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REPORT

Gaborone,
Botswana,
24-28 October
1994

Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

FAO Member Nations in the Africa Region (as at 28 October 1994)

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
Zaire
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Africa

First	— Lagos, Nigeria, 3-12 November 1960
Second	— Tunis, Tunisia, 1-10 November 1962
Third	— Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3-15 September 1964
Fourth	— Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 9-19 November 1966
Fifth	— Kampala, Uganda, 18-29 November 1968
Sixth	— Algiers, Algeria, 17 September - 3 October 1970
Seventh	— Libreville, Gabon, 14-30 September 1972
Eighth	— Rose Hill, Mauritius, 1-17 August 1974
Ninth	— Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2-12 November 1976
Tenth	— Arusha, Tanzania, 18-28 September 1978
Eleventh	— Lomé, Togo, 16-27 June 1980
Twelfth	— Algiers, Algeria, 22 September - 2 October 1982
Thirteenth	— Harare, Zimbabwe, 16-25 July 1984
Fourteenth	— Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 2-11 September 1986
Fifteenth	— Moka, Mauritius, 26 April - 4 May 1988
Sixteenth	— Marrakech, Morocco, 11-15 June 1990
Seventeenth	— Accra, Ghana, 20-24 July 1992
Eighteenth	— Gaborone, Botswana, 24-28 October 1994

ARC/94/REP

REPORT OF THE EIGHTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Gaborone, Botswana, 24-28 October 1994

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Rome, 1995

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SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Country Statements and General Debate

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

1. recommended that analytical studies be undertaken to assess the impact of structural adjustment programmes and draw the appropriate conclusions. (para. 26)

2. urged countries to continue to implement measures necessary to establish appropriate databases on the socio-economic situation of rural women and their needs, and to ensure that programmes for sustainable agricultural development incorporate the gender-disaggregated information. (para. 27)

3. called on all African Member Nations to demonstrate their support for the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa, (CIRDAFRICA) as a viable institution working for the promotion of sustainable rural development across the continent. (para. 34)

4. recommended that Member Nations formulate policies and programmes to harness water for agriculture with a view to sustainable development. (para. 35)

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

5. recommended FAO update its study "African Agriculture - the Next 25 Years", and especially, update its study on the irrigation potential in Africa so as to have the most realistic data available. (para. 35)

6. recommended FAO establish an African Commission for Land and Water Development which would undertake, *inter alia*;

   i) The promotion of improved land and water use techniques for sustainable agriculture and rural development;

   ii) The compilation of a land and water development and conservation database which would serve as a forum of exchange for land and water use-related problems; and

   iii) The formulation of recommendations of ways and means for FAO to enhance its assistance to the countries of the Region for the development of efficient water use for both irrigated and rainfed crops. (para. 35)

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

7. urged Member Nations to monitor the rural-urban drift situation closely so as to introduce appropriate measures that would make the rural areas more attractive and thereby significantly reduce rural exodus. (para. 41)

8. recommended that Ministers of Agriculture in the Member Nations of the Region make strenuous efforts to sensitize Ministers in charge of National Departments of Finance and other key ministries, as well as Heads of State and Government to understand the most vital and urgent need to prioritize agriculture. (para. 43)

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

9. requested FAO to assist Member Nations take appropriate measures in establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for technology transfer and research. (para. 40)

10. recommended that the FAO and other concerned international agencies, such as the OAU ensure that, during international meetings, Ministers of Agriculture interact with Ministers in charge of National Departments of Finance and other key ministries as well as Heads of State whenever the opportunity arose to emphasize the essential role of agriculture in national development. (para. 43)

Promoting Agricultural Cooperation through a Common African Agricultural Programme

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

11. recommended that a pragmatic approach be pursued in promoting economic integration and cooperation with clearly defined implementation phases. (para. 52)

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

12. recommended that FAO intensify its efforts to make the development, implementation and monitoring of the Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP) a standing item on the agenda of future Regional Conferences, in order to ensure continuing participation of the Conference in this process. (para. 51)

13. recommended that FAO continue providing technical assistance to strengthen the analytical capacity of individual Member Nations, as well as integration groupings in the area of policy analysis. (para. 52)

14. appealed to FAO to provide support to Member Nations in assisting them to create favourable conditions for enhancing trade among African countries. (para. 52)

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

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

15. invited the Council to continue to monitor the implementation of its decisions and give guidance and support to the Organization in regard to present and future activities of FAO in the Region. (para. 62)

Preparation for the 1996 World Food Summit

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

16. endorsed the convening of the World Food Summit. (para. 67)

Development of Technologies in the Context of an Eco-regional Approach for Sustainable Agricultural Production in Africa

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

17. recommended that national and international programmes support the timely availability of key inputs such as water development and management facilities, credit, quality seed and fertilizer to the farmers in appropriate quantities. (para. 80)

18. noted that the scourge of drought was now assuming an almost permanent trait in the Region and that this called for a more research oriented investigation of the problem. (para. 81)

19. recommended that analysis be carried out on the bottlenecks in the formulation and/or implementation of appropriate technology research programmes and steps be taken at the policy level for their removal. (para. 82)

20. recommended that enhancing the capacity of the human resource base receive high priority in national and international programmes and that an appropriate process be developed and applied for identifying national human resources development priorities including the needs of women farmers. (para. 83)

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

21. recommended that FAO initiate action to update the study - "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years". (para. 79)

22. recommended that FAO support the efforts of Member Nations to develop farm irrigation and small dam programmes. (para. 80)

23. requested that FAO provide assistance to help Member Nations develop efficient research and training facilities, and distribution networks for such key inputs as high quality seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc., with a view to increasing agricultural productivity. (para. 80)

Follow-up to the International Scheme for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of African Lands (ISCRAL) and the Role of FAO in the Implementation of the "Urgent Action for Africa", in Relation to the "International Convention to Combat Desertification"

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

24. recommended that countries take steps to enhance effectiveness in implementing desertification programmes by pooling resources and responsibilities together at the national level among different Ministries, as well as between countries. (para. 91)

For the Attention of FAO

25. recommended that FAO intensify its assistance to Member Nations in the field of land and water conservation. (para. 90)

26. recommended that FAO continue its assistance to the International Scheme for Conservation and Rehabilitation of African lands and called for a greater interest in long-term financial support from the donor community in the implementation of the programme. (para. 93)

A Proposal for a Diversification Facility for African Commodities (DFAC)

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

27. recommended that small farmers and their organizations be represented in National Diversification Councils. (para. 100)

28. recommended that African countries now consider dismantling artificial barriers to trade. (para. 101)

Desert Locust Control in the Region and Preparation for Future Campaigns

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

29. requested potential donors, as well as affected countries, to give their full support and cooperation in the implementation of EMPRES. (para. 107)

30. urged countries to establish preparedness capabilities for future campaigns. (para. 108)

For the attention of FAO

31. requested the Director-General that an effort be made to extend EMPRES to include the West and North-west recession invasion areas and other similarly afflicted areas. (para. 107)

32. recommended that FAO continue to provide assistance to the countries concerned in the preparation of future campaigns. (para. 109)

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

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

33. recommended that CGIAR give greater attention to sustainability issues and the needs of fragile ecosystems. (para. 113)

34. recommended that CGIAR set and implement its research agenda through a participatory approach with effective involvement by developing countries. (para. 113)

35. approved the nomination of Dr (Mrs) Ntombana Regina Gata of Zimbabwe to represent the Region on the CGIAR for the period 1995-98. (para. 116)

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

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

36. urged Member Nations to improve their inter-sectoral mechanisms for addressing nutrition issues which would involve more actively the food and agriculture sectors and recommended that new action programmes and approaches be formulated which would involve the objectives adopted at the ICN. (para. 124)

37. recommended that nutrition policies and considerations be integrated into National Action Plans and existing programmes. (para. 125)

For the Attention of FAO

38. recommended that FAO continue its support to countries to facilitate the preparation of National Plans of Action for Nutrition, as well as foster interagency cooperation at the country level on implementing ICN follow-up activities. (para. 126)

Date and Place of the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

39. noted the offer of Burundi to host the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa and requested that it be conveyed to the Director-General, who would decide on the date and place of the Conference in consultation with Member Governments of the Region. (para. 127)

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held at the Boipuso Conference Centre, Gaborone, Republic of Botswana, from 24 to 28 October 1994.

2. The meeting was attended by 126 delegates from 32 Member Nations of the Region, 26 of which were represented at ministerial level; seven observers from Member Nations outside the Region, the observer from the Holy See, seven representatives of the United Nations Specialized Agencies, ten observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and one observer from a multilateral financial institution. A list of participants is given as Appendix B of this Report. The list of the documents for the meeting is given in Appendix C of the report.

3. The Independent Chairman of the FAO Council, Mr J.R. Lopez-Portillo also attended the Conference.

Inaugural Ceremony

4. The Inaugural Ceremony for the Conference was held at the Boipuso Conference Centre under the Chairmanship of the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, and was formally opened by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire.

5. In his opening address, His Excellency the President, Sir Ketumile Masire, welcomed the delegates to the Conference on his own behalf and that of the Government and the people of Botswana. He said that it was a singular honour for him and a pleasure to have been invited to inaugurate the meeting. He recalled that FAO's mandate entailed the alleviation of poverty and hunger, a daunting challenge. He went on to enumerate some of the factors which contributed to the situation in which millions of people were living under conditions of hunger and malnourishment. He expressed his confidence that the Director-General, as head of this Specialized Agency, would live up to the important challenges of his office.

6. The President also took the opportunity firstly, to welcome the re-admission of the Republic of South Africa to the Organization which represented victory over apartheid and a return to healthy, political and economic development, and, secondly to welcome the Republic of Eritrea whose participation in the Regional Conference represented the end of a long liberation struggle.

7. The President pointed out that the Conference was taking place at a time when approaches to overcome social and economic challenges needed re-examination. He noted that the high expectations of earlier years for major economic and social transformation in African countries had not materialized. Progress had been achieved in areas such as life expectancy, literacy, school enrollment, health care and education, and, rather significantly, in the improvement and expansion of capital stock, especially physical infrastructure. However, in many countries of the Region, the state of disrepair and lack of maintenance of infrastructural assets left much to be desired, a clear sign of retrogression. Regrettably, Africa had actually witnessed declining *per capita* income, declining food availability, depletion of agricultural resources and increasing ecological degradation. A very large number of Africans were suffering from malnutrition.

8. The President referred to the increasing recurrence of droughts in recent years which bore testimony to the vulnerability of basic life-support resources in the countries, noting that increasing population pressures had been accelerating the processes of desertification and environmental deterioration. The productive capacity of land was being diminished by soil erosion and decreasing organic matter, leading to losses of rangelands and vegetation cover. The resultant effects of all of

these factors were increased malnutrition, hunger, famine, abject rural poverty, economic dislocation and social disintegration.

9. The President indicated that, as with rural poverty, the solution to these environmental problems required a combination of policy reforms which included land tenure reforms, investment in land conservation, rehabilitation and institutional capacity-building coupled with strong technological intervention. He mentioned some of the measures that Botswana had initiated to confront these problems. These included the adoption of a National Conservation Strategy to ensure effective coordination between the conservation of natural resources and sustainable development, as well as a capacity for drought management.

10. The President wholeheartedly welcomed the Director-General's new initiative, in the face of all the aforementioned challenges, to make FAO more dynamic by restructuring the Organization and decentralising its activities. The President advised that approaches to development had to be community-based, consultative and participatory so that such key actors as farmers and their leaders could be actively jointly involved with Government technical and extension services. He requested FAO to work in collaboration with bilateral and multilateral institutions, in order to assist the Region in generating increased technical and investment resources to support the development of agriculture in Africa. However, he cautioned that policy initiatives to improve agricultural outputs must be taken by the African governments themselves. The full text of the statement of His Excellency the President is contained in Appendix E.

