



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

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

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación



CONFERENCE

Twenty-eighth Session

Rome, 20 October - 2 November 1995

**COLLABORATION WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM AND WITH OTHER
ORGANIZATIONS**

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs
INTRODUCTION	1 - 3
THE 1995 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)	
High-level Segment	4 - 10
Coordination Segment	11 - 20
General Segment - Humanitarian Assistance	21 - 30
INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	31 - 34
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	35 - 43

INTRODUCTION

1. "Collaboration within the UN system and with other Organizations" is a standing item on the agenda of the Council and the Conference, and is primarily for the information of Member Nations. The document submitted under the item is prepared with a view to keeping the Conference abreast of developments in the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which have implications for, or particular relevance to, the work of the Organization.
2. The document is of necessity selective in its coverage, and to the extent possible, avoids reporting on matters which are the subject of separate items on the Conference's agenda. In these areas developments, and their implications, may be more appropriately treated as part of the Conference's broad substantive discussion.
3. The present document has been prepared for the consideration of the Twenty-eighth Session of the Conference and seeks to supplement and update the report submitted to the 108th Session of the Council (document CL 108/17).

THE 1995 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) High-level Segment

4. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/151, the Economic and Social Council's high-level segment focused on the development of Africa, including the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). A report was presented by the Secretary-General to ECOSOC under this segment, analysing certain critical issues facing Africa in the implementation of the New Agenda and suggesting some measures for consideration that could contribute to enabling African countries and the international community to tackle these issues and put Africa on the path of sustainable development. FAO participated at the high-level segment and the Director-General delivered a statement.
5. The Economic and Social Council took note of the summary and conclusions of the high-level segment, prepared by the President of ECOSOC, which is a distillation of the positions taken by delegations during the segment.
6. In the summary and conclusions, emphasis was placed on the need for concrete and innovative actions to help African nations overcome the myriad of complex problems faced and on the development of Africa as an urgent priority. Hence solidarity and support by the international community was called for in addressing the issue of development in Africa. Attention was drawn to a number of issues which require priority attention, including conflict prevention; management; external debt; financial flows; international trade; capacity-building; South-South cooperation; population growth; increasing the role of women in development as well as agricultural productivity and food security.
7. Concerning agriculture and food security in Africa, it was affirmed that the revitalization of the agricultural sector was essential and that although Africa had great potential with respect to its agricultural sector, little of it had been exploited. Concern was voiced that growth in food production was not keeping pace with population growth in Africa and, in concurrence with the position of FAO, it was underlined that agricultural production would have to reach an annual growth rate of 4 percent. This would require considerable improvement in agricultural productivity through, *inter alia*, irrigation and better crop varieties. It was acknowledged that a strong agricultural sector would be the major engine of growth for most African economies.
8. Achieving food security was viewed as the highest priority, especially for the chronically food-deficit countries. To this end, it was recommended that continued initiatives needed to be taken for: storage, transport and communication facilities; supporting regional strategies and regional

trade; establishment and expansion of early-warning systems; mobilization of resources for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; and strengthening of networks in support of agriculture and water management.

9. It was also pointed out that the entire range of issues identified in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) adopted in 1991, required urgent attention. UN-NADAF, it was reiterated, remained the appropriate framework for the United Nations to deal with the critical situation in Africa. Action taken by the United Nations system to give priority to African development was commended. In this context, support was given to the Secretary-General's special initiative on Africa, which was being pursued through the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

10. All the executive heads of the specialized agencies, UN programmes and funds, and of the Bretton Woods institutions reiterated their commitment to cooperating and working closely with the United Nations in pursuit of the common goal of eradication and alleviation of poverty and in the promotion of sustainable development and social justice. It was agreed that such cooperation should be based on the principles of comparative advantage and should respect the governance structure, mandate and competence of each organization and the policy guidance received from their respective governing bodies.

