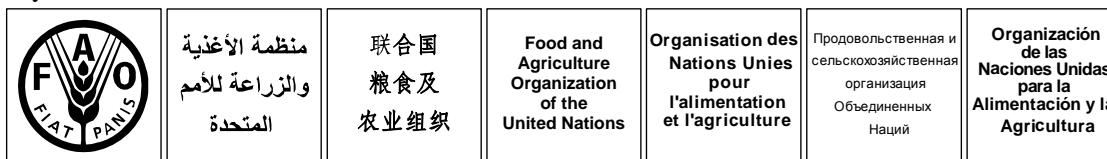


May 2012



FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Thirty-first Session

Rome, 14-18 May 2012

Provisional Annotated Agenda

SENIOR OFFICERS MEETING

14-16 May 2012

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. REGIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICY AND REGULATORY ISSUES

7. Food Loss Prevention for Improving Food Security in the Near East

With a limited and fragile natural resource base, a high population growth and an increasing demand for food, the Near East Region is structurally unable to feed itself. In addition, losses and waste severely affect the availability of food in many countries in the Region. Globally, it is estimated that 60% of perishable and 15-20% of non-perishable foods are lost postharvest. Food losses also occur at retail and household levels, and can represent large portions of food lost within the food system. The Near East Region is no exception. Food losses in the region are very high and extremely costly. Reducing food losses, in terms of both quantity and quality, requires a combination of strategies and approaches, including capacity building for improved technical knowledge, better marketing know-how, changing attitudes toward consumption, improved efforts by retailers, and a supporting policy environment.

This item will review available information on the subject and will discuss appropriate government policies to assist in reducing food waste and losses.

8. **Actions to Adapt to and Mitigate Climate Change Impacts on Natural Resources: the Case of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Forestry and Livestock in the Near East**

Adapting to and mitigating climate change impacts in the Near East is a major challenge facing countries in the region. This item will highlight the greater attention needed to be given to the impact of climate change on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and the appropriate measures required for adaptation and mitigation. A special attention will be given to the sectors of livestock, fisheries and forestry in the region.

Livestock production, which accounts for about 45% of agricultural GDP in the region, is affected by climate change in various ways that affect the capacity of the biosphere to produce enough feed for its livestock. Without effective adaptation and mitigation measures, livestock producers in the region will suffer substantial losses. Intensive livestock production also contributes to climate change through greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These would be reviewed for action by the member countries.

The region's fisheries and aquaculture sector is also threatened by climatic change. Coastal communities, fishers and fish farmers are already profoundly affected by climate change. The impacts of climate change will also affect and change the industries of fisheries and aquaculture. Some countries and fisheries will benefit while others will lose.

Climate change also poses great challenges for the region's forests and rangelands. Countries are faced with the need to develop appropriate policy, legal and institutional responses in the forests and rangeland sectors and to strengthen their capacities to plan and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation measures at national and local levels.

9. **Multi-stakeholder dialogue on Global Strategy Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, including the outcome of the Multi-stakeholder Consultation in the Near East**

The purpose of this session is to engage a wide range of regional stakeholders in consultation on the first draft of the Global Strategic Framework (GSF) to ensure that it includes appropriate regional perspectives. Comments made during the consultation will be taken into account in the preparation of a First Version of the GSF, which will be presented to the CFS Plenary in October 2012. Participants invited to discuss the First Draft of the GSF will include member countries, international organizations, grassroots and civil society organizations and private sector representatives, all of whom are encouraged to hold preparatory discussions in advance of the regional conferences. The session will feature brief presentations on the GSF by the Secretariat and the outcomes of the multi-stakeholder consultation workshop on food security and nutrition in the Near East held in October 2011. This will not be a decision-making session, but the comments will inform the drafting of the GSF and a summary of the discussions will be integrated into the Committee on World Food Security Chair's intervention during the Ministerial Meeting.

III. PROGRAMME AND BUDGET MATTERS

10. **FAO Activities in the Region in 2010-2011, Programme of Work and Budget 2012 - 2013 and Areas of Priority Actions for the Near East Region for the Following Biennium 2014-2015, including Summary report of recommendations of FAO regional bodies**

This item of the Agenda will report on FAO activities in the Region in 2010-2011 and actions taken on the recommendations of the previous Regional Conference.

Under this item Member nations will be briefed on the implementation of the FAO Programme of Work and Budget in the Near East Region during 2012 – 2013, including the Regional Results to be achieved. They will also have the opportunity to debate the main areas of priority action in the Region for 2014-2015. The Conference will also discuss the proposed global trends and future challenges for the work of the Organization.

11. **Decentralization Issues, Including the Coverage of the Near East Regional Office, Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in the Near East and Transition to a more dynamic approach**

Decentralization has been discussed at various meetings during the course of 2011 including at the Programme and Finance Committees, the Council and the CoC-IEE and Conference. The Council has requested that the Regional Conferences in 2012 provide views on a number of topics, including structure, staffing, operation and funding of DOs.

In response to the recommendation of the CoC-IEE Report to the FAO Conference and the 106th Session of the FAO Programme Committee, this item will:

- review FAO's country coverage in the Region, with a view to enhancing effectiveness and efficiency and making recommendations on the most suitable structure and skill mix of the DOs network in the Region;
- clarify coverage of Near East Regional Office (IPA Action 3.86) and, further to the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in the Near East, Members will be presented, for review and endorsement, the Plan of Action for implementing the recommendations of the Evaluation;
- consider possible establishment of subregional offices in the Region.