11. In his reply, the Director-General of FAO, speaking on his behalf and that of the delegates, expressed thanks to His Excellency the President for having delivered the opening address to the Conference, and said that this was indeed a great honour and privilege. He referred to the words of wisdom contained in the address and said that the outstanding achievements by the Republic of Botswana he had described were indeed confirmation of the capability of the President and the people of Botswana to turn words into action. He congratulated the President on his recent re-election and promised FAO's continued support to the President, the Government and the people of the Republic of Botswana, within the limits of its resources. He then declared the Inaugural Ceremony closed.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

12. The Conference unanimously elected Mr Roy Blackbeard, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Botswana, as its Chairman. In a short speech accepting his election, the Minister expressed his gratitude for the confidence placed in him by delegates in electing him Chairman of the Conference. He said that he felt greatly honoured, and that this was an honour not only for him but for the whole of the Republic of Botswana as well. He apologized for any difficulties the delegates might have experienced in connection with the Conference arrangements due to the Conference being hosted at short notice and the pressure of simultaneously preparing a similar meeting. Also, he had been in office for only a few days. He promised that the situation would be quickly rectified, however, and informed delegates of the arrangements that had been made for them. He looked forward to working with the delegates and the rest of the Secretariat in successfully conducting the affairs of the Conference.

13. The Conference then elected Mr Ndimira Pascal Firmin, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Burundi, as first Vice-Chairman; Mr Filibus Bature, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nigeria to FAO, as second Vice-Chairman, and Mr Frederik Coetzee, Chief Director, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of South Africa as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

14. The Conference adopted the agenda and timetable as reproduced in Appendix A to this Report.

Statement by the Director-General of FAO

15. The Director-General initially expressed his sincere thanks to the Government and people of Botswana for agreeing to host the Conference, and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality received. He then welcomed the delegations to the Conference and said that their presence was proof of the intention of the governments of the Region to come to grips with the major challenges of food and agriculture on the African continent. He also expressed his pride and delight as the first son of the continent to head the Organization.

16. He recalled that the Africa Region was beset by immense difficulties in meeting the food requirements of its population, that the agriculture sector was in a permanent state of crisis and that it was aggravated by sundry conflicts that helped to prolong the massive recourse to food aid. In this regard, there were many challenges and problems and new ways needed to be found with the support of FAO to overcome them. The Director-General informed the Conference of the serious state of malnutrition in the countries of the Region and of declining *per capita* food supplies. Recent trends had only served to confirm this situation. The predicted huge deficits in cereal production signalled a critical food situation and overall food insecurity in the continent.

17. The root causes for the situation were erratic rainfall, development policies that had generally failed to foster food and agricultural production, and the absence of such significant technological innovations as the "Green Revolution" that substantially increased productivity as had been the case in a number of Asian countries. Institutional weaknesses and insufficient infrastructure had accentuated these difficulties. Other causes included: the very high rate of population growth, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation (particularly desertification), political instability, social unrest, and civil wars resulting in massive population displacement, coupled with an unfavourable international economic environment and the heavy burden of external debt.

18. The Director-General stressed, however, that there was hope in the continent's capacity to meet these challenges. The potential existed, most African countries had courageously implemented rather painful reforms, and had made efforts to revive their economies with notable results. Irrigation was a viable weapon in the recovery mechanism which FAO supported. In this connection FAO planned to undertake a special study to assess the irrigation potential and thereby endeavour to solve some of the crucial problems inhibiting its application in Member Nations. Other areas in the recovery mechanism in which FAO was active included the forestry, livestock and fishery sectors.

19. The Director-General briefed the Conference on the new directions and related activities in connection with FAO policies and programmes. These encompassed the following areas: the restructuring exercise, food security, forestry, fisheries, Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), use of genetic resources, the role of women, AIDS, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization, and the World Food Summit.

20. Regarding the restructuring exercise, already mandated by Resolution 10/93 of the Conference, he said that the new structure made a much closer distinction between global and operational functions of the Organization, which were to be decentralized to improve efficiency and bring the activities of the FAO closer to the field. A special programme had been introduced to make a swift and significant impact on food security in the countries, while safeguarding their natural resources and ensuring the equitable distribution of the benefits of increased production. A second

special programme related to the prevention of Transboundary Transmission of Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES) had also been instituted.

21. With regard to forestry, action had been taken to refocus priorities which would increase FAO's presence in the sector. Similarly, the fisheries programme had been reinforced and resources were being made available for aquaculture development. Ministers responsible for forestry and fisheries would be invited to the next session of the respective technical Committees to review developments and make appropriate recommendations. A new agreement to promote TCDC for priority programmes in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors had been formulated and submitted to the governments for approval. FAO was also assisting with the implementation of AIDS prevention programmes for the rural youth in some countries of the Region and evaluating AIDS impact on agricultural production.

22. In connection with the FAO's Fiftieth Anniversary, the Canadian Government, in conjunction with the Government of the Province of Quebec, had kindly agreed to host the observances to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of FAO at Château Frontenac in Quebec. This would include, in particular, an International Symposium on the problems of food security and an extraordinary meeting of the Ministers responsible for agriculture and development cooperation. Considering the paramount importance of food security, there had been an increasing sense of the need for a top-level meeting which would review developments in the world food situation since the World Food Conference 20 years ago, would analyse the outlook for the year 2010, and would raise international community awareness of the risk of famine to humanity. Such a meeting would also provide the occasion for promoting commitment at the highest political level, as well as in the realm of public opinion, thus enabling corrective measures to be taken in time. This was the background to his proposal to convene a World Food Summit in early 1996. The International Symposium and Ministerial Meeting, to be held in October 1995 in Quebec, would provide the occasion to put the finishing touches on preparations for the Summit. The full text of the Director-General's statement is in Appendix F.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region

23. Under this Agenda Item, delegations presented their country statements. The Conference also heard statements by two observers from FAO Member Nations outside the Region, as well as from the delegate of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Meeting for the first time since the election of the first African to the high office of Director-General of FAO, Member Nations were unanimous in expressing their best wishes to him in the fulfilment of his duties. The Member Nations noted that the new dynamism being clearly manifested in the functioning of the Organization was a good sign, and promised their full support to the Director-General.

24. Most delegations agreed that although there were significant differences between countries in regard to their agricultural patterns and ecosystems, there were many issues in which their experiences, aspirations and measures for solving agricultural sector problems were similar. Agriculture was still the dominant sector of their economies, contributing the largest share of the GDP and providing, by far, the largest source of employment for their peoples. The main producers in the agricultural sector were smallholders. Agricultural production lagged behind population growth, environmental degradation was rampant, and poor soil and water management, desertification, frequent droughts, and explosions of human, animal and plant diseases were endemic. An almost apathetic external economic environment complicated the situation.

25. Some of the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa reported that although there had been increases in production in recent years, the effects of years of recurrent drought still haunted their agricultural production horizons. The Conference was informed of schemes initiated for utilizing large bodies of available water, but the lack of the required large financial and technical expertise had prevented countries from realizing the benefits of such attempts.

26. Measures introduced by countries to improve the performance of their agricultural sectors included liberalization and privatization of their economies. Most of the countries had also introduced structural adjustment programmes in one way or the other with variable success. The Conference recommended that analytical studies be undertaken to assess the impact of structural adjustment programmes and draw the appropriate conclusions. Countries had attempted to foster integrated and self-sustaining economies through diversification of agricultural production, import substitution and modernization of the sector. In this connection, one of the innovations introduced involved the establishment of special national task-forces to advise on the utilization of resources for the development of the agricultural sector on a priority basis in a free market economy.

27. The Conference noted that in regard to the central role played by women in Africa in food and agricultural production, countries had introduced special measures addressing their specific needs as agricultural producers, income earners and household heads. It was also noted that as the ongoing rural to urban drift mainly concerned rural males, it had the effect of increasing the burden on women farmers to maintain agricultural production levels and food security at household levels. The Conference urged countries to continue to implement measures necessary to establish appropriate databases on the socio-economic situation of rural women and their needs, and to ensure that programmes for sustainable agricultural development incorporate the gender-disaggregated information.

28. Agricultural research, extension and training were recognized to play a central role in the development of the agricultural sector, and now figured as a key area of activity for investment

programmes. Countries that had introduced the systems approach, in association with marketing, in order to stimulate the productivity of farmers had found it successful. In this regard, the Member Nations praised FAO for assisting them to implement their national programmes. Acknowledging the important role of external financial assistance to supplement their efforts, the Member Nations recommended that FAO intensify its efforts to assist countries in attracting the necessary external funding.

29. Recognizing the important relationship between food, nutrition, health, national development, peace and security, countries had pursued policies for improving the nutritional status of both their urban and rural population through educational programmes on food production, storage, processing and preservation, primary health care and nutritional surveillance. Special attention was being given to the most vulnerable groups in society especially with regard to women and children.

30. The Conference was informed of other vital areas in which countries had taken appropriate action, such as ensuring that impact studies to ensure environmentally-sustainable methods were applied in regard to all programmes, to reverse the imbalance in the uneven distribution of agricultural lands, and to allocate one percent of national budgets for a national disaster fund. The principle of the comparative advantage in production that certain countries and areas held over others was also recognized and utilized.

31. In his statement, the observer from the United States of America reiterated his country's support for the recent initiatives undertaken by the Director-General. He briefed the Conference on activities and projects through which his Government had cooperated with the Organization in implementing programmes in the Member Nations of the Region. He advised on actions that should be taken by the countries themselves to improve the performance of the agricultural sector, and reaffirmed his country's support for the Organization.

32. In his statement to the Conference, the observer from the Netherlands expressed his delight that FAO had, with much justification, given prominence to the problems of food security concerns in the Region. This should be encouraged from the grassroots to the highest level. He further enumerated his country's assistance to the countries of the Region in collaboration with the FAO in such areas as training and implementation of studies on agricultural subsistence and development.

33. The representative of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) expressed his thanks to FAO for the invitation to participate at the Conference. He was appreciative that FAO had introduced such topics for discussion that were of immediate relevance to the problems affecting the agricultural situation in Africa. The OAU had strengthened its cooperation with UN Agencies such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, and had jointly prepared the Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP) framework with FAO. The follow-up activities in regard to this study would be communicated to the Member Nations in due course.

34. The Conference reaffirmed its awareness of the need to strengthen African regional cooperation and recognized the importance of addressing, in a concerted manner, the problems of rural poverty and rural insecurity. The Conference reaffirmed its support for the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA), and called on all African Member Nations to demonstrate their support for the Centre as a viable institution working for the promotion of sustainable rural development across the continent.

35. **DECLARATION**

THE CONFERENCE,

Taking note of the Programme of the Director-General as approved by the 106th Session of the Council of FAO;

Noting the concern of Member Nations to ensure food security, especially through irrigation;

Considering the inherent risk of recurring drought for agricultural production, especially in the arid and semi-arid zones;

Considering the need to intensify agricultural production in order to confront the growing needs of African populations and in view of the launching of a Green Revolution for Africa;

Noting the irreplaceable role of water management in attaining food security on a continent where 4 500 billion m^3 of water flows unused each year into the seas and oceans and only 6 percent of the arable land was under irrigation;

Recommended:

For FAO

a. To undertake to update its study "African Agriculture - the Next 25 Years", and especially, to update its study on the irrigation potential in Africa so as to have the most realistic data available.

b. To establish, as for the Near East, an African Commission for Land and Water Development which would undertake, *inter alia;*

i) The promotion of improved land and water use techniques for sustainable agriculture and rural development;

ii) The compilation of a land and water development and conservation database which would serve as a forum of exchange for land and water use-related problems; and

iii) The formulation of recommendations of ways and means for FAO to enhance its assistance to the countries of the Region for the development of efficient water use for both irrigated and rainfed crops.

For Member Nations

c. To formulate policies and programmes to harness water for agriculture with a view to sustainable development.

For the International Community

d. To assist Member Nations to develop and implement programmes for harnessing and conserving water for the sustainable development of agriculture for food security.

e. To provide assistance to Member Nations for the formulation of irrigation policies and the development of irrigation programmes based on participatory management and the promotion of private irrigation.

TECHNICAL ITEMS

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93

36. The Officer-in-Charge, and Deputy Regional Representative for Africa presented the document[1] to the Conference.

37. Despite the numerous attempts to improve the situation, rural poverty had actually been accentuating and 80 percent of the countries were faced with chronic food deficits. The growth of food production had not kept pace with consumption and self-sufficiency ratios had declined. The disturbing conclusion was that a large number of Member Nations of the Region were unable to meet their basic nutritional requirements and there was a continuous worsening of the food security situation. Accordingly, this unprecedent crisis of development was a challenge to the entire continent to initiate new strategies in order to return the Region to the path of sustained growth.

