


July 2012

	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
---	--	--------------------	---	---	---	--

CONFERENCE

Thirty-eighth Session

Rome, 15-22 June 2013

Report of the 23rd Session of the Committee on Agriculture (Rome, 21-25 May 2012)

Executive Summary

The 23rd Session of the Committee on Agriculture brings to the attention of the Council and Conference its findings and recommendations on:

- a) Global trends and future challenges for the work of the Organization (paras. 6-8)
- b) Options for stakeholder dialogue in support of sustainable livestock development (paras. 9-11)
- c) Sustainable crop production intensification (para. 13)
- d) Perspectives of land and water resources in a changing climate (paras. 14-16)
- e) Improving statistics for food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development (paras. 17-21)
- f) Update of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides (paras. 22-25)
- g) Multi-year programme of work of the Committee (para. 26)
- h) Rules of procedure of the Committee (para. 27), and
- i) Establishment of the global soil partnership (paras. 29-30)

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



me654e

Suggested Action by the Council

The Council is invited to endorse the findings and recommendations of the Committee on Agriculture.

Suggested Action by the Conference

The Conference is invited to endorse the draft updated International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides negotiated by the FAO and WHO Expert Panels on Pesticide Management including UNEP experts, with input from other intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and NGOs.

Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:

Robert G. Guei
Secretary of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG)
Tel: +3906 5705 4920

Introduction

1. The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) held its 23rd Session from 21 to 25 May 2012 at FAO Headquarters. Of the 132 member countries of the Committee, 111 were present at the Session. Five Member Nations of the Organization, the Holy See, one UN Organization, one intergovernmental organization and 14 Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) participated as observers. The List of participants and the List of documents are available at www.fao.org/bodies/coag/coag23/en/.¹
2. Mr Graziano da Silva, Director-General, addressed the Committee.
3. The Committee was informed that the European Union was participating in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Article II of the FAO Constitution².
4. The Committee was assisted by a Drafting Committee composed of Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Japan, Lesotho, Netherlands (Chair), New Zealand, Oman, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sudan, Uganda and United States of America.
5. The Committee adopted the amended Agenda and Timetable for the Session. The Agenda is reproduced in *Appendix A*. Members agreed to discuss the documents COAG/2012/INF/13 and COAG/2012/INF13 Add.1 and to hear statements on trade barriers and market access and on COAG/2012/INF/15 under Item 12 – Any Other Matters.

Global Trends and Future Challenges for the Work of the Organization

6. The Committee welcomed the Strategic Thinking Process launched by the Director-General in order to determine the future strategic direction of the Organization, and to inform revision of the current FAO Strategic Framework, as well as preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17.
7. The Committee supported the relevance of the global trends and seven main challenges³ identified as the first output of the Process, and noted that:
 - a) all seven main challenges generally fell under COAG's mandate, in particular challenges 2, 3, 4 and 6;
 - b) the challenges extrapolated from the trends applied to Members, partners and entities engaged in agricultural development globally, and did not necessarily represent areas of focus for the work of FAO alone;
 - c) the current formulation of global trends and main challenges was subject to further evolution during the course of the Strategic Thinking Process, including through consultation with the governing bodies;
 - d) in order to develop the future strategic objectives of the Organization, there was need for analysis with respect to each challenge of FAO's basic attributes, core functions and comparative advantages;
 - e) there was need for a clear line of sight between FAO's strategic objectives and work on the ground, in order to translate FAO's normative and standard setting work into country-level impact;
 - f) it would be critical to identify and develop meaningful partnerships with other UN agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector, in order to achieve the future strategic objectives;
 - g) while the Programme of Work for the 2012-13 biennium was being undertaken under the existing Strategic Framework, there exists the need to determine how the identified challenges would be translated into cross-cutting strategic objectives in the second semester of 2012.

¹ COAG/2012/INF/2; COAG/2012/INF/3

² COAG/2012/INF/4

³ COAG/2012/2 and COAG/2012/2 Web Annex

8. The Committee highlighted the following priority technical areas under its mandate, to be incorporated into the main challenges in formulating the new Strategic Objectives and related action plans and programmes for the future work of the Organization:

- a) increased, sustainable agricultural production and productivity in an environmentally sustainable manner through efficient management of water, land and energy resources, conservation and use of genetic resources, and adaptation to climate change;
- b) attention to increased production of staple food crops such as rice and wheat, and attention to non-traditional crops;
- c) transboundary plant pests and animal diseases and food safety and the related standard setting and capacity development work through the IPPC and Codex Alimentarius;
- d) achievement of gender equality in agriculture production and rural development;
- e) efforts to combat post-harvest food losses and waste in the food chain;
- f) increasing the resilience of rural livelihoods to threats and crises;
- g) compilation and dissemination of reliable agricultural statistics;
- h) facilitating sharing of evidence-based agricultural knowledge, capacity building, and technology transfer, including for technical innovations such as biotechnology;
- i) more inclusive and efficient food systems;
- j) addressing market access and issues of trade distortion on food commodities;
- k) safeguarding and supporting the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems activities.

