

Rome, Roma, 1998



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

CONFERENCE CONFÉRENCE CONFERENCIA

Twenty-ninth Session • Vingt-neuvième session • 29º período de sesiones

Rome, 7-18 November 1997
VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS
OF THE CONFERENCE

Rome, 7-18 novembre 1997
PROCES-VERBAUX DES SEANCES PLENIERES
DE LA CONFERENCE

Roma, 7-18 de noviembre de 1997
ACTAS TAQUIGRAFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS
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SIXTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
SEIZIEME SEANCE PLENIERE
16ª SESION PLENARIA

(18 November 1997)

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**OPENING OF THE TWENTY-NINTH CONFERENCE SESSION
OUVERTURE DE LA VINGT-NEUVIEME SESSION DE LA CONFERENCE
INAUGURACION DEL 29° PERIODO DE SESIONES DE LA CONFERENCIA**

LE DIRECTEUR GENERAL

Monsieur le Ministre, Monsieur le Président indépendant du Conseil, Mesdames et Messieurs. Je déclare ouverte la 29^{ème} session de la Conférence de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture. Je voudrais vous souhaiter la plus cordiale bienvenue au siège de votre Organisation. Nous allons maintenant, si vous le voulez bien, procéder à l'élection de notre Président. Comme vous le savez, le Conseil, à sa 113^{ème} session, a décidé de proposer la nomination de son Excellence Monsieur Lyle Vanclief, Ministre de l'agriculture du Canada. Je voudrais avoir votre avis sur cette proposition.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Je vois que la proposition a été acceptée par acclamation par la Conférence. Je voudrais donc demander au Président Vanclief de prendre sa place sur le podium. Je tiens à le féliciter pour la confiance que la Conférence a bien voulu placer dans sa compétence et son expérience pour diriger nos travaux. Monsieur le Président, vous avez la parole.

CHAIRMAN

Ladies and gentlemen, Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, it certainly is a pleasure and honour for me to have been elected to chair the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Let me first begin by congratulating Director-General, Jacques Diouf and the Secretariat for their hard work in preparing this Session. Dr Diouf and I share a background of studies as agrologists and in agrology. Agriculture is close to my heart, not only because I am Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food but I have been a farmer much of my life. Actually, I was farming up until I was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1988 in Canada.

I also reserve a special place in my heart for FAO. This is my third FAO meeting. I welcome these opportunities to come together with colleagues who care about agriculture and food.

As economies boom and the pace of globalization accelerates, there is a growing need for us to work together within FAO, to ensure development and sustainable practices in agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Canada has a special relationship with FAO. I remind all of you again with pride that the founding FAO Conference in Quebec City was also chaired by a fellow Canadian. Canada has remained an active partner since FAO first met to address the problem of world hunger.

It was in Canada two years ago, on the Fiftieth anniversary of FAO, that we endorsed the Quebec Declaration and set the stage for the World Food Summit.

That Summit drew global attention to the millions who have not enough nourishing food. One hundred and eighty-six countries that were present at that Summit committed themselves to a single purpose, food for all. We should applaud FAO for having brought the issue of hunger and malnutrition back into focus.

This is the first opportunity that we Ministers have had to meet since the World Food Summit, so I am particularly pleased to be Chairman of this Conference. I look forward to our discussion of how each country translates the objectives of the Summit into concrete action.

There is an inspiring synergy when so many nations come together in a single resolve. At the Summit, we acknowledged that FAO is not to take all the responsibility for our efforts. We wished FAO to be a catalyst for actions at the international level. It is up to national governments to put strength and vigour behind our commitments.

We must reach or even exceed the target that we have set. Ladies and gentlemen, anything else would be unacceptable.

The key to accomplishing our goals is to involve people. People need to feel ownership in the solutions. Partnerships need to be built from the ground up. Each institution, farm organization, rural womens' group, non-governmental organization -- and I could go on -- but they all hold a piece of the puzzle. Each and every one's participation is essential.

Each government will need to act on all levels -- local, national, regional and international -- to achieve the concerted and effective action which is required, just as FAO must work with other United Nations Agencies because of the multi-dimensional nature of world food security.

At this meeting, let us ensure that FAO becomes the catalyst to transform hope into collective strength and action. Let us give it our full commitment.

As Chairman, I intend to ensure that we all have the opportunity to express our views and that we achieve meaningful resolution of the issues at hand. However, let me remind you that we must make good use of the valuable and available time that we have here. We have many important items on our agenda. With your cooperation, we will be able to complete our business in a satisfactory way.

In closing, let me pledge my commitment to assist all of you and FAO towards a successful outcome of our meeting.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION

1. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen

1. Election du Président et des Vice-Présidents

1. Elección del Presidente y los Vicepresidentes

CHAIRMAN

Ladies and gentlemen, we will proceed with the agenda before us this morning.

Rule VIII of the General Rules of the Organization provides that the Conference, after considering the report of the Council and the Nominations Committee, shall elect the three Vice-chairmen of the Conference, the seven members of the General Committee of the Conference and the nine members of the Credentials Committee.

The Nominations Committee, which is to make these proposals, was elected by the FAO Council at its One Hundred and Thirteenth Session, held from 4 to 6 November, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5(b) of Rule XXIV of the General Rules of the Organization. The Nominations Committee has met and drawn up its recommendations for the posts that I have just outlined.

I will now ask the Chair of the Nominations Committee, Mr Ronald Rose, to come forward to place before the Conference the nominations agreed to by the Committee.

Mr Rose, will you please come forward.

Ronald ROSE (Chairman, Nominations Committee)

Under Rule VII-2 of the General Rules of the Organization the Committee submits the following nominations to the Conference for the office of Vice-Chairman.

We submit the names of Mr Liu Zhenwei of China, Mr Paul Bandoma of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mr Beglar Tavartkiladze of Georgia.

CHAIRMAN

That is the proposal of the Nominations Committee concerning the three Vice-chairmen of the Conference. I take it there are no objections, that the Conference approves these names.

It is so decided, and I congratulate the three gentlemen who have been chosen as Vice-chairs, I welcome them to the Bureau of this Conference.

2. Appointment of General committee and Credentials Committee

2. Constitution du Bureau et de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs

2. Nombramiento del Comité General y del Comité de Credenciales

CHAIRMAN

We will now proceed to Item 2 of the Provisional Agenda, the Appointment of the General Committee and the Credentials Committee, and I will ask the Chairman of the Nominations Committee for its report on the seven Members of the General Committee.

Ronald ROSE (Chairman, Nominations Committee)

In accordance with Rule X of the General Rules of the Organization, the Committee submits the following nominations to the Conference: Cuba, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Lesotho, Libya, Sweden and the United States of America.

CHAIRMAN

You have heard the nominations for the seven Member Nations to be elected to the General Committee. If there are no objections, it is so decided.

Congratulations to the seven Member Nations. They have been duly elected to serve on the General Committee of the Conference.

I now request the Chairman of the Nominations Committee to give us the proposals concerning the Credentials Committee.

Ronald ROSE (Chairman, Nomination Committee)

For the nine Members to serve on the Credentials Committee, in accordance with Rule III of the General Rules of the Organization, the Committee submits the following nominations: Haiti, Hungary, Malaysia, Malta, Niger, Nigeria, Spain, Sudan and the United States of America.

CHAIRMAN

You have heard the proposals as regards the nine Member Nations to serve on the Credentials Committee. Are there any objections?

I consider these nine countries duly appointed to the Credentials Committee. I congratulate them and thank them for performing that duty for the Conference.

This completes the report of the Nominations Committee. I would like to thank Mr Rose and his Committee for having assisted the Conference.

We have come to the end of this brief, but important, part of our agenda for the first Plenary meeting. Right after we adjourn, I would like to ask the General Committee, which includes the three Vice-chairmen, Mr Liu Zhenwei from China, Mr Paul Bandoma from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mr Beglar Tavartkiladze from Georgia, as well as the Representatives of the seven Member Nations to join me in the Mexico Room for our first meeting. The seven Member Nations, as just approved by the Conference, will be the representatives of Cuba, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Lesotho, Libya, Sweden and the United States of America. That Committee, as I said, will meet in the Mexico Room, D.211, for our first meeting.

The Credentials Committee will also be meeting now and its nine Members are invited to proceed to the Lebanon Room, which is D.209.

The Plenary now stands adjourned until 14.30 this afternoon when the General Committee will make its first report, and will also vote on the application for new membership.

The meeting rose at 10.30 hours.

La séance est levée à 10 h 30.

Se levanta la sesión a las 10.30 horas.

I. INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION (continued)
I. INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE (suite)
I. INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO (continuación)

3. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Adoption de l'ordre du jour
3. Aprobación del programa

4. Arrangements for the Session and Allocation of Agenda Items
4. Organisation de la session et répartition des questions inscrites à l'ordre du jour
4. Organización del período de sesiones y asignación de los temas del programa

5. Admission of Observers
5. Admission d'observateurs
5. Admisión de observadores

CHAIRMAN

Welcome back to the second Plenary Session. I will call this Second Session to order.

Before proceeding, I will give the floor to the Secretary-General, who has a short announcement to make regarding the participation of the European Community.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The European Community is participating in this meeting in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Article II of the FAO Constitution.

I have been asked to inform you that the declaration made by the European Community and its Member States is contained in information document C 97/INF/16, which has already been distributed to all Members of the meeting.

I would draw the attention of the Conference to this declaration.

CHAIRMAN

As instructed this morning by the Conference, the General Committee met and has prepared its first Report containing proposals on the following items:

Adoption of the Agenda;

Arrangements for the Session and Allocation of Agenda Items;

Admission of Observers;

as well as, Other related arrangements.