Coordination Segment

11. The Coordination Segment of ECOSOC's substantive session of 1995 was devoted to the "coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the results of major international conferences in economic, social and related fields"; focusing primarily on the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development. The Organization participated in the discussion and a statement was delivered. The FAO statement underlined its commitment to concrete action at the country level and concern that follow-up to recent international conferences may lead to a proliferation of new or expanded global mechanisms, thus contributing to a duplication of efforts and diversion of scarce resources from more concrete forms of technical cooperation.

12. For this segment, the Economic and Social Council had before it the report of the Secretary-General on this subject. A panel discussion was held during the segment with the participation of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, and senior officials of UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR and UNCTAD.

13. The Economic and Social Council adopted the agreed conclusions on the follow-up to the above-mentioned conferences which relate, *inter alia*, to the roles of the General Assembly, ECOSOC and its functional commissions, as well as inter-agency coordination and reporting mechanisms. The Council acknowledged that coordinated follow-up to major conferences should be viewed as interlinked and contributing to an integrated framework of global partnership for development.

14. With regard to the role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council recognized that the Assembly had overall responsibility for ensuring implementation of the results of the conferences as well as facilitating and reviewing progress in this regard. The Council thus recommended that the General Assembly, within the context of its discussions on an Agenda for Development, give an integrated consideration to the themes of the conferences, with a view to promoting better coherence and providing harmonized and integrated policy guidance. To this end, the General Assembly may consider improving the harmonization of work among its Committees which in turn would serve to improve the complementarity and cohesion between ECOSOC and the General Assembly with regard to follow-up of the conferences.

15. ECOSOC believed that its role, on the other hand, should be to promote a coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the results of the conferences. It would make recommendations to the General Assembly related to policies. The Council will review each year, at its coordination segment, cross-sectoral themes common to major conferences and/or contribute to an overall review of implementation of the programme of action of a global conference.

16. It was further agreed that ECOSOC should ensure that the agendas and work programmes of its functional commissions were harmonized and coordinated. Each commission would focus on the core issues relating to the conference for which it is responsible and would obtain inputs from other relevant bodies on related issues. The Council also recommended that the mandates, composition and working methods of the functional commissions be further reviewed to enable them to better assist the Council in the coordinated follow-up to the conferences.

17. Concerning the role of inter-agency coordination in the follow-up to the conferences, ECOSOC advocated in its agreed conclusions that measures be taken to strengthen further the role of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and to ensure a rational division of labour among its standing committees, as well as between its established machinery and *ad hoc* mechanisms set up in the context of follow-up to individual conferences. ACC was invited to bring system-wide coordination issues to the attention of ECOSOC. It was agreed that appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and/or eliminate duplication of functions within the UN Secretariat and that relevant intergovernmental bodies be kept fully informed of the establishment of any inter-agency task forces for follow-up to conferences.

18. ECOSOC asserted that, at the country level, the national government had the primary responsibility for coordinating, on the basis of national strategies and priorities, follow-up activities of conferences. The follow-up of activities that are relevant to the mandates of operational activities for development of the United Nations system should, through the resident coordinator system, take into account common themes and goals and should be within the framework of national plans and strategies and the country strategy note, where they exist or are in preparation. The Resident Coordinator, in consultation with the government and in the light of national priorities, could utilize thematic groups composed of the agencies concerned, with a designated lead agency or task manager under his or her overall leadership, to serve as the coordination mechanism with the responsibility of developing integrated approaches for the realization of common goals, including, where appropriate, the development of a common data system at the national level to facilitate reviewing and reporting on the progress achieved.

19. With regard to reporting on the follow-up to major conferences, ECOSOC decided that greater use should be made of Task Managers, so that a particular UN agency would be responsible for coordinating the response of the entire UN system. The Secretary-General was requested to present to the Council at its next substantive session and to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, proposals for the simplification of existing reporting requirements, taking into account the reports that will be required for follow-up of UN conferences.

20. In its agreed conclusions for this segment, ECOSOC stated that effective follow-up to conferences required the mobilization of substantial new and additional resources from all sources, domestic and international, public and private, and from traditional and new sources.