Options for Stakeholder Dialogue in Support of Sustainable Livestock Development⁴

9. The Committee:

- a) recognized the importance of the multi-stakeholder consultation and suggested action in support of sustainable livestock sector development to catalyze an accelerated and targeted improvement of livestock sector performance;
- b) encouraged member countries to collaborate with and support the Global Agenda of Action and to recognize the process as a concrete contribution to Greening the Economy with Agriculture and related intergovernmental processes (e.g. Rio+20);
- c) supported the relevance of the stakeholders' agreed thematic priorities⁵, highlighting that regional and other thematic priorities should be identified;
- d) recommended that FAO continue its central engagement in this multi-stakeholder initiative and act as its secretariat if so requested;
- e) requested the secretariat to report on progress of the Global Agenda of Action and on any requirements for related inter-governmental action at the Committee's next session; and deferred its decision on whether to establish a subsidiary body of COAG on livestock sector issues to a later date.

10. The Committee recognized the need to establish a novel and functional governance system for the Global Agenda of Action and requested further information regarding its development and its relation to COAG.

11. The Committee noted the suggestion that the secretariat organize a donor meeting to explore the potential to mobilize additional extra-budgetary resources.

⁴ COAG/2012/4 Rev.1

⁵ COAG/2012/4 Rev.1, para. 13 (p. 5-6)

Sustainable Crop Production Intensification⁶

12. The Committee considered the progress report on the implementation of the Strategy on Sustainable Crop Production Intensification through an ecosystem approach and an enabling environment (Strategy) supported at its 22nd Session.

13. The Committee:

- a) noted the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy and the importance of a holistic approach that integrates economic, social and environmental sustainability to production including the need for complementary actions along the food chains and sustainable diets.
- b) recommended that FAO member countries examine the Save and Grow approach to sustainable production and consider incorporating those aspects that would make their agriculture more sustainable in the light of, and without prejudice to, their national agricultural development strategies. It emphasized that, depending on national priorities and needs, particular attention should be paid to integrating actions on sustainable production with nutrition, food losses and wastes, efficient use of water, conservation and use of genetic resources and soil health.
- c) noted the topics for integrated work proposed for 2012-2015. Encouraged countries to focus on integrated approaches to sustainable production including, and in the light of national priorities and needs, rice-based systems, crop-livestock systems and activities related to building resilience to climate change. It stressed that lessons learned and best practices, particularly with respect to smallholder farmers and women, should be developed and shared across all FAO regions.
- d) emphasized the need for a broad range of partnerships involving the public and private sectors including civil society, farmers' organizations, Rome-based Agencies, and Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).
- e) reaffirmed support for the Strategy with the revised title of Sustainable Production Intensification.

Perspectives of Land and Water Resources in a Changing Climate⁷

14. The Committee concurred that FAO should strive to ensure that sufficient, reliable and impartial information and knowledge on sustainable management of natural resources for food and agriculture be available to member countries to support policy decisions and interventions on food and agriculture at national, regional and global levels in the context of climate change. The Organization should seek to ensure that knowledge provided is supported by a wide scientific consensus.

15. The Committee recommended that FAO, in cooperation with member countries, relevant national, regional and international institutions, research and technology institutions, as well as the private sector and farmers' organizations give high priority to:

- a) development of tools and methodologies and, on request, provision of technical assistance and advice on the planning and management of national natural resources for food and agriculture under different climatic and management conditions, with special consideration of family farms and women farmers;
- b) analysis of regional and global perspectives on the status and sustainable use of natural resources for food and agriculture, under different climatic and management scenarios.

16. The Committee noted the proposed establishment of a small Coordinating Unit on Regional and Global Perspectives on Natural Resources for Food and Agriculture. Such a unit should not duplicate the work of existing institutions. As and when such a unit is proposed to be established, its Terms of Reference should be clearly stated, including the objectives, activities, scope, location and

⁶ COAG/2012/5

⁷ COAG/2012/7

financial requirements and it should be submitted to relevant FAO Governing Bodies for its possible adoption.

Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development⁸

17. The Committee reviewed and endorsed the Action Plan for improving statistics at sub-national, national, regional and global levels for food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development and its governance.

18. The Committee observed that besides improving agricultural statistics at national levels, the Global Strategy will also benefit the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS).

19. The Committee commended FAO and all Partners involved for the progress made so far in the implementation of this initiative.

20. The Committee called on member countries to consider implementing the Action Plan and reinforce their commitment to strengthening their national agricultural statistics system through allocation of adequate resources.

21. The Committee called on resource partners to mobilize adequate resources to fill gaps in the implementation of the Action Plan.

Update of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides⁹

22. The Committee welcomed the draft updated International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides and the proposal to present the finalized Code for adoption by the Governing Bodies of FAO, WHO and UNEP.

23. The Committee recognized that an update of the Code requires approval of the Conference, to which referral should be made by COAG. The Committee therefore reviewed the modifications to the Code that have been negotiated by the FAO and WHO Expert Panels on Pesticide Management including UNEP experts and with input from other intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and NGOs in their meetings of 2010 and 2011, and intersessionally.

24. The Committee:

- a) commended the work done on the update to date;
- b) provided a number of substantive comments, queries and suggestions for modifications to the document; and
- c) decided that countries should have the opportunity to participate in amending the draft as part of an inclusive consultation process among countries and all stakeholders.

25. The Committee delegated the COAG Bureau to determine the modalities for an inclusive consultation process to prepare an amended text to be submitted to the FAO Council in November 2012 for adoption by the 38th Session of the FAO Conference in 2013 and in time for the presentations to the subsequent meetings of the Governing Bodies of WHO and UNEP.

Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee¹⁰

26. The Committee reviewed, amended and approved its draft Multi-Year Programme of Work 2012-2015. The amended version is attached in *Appendix B*.

⁸ COAG/2012/8

⁹ COAG/2012/6

¹⁰ COAG/2012/3

Rules of Procedure of the Committee¹¹

27. The Committee reviewed Document COAG/2012/9 and did not accept the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure. The Committee agreed on the following:
- a) to enlarge the COAG Bureau from three to seven Members, with one representative from each Regional Group.
 - b) to suspend Rule I of the Rules of Procedure, through a nominal vote requiring a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, to enable election of a Chairperson and the expanded Bureau; to defer consideration of the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure to the 24th Session of COAG; and to mandate the expanded Bureau to negotiate a consensus document before the next session.
 - c) in the event of the Chairperson being unable to preside at a meeting, to have the Bureau select from among its members an acting Chairperson.

Date and Place of Next Session

28. The Committee decided to hold its 24th Session in Rome in 2014 at a date to be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee.

Any Other Matters¹²

29. The Committee endorsed the initiative of the establishment of the Global Soil Partnership, and welcomed the update provided by the Secretariat.
30. The Committee suggested the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group to review the Terms of Reference of the Global Soil Partnership before its submission to the FAO Governing Bodies.

Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons

31. The Committee had before it two nominations for the Office of Chair of the Committee on Agriculture, namely Mr François Pythoud (Switzerland) and Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño (Dominican Republic).
32. The Committee, after a secret ballot, elected Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño to the Office of Chair of the Committee. The following were subsequently elected as members of the Bureau:
- Monique Ouli Ndong, Cameroon (Africa)
 - Sultana Afroz, Bangladesh (Asia)
 - François Pythoud, Switzerland (Europe)
 - Mohamed Eltayeb Elfaki Elnor, Sudan (Near East)
 - Michael Michener, USA (North America)
 - Matthew Worrell, Australia (South West Pacific)

¹¹ COAG/2012/9

¹² COAG/2012/INF/13; COAG/2012/INF/13 Add.1

Appendix A

Agenda for the 23rd Session of the Committee on Agriculture

Introductory Matters

1. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
2. Nomination of Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee

Priorities for the Technical Work of the Organization

3. Global Trends and Future Challenges for the Work of the Organization
4. Options for Stakeholder Dialogue in Support of Sustainable Livestock Development
5. Sustainable Crop Production Intensification
6. Perspectives of Land and Water Resources in a Changing Climate
7. Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

Policy and Regulatory Matters

8. Update of the International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides

Other Matters

9. Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee
10. Rules of Procedure of the Committee
11. Date and Place of Next Session
12. Any Other Matters*
13. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons for the Twenty-fourth Session
14. Adoption of the Report