I now propose that the Secretary-General read the General Committee Report, section by section, for the consideration of the Conference, and the Report itself will be available tomorrow as document C 97/LIM/7.

May I ask the Secretary-General to read the first section of the Report.

First Report of the General Committee (C 97/LIM /7)

Premier Rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/7)

Primer Informe del Comité General (C 97/LIM/7)

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Agenda for the Session.

Paragraph 1. The General Committee examined the provisional Conference Agenda set forth in document C 97/1.

Paragraph 2. The Committee recommends that the Conference adopt the provisional Agenda, with the deletion of sub-item 22.2, Money and Medals Programme.

Paragraph 3. Having noted that, at the request of the Hundred and Twelfth Session of the Council, the Provisional Agenda printed in document C 97/1 was followed by a list of subjects on which information documents were tabled, the Committee also recommends that delegates wishing to comment on these documents be given an opportunity to do so under Item 32, Any Other Matters.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

If there are none, I declare the section adopted.

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Establishment of Commissions and Tentative Timetable of the Session.

Paragraph 4. At its Hundred and Twelfth Session, the Council formulated proposals concerning the organization and timetable for the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference, proposals which were communicated to all Member Nations in document C 97/12.

The Committee recommends that the Conference establish three commissions to consider and report on Parts I, II and III of the Agenda, respectively, except that Item 25, Payment by the European Community to Cover Expenses Arising out of its Membership in the Organization, will be examined by the General Committee, and not by Commission III.

Item 22.1. Review of FAO Statutory Bodies will be examined by Commission II when considering Item 15, Programme of Work and Budget 1998-1999, and not by Commission III.

Paragraph 5. The Committee noted that His Eminence Angelo Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See, would be coming to the Conference to read a special message from His Holiness Pope John Paul II. It recommends that this message be read on the morning of Saturday, 8 November, after the Director-General's Statement is delivered.

Paragraph 6. The Committee recommends that the Conference approve the Tentative Timetable proposed by the Council, taking into consideration the modifications indicated in paragraphs 2, 4 and 5 above, and the transfer of Item 17, Revision of the General Regulations of the World Food Programme, from the morning to the afternoon of Wednesday, 12 November. It is understood that this Timetable may be subject to modifications in the light of progress made in the Plenary and in the Commissions.

Paragraph 7. The attention of the Conference is called to the fact that, in order to accommodate requests for speaking time by Ministers, the duration of each intervention should not exceed five minutes. However, all meetings must start on time to permit this.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Seeing no hands or hearing none, I declare this section adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the three Commissions.

Paragraph 8. In accordance with Rules VII-1 and XXIV-5(b) of the General Rules of the Organization, and as indicated in document C 97/LIM/1, the Council, at its Hundred and Thirteenth Session, proposed the following candidates for chairmanship of the Commissions.

Commission I: Saeed NOURI-NAEENI (Iran, Islamic Republic of)

Commission II: Anthony BEATTIE (United Kingdom)

Commission III: Bob JALANG'O (Kenya)

The Committee recommends that the Conference adopt the Council's proposal.

Paragraph 9. In accordance with Rule X-2(c) of the General Rules of the Organization, the Committee recommends that the Vice-Chairmanship of the Commissions be distributed as follows:

Commission I: Louis DOMINICI (France); Atul SINHA (India)

Commission II: Paul PAREDES PORTELLA (Peru); Igor MARINCEK (Switzerland)

Commission III: Ms Mariann KOVACS (Hungary); Mansour Mabrouk AL SEGHAYER (Libya).

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section of the Report?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Resolutions Committee.

Paragraph 10. The Council, at its Hundred and Twelfth Session, had recommended the establishment of a Resolutions Committee of the Conference, consisting of seven Members, one from each FAO Region. Its Terms of Reference are described in document C 97/12, Appendix C, as are the criteria which should govern the formulation of resolutions.

Paragraph 11. The Committee recommends that the Conference adopt the Council's proposal and that the following Member Nations, identified by the region to which they belong, sit on the Resolutions Committee:

AFRICA: Uganda

ASIA: Indonesia

EUROPE: Netherlands

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: Paraguay

NEAR EAST: Kuwait

NORTH AMERICA: United States of America

SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC: Australia

Delegations of the countries concerned are requested to communicate to the Chairman of the Conference, as early as possible, the name of their representative on the Resolutions Committee.

Paragraph 12. The Committee further recommends that the Resolutions Committee be chaired by Oscar CABELLO SARUBBI from Paraguay.

CHAIRMAN

Ladies and Gentlemen, are there are comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Admission of Observers from Applicants for Membership

Paragraph 13. As is customary, the Director-General has provisionally invited applicants for membership to be represented by Observers until a decision has been taken on their application.

The Conference will no doubt wish to confirm the invitation in respect of Kazakhstan.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Admission of Observers from Non-Member Nations

Paragraphs 14 through 17. The Director-General received from Belarus, Russian Federation and Uzbekistan, communications expressing the interest of the Governments in attending the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference.

In addition, it was felt appropriate to facilitate attendance by the nine other Non-Member Nations which had been represented in Rome at the World Food Summit, namely Brunei, Dar-es-Salaam, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Monaco, Nieu Islands, Palau, San Marino, Tuvalu, Ukraine.

Accordingly, invitations to attend the Conference in an observer capacity were sent to the Governments concerned, pointing out, however, that they were subject to confirmation by the Conference in accordance with the principles relating to the granting of Observer Status to Nations, Basic Texts, Section L, paragraph B.1, which specifies that Non-Member States of FAO may, on request, be invited by the Conference to be represented by an Observer at a Session of the Conference.

The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm the invitations.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY GENERAL

Admission of New Member Nations.

Paragraph 18. In accordance with Regulation 5.8 of the Financial Regulations, the Conference determines the amount of the contribution to be paid by newly admitted Member Nations, beginning with the quarter in which the application is approved.

Paragraph 19. According to the established principles and customs, the minimum contribution due from this new Member for the last quarter of 1997 and the advance to be made to the Working Capital Fund are provisionally: Nation: Kazakhstan; Contribution for last quarter of 1997: US\$ 159 750; Working Capital Fund advance: US\$ 50 000.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Appointment of the Independent Chairman of the Council.

Paragraph 20. By the date determined by the Council, that is 22 August 1997, seven nominations have been received for the Office of Independent Chairman of the Council. Those are: Gabriel Badékara Dotte, Central African Republic; Pedro Alfonso Medrano Rojas, Chile; Jean Syrogianis Camara, Guinea; Sjarifudin Baharsjah, Indonesia; Gian Tommaso Scarascia Mugnozza, Italy; Per Wramner, Sweden; and John Samwel Malecela, Tanzania.

These nominations were notified to all Member Nations by Circular Letter G/CF-4/3 of 29 August 1997.

Paragraph 21. Under the terms of Rules XXIII-1(b) of the General Rules of the Organization, the General Committee determines and announces the date of the election. The Committee recommends that a secret ballot for this appointment take place on Friday, 14 November 1997 and, if no candidate obtains the required majority of votes cast, that successive ballots be held. It further recommends that the candidate having received the smallest number of votes in each ballot shall be eliminated.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY GENERAL

Election of Members of the Council.

Paragraph 22. Rule XXII-10(a) of the General Rules of the Organization, provides that the Conference, on the recommendation of the General Committee shall, not later than the end of the third day of the Conference Session, decide the date of election of Members of the Council and the date by which nominations must be submitted.

Paragraph 23. The Committee accordingly recommends: a) that the election begin on the morning of Friday, 14 November and, b) that nominations for the Council Seats to be filled at the present Session, be communicated to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Room B-202, by 12.00 hours on Saturday, 8 November at the latest, to permit the General Committee to communicate to the Conference the valid nominations received at least three working days before the dates selected for the election, in accordance with Rule XXII-10(d) of the General Rules of the Organization.

Paragraph 24. In this connection, the Conference will note in particular the following provisions of Paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 7 of Rule XXII of the General Rules of the Organization:

3. In selecting Members of the Council, the Conference shall give due consideration to the desirability of: a) including in its Membership a balanced geographical representation of nations interested in the production, distribution and consumption of food and agricultural products; b) ensuring the participation in the work of the Council of such Member Nations as contribute in a large measure towards the success of the Organization; c) giving to the greatest possible number of Member Nations an opportunity, by rotation of Membership, to serve on the Council.

4. Member Nations shall be eligible for re-election.

5. No Member Nation shall be eligible for election to the Council if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization, in an amount equal to or exceeding the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years.

7. A Member of the Council shall be considered to have resigned if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization in an amount equal to, or exceeding, the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years or if it has not been represented at two consecutive Sessions of the Council.

Paragraph 25. The Committee recommends that for the Council election on 14 November 1997, Kazakhstan be in the Asia Region and that the distribution of Seats by Region remain as shown in document C 97/11, which provides all relevant information concerning the Seats for which nominations must be submitted, as well as forms for submitting nominations.

CHAIRMAN

Are there comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Right to Vote.

Paragraph 26. The General Committee notes that the following Member Nations have not paid sufficient amounts of their Assessed Contributions to retain their vote in the Conference.

Member Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 222 562.60; Armenia, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 584 393.50; Bolivia, minimum payment required to ensure vote US\$ 19 664.37; Bosnia and Herzegovina, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 194 798.50; Burundi, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 48 470.66; Central African Republic, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 62 718; Chad, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 98 707.61; Comoros, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 145 315.50; Cook Islands, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 769; Democratic People's Republic of Korea, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 316 621.98; Djibouti, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 70 958; Dominican Republic, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 146 097; Ecuador, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 70 078.50; Equatorial Guinea, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 83 138.61; Guinea, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 33 719; Iraq, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 2 132 105; Kyrgyz Republic, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 272 717.50; Latvia, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 537 919; Liberia, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 37 131.72; Lithuania, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 796 015; Nicaragua, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 28 669.19; Niger, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 30 016.20; Sao Tome and Principe, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 122 237; Seychelles, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 18 912.33; Sierra Leone, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 24 811.2; Solomon Islands, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 94 397; Somalia, minimum

payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 198 141; Sudan, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 1 383.19; The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 9 257; Togo, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 37 971.63; Yugoslavia, minimum payment required to ensure vote: US\$ 6 597 318.50.