General Segment - Humanitarian Assistance

21. The coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system was considered by the Economic and Social Council during its General Segment. ECOSOC was informed of the important role carried out by the United Nations Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), the Humanitarian Coordinators and the process of consolidated appeals, which have continued to evolve and have now become invaluable assets for the humanitarian community at large.

22. Members of ECOSOC generally supported the question of strengthening the capacities of the UN system with regard to humanitarian assistance and a proposal was made for a review process to be initiated which would enable ECOSOC to adopt decisions for addressing the problems identified. It was believed that this would contribute to a greater coordination in the field of humanitarian assistance within the UN system.

23. Humanitarian assistance should not be seen in isolation but as a part of the continuum from prevention to rehabilitation, and such assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country, on the basis of an appeal launched by it, and with the concerned country's full cooperation. ECOSOC members asserted that contributions to humanitarian assistance must not be made to the detriment of resources which were made available for international cooperation for development.

24. In a report presented by the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, proposals were made for improving the utilization of the CERF. These included a proposed addition of US\$30 million special window for financing immediate recovery and rehabilitation activities during the transition phase. ECOSOC members expressed their concern over the situation of the CERF and stressed that urgent action was required for an increase of the CERF's financial base through additional contributions. An appeal was made for regular repayment by debtor organizations.

25. As for the consolidated appeal process, members of ECOSOC noted that there were discrepancies in the response of donor countries and that responses were more extensive for food than for other requirements. It therefore advocated that, particularly in view of the current climate of donor fatigue, resources be allocated in a more equitable manner. Members of the Council further recognized that there had to be more innovative approaches to refugee problems and that the rights of refugees, especially of women and children, must be protected. Similarly, the safety and protection of humanitarian aid workers was stressed.

26. The Economic and Social Council adopted three resolutions under the General Segment on "Strengthening of the Coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (resolution E/1995/L.62) and "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" (resolutions E/1995/L.38 and E/1995/L.50).

27. By its adoption of resolution E/1995/L.62, ECOSOC recognized the need to review and strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance and hence requested the Secretary-General to provide, in close cooperation with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, a comprehensive and analytical report on the review and strengthening of all aspects of the capacity of the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance. The report, which would also embody the views of Member States, observer States and relevant intergovernmental and other organizations, will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its next substantive session in 1996.

28. Governments were encouraged in the aforementioned resolution to ensure coherence in the direction given to the governing bodies of relevant agencies, organizations, programmes and funds of the United Nations system, with the aim of improving coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations system. ECOSOC further urged the governing bodies of the relevant United Nations system organizations to review, during the period 1995 to 1997, issues concerning the role and operational responsibilities as well as the operative and financial capacities of their respective organizations to respond, within their mandates, in the context of broad and comprehensive humanitarian programmes.

29. In its resolutions on "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" (resolutions E/1995/L.38 and E/1995/L.50), ECOSOC invited the Secretary-General to provide proposals for further improvements in the field of disaster-related telecommunications in his report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the early warning capacities of the United Nations system with regard to natural disasters. The Secretary-General was also invited by the Council to ensure, in pursuance of resolution 36 of the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunications Union (Kyoto, Japan, 1994), close cooperation among the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the International Telecommunication Union.

30. In its resolution E/1995/L.50, ECOSOC further urged all United Nations bodies that are involved in disaster reduction activities to give priority to integrating, coordinating and strengthening their work to build the capacities of disaster-prone countries and regions in the field of disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, with particular consideration for the needs of the least-developed countries and small island and land-locked developing countries. Member States, relevant intergovernmental bodies and all others involved in the Decade were called upon to provide adequate financial resources and technical support for the activities of the Decade. The Council recommended that the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction be considered by the fiftieth session of the General Assembly as a separate sub-item under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

31. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) held its Thirty-first Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 26 to 28 June 1995, which was preceded by the Sixty-second Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers. The FAO delegation to these meetings was headed by the Director-General.