FAO Renewal – Transition to a More Dynamic Approach in 2012

The report describes the new direction for FAO renewal, focusing on realization of benefits, acceleration of IPA actions in 2012, and a mainstreaming of the renewal into the work programme of the Organization. Regional Conferences are invited to provide observations on issues specific to each region. These are an essential feedback for successful completion of the renewal process, and will be used to inform management decisions on the way forward.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

12. **Multi-year Programme of Work 2012-15 for the Regional Conference for the Near East**

This item will consider the Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2012-15 for the Near East Regional Conference, which will be developed in accordance with IPA Actions 2.70 to 2.72.

13. **Date and Place of the 32nd Regional Conference for the Near East**

14. **Any other matters**

Preparation, discussion and adoption of a draft Report of the Regional Conference for consideration and adoption by the Ministerial Meeting.

INFORMATION NOTES ¹

a. Contribution of Natural Resources in Forests and Ranges to Food Security: Programmes, Policies and Good Governance

Policies and programmes for natural resource management and environmental protection have traditionally been perceived, managed, implemented and financed independently of that for food security. However, where local populations participate in management of forests and trees and use the resources they provide for their livelihood, the forests have an impact on people's food security and nutrition; thus the forestry sector can have a vital role in combating malnutrition. Foods and income from forests and other tree systems in the Near East Region constitute an important component of household food security. Beside the wide variety of wood and non-wood forest products for different uses e.g. food, medicine, handcrafting, building, etc., forests and trees provide direct and indirect employment opportunities and other income for thousands of households as well as watershed protection and conservation of biodiversity.

Forests and trees also contribute indirectly to food security because they have a major role in the sustainability of agricultural production systems. However, in the Near East, they could make a greater contribution to agriculture with a better and more systematic approach to agro-forestry and tree planting in agricultural systems and landscape restoration.

b. Developing a Regional Strategy to Improve Agricultural Statistics in the Near East Region

The agricultural statistical systems and data are weak in many of the Near East countries. The systems are feeble, uncoordinated, insufficiently resourced and essentially unsustainable. Their outputs are thus inadequate in terms of quantity, quality and dissemination.

The regional strategy to improve agricultural statistics is an initiative aimed to substantially improve agricultural statistics of the countries in the Near East region, and meet the growing demand for quality data in support of agriculture and rural development policies for the 21st Century. The strategy is a long term effort with implementation proceedings in stages, and provides a framework for the national statistical systems that enables them to produce and to apply the basic data and information needed to guide decision making processes. This document will provide details of the strategy including the implementation plan, comprehensive proposals on what is needed, and the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, and how to implement the strategy.

c. Reducing the Negative Impact of Desertification on Agricultural Production

Desertification an extreme form of land degradation is a major threat to productivity worldwide and especially in the Near East region. Two billion people in the dry areas mainly depend on agriculture and exploitation of natural resources for their livelihood and are hit hard by desertification. The major causes include climate change, high population growth, urbanization, and intensive agriculture. About 64 percent of the area of the Region consists of dry arid lands and hence, is extremely prone to degradation and desertification. 79 % of the land in the region has already been degraded with 98 % caused by human activity.

¹If they so wish, delegates may comment on information notes under "Any other matters".

The solutions to reduce negative impacts of desertification should be based on controlling causes of land degradation. As desertification is the result of human activity, attention should mainly be focused on: natural rangelands/grazing zones, farming in alluvial areas and irrigated zones. The document will review the types of efforts needed to reduce land degradation and desertification, and provide recommendations for possible actions and policies at regional level.

d. Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Meetings and Commissions in the Near East

This item reviews the conclusions and recommendations of the Regional Commissions and other relevant regional meetings in the Near East with regard to i) policy and regulatory matters and ii) programme and budget matters. This includes regional fora like: Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission (ALAWUC), Regional Commission for Fisheries (RCOFI), the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC) and the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC).

e. FAO Renewal – transition to a more dynamic approach in 2012

The report FAO Renewal – Transition to a More Dynamic Approach in 2012, describes the new direction for FAO renewal, focusing on realization of benefits, acceleration of IPA actions in 2012, and a mainstreaming of the renewal into the work programme of the Organization. The Regional Conference is invited to provide observations on issues specific to the region. These are an essential feedback for successful completion of the renewal process, and will be used to inform management decisions on the way forward.

f. Global Trends and Future Challenges for the Work of the Organization

In preparation for the formulation of FAO's revised Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan 2014-17, this document will present a brief draft outline of the major global trends and their importance for reaching FAO's global goals as a basis for defining substantive priorities of the Organization, and the major challenges that form the basis of the Strategic Objectives of the Organization. This document forms the basis for the overall discussion on priorities under item 10.

MINISTERIAL MEETING

17-18 May 2012

3. **Statement by the Director-General**
4. **Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council**
5. **Statement by the Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East**

The statement of the Chairperson of the 30th NERC will provide a brief on the outcome of the deliberations of the 37th Session of the FAO Conference (Rome, 25 June – 2 July 2011) and the 141st FAO Council (11-15 April 2011) on matters related to the Near East Region. The Chairperson will also provide an update on the Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) for FAO Renewal.

6. **Statement by the Chairperson of the CFS on the outcomes of the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security and update of the CFS reform**

The Chairperson will brief the session on the outcomes of the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and update on the CFS reform. The brief will cover updates on global and regional initiatives and linkages with CFS, and also include global coordination and support for national processes such as mapping food security and nutrition activities at the country level. A consultation on these subjects will be held at the Senior Officers Meeting under agenda item 9.

Review and endorsement of the Report of the Conference

The draft Report of the Regional Conference, prepared by the Technical Committee Meeting, will be reviewed, discussed and eventually endorsed. The discussion will cover:

- i. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues;
- ii. Programme and Budget Matters;
- iii. Other Matters.

The Report will be introduced by Rapporteur.