Paragraph 27. Article III-4 of the Constitution states, "A Member Nation which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution to the Organization shall have no vote in the Conference if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contribution due from it for the two preceding calendar years. The Conference may, nevertheless, permit such a Member Nation to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member Nation."

Paragraph 28. In the meantime, however, the Committee recommends to the Conference, in accordance with past practice, that all Member Nations in attendance be authorized to vote on Friday, 7 November on Item 28 of the Agenda -- Applications for Membership in the Organization -- on the understanding that contacts with them shall be continued with a view to regularizing their arrears situation.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Right of Reply.

Paragraph 29. At its fifteen previous Sessions, the Conference had decided that, if delegates wish to reply to criticisms of their government's policies, they should preferably do so on the day on which such criticism had been voiced after all those wishing to participate in the discussion had had an opportunity to speak.

Paragraph 30. The Committee recommends that these same arrangements be followed at the present session.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Verbatim Records.

Paragraph 31. Rule XXIII-1 of the General Rules of the Organization, lays down that verbatim records should be kept for all Conference Plenary and Commission meetings. The right of delegates to check the accuracy of the record of their interventions is expressly recognized in Rule XVIII-2 of the General Rules of the Organization.

Paragraph 32. The accuracy of the Records may be maintained by either correcting typing and other errors or by amending a word or phrase actually used. In practice, such corrections or amendments to statements are accepted only from the delegation which made the statement and should be submitted within 48 hours of circulation of the Draft Verbatim Record concerned.

Paragraph 33. In 1961, a procedure was formally adopted by the Conference whereby speakers who so desire may have their statements inserted in the Records without delivering them in Plenary. This procedure is still followed and is recommended in the interests of saving time.

Paragraph 34. While the Committee sees no objection, in principle, to the insertion of statements in the Records when time does not permit them to be delivered, it recognizes the difficulties which might arise if no occasion is given to delegates to exercise the Right of Reply to any criticism of their government's policy made in the inserted statement.

Paragraph 35. The Committee therefore recommends that the Conference continue to permit the insertion of such statements on conditions that: a) the Plenary or the Commission concerned is informed by its Chairman that a statement not actually delivered, or a substantive addition to a statement that has been delivered, is being inserted in the Record; b) the text handed over to the Chairman for insertion is in English, French or Spanish, the languages used in the Verbatim Records; c) the provisional Verbatim Record, containing the additional statement is circulated at least three days before the close of the Session; and d) delegations attending the Session are able to avail themselves of the Right of Reply by having an opportunity to make, prior to the close of the Session, a statement relating to the additional statement.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Statement by Heads of Delegations.

Paragraph 36. The Committee recommends that a List of Speakers be published daily in the Journal of the Conference, in the order in which they will be called upon by the Chairman, and further recommends that statements be limited to a maximum of five minutes.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Admission of Observers from Inter-governmental and International Non-governmental Organizations.

Paragraph 37. The list of Inter-governmental and International Non-governmental Organizations which have been invited by the Director-General to be represented in an observer capacity at this Session of the Conference is given in document C 97/13 and its supplements. The invitations sent to Inter-governmental Organizations with which FAO does not have a formal agreement and to International Non-governmental Organizations which do not have consultative status with FAO are extended on a provisional basis and are subject to approval by the Conference.

Paragraph 38. After having reviewed this list, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm the said provisional invitations.

CHAIRMAN

Any corrections on this section?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Statements in Plenary Meetings of the Conference by International Non-governmental Organizations Having Consultative Status.

Paragraph 39. The General Committee was apprised of a request from the following International Non-governmental Organization in consultative status with FAO to address the Plenary of the Conference: The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

Paragraph 40. Having examined this request, the Committee, in accordance with Rule X-2(g) of the General Rules of the Organization is now reporting to the Conference and recommends that the Conference grants speaking time to the above-mentioned Organization on the understanding that a maximum time limit of 3 minutes will be observed and that in no case will such Organization be given priority in speaking over representatives of Member Nations.

CHAIRMAN

Any comments on this section?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Informal Meeting of Observers from Non-governmental Organizations.

Paragraph 41. The Council recommended that as at previous sessions of the Conference, observers from Non-governmental Organizations be invited to attend an informal meeting so that their advice and suggestions on the Organization's activities and programme may be communicated to the Conference. It is suggested that this meeting take place on the morning and afternoon of Saturday, 8 November. The Committee recommends that the Conference accepts this proposal.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Attendance by Liberation Movements.

Paragraph 42. In conformity with the suggestion made by the Council at its Hundred and Twelfth Session, the Palestine Liberation Organization has been invited to attend the Conference in an observer capacity. The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm this invitation.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Conclusion.

Paragraph 43. Lastly, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm all the detailed arrangements for the Session and that the normal working hours for meetings of both Plenary and Commissions be 9.30 to 12.30 hours and 14.30 to 17.30 hours. Night meetings may also be convened from 19.30 to 22.30 hours if required. The Committee also invites all delegations to observe the working hours with the maximum punctuality.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on this section?

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

I would thank the Secretary General for taking us through the Report of the General Committee.

IV. APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS
IV. NOMINATIONS ET ELECTIONS
IV. NOMBRAMIENTOS Y ELECCIONES**28. Applications for Membership in the Organization**
28. Demandes d'admission à la qualité de membre de l'Organisation
28. Solicitudes de ingreso en la Organización

We will now move to the applications for membership in the Organization. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Conference will now examine Item 28 on the Applications for Membership.

There is one application, that of Kazakhstan. Article II-2 of the FAO Constitution states, I quote: "The Conference may by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that a majority of the Member Nations of the Organizations is present, decide to admit an additional member of the Organization. Any nation which has submitted an application for membership and a declaration made in a formal instrument that it will accept the obligations of the Constitution as enforced at the time of the admission". End of quote.

The document giving details of this application is C 97/10. I shall now call again on the Secretary General to give details of the voting procedure.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Delegates will receive one ballot paper which has boxes with *Yes, No and Abstention* written on it. The delegate will vote by marking one of those three choices with an X. Please note that, in accordance with Rule XII-4(c) of the General Rules of the Organization, blank ballot papers will be treated as abstentions. Please also note that according to paragraph 4(d) of the same Rule, ballot papers must carry no other notation or mark other than those required for the purpose of indicating the vote.

CHAIRMAN

In accordance with the Article XI.2 of the FAO Constitution and the Provisions of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, the quorum required for this election is a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization. This means that at least 88 Member Nations must be present at this time. I am told that at the moment there are at least 104 delegations in the Hall. We may therefore proceed with the vote.

May I remind you that in accordance with paragraph 14 of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, once voting has commenced no delegate or representative may interrupt the voting, except to raise a Point of Order in connection with that vote.

In accordance with paragraph 9(c) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, the Chairman of the Conference appoints two tellers from the delegates or representatives or their alternates. May I please ask the delegates of Mexico and Kenya to proceed to the voting areas.

The Assistant Secretary General will now call the voters to the voting area.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRMAN

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for balloting as quickly as you did and moving the process along. While the counting takes place we will proceed with the presentations of the B.R. Sen Award, the A.H. Boerma Award and the Edouard Saouma Award for 1996 and 1997.

V. OTHER MATTERS**V. QUESTIONS DIVERSES****V. OTROS ASUNTOS****32. Any Other Matters****32. Autres questions****32. Otros asuntos**

32.2 Presentation of B.R. Sen Awards

32.2 Remise des prix B.R. Sen

32.2 Entrega de los premios B.R. Sen

CHAIRMAN

We now come to Item 32 on the Agenda and that is the presentation of the B.R. Sen Awards for 1996 and 1997. This Award was established by the Conference in honour of Mr B.R. Sen, who was Director-General of FAO from 1956 to 1967. The Award is made annually to a field officer who has made a special contribution to the country or countries to which he or she was assigned. The prize consists of a medal, a scroll, a cash prize of US\$ 5 000 and a round trip for the winner and the spouse to attend the Conference Session here in Rome in which the awards are made.

I would like to now call on the Director-General to introduce the winners and to present the B.R. Sen Awards.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

This prestigious Award is in honour of the late B.R. Sen, who was Director-General of FAO from 1956 to 1967. The Award is given for each year to the field officer who has made the most outstanding contribution to the advancement of the country or countries to which he or she has been assigned. On this occasion, we shall be presenting the Award for 1996 and 1997.

The Award for 1996 goes to Mr Hon Tat Tang, a national of Malaysia. It is given to him in recognition of his major contribution to the work of the South Pacific Forestry Development Programme in Fiji. Under his leadership, the South Pacific Forestry Development Programme has provided, amongst other things, an effective and interactive forum that has elevated the forests and trees sector into regional prominence, improved awareness of forestry issues and investment requirements at regional and sub-regional level, and an enabling environment to facilitate and enhance donor agency collaboration and coordination in areas of potential overlap, steering bilateral assistance into areas of greatest priority and need. Unfortunately Mr Tang is not with us today to receive the Award in person due to an unforeseen medical emergency. However, Mr Sofara Aveau, Director of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology of Western Samoa, has kindly agreed to receive the Award on his behalf.