38. The Officer-in-Charge reported extensively on the various programmes implemented and activities undertaken in the Region during the 1992-93 period. These included, *inter alia* programmes to mitigate rural poverty such as proposals for an integrated approach to rural development, comparative and multi-dimensional analysis of tenurial changes in land resources, the organization of rural women's access to credit and the promotion of income generating activities for women.

39. Some further activities included consultation on the role of farmers' organizations and groups in education and training, as well as training on the rational use of water resources, coordination of activities connected with the Tropical Forest Action Programme (TFAP), workshops on pest management, distribution and use of pesticide, national user producer dialogue for agricultural statisticians, and post harvest technologies and training in food processing. Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) had also been promoted.

40. The Conference expressed its dismay with the continued existence of poverty in the Region in spite of many conferences. Various possible explanations for the situation were highlighted. One was the fact that rural poverty was not the prerogative of agriculture as was usually erroneously thought, although because of its nature as the predominant sector in most African economies, it was primarily responsible for the poverty situation in most countries. Poverty was a structural problem and needed a multisectoral approach to solve it. The Member Nations recognized that proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were lacking, as were adequate measures for appropriate technology transfers and research, and requested FAO to take appropriate measures to assist Member Nations to rectify the situation.

41. The Conference was alerted to the fact that lack of amenities and appropriate infrastructures in the rural areas contributed to the urban drift of the population, thus increasing the pressure on the meagre resources of the urban areas and engendering increased urban poverty. The Conference urged Member Nations to monitor the situation closely so as to introduce appropriate measures that would make the rural areas more attractive, and thereby significantly reduce the rural exodus.

42. The Conference inferred that other causes included the fact that Ministers of Agriculture did not control national financial resources and were thus hamstrung in the execution of vital agricultural recovery programmes and projects. This extended to the political arena where the required agricultural interventions were not accorded the necessary priorities. Inter-African non-cooperation was an inhibiting factor although trade, transfers of technology, harmonization of policies and the intelligent sharing of resources between countries were necessary ingredients for African agricultural development.

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[1] ARC/94/2.

43. The Conference recommended that Ministers of Agriculture of the Member Nations of the Region should make strenuous efforts to sensitize Ministers in charge of National Departments of Finance and other key ministries, as well as Heads of State and Government to understand the most vital and urgent need to prioritize agriculture. The Conference further recommended that FAO and other concerned international agencies, such as the OAU, should ensure that, during international meetings, Ministers of Agriculture would interact with those Ministers in charge of National Departments of Finance and other key ministries, as well as Heads of State, whenever the opportunity arose. This would serve to emphasize the essential role of agriculture in national development.

Promoting Agricultural Cooperation through a Common African Agricultural Programme

44. The Senior Economist, Africa Group, Policy Analysis Division presented the document[2] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. He said that the document was in fact an OAU paper prepared with FAO support. He recalled that the idea of formulating a Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP) came about at a meeting between OAU and the UN system in 1990.

45. A consensus emerged during that meeting that, to operationalize the food and agricultural provisions for establishing an African Economic Community (AEC), it would be necessary to prepare and adopt a programme for sustainable agricultural development. The meeting, therefore, requested FAO, as the world's leading institution on food and agriculture, to assist OAU in preparing a draft framework for such a programme. FAO agreed to support this activity primarily because it provided an opportunity for the Organization to contribute to Africa's economic integration effort through cooperation in the food and agricultural sector.

46. Economic integration and cooperation at the sub-regional and regional levels did play a major role in the continent's overall development. Today, the spirit of cooperation and integration among Member Nations of the Region was stronger than ever before as evidenced by the emergence of many intergovernmental organizations.

47. The Conference debated the respective merits of calling CAAP a policy or a programme, and decided to refer the matter to the appropriate FAO and OAU authorities for a final decision. It was accepted however, that the overriding goal of CAAP was to promote regional cooperation and integration in the food and agriculture sector. More specifically, CAAP should promote and enhance economic cooperation through the development and coordination of policies, programmes and projects, technical cooperation to facilitate the development and utilization of appropriate technologies, and cooperation for a rational and equitable exploitation of common resources.

48. Subject to possible future adjustments, the objectives of CAAP were to commit Member Nations to cooperation in the development of agriculture, livestock and fisheries in order to ensure food security; increase productivity and production in food and agriculture, including forestry and fisheries; enhance agricultural production through local processing of various agricultural products, and protect prices of export commodities on the international market.

49. The operationalization of CAAP would require the AEC Secretariat ensure that CAAP framework documents were considered and approved by the relevant national, sub-regional and continent-wide organizations, NGOs, professional associations, Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture, whose roles were critical to this end.

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[2] ARC/94/3.

50. Success in achieving CAAP objectives would entail relying heavily on the Regional Economic Communities. The policies and programmes of these integrated groupings should constitute a major component of CAAP. While foreign financial assistance would be welcome, the funding of CAAP would be the primary responsibility of African countries.

51. The Conference endorsed the principles and strategies of CAAP. It recommended that FAO intensify its efforts to make the development, implementation and monitoring of the CAAP a standing item on the agenda of future Regional Conference, in order to ensure continuing participation of the Conference in this process.

52. The Conference emphasized the importance of open borders, competitiveness, and consultation on the utilization of common water resources. The Conference recommended that a pragmatic approach should be pursued in promoting economic integration and cooperation with clearly defined implementation phases. The Conference further recommended that FAO should continue to provide technical assistance to strengthen the analytical capacity of individual Member Nations, as well as integration groupings in the area of policy analysis. In addition, the Conference appealed to FAO to provide support to Member Nations in assisting them to create the favourable conditions for enhancing trade among African countries.

53. The Conference considered it of utmost importance that countries harmonize their macro-economic and sectoral policies, and suggested that structural adjustment programmes should be designed and implemented by taking into account the regional dimension.

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

54. The Independent Chairman of the Council presented the document[3] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. He emphasized that this document was for information only, and in this regard, he would provide a briefing of the deliberations. In the main, the document referred to reforms carried out as a result of the proposals of the Director-General within the framework of the transformation of the UN system, and within a wide-ranging process of consultation and participation of Member Nations, as well as transparency on behalf of the FAO Secretariat.

55. It was recognized that the Director-General's proposals were normative and were only a first step towards adapting FAO to the new challenges of food security, sustainable development and greater managerial efficiency, all within the budgetary limitations of FAO. The progress report on the implementation of the decisions taken by Council had been discussed, and the related supplementary document would be presented to a subsequent Council meeting. This would permit a further assessment of progress to date.

56. The Conference was informed that the Council had confirmed that achieving food security worldwide should be an absolute priority, and that FAO should renew efforts to implement relevant special programmes, particularly in low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). It was agreed that this would entail extra financial provisions. The other special programme unanimously approved was the Emergency Prevention System for Trans-boundary Animal Pests and Diseases (EMPRES). The notion of an accelerated restructuring exercise was also unanimously approved.

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[3] ARC/94/INF/10.

57. The policy of decentralization proposed by the Director-General was recognized as giving a new dimension in identifying regional, sub-regional and national needs. Also, the new Department of Technical Cooperation permitted improved relations of cooperation with multilateral and bilateral institutions, the private sector and NGOs. The new Department for Sustainable Development also received unanimous support.

58. The Special Adviser to the Director-General/Assistant Director-General for Environment and Sustainable Development reported on the action taken by the Director-General for the implementation of the decisions of the 106th Session of the Council. He emphasized that the broad scope of these decisions implied a series of stages which would extend beyond the present biennium and involve the preparation and implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 1996-97.

59. As regarded decentralization, Member Nations were consulted by the Director-General on their priorities so as to ensure that the multidisciplinary teams established in the Regional and Sub-regional Offices would include expertise specially related to regional and sub-regional requirements. Member Nations were also being consulted with a view to reaching a consensus on the location of the sub-regional offices for North Africa and for Eastern and Southern Africa. As regarded the FAO country offices, an audit of their activities was conducted at the request of the Director-General with a view to further improving their performance. The Organization's rules and procedures were being adjusted concurrently to enable the recruitment of National Programme Officers (NPOS).

60. The restructuring of Headquarters had now entered the phase of redeployment and redefinition of posts, particularly within the new Department of Technical Cooperation and the Department of Sustainable Development. This phase was almost completed, and would be followed by a series of staff transfers and new recruitment.

61. It was further reported that the new Special Programmes for LIFDCS and EMPRESS had completed their planning and programming phases, and were now proceeding with the launching of field missions at country and sub-regional levels. These concerned the identification of pilot projects to enhance local food production in LIFDCs, as well as a series of measures for the prevention and monitoring of locust infestations, and the control and eradication of rinderpest.

62. The Conference expressed satisfaction with the progress made and the action undertaken by the Director-General during the short time since the Council session, and invited the Council to continue to monitor the implementation of its decisions and give guidance and support to the Organization in this regard.

Preparation for the 1996 World Food Summit

63. The Director of the Information Division presented the document[4] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. This document was also presented to the Conference with the understanding that it was for information purposes only. The Conference was provided with a range of data concerning the persistence of food insecurity in many countries, the population increase and the decline in agricultural investment.[5] The "deep concern" over these developments expressed by the Twenty-seventh Session of the Conference was recalled as was the Conference's call for immediate action to bring about food security.

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4 ARC/94/INF/9.

5 ARC/94/INF/11.

64. The Conference noted that the Director-General had consulted a number of Heads of State and Governments in all regions on these issues and was aware of a consensus that the convening of a World Food Summit as early as possible was warranted and commensurate with the seriousness with which they viewed the problems of food insecurity. The Conference further noted that it was the Director-General's intention to call the World Food Summit in early 1996. Saturday 9 March and Sunday 10 March, 1996 were presently viewed as possible dates. The purpose of the Summit was to raise awareness and political will at the highest level, as well as in the realm of public opinion, on the non-acceptability of continued food insecurity and the need for global commitment and action to redress the problem. The Summit was expected to lead to the adoption of policies at international and national level, and the adoption of a Plan of Action. There was no intention to propose new organizational structures or additional financial mechanisms.

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

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

67. The Conference fully endorsed the convening of the World Food Summit.

Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture

68. The Director of the Information Division presented the document[6] to the Conference, which was being presented for information purposes only. The Conference was informed that the Secretariat had prepared a draft "Declaration on Food and Agriculture"[7] in response to Resolution 4/93 of the Twenty-seventh Session of the FAO Conference. The Resolution referred to the Fiftieth Anniversary of FAO and recommended that a draft declaration be submitted to all Regional Conferences in 1994. Member Governments were asked to submit their comments in writing before a given deadline. In the case of the African Region, the deadline for such comments was 28 December 1994.

69. The draft would be revised by the Secretariat in accordance with the written submissions from Member Nations. The revised draft would be placed before the Hundred and Eighth Session of the Council in June 1995 for its consideration. In the light of the Council's deliberations, it would be

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6 ARC/94/INF/10.

7 ARC/94/INF/9.

further revised for submission to the Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Observance for endorsement, and subsequently submitted for approval by the Twenty-eighth Session of the FAO Conference in November 1995.

70. The Conference was further informed that the Fiftieth Anniversary Resolution adopted by the last Conference of FAO also called upon all Member Nations to observe the Organization's Anniversary in a manner that befitted the importance of the event. Many activities were already under consideration. For example, more than 70 countries had already decided to issue commemorative stamps and, so far, over 35 countries had indicated that they would issue commemorative coins. In order to assist Member Nations to plan suitable commemorative events, the Director-General had already decided on the World Food Day theme for 1995, which was also the theme for the Anniversary: "Food for All".

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

72. At the end of this presentation the Conference took note of the document and its contents.

Development of Technologies in the Context of an Eco-regional Approach for Sustainable Agricultural Production in Africa

73. The Senior Officer, International Agricultural Research and Technology Development Division presented the document[8] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. He recalled the recommendations of the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, which had discussed this subject, and highlighted the actions taken by FAO during the past decade. He pointed out that the state of food and agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa during the intervening decade had seriously deteriorated and among the several causes, two constraints were dominant. The first was weak national agricultural research and technology development institutions leading to generally low and poor rate of generation, development and transfer of technologies. The second was inappropriate policies and failure to adjust policies affecting the costs of production, distribution and processing and thus affecting competitiveness in domestic, regional and international markets.