Appendix B

Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee

I. Overall Objectives for the Committee on Agriculture for 2013-2015

The Committee on Agriculture (COAG) conducts periodic reviews and appraisals, on a highly selective basis, of agricultural and nutritional problems, with a view to proposing concerted action by Member Nations and the Organization. It advises the Council on the overall medium- and longer-term work programme of the Organization relating to agriculture and livestock, food and nutrition, with emphasis on the integration of all social, technical, economic, institutional and structural aspects related to agricultural and rural development in general¹³. It provides well-founded advice and action-oriented recommendations to the Conference on global policy and regulatory matters, in its areas of mandate.

II. Results for 2012-2015

A. Strategy, priority setting, and budget planning

Result: The Organization has a clear strategy, well-defined priorities and programmes on issues of relevance to the Committee.

Indicators and targets:

- Summary presentation of developments in the areas of mandate is part of the regular sessions of COAG;
- Committee's recommendations made on the pertinent aspects of the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) are reflected in the Council Report.

Output: Clear, precise and consensual recommendations on strategy, priorities, programmes and budget for the Organization considered by Council and provide a solid basis for its guidance and decisions.

Activities:

- Review the current situation in its areas of mandate, including issues of topical significance to Regional Groups and the international community;
- Review implementation of the PWB in areas falling within the Committee's competence;
- Formulate clear consensual, timely and well-developed recommendations on the strategies, priorities, programmes, and budget in areas falling within the Committee's competence;
- Organize side events of relevance to priority or topical issues on the agenda.

B. Advise on global policy and regulatory matters

Result: Based on the Committee's recommendations, the FAO, through its Conference, and taking into consideration regional priorities, gives clear, relevant and useful advice on major policy and regulatory issues confronting the globe, regions, and individual Member Nations, within the areas of competence.

Indicators and targets:

- Member Nations obtain value from the deliberations of COAG, using the advice and recommendations to guide domestic and regional actions and policies as reported by FAO;

¹³ Rule XXXII 6 a) and b) of the Basic Texts

- Clear and specific recommendations made in a timely manner by COAG to the Conference regarding global policy and regulatory matters in its areas of mandate;
- Committee's recommendations made on global policy and regulatory matters are reflected in the Conference Report.

Output: Clear, precise and consensual recommendations for Conference on policy and regulatory frameworks or instruments.

Activities:

- Report to the Conference on global policy and regulatory issues arising out of its deliberations;
- Review the status of relevant international instruments, including codes of conduct in areas of competence for the Committee;
- Consider possible solutions with a view to support concerted action by Members themselves or collectively through FAO and other relevant bodies on issues or concerns in areas of competence for the Committee.

III. Effective work planning of COAG

Result: COAG works effectively and efficiently, in an action-oriented, transparent and inclusive way.

Indicators and targets:

- COAG agendas are focused;
- COAG reports are concise and contain specific, action-oriented recommendations to both Council and Conference;
- COAG documents are made available in all FAO languages four weeks before the session commences;
- Continuity in terms of inter-sessional work;
- Level of participation of COAG members in the planning and intersessional work of the Committee.

Outputs

- Multi-Year Programme of Work for COAG adopted in 2012;
- Progress report on COAG's MYPOW in 2014.

Activities:

- Consider ways to improve the conduct of sessions, including more efficient use of the time available;
- Focus side events on key issues;
- Facilitate coordination with other Technical Committees as well as Regional Conferences;
- Work out clear modalities for the election and operation of the Bureau with a view to enhancing continuity between sessions;
- Pay continued attention to effective arrangements for the formulation of agendas and drafting of the final report;
- Enhance consultative participation of COAG members in planning and intersessional work of the Committee.

IV. Working methods

The work of the Committee is based on the review of worldwide trends in sectoral policies and regulations within the areas of competence. It collaborates with statutory and other bodies under FAO auspices, liaises with the Programme Committee on strategy and priority matters, and with the Finance Committee on financial and budgetary matters. It collaborates with other relevant FAO Governing Bodies, takes into account relevant recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on measures designed to increase the efficiency of Governing Bodies, including representation (OEWG report submitted to the 37th Conference of June-July 2011), liaises with other international organizations active in the areas of agriculture, food and nutrition. It undertakes regular inter-sessional activities facilitated by the Chairperson and the Bureau and with proactive support from the Secretariat. It encourages and facilitates participation of farmer's, private sector's and civil society's organizations as observers.