The Award for 1997 is conferred on Mr Les Clark, a national of New Zealand. It is given to him in recognition of his outstanding contribution to fisheries policy and planning in Namibia. During the five years as Special Adviser to the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources in Namibia, Mr Clark has designed, documented and assisted in the implementation of a policy of fishing rights and quotas which has successfully blended the Namibian Government's goals of strengthening and broadening Namibian participation with rapid economic growth, assisted in the development of both broad strategies and detailed aspects of fisheries management in Namibia, and made a substantial contribution to the restructuring and strengthening of the Ministry of Fisheries. The policies that have been put in place through the project have successfully transformed the Namibian fisheries sector from a largely foreign activity, operating essentially outside the domestic Namibian economy, to one of the country's key sectors fully integrated into Namibian society and economy.

CHAIRMAN

I would ask the Director who is receiving the Award to come forward now to receive the Award for Mr Tang, and the Director-General will present the B.R. Sen Award to the Director on behalf of Mr Tang.

Sofara AVEAU (Samoa)

This statement was prepared by Mr Tang himself for this occasion. Unfortunately, for reasons of his sudden illness, he is unable to be here in person to receive his award.

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, FAO Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, the B.R. Sen Award is an award that all FAO field officers aspire to, but do not really expect to receive. I am, therefore, greatly honoured to have been selected to receive the Award for 1996. I would like to thank Dr Vili Fuvao, the FAO Sub-Regional Representative for the Pacific in Samoa for nominating me, and the B.R. Sen Award Review Committee and Dr Jacques Diouf, FAO Director-General, for selecting me for this Award.

To have the opportunity to work for FAO is in itself a privilege, and to have the opportunity to work in the Pacific and with the Pacific Island peoples is an added privilege. Therefore, to receive this Award is really an unexpected bonus.

The achievements for which this Award has been given have been possible only because of the strong support, cooperation and collaboration of the governments of Pacific Island countries, in particular their Heads of Forestry; the various donor agencies, in particular UNDP, FAO and AusAID; our cooperation partners, especially the USDA Forest Service, CIRAD-Forêt and the Pacific German Regional Forestry Project; the various national and regional Government and Non-Governmental Organizations; and the many dedicated communities and individuals in the region. Their continued support has been invaluable to our collective efforts to improve the role, contributions and profile of forests and trees in the Pacific Island countries. This Award is, in fact, a recognition of the ability of so many different countries, agencies and peoples to work together towards a common goal.

To all these friends, colleagues, agencies and, most of all, the peoples of the Pacific Island countries, I would like to extend my sincere thanks for your support which has made it possible for me to accept this Award. I would also like to thank my colleagues in FAO Rome, Bangkok and Apia, at UNDP Suva, and in our Project Office in Suva for their able and unfailing support. I hope that the Award will bring a little more attention to the Pacific Island countries and their needs, and perhaps also more assistance to address these needs.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my wife, Gim, for her love, patience and understanding over the last 25 years.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

Again we congratulate Mr Tang on the receiving of that Award.

I will now call Mr Clark to come forward to receive the Award.

Les CLARK (New Zealand)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Director-General, FAO Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is an overwhelming honour to be here today to receive this Award. In accepting it, I am deeply conscious, as are all field officers, that the contribution that one can make in a field assignment is very heavily dependent on those whom you work with as counterparts and those who support you.

In Namibia, I have the privilege of working with an outstanding team in the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. Led by the Minister, the Honourable Hifikepunye Pohamba, Namibia has shown what a small country can do in fisheries management with courage and a commitment to sustainability.

I also have the advantage of excellent administrative and technical support from staff in various services within this Organization. I have worked in various field assignments with a number of agencies, and I have never been as effectively supported as I have in this assignment with FAO.

For the high quality of administrative support, I am grateful to those in the small but very capable FAO Representation in Windhoek, and to those in the various administrative services of the Organization. For their technical support, I am very grateful to my colleagues in the Fisheries Department and the Legal Office. To put it simply, this building continues to be the workplace of the finest group of fisheries professionals in the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend through you, Director-General, my thanks to all FAO staff who are supporting the work that we are undertaking in fisheries in Namibia.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife and children who have always shared my own pride and enthusiasm in being part of this Organization.

Thank you once again for this honour.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

32.3 Presentation of A.H. Boerma Award

32.3 Remise du prix A.H. Boerma

32.3 Entrega del premio A.H. Boerma

CHAIRMAN

We now come to the presentation of the A.H. Boerma Award, which is a biennial prize given to a writer or journalist whose writing or work on radio or television is likely to have increased international awareness of the world food problems and measures to resolve them. The Award consists of a scroll, a cash prize of US\$ 10 000 and a round-trip to Rome for the winner and spouse.

I now invite the Director-General to introduce the co-winners and to present the A.H. Boerma Award.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Twenty-two years ago, in 1975, the Eighteenth Session of this Conference instituted the A.H. Boerma Award to commemorate Dr Addeke Boerma's leadership as Director-General of FAO. The Award is presented biannually to a journalist or journalists whose coverage of development issues has helped to focus public attention on important aspects of food problems and increase public support for measures leading to their solution.

On this tenth occasion, the honour is shared by two distinguished associations of journalists. One is the Kenya Association of Food and Agriculture Journalists (AFAJ), well-known for its strong commitment to the coverage of food, agricultural and environmental issues. The other is an independent association of journalists based in Rome, the Inter Press Service, for its significant contribution over the last 30 years to covering sustainable agriculture and rural development all around the world.

The Award is presented to the Association of Food and Agriculture Journalists for the dedication demonstrated by its members in the coverage of food, agricultural and environmental issues and, in particular, the launching of their campaign to raise international awareness of the threat posed by the Water Hyacinth weed which has heavily infested Lake Victoria, with profound socio-economic effects. Health, food security, employment and regional trade were all threatened by the Water Hyacinth. We have been particularly impressed by the ability of the Association to move beyond national boundaries and bring this problem to the attention of an international audience, reaching the international news media and winning support from donor governments and international organizations. It is indeed rare for a journalists' association to be able to mount such a campaign and gain widespread support. The multimedia nature of the campaign is also a demonstration of the effectiveness of using modern information technology to focus on a single problem that, if unchecked, could spell disaster.

The Award is presented to the Inter Press Service for the dedication shown, since its foundation in 1964, to covering issues related to development and sustainable agriculture. IPS correspondents report from more than 100 countries on issues not normally featured in the international media: workers, peasants, migrants, refugees, women and children. IPS goes beyond the daily headlines that dominate the mainstream media and concentrates on issues of development and provides in-depth coverage and analysis of events. The agency covers events in large areas of the world, which generally attract attention of the mainstream media only if they reach crisis situations. In addition to its main services in English and Spanish, news bulletins are produced in many other languages, including Indonesian, Bengali, Dutch, Hindi, Swahili, German and Nepali. Regional editorial centres operate in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America, coordinated by a world desk which guarantees a cultural diversity of news information.

Mr Chairman, I am sure that you, the delegates and all participants in this Conference, will join me in expressing our appreciation to this dedicated association of journalists whose efforts and concerns have contributed greatly to enhancing public awareness and understanding of important aspects of the world food problem.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much, Director-General.

I now invite Mr Alfred Omandi, representing the Association of Food and Agricultural Journalists to come forward to receive the Award.

Alfred OMANDI (Kenya)

Mr Director-General, Jacques Diouf, Members of the Boerma Award Selection Committee, Colleagues in the media, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. You know one thing about us in the media is that we are always used to listening. The Director-General knows this because when he came to Kenya, about a year ago, we were very busy listening to him but, once in a while, we get an opportunity to be listened to. Well, you will allow me to divert from the usual practice, as media people, of listening to others and being listened to. It is a real opportunity.

On behalf of the Association of Food and Agriculture Journalists, Kenya, I wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to the Director-General in particular, for bestowing on us this prestigious honour. This is indeed a very special moment for me, as Chairman of the Association of Food and Agriculture Journalists in Kenya (AFAJ), and also in my capacity as a founder member of AFAJ.

AFAJ, for those who do not know, is an organization that is comprised of 35 members drawn from both the print and the electronic media in Kenya. It was started about three years ago in 1995.

Please allow me, just to illustrate the objectives of AFAJ. Our objectives as AFAJ are to enhance the knowledge, the understanding and skills of journalists on food, agriculture and environmental issues, in order to create public awareness which can act as a source of inspiration for individuals and organizations to take action that can influence policies of matters on food and agriculture.

Our other objective as AFAJ is to mobilize journalists interested in food and agriculture issues, through workshops and seminars that enable us to share ideas, experiences and strategies for the future. We also seek to identify training opportunities for journalists on food and agriculture issues.

It is our intention to foster and strengthen linkages with international organizations like FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), farmers, researchers and other related organizations. AFAJ is affiliated to the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) which is based in the UK. We always like boasting that we are the only media organization in Kenya and, perhaps, Africa for that matter, with an international affiliation. You have today given us, Mr Director-General, something else to boast about.

In our country, Kenya, heavy rainfalls in the coastal region have, over the last two weeks, caused floods that have wreaked havoc and brought suffering to many people and displaced farmers. The negative effects of this weather phenomenon, commonly referred to as *El Niño*, and in addition famine, droughts and other natural disasters that can be minimized through early warning systems and proper dissemination of information. Dissemination of information is rare, if it comes in at all.

To accelerate the development of the agricultural sector, Kenya needs to educate her farmers on new farming methods, irrigation methods, weather patterns, how to choose good quality seeds, how to penetrate in national export markets, and so on. We feel that this is the area where our AFAJ comes in. Information is critical, particularly to small-holder farmers who produce 70 percent of Kenya's agricultural output. The relevant information, if given at the right time and acted upon, could increase gradual earnings and lead to job creation.