74. Recognizing that technology development and transfer was the engine to agricultural progress, he emphasized that previous approaches to research and technology development needed to be modified to enable the agricultural sector to accommodate national food and economic concerns in a comprehensive and sustained manner.

75. In relation to past trends in technology developments, African NARS had been strengthening their capabilities to complement their local technologies and skill by generating and transferring technologies for different agro-ecological and socio-economic settings in attaining the twin goals of productivity and sustainability. Such efforts included better yielding, disease and pest resistant and superior quality varieties of food and cash crops; management of animal diseases, development of new

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8 ARC/94/4.

vaccines, development of better and improved grazing regimes and management of rangelands, and improved fishing and fish processing. However, the ongoing efforts fell drastically short of the challenges and opportunities.

76. The Conference was informed that the eco-regional approach for technology development and transfer was a sound approach not only for developing and identifying appropriate technologies but also for promoting technology exchange among countries and eco-regions. It noted that the African region featured one of the world's most variable and complex agro-ecological conditions and farming systems. In order to enhance production and insulate it from wild fluctuations, irrigation and water conservation and management should receive high priority to enable adoption of "Green Revolution" technologies and to intensify agricultural production in a sustainable manner.

77. The Conference was then apprised of several eco-regional strategies for enhancing the development, assessment, transfer and adoption/adaption of appropriate technology to meet the dual objectives promoting enhanced productivity and maintained sustainability and conservation of natural resources. These included action by national and international agricultural research systems and support mechanisms to adjust their visions and missions to complement the changing socio-economic, political and climatological and scientific realities. A Green Revolution that was environmentally-friendly and sustainable under African conditions should be developed. Adequate, sustainable and transparent funding for agricultural research and technology development had to be ensured.

78. The attention of the Conference was drawn to the fact that the use of the term sub-Saharan Africa was inappropriate in addressing issues of technology transfer, since food and agricultural considerations in this regard should be on a basis of ecological factors and not on the basis of North and South Africa. The Committee noted that the geographic scope of the document was for the African Region as a whole, and not only for sub-Saharan Africa.

79. The Conference made reference to earlier studies undertaken by FAO such as "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years" which gave a comprehensive review of the major issues affecting the sector in countries of the Region. Since such studies provided a basis for assessing the extent of transfer and utilization of technologies, the Conference recommended that FAO initiate action to update the study.

80. The Conference lauded the Director-General's Special Programme on Food Security with particular attention to low-income, food-deficit countries. It acknowledged that fundamental to this thrust was accelerated and sustained food production in the deficit counties through the use of improved technology packages. The Conference endorsed the approach and cautioned that lessons learned from the "Green Revolution" in Latin America and Asia should be duly considered while launching a new "Green Revolution". It emphasized that the new Green Revolution should encompass a wider range of commodities, reduce inequity by being ushered in both well-endowed and poorly-endowed agro-ecological settings, and be environmentally-friendly. It recommended that national and international programmes should support the timely availability of key inputs such as water development and management facilities, credit, quality seed and fertilizer to the farmers in appropriate quantities. The Conference recommended that FAO support the efforts of Member Nations to develop farm irrigation and small dam programmes. It also requested that FAO provide assistance to help Member Nations develop efficient research and training facilities, and distribution networks for such key inputs as high quality seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc, with a view to increasing agricultural productivity.

81. The Conference emphasized that the foremost concern of the Member Nations should be to secure food for the burgeoning population, while not only reversing the process of degradation of natural resources but also improving and conserving them. The Conference noted that the scourge of drought was now assuming an almost permanent trait in the Region and that this called for a more research-oriented investigation of the problem.

82. Notwithstanding the pivotal role of appropriate technologies, the Conference underlined the need for necessary political will, commitment and suitable multisectoral policies to complement the technology push. It recommended that analysis should be carried out on the bottlenecks in formulation and/or implementation, and steps should be taken at the policy level for their removal. The right political will would also help in minimizing, if not completely eliminating, the man-made problems. There was a need also for establishing mechanisms for accessing technologies as there was an increasing trend of proprietary protection.

83. The Conference acknowledged that enhancing the capacity of the human resource base was a key factor in improving the quality of technology development and transfer in the Region, and its paucity was a major constraint in Africa. It recommended that this aspect receive high priority in national and international programmes and that an appropriate process should be developed and applied for identifying national human resources development priorities. In doing so, the needs of women farmers should be given due attention.

Follow-up to the International Scheme for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of African Lands (ISCRAL) and the Role of FAO in the Implementation of the "Urgent Action for Africa", in Relation to the "International Convention to Combat Desertification"

84. The Regional Soil Resources Officer, RAFR, presented the document[9] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. Recalling that food security, economic well-being and the quality of life of African populations depended on the quality of cropping, grazing lands and forest land resources, the Officer indicated that these resources were seriously endangered and that land degradation was and would be one of the major problems of contemporary Africa for a long time.

85. In order to combat and prevent further land degradation, FAO had prepared the International Scheme for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of African Lands (ISCRAL) which was approved by the Sixteenth Regional Conference for Africa. The Regional Soils Resources Officer also referred to the Convention adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) which had a close bearing on the ISCRAL Programme. The Convention incorporated a Programme of Action for sustainable development worldwide to combat desertification and drought.

86. FAO's wide experience in desertification control and sustainable development made it inevitable that it should be closely involved in the preparation of the Convention and in the implementation of its activities. In order to harmonize and strengthen its work in desertification control and dryland development and provide the necessary support to the Convention, FAO had established a Working Group to act as a focal point and for cooperation activities. The Convention contained an annex for the Africa Region as one of its integral parts, the purpose of which was to identify means and arrangements for the implementation of the Convention in the Region.

87. The Officer highlighted the prominent role played by FAO during the negotiating process and the many concrete actions taken in connection with the implementation of the objectives of the Convention. More specifically, such actions included those contained in the Annex for Africa, as well

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9 ARC/94/INF/6.

as those connected with the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa. All these were implemented within the new framework of thrust given to FAO activities and the changes brought about to the structures of the Organization.

88. The Conference was apprised of the scope and modalities of the International Scheme for Conservation and Rehabilitation of African lands (ISCRAL), the progress achieved so far and the experiences gained. Country reports had been prepared for a number of countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Gambia, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Rwanda and Togo, while identification missions were carried out in a number of countries. So far, the Scheme had been mainly supported through FAO's Regular Programme, but the requirements beyond the identification phase called for greater support in order to develop national and regional programmes.

89. The Conference expressed its appreciation for the initiative taken by FAO in connection with the ISCRAL project, and endorsed the proposal put forward by FAO regarding ISCRAL as an instrument for implementation of the Convention, and, in particular for the related Resolution for Urgent Action for Africa. The Conference noted the seriousness and extent of desertification/land degradation, pointing out its negative impact on agricultural productivity and the livelihood of the people.

90. The Conference took cognizance of related ongoing and already implemented activities in their respective countries, and commended FAO's involvement in the discussions related to the negotiating process as well as for the steps taken regarding the implementation of the regional Annex for Africa. The Member Nations Conference recommended that FAO intensify its assistance to Member Nations in the field of land and water conservation.

91. The Conference recognized that solutions to desertification should focus on causes rather than symptoms, and required a multidisciplinary approach. It stressed that there was need for the countries to effectively exercise ownership of programmes concerning desertification and land degradation control in order to achieve greater success. Also there was need for exchange of experience and knowledge in the areas of peoples' participation and policy formulation. The Conference recommended that countries take steps to enhance effectiveness in implementing desertification programmes by pooling resources and responsibilities together at the national level among different Ministries, as well as between countries.

92. The Conference stressed the need for more emphasis on assessment, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes concerning land, water and natural resources as a whole. Because of the seriousness of the problem of land degradation and desertification, long-term problems necessitated long-term solutions and commitments. Consequently it was most important that a clear and independent mechanism for financing related programmes and projects be established.

93. While emphasizing the need for close link among policy-makers, researchers and users, the Conference called for the development of national research programmes on soil and water conservation and requested the assistance of FAO and the international community to that effect. The Conference recommended that FAO continue its assistance to the International Scheme for Conservation and Rehabilitation of African Lands and called for a greater long-term financial support from the donor community in the implementation of the programme.

A Proposal for a Diversification Facility for African Commodities (DFAC)

94. The Senior Economist, Africa Group, Policy Analysis Division, presented the document[10] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. In his presentation, he pointed out that although the idea of diversifying the economies of African countries was not new, it had never really led to concrete follow-up actions in the past. The proposal for a diversification facility for Africa's commodities, currently being discussed in UN circles was, therefore, the first serious concerted effort at the international level for realistic implementation. He traced the origins of the process which had culminated in the organization of a study on the "Implementation of Diversification in the Commodity Sector in Africa, at National, Sub-regional and Regional Levels with the Support of the International Community."

95. Although it was recognized that such diversification was primarily the responsibility of the African countries themselves, financial and other constraints made it imperative that external assistance be sought to support diversification programmes and projects. FAO, at the request of the UN Secretary General had assisted by preparing the background document entitled "A Study on the Need for and the Feasibility of the Establishment of the Diversification Fund for African Commodities," with relevant recommendations. This study provided the basis for consultations between African countries and the international community under the auspices of the UN General Assembly.

96. The Conference was informed that the need for commodity diversification in Africa was certainly more pressing than ever in the light of the serious economic difficulties facing the Region. However, for diversification to take off, substantial resources were required, including the mobilization of external resources. External resource flows to diversification projects in Africa were limited but additional resources would be forthcoming only with the formulation of bankable projects and programmes.

97. There was a gap in development assistance for the preparation of diversification projects profitable enough to attract potential investors. Filling the gap was the *raison d'etre* in proposing the creation of a special facility to fund the pre-investment phase of commodity diversification projects. The establishment of such a facility, as was conceived, did not require creating a new structure which would take an enormous amount of time to negotiate and which would involve the setting up of a costly new bureaucracy.

98. The Conference was informed that the facility would be established in the African Development Bank and that National Diversification Councils would be established at the country level with oversight responsibility on diversification undertakings. Furthermore, the Conference was made aware that the proposal was currently being discussed at the UN level and there was hope that it would meet with success this time around. Careful note needed to be taken at this time of the fact that the role of the FAO was purely that of a facilitator employing diverse ways and means to ensure the success and acceptance of the proposal.

99. The Conference overwhelmingly supported the proposal and praised FAO for taking initiatives such as these that would definitely be of benefit to the countries of the Region. The Conference, however, cautioned that the facility should not be used for theoretical studies or for technical assistance, but for more concrete developmental activities at the field level. In this connection, the attention of the Conference was called to the fact that grants were preferable to loans in establishing the fund. In addition, the potential adverse effects of diversification in marginal areas needed to be closely monitored.

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[10] ARC/94/INF/8.

100. The Conference was informed of the many activities already underway in various countries for implementing diversification programmes with promising results. The Conference recognized that it was of the utmost importance for grassroots participation in the related activities, and recommended that small farmers and their organizations should be represented in National Diversification Councils. Similarly, it was important to give priority to promoting interregional trade to recapture regional market shares lost to foreign competitors.

101. The Conference recognized the need for harmonizing macro-economic policies in order to foster inter-African trade and recommended that African countries now consider dismantling artificial barriers to trade. While this was important, other considerations needed to be kept in mind, such as the lack of transportation infrastructure, the lack of competitiveness of African exports as well as the lack of access to capital markets by nationals that could adversely curtail the advantages to be obtained from diversification.

Desert Locust Control in the Region and Preparation for Future Campaigns

102. The Regional Senior Crop Protection Officer, RAFR, presented the document[11] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. Recalling that the plague of locust was one of the scourges that still afflicted some countries of the Africa Region, he recalled incidents of this plague in the recent past, in particular, the 1987-89 major plague which affected mainly the Central, West and North-West regions of Africa and the 1992-94 upsurge which developed in the Central Region (Red Sea area). The latter extended to West Africa, India and Pakistan. He underscored the fact that FAO and the international donor community had deployed substantial efforts to combat the outbreaks and had allocated some US$300 million for treatment over an area of 15 million hectares in 1987-98, and US$43 million over an area of 4 million hectares in 1992-94.