32. In an address to the Council of Ministers, the Director-General informed members of the OAU of the need to deal urgently with priority sectors such as water control, forestry conservation, livestock production and the management of Africa's marine fishery resources. The OAU was further informed of FAO's current and planned contributions to African agriculture and food security; the progress in the implementation of changes in the Organization's programmes, structures and policies; and developments related to the proposed World Food Summit including international support received to date. The Organization also reiterated its commitment to the appeal launched to Africa's development partners in the Cairo Agenda for Action.

33. The Council of Ministers recognized the important role of the food and agriculture sector in the economic development of African countries and underscored the need to have a common African position on food security and agricultural development prior to the World Food Summit. The OAU Summit adopted a resolution on Food Security and Agricultural Development in Africa, in which it emphasized the commitment of African States to strive individually and collectively towards the achievement of food security in the continent.

34. In this resolution, the Secretary-General of the OAU was requested by the Summit to take the necessary measures for the preparation and adoption of a proposal relating to a common African position on food security prior to the World Food Summit. A draft position paper to this end will be discussed at the 19th FAO Regional Conference for Africa (April 1996) and submitted to the next OAU Summit for adoption.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

35. Efforts have recently been made by FAO to strengthen further its cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations. The participation of NGOs in the last sessions of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), as well as their cooperation in producing the last editions of the publication "DEEP" (Development Education Exchange Paper) are examples of areas where relations between FAO and the NGOs have intensified.

36. Convened at the initiative of the Director-General as part of the Organization's effort to reach out to the non-governmental community, the meetings between NGOs and the Departments of Fisheries and Forestry in connection with the biennial sessions of the Technical Committees on Fisheries and Forestry (March 1995), provided the opportunity for the non-governmental organizations to present their views to the committees and the subsequent ministerial meetings and to suggest how FAO/NGO cooperation on forestry and fisheries could be strengthened. The reports of the two meetings were presented to COFI and COFO respectively.

37. Twenty-three participants from 17 NGOs attended the meeting held in Rome prior to COFI. Three major items figured on the agenda: the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, follow-up to UNCED, and measures to enhance fisheries collaboration between NGOs and FAO. Discussion at the meeting was facilitated by the rapport established among NGOs themselves as well as that between the NGOs and FAO during the negotiations associated with the elaboration of the Code of Conduct.

38. In considering how NGOs and FAO might strengthen their collaboration in the field of fisheries, participants suggested that more precise guidelines for NGO participation in FAO meetings, and the work of the Organization, were needed. It was noted that FAO should not expect NGOs to voice consensus views, given the wide range of interests that they represented. As a means of strengthening FAO/NGO collaboration, several NGOs undertook to prepare a programme to promote NGO participation in the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

39. The meeting on forestry brought together 46 participants from 34 NGOs. It focused on: international aspects of the UNCED follow-up process, in particular the report of the UN Secretary-General on forests prepared by FAO and submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development; the question of a legally binding international agreement on forests; criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management; and trade mechanisms including certification.

40. With regard to future collaboration between FAO and the non-governmental community on forestry, the need for regular communication and interaction was stressed. The participants suggested that NGOs be involved in meetings of FAO statutory bodies, including the FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, and FAO agreed to take steps to make this possible starting with the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission meeting in 1995.

41. Another example of close collaboration between FAO and NGOs has been the production of the Development Education Exchange Papers (DEEP), which has been renovated in both content and layout.

42. Launched in 1970, DEEP now reaches an international network of 10 000 groups and institutions in the non-governmental sector seeking to share knowledge and experience in a variety of development issues. Five issues of DEEP have been produced since September 1993, and one is under preparation. Themes treated in these issues of DEEP were: plant genetic resources,

sustainable agriculture and rural development (two issues), food security (two issues), and responsible fisheries. Each of these issues, prepared in collaboration with specialized NGOs, seeks to bring together the positions and programmes of FAO and NGOs, highlighting complementarities as well as divergencies.

43. One of the merits of the publication is its production method, which provides opportunities for NGOs and FAO experts to exchange views and concerns on a particular issue, and communicate them to the readers of DEEP. As the FAO publication with the largest outreach to the NGO sector, DEEP is an important instrument of dissemination of information on FAO's and NGOs' policies and programmes on rural development.