Please allow me to turn to what exactly contributed to our winning of this Award. Let me now turn to our campaign on the Water Hyacinth weed menace in Lake Victoria which enabled us to win this award. Lake Victoria, for your information, is the second largest freshwater lake in the world, directly shared by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Now, the Water Hyacinth phenomenon is what you call a plant that spreads to other African countries.

Research findings indicate that the Water Hyacinth originated from Brazil in the eighteenth century. Some reports indicate that it was imported to Egypt by Mohammed Ali, the first Ruler of modern Egypt in the nineteenth century to decorate a palace garden. It is said that the Hyacinth plant then spread to other African countries.

Last year, in 1996, we organized a solution-centred Workshop for the Water Hyacinth, which brought together researchers, politicians, scientists, non-governmental organizations and journalists who concluded that the control of the Water Hyacinth required an integrated approach. The integrated approach encompasses biological, mechanical and manual control of the weed. I must say, the implementation of this strategy requires political commitment from the governments of the three East African countries. In addition, we require the support of the East African Corporation (EAC), which was established recently to coordinate development activities in the East African region.

In future, we, as AFAJ, plan to make the association a regional organization so that we can coordinate our efforts with the other partners in the region and other media organizations. The Director-General, in his communication to me, congratulated AFAJ for winning the award. We, too, would like to congratulate you, Mr Director-General, for the recognition to AFAJ. We are proud to be associated with FAO and we appeal to you to try and make sure that this integrated approach through the East African Corporation is implemented.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I will now invite Mr Roberto Savio, representing the Inter Press Service, to come to the front and receive the Award.

Roberto SAVIO (Italy)

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of all the staff of IPS I would like to express our thanks to FAO for giving us this prestige award.

We organized ourselves in 1964. It was the year in which the international cooperation started to be based on the concept of North-South solidarity. The year of the integration of the Group of 77. If you all think of how much time and how many events have gone since then, we have also to reflect if we have been solving the problems of equity, justice, international cooperation and solidarity, which at that time, did start to move people worldwide.

We are a press agency, but also an International Non-governmental Organization, and our commitment to those issues is the reason of our work. I think it is significant that in the last years, not only States and Intergovernmental Organizations have been emphasizing these issues to create a new international system of values but also new actions have come out very strongly from the civil society and in part from the private sector. It is reaching out that is the main challenge of how to create this new agenda of a new value system which would address the issues which brought us in 1964 to organize ourselves which remains a challenge in front of us today.

Globalization is bringing ahead different speed and different trades. We are part of the globalization of information which certainly is one of the fastest. But what about the issue on which we have been writing all this year, namely, for instance, the issue of food security. We do not think that, by itself, a solution can be found if these issues of equity, justice and solidarity are not addressed. In fact we think that the real problems today are the problems of participation, of accountability, of transparency on which we have to address all of ourselves, to be able to accommodate more and more new articles. And this is where the issue of information and communication comes because if we all agree, that there is no development without participation, we should also agree, there cannot be participation without communication.

We have been, in our 34 years, siding together with FAO to announce the agenda on which you are here representing your countries. Some of you will remember that during the past Summit we edited "Terra Viva", a daily newspaper, which tried to put together the civil society, the delegates and the media.

We will continue with those efforts. We are going to use the award that we have received to launch a project next year, because it will be 105 years of Human Rights Celebration on the issue of children and food security. So, we are very thankful for that contribution that we are going to put into that concrete use into that concrete direction.

I would like to say, in conclusion, that we all face the problem today not only of food security. The man in the street no longer feels his existence threatened by military problems, and the problem of security is no longer a military concern. It is the perception of individuals that food, environment, migration, virus and unemployment are a threat to the world security. This is why we speak of global human security, and now we have to launch campaigns to address this issue which is global because we think that today no solutions are really local, all solutions have to be global. This brings a new relation between North and South in which we have to look into the globality of these problems and into the mechanisms which bring us to work together.

I would like therefore to wish all of you the best work for those purposes and let us all agree that development does not mean to have more, it means to give more and it is in that perspective that we will continue our work together with you in a perspective of having people giving more and therefore changing the present international injustice and inequalities which are at the basis of our prime concern.

Again, thank you very much and the best wishes to all of you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

32.4 Presentation of Edouard Saouma Award

32.4 Remise du prix Edouard Saouma

32.4 Entrega del premio Edouard Saouma

CHAIRMAN

We will now proceed to the presentation of the Edouard Saouma Award for 1996-1997. The Edouard Saouma Award set up by the Conference at its Twenty-seventh Session is awarded every biennium to the institution which has successfully implemented a project funded by the Technical Cooperation Programme. The prize consists of a medal inscribed with the name of the recipient institution and a cash prize of US\$ 25 000. I should like to invite the Director-General to introduce the co-winners and to present the Edouard Saouma Award.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The Edouard Saouma Award was established by the Conference, at its Twenty-seventh Session, as a permanent feature to honour my predecessor, Mr Edouard Saouma. It is awarded to a national or regional institution that has implemented a Technical Cooperation Programme Project with particular efficiency, and demonstrated outstanding results achieved with very little means.

Of the many nominations received for the award from all regions and all sectors, two national institutions were chosen by the Selection Committee which stood out from the other nominations in terms of achievement, impact and efficiency during and after project implementation. The project in Bangladesh stands out because of its work at the grassroots level, its work with women farmers and its modal character which led many Bangladesh farmers to adopt the technology demonstrated. The project in the Islamic Republic of Iran is on the other end of the range of activities conducted under the TCP, as it engineered a policy change in the irrigation sub-sector in the country. Accordingly, we have invited one representative from each of the two national institutions to attend and be honoured, during the Opening Ceremony of the Conference.

Mr Liaquat Ali, Director-General of the Department of Fisheries, is here today, representing the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in Bangladesh. The TCP project implemented by his Department developed a "Trickle-down" extension system, which was very successful in disseminating an improved, low-cost pond-fish culture technology throughout Bangladesh. The project trained more than 1 500 fisheries officers and extensionists and more than 8 300 farmers. They acted as local trainers of other farmers throughout the country. This not only led to an increased pond-fish production on a large scale, but also encouraged rural women to form groups, to lease unutilized ponds and to enter into community fish farming, to improve their livelihood.

As a follow-up, the Government of Bangladesh has decided to further invest US\$ 1.9 million in the sector, based on the patterns established by this TCP project. I believe that this is an excellent example of how local commitment and enthusiasm can have catalytic effects that go well beyond the initial investment provided by the international community.

Mr Darab Malekghasemi, National Project Director of Project TCP/IRA/4452, has been invited to represent the team that conducted a highly effective sector policy study of the irrigation water sector in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Approximately, 90 percent of the Islamic Republic of Iran is arid or semi-arid and irrigated agriculture is therefore the basis of its food security. With growing food demand and increasing water scarcity, inefficient use of water and low returns on investment as well as the current policies and investment programmes needed to be reviewed and reformed. With the assistance of a team of international and national experts that were provided by the TCP project, the Infrastructure and Technical Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture conducted a comprehensive review of the sub-sector. As a result, a reform of the administrative set-up and the working procedures in the irrigation sector was introduced. Water users associations and a system of wholesaling of water from irrigation agencies to water users associations were established. An irrigation advisory service to assist farmers in the more efficient use of water was successfully tested.

The work done under the project formed the basis for a successful national investment programme with the support of other donors and led to the reform of the sector. I consider this project a model for policy work, as it not only strengthened a national team of experts but also led to practical and concrete results at the farm level, thus improving national food security and the livelihood of our constituency, the farmers.

CHAIRMAN

I would like to call Mr Darab Malekghasemi from the Infrastructure and Technical Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture in the Islamic Republic of Iran. I would like to call him forward to receive the Award.

Darab MALEKGHASEMI (Iran, Islamic Republic of)

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honoured and greatly pleased to extend, on behalf of the Technical and Infrastructural Department of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Ministry of Agriculture and myself, our gratitude and appreciation to the Edouard Saouma Award Selection Committee for its decision.

The project's name, "Water Management Policies, Strategies and Programmes for Sustainable Agricultural Development", which has been selected for the Award, is one of the many projects that have been implemented so far in the Islamic Republic of Iran with the collaboration of FAO.

Having realized the significance of irrigation development in the country, which has an arid and semi-arid climate, the Technical and Infrastructure Department of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Ministry of Agriculture took steps to formulate a Technical Cooperation Programme project with a view to utilizing FAO's long experience and expertise on irrigation management.

All the basic statistics and information gathered and translated were made available to the FAO Advisory Team prior to its mission to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This information helped the Team to familiarize itself with the status of the country, its potentialities and problems. The FAO Advisory Team was accompanied by a counterpart delegation of five members, who were all experienced staff of the affiliated offices of the Technical and Infrastructure Department, thus making it possible to have fruitful information exchange as well as a training workshop.

The most important goal of the project was to help the Iranian Government formulate plans and policies for irrigation management in the framework of the Second Development Plan. The basic aims were as follows: revision of the official structure and the administration of those government-sponsored departments whose duties include irrigation management; and development of irrigation management and revision of rules and regulations regarding land ownership and water use.

The recommendations by the TCP Team had the following main elements: the necessity for leaving the responsibility of irrigation management with the private sector and water users; clarification of the private sector's role in sustainable development; the necessity for the increase in irrigation output and completion of the renovation of irrigation networks; the necessity of changing the existing irrigation system and replacing it by a pressurized irrigation system; and emphasis on restructuring the current organizational format and the elimination of parallel institutions.

The recommendations are being put into action by the Technical and Infrastructure Department on a country-wide scale, particularly in the areas of irrigation management, plans and policy-making.

In conclusion, I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the authorities of the Technical and Administrative Departments of FAO and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Ministry of Agriculture for their qualitative collaboration in implementing this project.