103. He informed the Conference of the apparent increase in the frequency of Desert Locust outbreaks and the financial and environmental consequences of chemical control campaigns. The narrow time lag between Desert Locust upsurges could be attributed to several factors including: favourable weather conditions for breeding, unpreparedness of affected countries to respond to invasions, poor security situations in countries where Desert Locusts breeding areas were located, difficulties in making accurate long-term forecasting of outbreaks, lack of environmentally-safe and persistent pesticides since the banning of the apparently efficient anti-locust chemical - dieldrin, and the failure of preventive control measures.

104. The Conference was informed of the important role that the three FAO Regional Commissions involved with the control of Desert Locust could play in the promotion of national and the international research and in the coordination of related surveys and control activities. The Conference was further informed of the importance of the three intergovernmental regional locust control organizations in the recession and invasion areas of West Africa (OCLALCV), East Africa (DLCO-EA), and Central/Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA). The crippling financial situation affecting the three intergovernmental organizations due to the non-payment of contributions by Member Nations was regrettable.

105. The Conference was made aware of current strategies for the control of the Desert Locust and noted the regrettable predominance of the curative, crisis management and costly emergency operation strategy over the preventive and more permanent and sustainable early warning and monitoring control strategy. The latter ensured a rapid response to Desert Locust outbreaks before they assumed serious proportions. The Conference was further briefed on the Director-General's proposal for the

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[11] ARC/94/INF/12.

establishment of an Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests (EMPRES) which had already been approved by the Hundred and Sixth Session of the FAO Council.

106. The Conference noted the various bold initiatives taken by countries to combat the scourges of the Desert Locust in the face of financial and human resource constraints. Since locusts do not recognize national boundaries, it was imperative that countries cooperate and coordinate their programmes in combating the scourge. It was noted that the lack of political will in some countries was a factor that militated against efforts to address the situation.

107. The Conference supported the objective and priority of EMPRES which was to establish a system for early detection and control of locust upsurges in the Central Region, the identified zone of origin of almost all the locust outbreaks. It requested potential donors, as well as affected countries, to give their full support and cooperation in the implementation of EMPRES. The Conference further requested the Director-General to make an effort to extend this important programme to include the West and North-West recession invasion areas and other similarly afflicted areas.

108. The Conference recognized the fact that inspite of preventive control measures, Desert Locust upsurges and plagues could still occur, albeit with less frequency. In order to respond as quickly as possible to such emergencies, it urged countries to establish, with support from FAO and international donors, preparedness capabilities for future campaigns. Locust affected countries should prepare contingency plans that could be rapidly activated in times of emergencies, maintain regular monitoring programmes, and develop and support adequate infrastructures for Desert Locust surveys and control. Further, the activities of the FAO Desert Locust Commission and the three Regional Locust control organizations should be supported and FAO should be informed on the Desert Locust situations.

109. The Conference commended FAO for its unrelenting efforts in coordinating the control of the Desert Locust at the international level and recommended that it continue to provide assistance to the countries concerned in the preparation of future campaigns.

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

110. In presenting the document[12] on this agenda item, the Senior Officer, International Agricultural Research, Research and Technology Development Division, recalled that since the formation of CGIAR, the need had been recognized for active interaction between the CGIAR and the developing countries. This was necessary to assist national research systems in reaching a fully effective capacity for well-organized, science-based research. FAO was one of the co-sponsors of the CGIAR, participated in setting policy for the international agricultural research centres and monitored their work so as to ensure that the research priorities and needs of developing countries were addressed.

111. He further recalled to the Conference that while policy and planning, organization and management continued to affect the performance of National Agricultural Research Centres (NARS), funding remained a major constraint to the development of productive agricultural systems in the Region. Increased food self-sufficiency and food self-reliance also continued to constitute a development priority for all African countries.

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12 ARC/94/5.

112. The Conference was informed that although the objectives of CGIAR were known it was, however, appropriate to recall its recently adopted goal, viz

> "Through international research and related activities and in partnership with national research systems, to contribute to sustainable improvements in the production of agriculture forestry and fisheries in developing countries in ways that enhance the nutrition and well-being especially of low-income people."

113. The Conference recommended that CGIAR should give greater attention to sustainability issues and the needs of fragile ecosystems. It further recommended that CGIAR set and implement its research agenda through a participatory approach with the effective involvement of developing countries.

114. The Conference referred to and considered the procedures for facilitating adequate representation of developing countries on the CGIAR, and the criteria for selecting Member Nations and their responsibilities as illustrated in the background document. It also considered the new procedures suggested for the identification and recruitment of suitable candidates.

115. The Conference endorsed the criteria for the selection of Member Nations and proposals for an effective representation, including the identification and recruitment of suitable candidates which moved away from the old procedure of geographical representations. Regarding the inclusion of the regional representative in the national delegation to enable him/her to report to the Regional Conference, the Conference felt that ordinarily, the Member Nations would find it financially difficult and, thus, suggested that FAO find ways and means to facilitate their participation.

116. The Conference established an "open" Sub-committee to evaluate the candidatures and representation of the Region on CGIAR for the period 1995-98. Dr (Mrs) Ntombana Regina Gata of Zimbabwe was nominated by the Sub-committee and approved by the Conference to represent the Region accordingly. In a short acceptance speech to the Conference, Dr Gata expressed her thanks for her nomination and pledged to do her utmost to serve the interests of countries of the Region and to uphold the trust put in her.

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

117. The Regional Food and Nutrition Officer, RAFR, presented the document[13] to the Conference in connection with this agenda item. He recalled that the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN), convened jointly by the FAO and WHO, had unanimously adopted the World Declaration and Plan of Action for Nutrition. The Plan of Action called for vigorous and concerted efforts at all levels to improve the nutritional status of all. The Plan of Action also provided policy guidelines and action areas for directing resources in order to raise productive capacities, improve social opportunities and human welfare, especially as regarded nutritional well-being.

118. The Conference was informed of actions taken by countries of the Region, as well as by FAO, to implement the recommendations of the ICN. Progress made to date in implementing the recommendations included, *inter alia*, substantive discussions in FAO Governing Bodies, meetings of relevant FAO and WHO Committees, and sessions of the ACC/SCN, all of which had reiterated calls for concerted actions at national level to implement the recommendations. Further, FAO and WHO were to jointly prepare a consolidated report on actions taken by UN agencies to implement the ICN World Declaration and Plan of Action.

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[13] ARC/94/INF/5.

119. It was explained to the Conference that work already carried out or scheduled during the biennium in the Africa Region would contribute to nutritional improvement and thus to the achievement of overall food security. In this regard, most countries had requested and received technical and financial assistance for the development of National Action Plans for Nutrition and ICN-related programmes. Also, FAO had supported national consultants, sponsored workshops and funded Technical Cooperation Programmes for implementing National Action Plans on Nutrition.

120. The Conference was told that FAO Country Representatives had been involved in the preparation of National Action Plans which had served as the framework for a number of sectoral and cross-sectoral activities during which the need for inter-ministerial and related institutional cooperation had been emphasized. At the regional level, FAO had also followed up on work in connection with the ICN. In collaboration with WHO, FAO had sponsored a series of inter-country meetings to promote regional collaboration and exchange of information on National Action Plans and other matters of relevance. Also similar meetings would be held in the future.

121. The Conference expressed its appreciation for the ongoing technical and financial assistance provided by the FAO to Member Nations in enhancing ICN follow-up activities and in preparing their Nutrition Action Plans. However, the Conference reiterated the fact that some of the targets set by the recommendations of the ICN were unattainable within the specified timeframe, especially in the face of the resource constraints experienced by many countries.

122. The Conference welcomed the initiative of FAO in highlighting the linkage between food and nutrition requirements on one hand, and agriculture and income generation on the other. Countries had not only instituted policies that increased food production but also those that generated income and improved economic access to food by members of the society. Early Warning and Food Information Systems had also been established and they had proved useful in guiding the more relevant application of government interventions. The Conference urged FAO to assist countries in integrating nutrition and food security strategies in their overall development planning and thereby to improve the nutritional status of their peoples, especially those in the poorer sections of society.

123. The Conference noted that such issues of human resource development as the training of personnel in food science and technology, as well as gender issues, were important elements of most of the themes of the ICN. These were explicitly reflected in the guidelines for the preparation of National Plans of Action for Nutrition.

124. The Conference urged Member Nations to improve their inter-sectoral mechanisms for addressing nutrition issues which would involve the more active participation of the food and agriculture sectors. In order to promote nutritional well-being in all activities in agriculture, fishery, forestry and rural development, the Conference recommended that new action programmes and approaches be formulated which would involve the objectives adopted at the ICN.

125. In order to strengthen national efforts for implementing ICN follow-up activities, the Conference further recommended that nutrition policies and considerations be integrated into National Action Plans and existing programmes.

126. The Conference recommended that FAO continue its support to countries to facilitate the preparation of National Plans of Action for Nutrition, as well as foster inter-agency cooperation at the country level on implementing ICN follow-up activities.

CONCLUDING ITEMS

Consideration of the Technical Committee Report

127. The Conference considered and approved the Technical Committee Report unanimously.

Date and Place of the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

128. The Delegation of Burundi renewed its offer to host the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa. Cogent reasons were presented why its previous offer could not materialize, and a number of delegations supported Burundi's offer. The Conference noted this offer which would be conveyed to the Director-General of FAO, who would decide on the date and place of the Conference in consultation with Member Governments. The delegations from Uganda and Angola affirmed that in the event that Burundi withdrew its offer, then they would offer to host the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference. The delegation from South Africa made an open offer to host a Conference in the future.

Adoption of the Report of the Conference

129. The Conference considered and, after some amendments, adopted its report by acclamation.

Closure of the Conference

130. In a brief statement, the Officer-in-Charge of the FAO Regional Office for Africa and FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Africa, recapitulated the accomplishments and outcome of the Conference. He said that the major theme that emerged from the deliberations of the Conference was the recognition that the Africa Region was typified by contrasts topographically, physio-graphically, climatically, ecologically, economically, culturally, ethnically, socially and agriculturally, conditions which were reflected in the diversified agricultural commodities produced. Developmentally, the Region was in all stages of agricultural and rural development ranging from hunting and gathering fruits, to modern capital-intensive agriculture.

131. He referred to the many productive resources of Africa as highlighted by delegates, and the related problems and challenges in trying to utilize them. He noted that the Conference had discussed these problems and mentioned FAO's priorities in assisting countries meet these challenges and solve the related problems. The Conference had endorsed the priorities established by the Director-General on food security with a primary focus on low-income, food-deficit countries and rational use of water resources to bring into productive use potentially irrigable land. Given the intensification of the vagaries of weather, it was recognized that the Region could not rely on rainfed agriculture alone, and there was an urgent need for greater efforts to be made in expanding irrigated agriculture.

132. The Conference had agreed that declarations made during international conferences on water use and management should be translated into concrete programmes and projects at national, sub-regional and regional levels in support of the necessary expansion in irrigated agriculture to mitigate violent fluctuations in output from non-irrigated agriculture. This required a strong political will and commitment by the governments to increase investment in irrigation. He enumerated further supporting the ameliorative measures discussed and proposed.

133. He reaffirmed that the potential for expanding intraregional trade and development was greatly boosted by the existence of technical complementarity due to alternate agricultural production seasons between countries in the northern and south of equator, and was appropriately complemented by technical cooperation among developing countries. They should be strengthened through prudent macro-economic policy management, and regional harmonization of macro-economic policies of the countries in the Region.

134. Such deliberate intraregional trade promotion would exploit the comparative advantage in agricultural production and trade that potentially existed. Given the resurgence of pests and diseases of plants and animals, some new, others old, it was the consensus of the Conference that regional cooperation in their control should be strengthened, and national and regional institutions dealing with their control should also be strengthened. Accordingly the Conference unanimously endorsed the Director-General's programme to strengthen institutional capacities of institutions concerned with pest and disease control.

135. Finally he recalled that the Conference had welcomed and supported the Director-General's proposal to hold a World Food Summit in Rome in early 1996, and the willingness on the part of countries to assist in the preparation of the Summit. The Conference unanimously endorsed the Director-General's measures to restructure the Organization, in particular the decentralization programme and the establishment of sub-regional offices. FAO, within the limits of available resources, would provide support in particular through studies, training and project/programme generation to increase investment flows into agricultural and rural sectors.

