of the Research Group reminded the Committee that the term of office of the present Group would expire in July 1995. He proposed that the present membership be increased from 7 to 9 to allow for broader representation of the laboratories engaged in FMD research. No additional cost would be involved for the Commission since, as recommended by the Thirtieth Session in 1993, meetings were now being held jointly with the FMD Sub-group of the Scientific Veterinary Committee of the EC and expenses of members from EC countries were being met by the EC Trust Fund. The Committee agreed to submit this proposal for the consideration of and approval by the Thirty-first Session.

Item 13 - Adoption of Report

Following discussion, the draft report was adopted subject to the incorporation of the amendments agreed and to any necessary editorial changes.

Closing remarks

In his closing remarks, the Chairman extended thanks to the delegates and observers for their contribution to the discussions. He thanked the host country for the arrangements for the Session and for the hospitality offered to the Committee during their stay in Tübingen.