I wish them every success in the future.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I will now call Mr Liaquat Ali, from the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh.

Liaquat ALI (Bangladesh)

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure and privilege for me to address this Award-giving Ceremony of the FAO Conference. On behalf of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Government of Bangladesh, and on my own behalf, I express my gratitude to FAO and to the Selection Committee headed by the Director-General for selecting the Department of Fisheries, Bangladesh, for the distinguished Edouard Saouma Award 1996-1997.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate our thanks for the continued support extended by FAO for the development of fisheries in Bangladesh since its independence.

The contribution of fisheries to the economy of Bangladesh is substantial with reference to food consumption, nutrition, employment generation and export earning. This sector contributes about 5 percent to the national GDP, 17 percent to the agricultural GDP and 10 percent to the export earnings. The average annual rate of growth of the fisheries sector is, over the years, 4.6 percent. The fisheries sector provides full-time employment for 1.2 million professional fishermen and 11 million part-time fishermen and fish farmers, which is about 10 percent of the total population of Bangladesh.

The present fish production of Bangladesh is about 1.3 million tons per year, of which aquaculture contributes approximately 30 percent, marine fisheries 22 percent and inland capture fisheries 48 percent.

To ensure the availability of fish for protein-deficient households through optimization of aquaculture resources utilization has been considered a priority area for development in Bangladesh. Accordingly, FAO TCP assistance was required by the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen fish culture extension services to meet the challenges of the growing demands of the population. In this context, a project entitled "Strengthening Rural Pond Fish Culture Extension Services", TCP/BGD/4451(T), was financed by FAO. The project commenced operation in April 1994 and was completed in April 1996.

The objective of the project was to increase fish production in rural ponds from 1.3 t/ha/year to 3.5 t/ha/year. Under this project, 1 872 development stations on semi-intensive fish culture in various forms were organized and about 8 400 fish farmers, including women, were trained in improved semi-intensive fish culture in rural ponds.

Manuals and guidelines were prepared by the project on various aspects of improved semi-intensive fish culture technology and appropriate extension methodology for use by the extension workers of the Department of Fisheries and for the fish farmers. As a result of these efforts, the average production of fish in these ponds rose from 1.3 t/ha/year to 4.1 t/ha/year in the demonstration ponds, with a maximum of 7 t/ha/year.

Inspired by the success of this project, through its own resources the Government of Bangladesh has started nation wide follow-up projects, covering the whole country on the same pattern as the TCP project, to ensure gradual increase in production in 1.4 million ponds of the country. In a recent policy statement addressed to the development partners, the Government of Bangladesh expressed its determination to achieve a significant reduction in poverty through faster economic growth, with particular emphasis on equity and social justice.

In order to implement the fisheries development programme, Bangladesh has allocated approximately US\$ 130 million in the fifth five-year plan to raise the present *per capita* daily fish consumption from 25.6 grams to 34.43 grams, with a targeted annual production of fish of 2.07 million tons at the end of the planned period 2001-2002.

It is a great honour for the rural farming community of Bangladesh to be awarded the Edouard Saouma Award 1996-1997 by FAO. I thank FAO for rendering support for the successful implementation of the project and giving recognition to its outstanding achievements. It is hoped that FAO will continue to extend its generous assistance to Bangladesh for ensuring sustainable food security.

I express my sincere thanks to those who were directly involved in implementing the project. In this respect, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the services provided by the FAO consultant Dr Dilip Kumar, the National Project Director, Mr S.N. Chowdhury, and the members of the FAO local office in Bangladesh for the successful implementation of this project.

I also thank the Government of Italy for permitting me to attend this Award-giving Ceremony.

Finally, I thank you all.

Alla Hafez.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

Congratulations again, Mr Ali, and to your Ministry.

We will now watch a video presentation on EMPRES, the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases. I believe it will be shown on the screen at both ends of the Hall.

Video Projection

Projection vidéo

Proyeccion Video

CHAIRMAN

I would like to, on behalf of all of us, thank those who produced that film for us. It certainly demonstrates the challenge but also the opportunities that we have and the necessities and the benefits of the work that FAO and other Member Nations do. I congratulate everyone who put that together, to demonstrate that to us here today.

IV. APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS (continued)

IV. NOMINATIONS ET ELECTIONS (suite)

IV. NOMBRAMIENTOS Y ELECCIONES (continuación)

28. Applications for Membership in the Organization (continued)

28. Demandes d'admission à la qualité de membre de l'Organisation (suite)

28. Solicitudes de ingreso en la Organización (continuación)

CHAIRMAN

We will now return to Item 28, which is the Applications for Membership in the Organization. The votes have been counted and I will ask the Secretary General to read the results.

SECRETARY-GENERAL***Report of Ballot******Resultat du scrutin******Resultado de la votación******Admission to Membership******Admission de membres******Admision de miembros***

1. Ballot papers deposited	
1. Bulletins déposés	
1. Papeletas depositadas	118
2. Defective ballots	
2. Bulletins nuls	
2. Papeletas defectuosas	0
3. Abstentions	
3. Abstentions	
3. Abstenciones	4
4. Votes for	
4. Voix pour	
4. Votos favorables	114
5. Votes against	
5. Voix contre	
5. Votos en contra	0
6. Votes cast	
6. Suffrages exprimés	
6. Votos emitidos	114
7. Majority	
7. Majorité	
7. Mayoría	76

KAZAKHSTAN

having obtained the required majority, is admitted to Membership

ayant obtenu la majorité, est admis Membre.

habiendo obtenido la mayoría, es admitido Miembro.

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escurtadores

C. Jaber de Blancarte

Mexico

G.K. Nzuva

Kenya

D. Debilde

Elections Officer/Fonctionnaire électoral/El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRMAN

Kazakhstan is now a Member of FAO and the delegation will take its place among us.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I am now informed that we have 175 Members of FAO and I will give the floor to our newest Member, the Representative from Kazakhstan.

Olzhas O. SULEYMENOV (Kazakhstan)

I would like to say a few words in my own language, with your permission.

Mr Director-General, Mr Chairman of the Conference, Mr Independent Chairman of the Council, Distinguished Heads of Delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Conference and to all Member Nations of this Organization for the support and confidence which have made possible the admission of my country as a full Member Nation of this very important and much needed Organization in the world, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan intends to actively cooperate with the Food and Agriculture Organization and will render its support and assistance to the programmes and objectives of the Organization.

Allow me again to express both my gratitude for the confidence you have shown in my country and my hope for a fruitful cooperation within the framework of this Organization, in order to achieve the normal goal of providing food to earth's population.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

As I say, FAO now has 175 Member Nations and one Member Organization.

The traditional flag raising ceremony for the new Member Nation will be held at the side of Building A, where the flags of all Member Nations are flown. That will take place tomorrow morning at 09.00 hours, and I invite you to attend if you can.

As everyone is aware, we will have with us tomorrow morning the Secretary of State of the Holy See, Cardinal Angelo Sodano. I would like to invite everyone to be in their place by 09.15 hours because it is my intention to start promptly at 09.30 hours tomorrow morning.

I thank you for your cooperation and attendance today. This Plenary Session now stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 17.15 hours.

La séance est levée à 17 h 15.

Se levanta la sesión a las 17.15 horas.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S STATEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE
DECLARATION DU DIRECTEUR GENERAL A LA CONFERENCE
DECLARACION DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL A LA CONFERENCIA**

LE DIRECTEUR GENERAL

Monsieur le Président de la Conférence, Monsieur le Président indépendant du Conseil, Mesdames, Messieurs les Ministres, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Il y a un an, dans cette même salle, se tenait le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation. Je n'ai pas besoin de souligner l'importance de cet événement pour la mise en oeuvre du mandat de l'Organisation et je tiens à rendre hommage encore une fois à tous ceux qui ont permis de faire du Sommet un grand succès, les gouvernements, les parlementaires, les représentants des organisations intergouvernementales, non-gouvernementales et du secteur privé et le personnel de l'Organisation.

Il s'agit maintenant d'accomplir le plus important, avec détermination, ténacité et cohérence, de mettre en oeuvre les engagements adoptés par 186 pays. C'est donc dans cette perspective qu'il convient de placer les travaux de cette vingt-neuvième session de la Conférence.

La situation de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation mondiales présente aujourd'hui des aspects contrastés. Les fortes tensions sur les marchés vivriers de 1995-96 sont maintenant largement résorbées grâce aux bonnes récoltes de 1996. Cependant, les difficultés persistent dans de nombreux pays et les premières estimations pour 1997 indiquent une augmentation de la production agricole mondiale de 1,1 pour cent seulement. En outre, les stocks de céréales, estimés à un total de 285 millions de tonnes, soit un peu plus de 15 pour cent des utilisations prévues en 1997-98, n'ont pas retrouvé le seuil de sécurité fixé entre 17 et 18 pour cent des besoins annuels. Pour beaucoup de pays à faible revenu et à déficit vivrier, les coûts élevés des importations alimentaires ont constitué un grave problème financier et entravé leur progrès vers la sécurité alimentaire.

Au plan global, les perspectives sont bonnes, la croissance de l'économie mondiale en 1997 et 1998 devant se situer autour de 4,2 pour cent contre 4,1 pour cent en 1996. Mais la situation reste préoccupante dans bien des parties du monde. De nombreux pays en développement, écrasés par leur dette extérieure qui a atteint un total de 2.177 milliards de dollars en décembre 1996, risquent de plus en plus d'être marginalisés. Beaucoup peinent à se doter d'un environnement capable d'attirer des capitaux étrangers et à améliorer leur compétitivité assez vite pour faire face à la montée du libre échange et de la globalisation. L'aide au développement continue de s'amenuiser en termes réels puisqu'elle est restée ces dernières années autour d'une valeur nominale de 60 milliards de dollars. Celle destinée au secteur agricole a par contre connu une forte réduction en passant de 16 milliards de dollars en 1988 à environ 10 milliards en 1995, bien qu'heureusement un changement de tendance semble s'amorcer. Dans ces conditions, les écarts entre riches et pauvres ne peuvent que s'accroître, aussi bien entre pays qu'au sein des Nations.