136. In moving the vote of thanks, Mr Ibrahim Adam, the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana, on behalf of all the delegates, expressed deep appreciation and thanks first to the President, Government and People of the Republic of Botswana for their excellent facilities and reception to ensure that the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference came to such a very successful conclusion.

137. Similarly he expressed his thanks to the Director-General, his staff and all those who assisted in the preparation of the stimulating Conference background documents for their perception in bringing such current issues of relevance to the attention of the Conference. This had made their stay most worthwhile and, inspite of the sometimes gloomy forecasts, he affirmed that delegates in their statements and deliberations had shown that African countries were indeed taking action with much enthusiasm to tackle most, if not all, of their agricultural-related problems. This had greatly inspired much hope for the continent in the future. He congratulated his colleagues for participating in one of the most useful and relaxing FAO Regional Conferences ever.

138. In his closing remarks, the Chairman of the Conference, Mr Roy Blackbeard, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Botswana, expressed appreciation and gratitude for the kind word of thanks expressed to the President, Government and People of Botswana, as well as to him as Chairman of the Conference, for its successful organization in Botswana. He said it had been a privilege for him to have chaired the function and, along with the country, felt highly honoured.

139. He referred to the opening address by H.E. the President of the Republic in which he catalogued some of the ills and sad state of affairs of African agriculture that food and agricultural production in Africa had not kept pace with its population growth. The rampant malnutrition and food insecurity in the countries, was also noted as being indeed worrisome. Agricultural development was basic to overall economic and social development in the countries, and consequently the agricultural sector was most important and needed urgent attention.

140. He commended FAO for its untiring efforts and actions taken so far to assist the countries improve their agricultural sector in general and to the in-depth analytical documents presented at this Eighteenth Regional Conference, in particular. He expressed his delight and confidence that from the statements and debates from the Ministers and others present, there was hope that delegates would return to their countries prepared and determined to tackle the problems that inhibited African agricultural development.

141. He reaffirmed that there were bright hopes for the future in that, as exhibited in this Conference, countries had embraced the concept of mutual cooperation for agricultural development, had realized the importance of sharing experiences and of developing trade links, had agreed to

improve their water resources management and irrigation at both the country and inter-country levels, and had agreed to come together in various other issues of common interest. FAO had also agreed to help the countries institute measures that would improve their water management and food security.

142. He thanked all those who had in various ways helped to make the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference fruitful and successful, and wished delegates and others travelling a safe journey back to their countries.

143. The Conference was then declared closed.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

24-26 October 1994

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. SELECTED ISSUES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

4. Development of technologies in the context of an eco-regional approach for sustainable agricultural production in Africa
5. Representation of the Region on the CGIAR
6. Report of the Follow-up to the ICN
7. A Proposal for a Diversification Facility for African Commodities (DFAC)
8. Desert Locust Control in the Region and Preparation for Future Campaigns
9. Adoption of the Report of the Technical Committee
10. Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting

PLENARY SESSION

26-28 October 1994

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General

5. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6. Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93

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

8. Promoting Agricultural Cooperation through a Common African Agricultural Programme (CAP)

9. Preparation for the 1996 World Food Summit

10. Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture

III. CONCLUDING ITEMS

11. Any Other Business

12. Date and Place of the 19th Regional Conference for Africa

13. Adoption of the Report of the Conference (including the Technical Committee Report)

14. Closure of the Conference.

APPENDIX B
ANNEXE B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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BUREAU DE LA CONFERENCE

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SEANCE PLENIERE

Chairman:	Roy Blackbeard (Botswana)
Vice-Chairmen: Vice-Président:	Ndimira Pascal Firmin (Burundi) Filibbus Bature (Nigeria)
Rapporteur:	Frederick Coetzee (South Africa)
Independent Chairman of the Council: Président du Conseil	José Ramón López Portillo

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
COMITE TECHNIQUE

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Vice-Chairmen: Vice-Présidents:	Abdoulaye Touré (Mali) Gideon N. Nyaanga (Kenya)
Rapporteur:	Thomas Yanga (Cameroon)

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APPENDIX C

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

ARC/94/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ARC/94/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1992-93
ARC/94/3	Promoting Agricultural Cooperation Through a Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP)
ARC/94/4	Development of Technologies in the Context of an Eco-regional Approach for Sustainable Agricultural Production in Africa
ARC/95/5	Representation of the Region on the CGIAR

INF Series

ARC/94/INF/1	Information Note
ARC/94/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
ARC/94/INF/3	Provisional List of Documents
ARC/94/INF/4	Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 17th Regional Conference for Africa
ARC/94/INF/5	Information Note on the Follow-up to the International Conference on Nutrition
ARC/94/INF/6	Follow-up to the International Scheme for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of African Lands (ISCRAL) and Role of FAO in the Implementation of the "Urgent Action for Africa", in Relation to the "International Convention to Combat Desertification"
ARC/94/INF/7	A Proposal for a Diversification Facility for African Commodities (DFAC)
ARC/94/INF/8	Statement by the Director-General
ARC/94/INF/9	Draft Declaration on Food and Agriculture
ARC/94/INF/10	Outcome of the 106th Session of the Council and its Implications for Present and Future Activities of FAO in the Region
ARC/94/INF/11	Preparation for the 1996 World Food Summit
ARC/94/INF/12	Desert Locust Control in the Region and Preparation for Future Campaign

APPENDIX D

EXTRACT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT
(24-26 October, 1994)

Organization of the Technical Committee Meeting

1. The meeting of the Technical Committee of the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held at the Boipuso Conference Centre of the Republic of Botswana, from 24 to 26 October 1994.

2. The meeting was attended by 127 delegates from 34 Member Nations of the Region, 29 of which were represented at Ministerial level; four observers from Member Nations outside the Region, seven representatives of the United Nations Specialized Agencies and six observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. A full list of participants is given as Appendix B of this Report. The list of the documents for the meeting is given in Appendix C of the report.

Opening

3. The Opening Ceremony for the meeting was held at the Boipuso Conference Centre under the Chairmanship of Mr Matthew Okai, Officer-in-Charge of the FAO Regional Office for Africa and FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Africa. The meeting was formally opened by Mr C.M. Lekaukau, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Botswana.

4. The Officer-in-Charge, on behalf of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, expressed his profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Botswana for having extended the invitation to host the meeting of the Technical Committee of the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa. He recalled the circumstances under which the Government of Botswana, at very short notice, agreed to organize the meeting and paid special tribute to the Government for the excellent arrangements and facilities that had been put at the disposal of participants.

5. Mr Okai pointed out that it was not only the hosting facilities provided to this Conference that made Botswana a unique venue for this gathering, but also the rare quality of social, cultural and geographical diversity in an atmosphere of unity. This combination of factors had resulted in macro-economic stability, social harmony and political stability under an able, dedicated and prudent leadership.

6. He recalled that the re-institution of meetings of the Technical Committee was at the specific urging of the Seventeenth Regional Conference and expressed his confidence that from the list of topics to be discussed, the delegates would be able to make an in-depth analysis of issues of relevance to all participating Member Nations.

7. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Lekaukau, extended a warm welcome to the delegates and said it was an honour and a privilege not only for him, but for the Republic of Botswana to have been invited to inaugurate the meeting. Being the first meeting of its kind to be hosted in Botswana it would, indeed, be an occasion which would be remembered for a long time.

8. Mr Lekaukau took the opportunity to welcome the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Eritrea as participants to the meeting, the former being re-admitted, after a long absence, as a free and democratic country and the latter as a new and independent state. He was indeed confident that they would contribute to the success of the Organization.

9. Mr Lekaukau stated that poverty, food security and low agricultural productivity in Africa were some of the critical issues confronting FAO in the coming years. Dramatic changes needed to be made in macro-economic and sectoral policies including major political reforms. He acknowledged that, in respect of political reforms, there was return to democratic governments and the observance of human rights which, hopefully, could promote peace, stability and reduced defence budgets and would facilitate urgent economic transformation.

10. The Permanent Secretary hoped that investment in technology, human resource development and physical infrastructure would grow in real terms. The deliberations of the Technical Committee would focus on the development of economically- and environmentally-sustainable technologies that would improve agricultural productivity, increase rural household incomes in real terms and reduce the disturbing food insecurity. He called on the meeting to explore ways of coordinating domestic and regional policies to avoid wastage duplication and unnecessary competition.

11. In conclusion, he urged those relating to the meeting to scrutinize international developments such as General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). He called on FAO to provide the resources necessary to assist Member Nations in the Region to implement realistic policies and programmes that would benefit them in the face of a rapidly changing world economy.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

12. The meeting unanimously elected Mr C.M. Lekaukau, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Botswana, as its Chairman. In a short speech accepting this change, the Permanent Secretary expressed his gratitude for the confidence placed in him by electing him the Chairman of the Technical Committee. He expressed his confidence that delegates would afford him and his bureau the necessary cooperation and support to conduct the affairs of the meeting judiciously and expeditiously, and thereby achieve the goals of the meeting.

13. The meeting then went on to elect the bureau comprising Mr Abdoulaye Touré, Technical Advisor of the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment of the Republic of Mali as its first Vice-Chairman; Mr Gideon N. Nyaanga, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to FAO as second Vice-Chairman; and Mr Thomas Yanga, Alternate Permanent Representation of the Republic of Cameroon to FAO as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

14. The Assembly then proceeded to consider and adopt the Agenda and Timetable (Appendix A) for the Technical Committee of the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY SIR KETUMELE MASIRE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

The Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf,
Your Honour, the Vice-President and Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Mr Festus Mogae,
The Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Mr Roy Blackbeard,
The Honourable Visiting Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Delegates and Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a singular honour and pleasure for me to have been invited to join you this morning for the inaugural session of the Eighteenth United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Conference for Africa. As staunch advocates of international and regional cooperation, we are most delighted that such an important conference of the United Nations system has come to Botswana. I, therefore, wish to extend a warm welcome to you, on behalf of the Government and people of Botswana, and hope that you will have fruitful deliberations over the next few days.

FAO is the largest autonomous agency within the United Nations system. Its mandate is to coordinate the efforts of governments in seeking to alleviate poverty and hunger through the promotion of agricultural development, improved nutrition, and food security. This is a daunting challenge because the world is inhabited by millions of people who are still living under desperate conditions of hunger and malnourishment. The factors which contribute to this sad state of affairs are numerous and varied. In some cases, the reason could simply be inappropriate agricultural policies, while in other circumstances, it could be a combination of adverse factors, far beyond the capacity of a country to cope.

FAO is the UN agency with the mandate to assist governments in finding solutions to these problems. In this regard, I am confident that Dr Jacques Diouf, as Director-General, will live up to the challenges of this important office. Dr Jacques Diouf, a Senegalese, is the first African to hold this high position. As he was elected to this office by the FAO Conference in November 1993, I would like to wish him well in the years ahead.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me now take this opportunity to welcome new Member Nations. We have amongst us delegations representing the Republic of Eritrea and the Republic of South Africa. The re-admission of South Africa, after many years of isolation, represents victory over apartheid and a return to healthy political and economic developments in South Africa and this Region in general. It also means that international cooperation can be expanded and strengthened. The joining of Eritrea has also both political and economic dimensions. It represents the end of a long liberation struggle and the beginning of economic reconstruction in the horn of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this Conference is taking place at a time when we need to re-examine our approach to social and economic challenges facing Africa today. You will recall that in the early nineteen sixties, when most African countries attained their independence, there were high expectations for a major economic and social transformation. Many countries enshrined strategies in their national development plans giving detailed account of how they were going to make large-scale

improvements in the productive sectors of their economies, as well as in the social services, with a view to ensuring that development was just and sustainable.

Some progress has been achieved and many countries have been able to improve economic well-being as reflected by social indicators in such areas as life expectancy, literacy, school enrollment, and the provision of health care and education. Similarly, there has been a significant improvement and expansion of capital stock, especially as it regards such physical infrastructure projects as the road and communication networks, ports, telecommunications and electric power facilities. It must, however, be admitted that the state of repair and maintenance of these infrastructure assets now leaves much to be desired in many of our countries.