En outre, conflits armés et urgences alimentaires persistent et se renforcent mutuellement dans beaucoup de cas. Si la paix est l'une des conditions premières pour la sécurité alimentaire, il ne peut y avoir de vie paisible pour des peuples affamés.

Pour atteindre les objectifs du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, différentes initiatives ont été lancées:

L'élaboration, avec 150 Etats membres en développement et en transition, de documents sur les stratégies nationales pour l'agriculture et la sécurité alimentaire vers l'an 2010 permet de disposer d'un cadre pour la collaboration de la FAO avec ces pays. Il est souhaitable que les pays développés, membres de la FAO, participent à cet exercice en préparant, dans les meilleurs

délais, des documents similaires dans l'esprit de l'approche globale des problèmes de la sécurité alimentaire.

Le développement du Système d'information et de cartographie sur l'insécurité et la vulnérabilité alimentaires a été engagé dès le début de cette année en étroite collaboration avec de nombreuses agences du Système des Nations Unies ainsi que des institutions internationales et nationales actives dans ce domaine. La Consultation d'experts organisée par la FAO en mars dernier a défini les actions à prendre pour le lancement de ce programme. Ces actions ont reçu l'aval du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale lors de sa session d'avril 1997. Un Groupe de travail inter-agences a été formé pour leur mise en oeuvre.

Mais pour diminuer de moitié en 2015 les 800 millions de personnes qui n'ont pas un accès adéquat à la nourriture, il faut aller au delà des discours, des séminaires, des études et des rapports de consultants. C'est pourquoi des actions concrètes sur le terrain ont été menées. Le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire, fer de lance de l'action concrète au niveau des communautés rurales des pays pauvres, est déjà opérationnel dans 24 pays et le processus de formulation est en cours dans 42 autres. Les fonds modestes prévus au programme régulier de l'Organisation ont cependant permis par leur effet catalytique de mobiliser des ressources bilatérales et multilatérales qui vont permettre à ce programme vital de se développer progressivement pour couvrir les 86 pays à faible revenu et à déficit vivrier.

Par ailleurs, le Programme de lutte contre les maladies transfrontières des plantes et des animaux et contre les ravageurs a déjà à son actif de nombreux succès: interventions précoces pour faire face à des situations d'urgence, notamment pour la peste bovine dans cinq pays et lutte contre le criquet pèlerin dans les régions les plus menacées par ce fléau, en Afrique du Nord, au Sahel autour de la Mer Rouge et du Golfe d'Aden. Son développement va se traduire par l'établissement d'un réseau mondial d'unités nationales et le renforcement de la capacité d'intervention rapide et d'assistance aux pays pour l'élimination des épizooties et la lutte contre les maladies des plantes.

La FAO a aussi poursuivi et renforcé son appui aux Etats membres dans la mise en oeuvre des accords de Marrakech au plan normatif et opérationnel. Cette assistance, fournie au travers de 18 séminaires régionaux et 44 projets nationaux, a porté sur les politiques agricoles, les perspectives ouvertes par la "Décision sur les mesures concernant les possibles effets négatifs du programme de réforme sur les pays les moins développés importateurs nets d'aliments", les droits de propriété intellectuelle, les mesures sanitaires et phytosanitaires, les obstacles techniques au commerce et les normes internationales du Codex Alimentarius dont la Commission conjointe FAO/OMS compte aujourd'hui 158 membres. L'Organisation devra cependant renforcer ses capacités pour aider à la préparation des négociations commerciales futures, en collaboration étroite avec l'OMC, la Banque mondiale et la CNUCED.

Le Sommet a souligné avec force la nécessité d'associer la société civile à la lutte contre la faim et la malnutrition. La FAO a donc encouragé le lancement de campagnes "de la nourriture pour tous". D'ores et déjà certains pays développés comme en développement ont entrepris un processus de concertation au niveau national à cet effet. Je voudrais réitérer mon appel à tous les gouvernements pour qu'ils lancent leur campagne nationale, notamment par l'organisation de forums nationaux regroupant tous les acteurs et partenaires au développement (parlementaires, ONG, secteur privé, associations de femmes et de jeunes, média, universités, etc..). C'est dans le cadre de cette ouverture à l'opinion publique mondiale, que l'opération "TeleFood", organisée à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de l'alimentation, a permis de sensibiliser aux problèmes de la faim et de la malnutrition environ 500 millions de téléspectateurs d'une centaine de chaînes de télévision dans plus de soixante-dix pays.

En outre, sous l'égide du Comité administratif de coordination des Nations Unies, un dispositif de coopération inter-agences pour la mise en oeuvre du Plan d'action du Sommet a été mis en place notamment avec l'établissement, sur proposition de la FAO et du FIDA, d'un Réseau sur le développement rural et la sécurité alimentaire.

Enfin, la FAO a mis en oeuvre le dispositif de suivi de la mise en oeuvre du Plan d'action du Sommet, conformément aux orientations du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale qui examinera à sa prochaine session les résultats obtenus. (Continue en espagnol)

Señor Presidente, la FAO ha proseguido e intensificado sus esfuerzos para la ejecución del programa de reformas aprobado por el Consejo en su 106º período de sesiones de junio de 1994 a nivel de políticas, prioridades y estructuras de la Organización. Además, ha adoptado medidas en otros sectores importantes de su mandato.

Ante todo, las iniciativas para la utilización sostenible de los recursos naturales han permitido:

- aprobar el Plan de Acción Mundial de la Conferencia Técnica Internacional sobre los Recursos Fitogenéticos, celebrada en Leipzig en junio de 1996;
- revisar la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria;
- realizar con éxito el Programa de Lucha Integrada contra las Plagas en Asia y empezar a aplicarlo en Africa.

Por otra parte, en el sector forestal la FAO ha seguido desarrollando un programa centrado en la contribución de ese sector a la seguridad alimentaria, la ordenación eficaz y responsable de los recursos y el equilibrio entre los valores económicos, ecológicos y sociales de los bosques. Ha contribuido también a la elaboración de programas forestales nacionales, especialmente mediante la preparación de un esquema de planificación para el desarrollo sostenible de todos los tipos de bosques y actividades forestales. Durante los dos últimos años, la FAO ha contribuido en forma sustancial al diálogo sobre las cuestiones forestales a nivel internacional y ha desempeñado plenamente su función de coordinador apoyando los trabajos del Grupo Intergubernamental de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Bosques y presidiendo el Equipo Interinstitucional que ha preparado un plan de trabajo para la aplicación de las decisiones de dicho Grupo. Además, hace menos de un mes se celebró en Antalya el 11º Congreso Forestal Mundial por invitación de Turquía y con el apoyo de la Organización.

Por último, en los sectores de la pesca y la acuicultura, la FAO ha seguido trabajando en el marco del Plan de Acción de Kyoto sobre la contribución sostenible de la pesca a la seguridad alimentaria, del Código de Conducta para la Pesca Responsable y del fortalecimiento de los órganos regionales, en particular la Comisión del Atún para el Océano Índico, creada recientemente, y el Consejo General de Pesca del Mediterráneo. Después de la última Conferencia, se han celebrado, en el marco de los órganos regionales, 21 consultas técnicas sobre la ordenación de los recursos pesqueros marinos. Asimismo, se han intensificado los trabajos relacionados con los recursos genéticos acuícolas y se han hecho estudios sobre las consecuencias del fenómeno "El Niño" para la pesca en América Latina y en Africa.

En todos los sectores, la compilación, el análisis y la difusión de información figuran siempre entre las actividades más importantes de la FAO. La publicación del informe anual sobre El Estado Mundial de la Agricultura y la Alimentación sigue siendo el principal vehículo de información general acerca del sector. Este informe incluye ya una sección dedicada a la evolución de la seguridad alimentaria después de la celebración de la Cumbre. Se han iniciado dos nuevas publicaciones para ofrecer un análisis en profundidad de la situación y los problemas específicos de los sectores pesquero y forestal: "El Estado Mundial de la Pesca y la Acuicultura" y "La situación de los bosques mundiales". Además, en 1996, se publicó la Sexta Encuesta Alimentaria Mundial, incluyendo por primera vez datos sobre China y los países de Asia Central en transición, con una metodología perfeccionada y una información antropométrica más completa.

La FAO continúa sirviendo también de referencia para seguir la evolución a largo plazo de la agricultura y seguridad alimentaria mundiales. Después del estudio "La agricultura mundial hacia el año 2010", publicado en 1993, se iniciará una actualización de la evolución probable hasta el 2015 que incluirá una evaluación menos detallada hasta el 2030.

Durante estos últimos años, la Organización ha elaborado y aplicado estrategias y planes para la utilización eficaz de tecnologías modernas de información y telecomunicación. La instalación o sustitución del equipo y los programas y aplicaciones informáticos, la mejora del flujo de información a través de la red interna Internet y la introducción de instrumentos multimediales han permitido racionalizar y modernizar los sistemas, reduciendo a la vez los costos. La Organización utiliza ya las videoconferencias en sustitución de las reuniones y consultas interinstitucionales tradicionales.