This is a clear sign of retrogression and I regret to say that Africa has actually been witnessing declining *per capita* incomes, declining food availability, depletion of mineral resources, and incresing ecological degradation. The retrogression of income levels has also been widespread.

Progress in the social sectors that had been remarkable in the early years of independence has also been slowing down. Life expectancy has started to decline in some countries, and enrollment ratios for primary education are deteriorating.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Africa is also experiencing a self-reinforcing process of environmental deterioration. The increasing recurrence of droughts in recent years bears testimony to the vulnerability of our basic life-support resources. Increasing population pressure has been accelerating the processes of desertification and environmental deterioration. The productive capacity of land is being diminished by soil erosion and decreasing organic matter, leading to loss of rangelands and vegetation cover. The combined economic and social consequences of all these factors are reflected in increasing malnutrition, hunger, famine, abject rural poverty, economic dislocation and social disintegration.

According to FAO survey data of 1987, there were 101 million Africans who were suffering from malnutrition in that year alone. In 1991, there were 168 million malnourished people, an increase of 67 million people in a period of only five years. As I speak to you today, there are an estimated 180 million malnourished people in Africa, or 35.5 percent of the total population of our continent. In absolute terms, there is an average annual increase of 15 million people who are suffering from malnutrion. Clearly this must be of serious concern to all of us.

As with rural poverty, environmental problems will require a combination of policy reforms. These include land tenure reforms, investment in land conservation and rehabilitation, as well as institutional capacity-building. It will also require strong technological intervention. Governments will require external support in this endeavour.

Capital requirements for the sustainable development of agriculture have often been kept low by neglecting environmental protection in the process of resource use. We in Botswana are very conscious of this because of our fragil environment. The conservation of our nation's renewable and non-renewable resources has been a continuing concern of the Government as it formulates its development policies. Consequently, we have adopted a National Conservation Strategy to ensure effective coordination between the conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. As a drought-prone country, we have also developed the capacity for drought management.

It is against this background that I wholeheartedly welcome the Director-General's new initiatives to make FAO more dynamic by restructuring the Organization and decentralizing its activities. I welcome, in particular, the proposed transfer of 35 percent of Headquarters technical staff to the field. Indeed, our problems are not in Rome, Geneva or New York, but they are at the grass-roots level, in the field.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, our approach to development has to be community-based, consultative and participatory so that the key actors such as farmers and their leaders can be actively involved together with government technical and extension services.

It is important for FAO, working in collaboration with bilateral and multilateral institutions, to assist this Region in generating increased technical and investment resources to support the development of agriculture in Africa. However, policy initiatives to improve agricultural output must be taken by the African governments themselves.

A short paper written for discussion at a recent meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Global Coalition for Africa makes an analysis of the problem of agriculture in Africa. This paper is worth noting. It says that in spite of the numerous pronouncements, declarations and development plans affirming the importance of agriculture, this sector has continued to receive low priority with respect to resource allocations from governments in sub-Saharan Africa. It notes that there are some success stories which provide evidence that, given the right ingredients of peace, political stability, good governance, appropriate technology use and an enabling macro and sectoral policy environment, agriculture can succeed in Africa. The paper then concludes that policy-makers must put agriculture on top of the political agenda, and that long-term national strategies must be adopted by governments.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, consistent with the spirit of the Abuja Declaration on the African Economic Community, there have been a number of regional initiatives to pool resources and coordinate development efforts. In this Region, a treaty transforming the old Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) into an integrated economic community was signed in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1992. The Treaty provides for progressive institutionalization of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) over a number of years.

The transformation of this Region into an economic community has fundamental implications for the food and agricultural sector. SADC is not only intending to increase intra-regional trade, but will also strive for the harmonization of macro-economic and agricultural policies to enhance the growth and development of the community. Policies that promote trade, transfer of technology and capital formation, for example, will be pursued in order to foster regional economic integration.

To this end, sectoral protocols are being prepared which will provide an agreed framework for long-term economic integration, including sustainable agricultural development. The Food and Agriculture Organization will indeed be expected to provide technical expertise in the field of agriculture. In that way, it will also play a major role by providing advice in the process of community building which is now being undertaken by SADC.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I conclude my statement, I would like to make a few remarks about recent changes regarding international trade arrangements. By now, most countries have either acceded to the new convention of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) or are in the process of doing so. The new convention, which will now be known as the World Trade Organization (WTO), was signed in Marakesh, Morocco, in April this year. This will probably be the most significant global economic landmark of our time in the course of liberalizing world trade.

While the existing multilateral trading mechanisms, such as the Lomé Convention, have indeed improved market access to most of our agricultural commodities, more needs to be done to liberalize trade globally. This should assist countries with a comparative advantage in certain products to enter the market. The impressive growth of Southeast Asia, for example, is due largely to the availability of technology, finance and insurance, as well as the application of sound economic policies and the exploitation of comparative advantage. We in Africa must learn from the experience of Southeast Asia.

Given these global changes in the trade and service sectors, the agricultural sector in Africa will need to gear itself to meet this challenge. I believe that FAO has a role to play in this process. In this regard, I have noted with appreciation that FAO is already disseminating information on how GATT will affect the agricultural sector in the world, following the recent agreement to liberalize world trade. I hope this information service will be of assistance to Member Nations in providing the basis for the macro-economic and agricultural policy reviews that are necessary to ensure sustainable development.

Mr Director-General, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure and profound honour to declare the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa officially open.

APPENDIX F

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chairman,
Mr Independent Chairman of the Council,
Your Excellencies, Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

First of all I should like to express my sincere thanks to the Government and people of Botswana for agreeing to host the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, and for extending such a warm welcome and such generous hospitality from the very moment of our arrival. I should also like to congratulate the Minister of Agriculture for Botswana on his election as Chairman of the Conference. I am convinced that under his enlightened guidance our work will proceed harmoniously in a cordial atmosphere, and that our deliberations will be commesurate to our expectations. I should also like to welcome to this Conference the Ministers and Heads of Delegations. Your presence here is clear evidence that the governments of the Region want to come to grips with the major challenges confronting food and agriculture on the African continent.

May I also just say how proud and happy I am to be with you today as the first son of Africa to head this, the largest Specialized Agency of the United Nations. And may I once again take the opportunity, as at the OAU Summit last June in Tunisia, to ask you to convey to your respective governments my profound gratitude for electing me to this post.

Africa owes this success not only to its mobilization and cohesion, but also to its legitimate aspiration to lead, for the first time in FAO's nearly 50 years, the international organization responsible for such a vital sector of the African economy — and the sector in which Africa's performance must be substantially improved.

FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Mr Chairman, in accepting this task I was fully aware of the awesome responsibility I was assuming, at a time when 800 million people in the world, 20 percent of the population of the developing countries and as much as 37 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa, are suffering from chronic malnutrition. By the year 2010, humanity will have to face the daunting challenge of feeding 7 billion people against the 5.6 billion of today, while at the same time safeguarding the planet's natural resources.

Of all the regions in the world, our continent is the one with the greatest difficulties in meeting the food requirements of its population. African agriculture is in a permanent state of crisis, aggravated by sundry conflicts that help to prolong the massive recourse to food aid.

And so, in addressing you, the plenipotentiaries of this vital sector, I want to touch first upon the major challenges and problems which your countries will have to face in the years to come. I shall be brief, for you are as aware of them as I am, if not more so. Next, and most important, I want to share with you our thoughts on new ways in which FAO can support your efforts.

Indeed, Mr Chairman, while impressive strides have been made worldwide and in many developing countries in increasing *per caput* food supplies, overall progress has been both uneven and slow. While some regions in the world have an intake of over 3 600 calories per day for each

inhabitant, sub-Saharan Africa has only 2 100. While projections for the year 2010 do include increased *per caput* supplies and reduced malnutrition rates in most parts of the world, other regions, particularly Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, will still be experiencing serious difficulties.

Africa is the only Region in the world where *per caput* food production has declined in the last 25 years. By the year 2010, Africa will have an estimated 1 billion inhabitants as against 720 million today. A net food exporter in the early 1960s, the Region is today a net importer. The 1986 FAO study requested by the Regional Conference, *African agriculture: the next 25 years*, showed that, if the then current trends were to be maintained up to the year 2010, the cost of food imports at constant prices would surpass US$28 billion, whereas income from agricultural exports would amount, at most, to US$12 billion. Recent years have only served to confirm these trends. The cereal deficit alone could well exceed 100 million tonnes by the year 2010, 58 million tonnes of which would be in sub-Saharan Africa. These figures illustrate the critical food situation in Africa.

I do not wish to go into every single reason for the semi-permanent state of food insecurity that has become the lot of so many African countries, but I think the root causes do need to be mentioned: climatic fluctuations; development policies that have generally failed to foster growth in the food and agricultural sectors; and the absence of significant technological innovations such as the "Green Revolution" that substantially increased productivity in a number of Asian countries. Institutional weaknesses and insufficient infrastructure have also helped to accentuate these difficulties.

In addition to these root causes, other factors have helped to exacerbate food insecurity in the continent: the very high rate of population growth, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation (particularly desertification), political instability, social unrest, and civil wars entailing massive population displacement — all this coupled with an unfavourable international economic environment and the heavy burden of external debt. The situation in Rwanda is unquestionably one of the most dramatic illustrations of these factors. To varying degrees, these negative factors explain the severe food shortages that many African countries are facing this year, particularly in southern and East Africa.

There is good reason, however, to believe in the continent's capacity to rise to meet these challenges. Most African countries are courageously undertaking painstaking and, indeed, painful efforts to revive economic growth, and the agricultural sector is beginning to resume pride of place in these new policies. Our host country, Botswana, is a good example of a nation that has managed to achieve relative food security by implementing wise policies that rationally exploit its potential and comparative advantages.

Mr Chairman, Africa as a whole has great, though unevenly distributed, potential which has not yet, or only barely, been tapped. If Africa is to achieve a relatively acceptable level of food security, the continent must come to grips with the scourge of drought that has devastated agricultural production in the Sahel, in southern and East Africa and in North Africa, in turn, since the 1970s.

There has not been nor can there be "secure" production unless there is adequate water control. Yet in Africa, only 6 percent of the arable land, 10 million hectares, is under irrigation, and 75 percent of this irrigated land is concentrated in five countries. Irrigation, moreover, is a major component of agricultural intensification, for the 6 percent of farmland under **irrigation** accounts for 20 percent of the total output, meaning a productivity level three to four times higher than under rainfed cultivation systems. And yet, every year the equivalent of 4 500 billion cubic metres of water from African rivers flows unused into the seas and oceans. In theory, 3 100 billion cubic metres of this water could be used to irrigate as much as 220 to 260 million hectares. Bearing in mind the other constraints, however, the irrigable potential is probably a much more modest 30 to 40 million

hectares, but even this is still three to four times the area now under irrigation. FAO plans to undertake a special study to assess this potential, so that we can have more realistic figures at our fingertips.

Despite the vital need for massive investment in this sector, some donors reject irrigation works because they are considered "costly", forgetting the inherent cost of each year of drought in terms of human lives and suffering, and the need for emergency aid. It would be better to adopt a pragmatic, case-by-case approach rather than to reject such works out of hand, for experience has shown that capital-intensive primary irrigation and drainage canals can be supplemented by secondary and tertiary canals built and maintained by the local community at considerable savings in cost and acceptable cost-benefit ratios. Irrigation programmes also help to diversify production, exports and rural income. FAO and its partners are seeking to solve this crucial problem. The Organization is also prepared to support the African countries in the formulation of efficient water-use policies that take the environmental impact into consideration.

In another area, despite the annual deforestation of 4 million hectares caused by population pressure, extensive farming and demand for wood, 30 percent of Africa is still covered by **forests**. This important capital should be safeguarded, so it would be advisable to implement national strategies for the stewardship of this resource and for the identification of energy sources other than charcoal.

Livestock production is a major sector in many African countries. It can account for up to 25 percent of GDP and is a means of improving people's nutritional status. However, there are still enormous constraints to livestock development, which should be removed by enhancing livestock health and production, and by processing and marketing livestock products and by-products.

As for marine **fishery resources**, overfishing on the part of foreign fleets has cut deeply into Africa's once vast fishery potential, without the African countries involved having benefited in any substantial way. Appropriate strategies and policies should make it possible for these countries to develop their own fisheries capability, individually and/or collectively, with the participation of private investors working in mutually beneficial partnership. Freshwater and coastal aquaculture should also receive special attention, for although this subsector only accounts for 1.5 percent of consumption in Africa, it currently represents 15 percent of world consumption and is expected to reach 30 percent by the year 2010.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN FAO

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, FAO stands right beside you in your fight to ensure the food security of your populations. We shall work tirelessly for the attainment of a new Green Revolution in Africa, a process that will combine the most productive technology with the necessary measures to ensure sustainable production *vis-à-vis* the environment, and to foster social equity in sharing the benefits of agricultural growth.

The restructuring exercise

In accordance with Resolution 10/93 of the Conference of FAO, I undertook a review of the Organization's programmes, structures and policies. Based on this review, I proposed a number of measures to the Council of FAO, which were adopted unanimously. Their aim is to make the Organization a centre of excellence, to bring its activities closer to the Member Nations, and at the same time to make the necessary adjustments that will enable FAO to cope with emerging needs and priorities as they arise.

The new structure will make a much closer distinction between the more global normative functions of the Organization and its operational functions. The latter will be largely decentralized so as to make FAO more efficient and, most important of all, bring FAO closer to the Field.

It is my intention, therefore, to proceed to the gradual reinforcement of FAO's regional presence in terms of human resources. A substantive multidisciplinary team will be positioned at the Regional Offices to cover the necessary technical fields and to constitute a critical mass of expertise at the regional level. And, as you know, two Subregional Offices will also be set up: one for southern and East Africa, the other for North Africa.

The Council also approved the establishment of a new Department of Sustainable Development to ensure the coordination of FAO's work within the context of UNCED follow-up and in conjunction with the Commission for Sustainable Development. The current Development Department will be transformed into the Technical Cooperation Department, in order to improve the coherence of FAO's operational services with regard to its Member Nations. This Department will constitute the nerve centre of operational activities, and will be responsible for both policy advice and activities concerning investments and field operations. The policy advice function will be reinforced by a new Policy Formulation Division, which will work in close contact with the new Agriculture and Economic Development Analysis Division in the Economic and Social Policy Department. These arrangements will streamline and maximize our capacity to respond to Member Nations' requests for development policy advice.

As you can clearly see, such restructuring is a complex operation that cannot be implemented overnight. It requires serious planning and entails successive stages. The first of these will be implemented during the current biennium, and others will come into force under the 1996-97 Programme of Work and Budget and the Medium-term Plan, which will be adjusted accordingly.

Food security

The FAO's Member Nations, in ratifying the FAO Constitution, undertook a solemn commitment to raise the levels of nutrition and standards of living of their populations, thus helping to free humanity from the spectre of hunger. For FAO, concerned with the overriding need to rise to this collective challenge, food security has always been a priority target. The Council has approved the implementation of a Special Programme to sharpen our focus in this domain, its target being to increase food production in the low-income, food-deficit countries, of which 45 of the total 78 are in Africa. None have sufficient means to import the food they need. On the other hand, they do have the capacity to produce more food themselves.

This Special Programme should have a swift and significant impact on food security in the countries in question, at the same time safeguarding their natural resources and ensuring the equitable distribution of the benefits of increased production. The programme is thus an integral part of FAO's response to UNCED's Agenda 21, and to the recommendations of the International Conference on Nutrition. The programme will also spearhead a vast gamut of action on all aspects of food security. The action strategy focuses on the application of techniques that can substantially boost productivity and food production, based on specific measures designed to promote sustainable production systems and a favourable economic policy environment, with due consideration to social equity.

There can be no lasting solution to the problem of food security in Africa unless sustained efforts are made to concentrate action in places where enhanced food security is an urgent priority and where the potential is high, thus reducing pressure on the most vulnerable zones. This will also avoid the fragmentation of our efforts, thereby ensuring close-knit intervention. It will permit the

involvement of farmers in research and the transfer of new technology tailored to local conditions, and it will enable the systematic exploration of local techniques and practices, working towards their refinement where necessary.

Initial efforts will therefore involve implementing the programme on a pilot basis in certain countries that have been selected because they offer tangible possibilities for immediate action. The programme will subsequently be extended to other countries, based on solid partnership and coordination among all those involved in development — from research institutions to NGOs and to funding agencies such as the World Bank, UNDP and IFAD.

FAO also approved a second Special Programme on the Emergency Prevention of Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases, based on FAO's extensive experience in this area. Although we do have the expertise in control and intervention, when pests and disease strike we are still at the mercy of processes and procedures for issuing alerts and mobilizing resources that are inherently extremely time-consuming. Within the limits of available resources, therefore, the programme proposes to organize interventions in such a way as to maximize the impact of our joint action. Initially, programme activities will concentrate on locust control and the eradication of rinderpest.

Forestry

With regards to forestry, as you know, FAO has been appointed Task Manager for the coordination of UNCED follow-up concerning the implementation of forest principles and other important chapters on the forest, in particular Chapter 11 of Agenda 21, on curbing deforestation.

Considering FAO's key role in the preparatory process to the 1995 session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development which will focus on the forest, I have already taken the necessary steps to strengthen FAO's work so as to increase the Organization's presence and visibility in this sector. I have accordingly allocated additional resources from the Regular Programme and adopted a strategy to refocus FAO priorities in the forestry sector, especially in the light of the preparations for the Commission's meeting. To enhance the success of this meeting, FAO will organize pre-session meetings of the Regional Forestry Commissions to discuss aspects specific to each region and issues concerning FAO's Field Programme.

If we are to leave a better world to our children, it is imperative for the whole international community to make a concerted effort with regard to forests. I have therefore invited the Ministers responsible for forestry to a special meeting to be held as an adjunct to the Twelth Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry in March 1995 to discuss major problems concerning this vital sector. This will be the first Ministerial-level meeting devoted exclusively to forests. Finally, just prior to the meeting of the Committee on Forestry, we shall be holding discussion and coordination meetings with our NGO and private sector partners in order to ensure the broadest possible consensus for the collective action that will follow.

Fisheries

Fisheries, apart from their role in boosting nutritional status, constitute a major part of many African economies and, as I have already said, a source of employment, income and foreign exchange. I have reinforced the fisheries programme and allocated a small increase in resources to support aquaculture development and the preparation of the International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing. This Code will be submitted for approval by the Committee on Fisheries at its forthcoming session in March 1995. I have also invited the Ministers responsible for fisheries to attend this session so that they can review new developments since they last met ten years ago on the occasion of the World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development. The meeting will also

serve to work out general guidelines for future activities in the sector. It also will be preceded by a discussion and coordination meeting with NGOs and the private sector.

The Field Programme

The FAO **Field Programme** in Africa is still the largest with respect to the other regions in the world. In 1993, there were 791 projects under way south of the Sahara for a total budget of some US$848 million, the equivalent of 40 percent of the total value of FAO's Field Programme worldwide. Including North Africa, the number of projects totals 918 for a combined value of US$970 million, or some 50 percent of FAO's overall programme. These figures do not cover activities under the Regular Programme budget, nor FAO services to African countries under the new UNDP TSS-2 arrangements, nor FAO support for nationally implemented projects. I intend not only to maintain the Field Programme at a high level but also, and above all, to retarget it firmly to reach the prime objective: food security.

Cooperation with African institutions and TCDC

In addition, the ongoing **cooperation with various African institutions** will be intensified in the future. FAO will continue to maintain close links with the major regional intergovernmental organizations and specialized non-governmental organizations working in agricultural development, so that we can coordinate strategy and come up with the most appropriate approaches to development in the pursuit of common objectives. Here, FAO is pleased to have complied with the OAU's request to contribute to preliminary discussions on the preparation of a draft framework for the implementation of a Common African Agricultural Programme. The Organization is prepared not only to participate in this collective effort, but also to provide support for economic integration and cooperation within the subregions through the appropriate institutions.

There is an increasing trend towards a key, participatory role for NGOs and intergovernmental organizations, both inside and outside the UN system. I firmly intend to reinforce our partnership links with these organizations through the effective utilization of existing cooperation mechanisms.

Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) is an effective means of transferring appropriate technology through the South-South exchange of experiences. I have accordingly submitted for the approval of your governments a new agreement to promote TCDC for priority programmes in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors. It is my profound hope that this agreement will receive overwhelming country support, thus enabling FAO to begin to translate Member Nations' cooperation into action through TCDC projects.

Genetic resources

Concerning genetic resources, I am pleased to announce that the Fourth International Technical Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources will be held in Germany in 1996. It will have before it an extremely important report on the world status of these resources, as well as a Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources, together with the means for its implementation. The Conference will be based on country reports under the guidance of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. The Report of the World's Plant Genetic Resources constitutes a major FAO contribution to the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity, in a process designed to help translate into action some of the UNCED results, particularly Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biodiversity. The countries of the Region have much to gain from all these initiatives, and I hope they will participate actively in the preparations for the 1996 Conference, and the Conference itself.

Concerning genetic resources, I hope to see the Commission's mandate on plant genetic resources expanded to include the livestock and fisheries sectors. Realism dictates the adoption of an integrated approach embracing all major components of food and agriculture, an approach allowing us, on the brink of the twenty-first century, to benefit as effectively as possible from the new opportunities offered by modern biotechnology. Furthermore, an enlarged mandate for the Commission would reinforce FAO's contribution to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity.

Women

Women play a key role in increasing food production and in sustainable agricultural and rural development, particularly in Africa. I am firmly committed to ensuring that this role receives greater recognition within FAO's programmes during my term of office. As part of the restructuring exercise, a former service is poised to become a fully fledged division of the Department of Sustainable Development. In addition to reinforcing existing programmes, the Organization will provide a substantial contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in 1995, and will ensure the follow-up of the implementation of the strategies to be adopted by this Conference.

AIDS

Finally, I cannot fail to mention the appalling scourge of AIDS, which is to some extent a common concern in all African countries, especially those south of the Sahara. The number of people suffering from AIDS as a result of infections contracted five to ten years ago is rising quite sharply in sub-Saharan Africa, and WHO estimates that there are now some 10 million infected people in the Region. Additionally, 60 percent of the newly-infected are young people between the ages of 15 and 24. It will be very difficult for Africa to achieve food security unless efforts are made to inform rural people (particularly the young) about AIDS and educate them in the prevention of the disease. FAO is now helping in the implementation of AIDS prevention programmes for rural youth in certain African countries such as Uganda. The Organization also has research projects in East Africa to evaluate the impact of the disease on agricultural production systems and rural communities, with a view to establishing appropriate defence and protection mechanisms.

Fiftieth Anniversary

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, on 16 October 1995 FAO will be 50 years old. The Canadian Government, in conjunction with the Government of the Province of Quebec, has kindly agreed to host the observances to mark the anniversary of the founding of FAO at Château Frontenac in Quebec. This will include, in particular, an International Symposium on the problems of food security and an extraordinary meeting of the Ministers responsible for agriculture and development cooperation. Here, I should like to draw your attention to the draft Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration on Food and Agriculture which is before you. It summarizes the results achieved and the aspirations of the international community in the domain of food and agriculture. I would very much like to have your comments and suggestions on this document, which will also be reviewed by the FAO Council in June 1995, and later by the ministerial meeting in Quebec in October 1995, for final submission to the Conference of FAO for adoption in November 1995.

The World Food Summit

Considering the capital importance of food security, there has been an increasing sense of the need for a top-level meeting which would review developments in the world food situation since the World Food Conference 20 years ago, analyse the outlook for the year 2010, and raise international community awareness of the risk to humanity that famine entails. Such a meeting would

also provide the occasion for promoting commitment at the highest political level, as well as in the realm of public opinion, enabling corrective measures to be taken in time. This is the background to my proposal to hold a World Food Summit in early 1996. The International Symposium and Ministerial Meeting, to be held in October 1995 in Quebec, will provide the occasion to put the finishing touches on preparations for the Summit. And the Summit will endeavour once again, but this time at the highest political level, to define and adopt the strategies and programmes that will secure for every man, woman and child the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition, in accordance with the declaration of the 1974 World Food Conference.

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope that these few remarks will help to shed light on your work. I wish you full success in your deliberations, from which much is expected to guide the work of the Organization, especially its programmes in the African continent.

Thank you.

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