También las técnicas de la difusión de la información han evolucionado siguiendo el paso de los tiempos, gracias a las posibilidades de estos medios electrónicos. El Centro de Información Agraria Mundial (WAICENT) permite ya a los gobiernos, a las instituciones y al público en general acceder fácilmente a toda una serie de informaciones esenciales para la seguridad alimentaria y el desarrollo rural sostenible: FAOSTAT para los datos estadísticos, FAOINFO para las informaciones textuales y FAOSIS para el acceso a sistemas de información especializados, principalmente sobre los recursos genéticos animales y los plaguicidas. Se han establecido también tres formas diferentes de acceso al Sistema Mundial de Información y Alerta sobre la Alimentación y la Agricultura.

Estos esfuerzos están dando sus frutos. El "sitio" FAO en Internet registra más de un millón de visitas al mes y ha contribuido a reforzar como nunca la capacidad de la Organización de difundir su información a los usuarios en árabe, español, francés e inglés. Para asegurar el acceso al WAICENT en las zonas donde la utilización de Internet no es todavía fácil ni generalizada, se han distribuido 2 000 CD ROM en todos los Estados Miembros. El Programa de Labores y Presupuesto para 1998-99 permitirá ampliar aún más los distintos servicios de información que se facilitan a los Estados Miembros. En particular, se prevé facilitar en Internet y CD ROM una serie de documentos técnicos de la FAO, pero también ayudar a los Estados Miembros a desarrollar su propia capacidad de utilizar toda la riqueza documental de la FAO.

Señor Presidente, la FAO atribuye una importancia capital a la plena participación de todos los miembros de la sociedad en la consecución del objetivo común: Alimentos para todos. Con la voluntad firme de estimular un enfoque participativo en todos los programas y actividades de la Organización, se ha dado un trato prioritario a la realización de actividades en favor de la mujer. Dentro de la Secretaría, el "Comité sobre la Mujer y el Desarrollo" estimula con éxito a todos los departamentos técnicos de la FAO a tener en cuenta la paridad entre el hombre y la mujer en la elaboración de sus programas y proyectos. Para fomentar la toma de conciencia sobre la importante función de la mujer en la seguridad alimentaria, se publicó un estudio detallado con ocasión del Día Mundial de la Mujer Rural en octubre de 1997. En el sector de la información, el programa de análisis socioeconómico y de género, que se está realizando desde junio de 1996, ha prestado ayuda a más de 2 000 especialistas en 60 países. Asimismo, las actividades realizadas en el marco del Programa Especial para la Seguridad Alimentaria mejoran el acceso de la mujer rural a las tecnologías, los insumos y el crédito, haciendo especial hincapié en la avicultura y la horticultura, tareas que competen generalmente a las mujeres.

Otra actividad necesaria es la movilización de los jóvenes: por esta razón, en una primera etapa se ha establecido una red de instituciones gubernamentales responsables de programas para la juventud rural en 15 países anglófonos de Africa, con el fin de intensificar la contribución de la juventud a la seguridad alimentaria y al desarrollo sostenible. Esta experiencia se extenderá próximamente a otros países. (Continúa en inglés)

Mr Chairman, the Organization has also been energetically exploring partnership and coordination possibilities:

- with the World Bank and regional banks through new agreements, especially for implementation of the Special Programme for Food Security;
- with the food and agriculture institutions based in Rome, IFAD and WFP, thanks to regular and more frequent contact at all levels;

- with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, its Technical Advisory Committee and its institutes;
- with the other UN agencies under the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination;
- with the private sector and the community of non-governmental organizations.

Similarly, various forms of cooperation are being developed with many Member Nations: over the last three years, some 750 experts have been involved in implementing FAO programmes within the framework of agreements for cooperation between developing countries and countries in transition; some 150 researchers have participated in the Programme of Cooperation with Academic and Research Institutions, and over 400 experts have been employed under the Retiree Programme. While maintaining quality performance, these agreements offer considerable savings against the cost of international consultants. Furthermore, in support of the Special Programme for Food Security, a number of South-South cooperation agreements have resulted in the more advanced developing countries providing a critical mass of field technicians in rural communities of other developing countries, with support from the Organization. Finally, to increase national capacities, FAO has conducted a survey of training opportunities offered in the areas of its mandate by Member Nations for students and trainees from developing countries. Along the same lines, FAO will employ young professionals, within the limit of available resources, so that they can gain practical experience and thus build on their high-level academic training.

The promotion of investment in agriculture, the theme of this year's World Food Day, is another major thrust of FAO activity. The Investment Centre has worked with the funding agencies to prepare investment projects for a total value of US\$6 billion in 1995-96, including US\$3.5 billion from external funds. Activities carried out in 1997 could mobilize a total of US\$2.5 billion.

FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme continues to be a strong catalyst. Since January 1996, upon the request of the Member Nations, 350 new projects have been initiated in areas requiring preliminary, urgent or unforeseen action. The programme continues to abide by its criteria of rapid approval, limited duration, low cost and practical orientation.

Cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme is now on an upturn after the sharp downward trend of recent years. FAO's role in implementing UNDP-funded projects has been strengthened, with US\$40 million of new funds approved in the first nine months of 1997 - already more than for the whole of last year.

Mr Chairman, the restructuring of FAO has been pursued during the course of this biennium with determination and with the same overriding objectives of identifying savings and improving efficiency through decentralization. This effort has, however, had to be made under severe budgetary limitations.

The decentralization process will be completed in December of this year: all the new liaison and subregional offices are open; the regional offices have been reinforced; the last operations teams are being transferred; and, in 1998-99, Member Nation coverage by the network of FAO Representatives should be improved through the use of multiple accreditation, National Programme Officers and National Correspondents. The measures taken since 1994 to improve the cost-effectiveness of country offices will be continued. In January 1998, 31 percent of posts in the Professional and Director category and 38 percent of the total establishments will be working in the decentralized offices. The decentralization of policy assistance and project operations will make FAO better attuned to the needs of its members and their rural communities in the different geographic regions.

Staff numbers have been further reduced, with the elimination of 503 posts, or 12 percent, since January 1994 when there were 4 185 posts to the proposed 3 682 in January 1998. At the same time only seven professional posts have been abolished. The grades pyramid has been broadened, with the elimination of 37 directors' posts, a reduction of 15.6 percent. Transparency and consultation with staff representatives, to whom I take this opportunity to pay tribute, have minimized the human cost. At the same time, greater attention has been paid to staff training, to

raising the contingent of women professional staff and to ensuring equitable Member Nation representation among the staff. The number of countries not represented among the staff has fallen from 54 in January 1994 to 31 in October 1997, taking into account ongoing recruitment. While staff numbers have been reduced, annual savings of US\$ 25 million have also been made from cuts in travel, translations, publications and meetings.

The restructuring process has been echoed in the administration and finance sectors. Operational, administrative and financial responsibilities have been delegated to departments at Headquarters and teams in the field. This is reflected in the Management Support Units that have been set up at the departmental and regional office level. At the same time there has been tighter auditing in all regional, subregional and country offices.

FAO has also sought to simplify its administrative and financial procedures and has set about replacing the computerized financial and personnel management system with the more up-to-date Oracle system.

As regards planning, the programming and coordination methods have been revised and the Medium-term Plan improved. In addition, programming by objectives is now under trial for the Programme of Work and Budget.

The Programme of Work and Budget for 1998-99 is the result of careful in-house analysis and delicate protracted consultation with the Member Nations. The implications of the different budget options on the programmes have been examined in accordance with the guidelines of the Council and its Technical Committees. The Programme of Work and Budget submitted to the Conference therefore combines two scenarios, as requested by the Council: the proposals associated with a zero real growth scenario, presented in detail for a total budget of US\$ 675.3 million, and the changes that would be needed to accommodate zero nominal growth and therefore a budget of US\$650 million. A brief supplementary document has also been issued, outlining the reductions that would be needed for a budget below zero nominal growth. It is worth recalling, in this connection, that the approved budget for 1994-95 was US\$ 673 million.

The zero real growth scenario would enable the Organization to maintain its capacity in priority areas. First, its normative work, including the International Plant Protection Convention, the Code of Conduct on Pesticides, Codex Alimentarius, the conservation and management of genetic resources, responsible fisheries and the evaluation of forest resources. Second, its technical assistance provided to Member Nations at their own request, such as in the implementation of the Marrakesh Agreement, development of non-polluting aquaculture, conservation and management of forests, control of pests and diseases, early warning of food shortages and the role of women in rural development. Finally, the zero real growth scenario would enable FAO to maintain its direct support to countries in the form of policy advice, and help with implementation of the Summit Plan of Action, investment support and field operations, particularly the Special Programme for Food Security.

With the zero nominal growth option, however, and despite all efforts to the contrary, only some of these priority areas could be maintained: forestry, Codex, TCP and the Special Programme.

Clearly - and this needs to be emphasized - the negative impact of a below zero nominal growth budget on programmes of high priority to Member Nations would obviously be aggravated.

Having outlined the budget proposals, I feel that I must also throw in some telling comparisons:

FAO's budget is equal to little more than two days' tobacco consumption in North America and less than two months' champagne consumption in one European country.

Where, then, does the fight against the hunger of 800 million human beings fit in the scale of priorities of the affluent? (Continues in Arabic)

Monsieur le Président, Excellences, Mesdames, Messieurs, Comme Directeur général dévoué aux objectifs de votre Organisation, je suis à la fois encouragé par la mobilisation historique qu'a

générée le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation et soucieux de conserver à l'Organisation une capacité d'atteindre les objectifs que vous lui avez assignés, notamment dans la Déclaration de Rome et le Plan d'action de ce Sommet. (Continue en français)

Je suis convaincu que la responsabilité première dans cette entreprise appartient aux Etats membres, et que le rôle de la FAO est de leur fournir les services et l'appui qu'ils demandent. Je ne puis que refléter l'ampleur des besoins qu'ils expriment en informant les dirigeants du monde et l'opinion publique internationale. En ce qui me concerne, je continuerai à tout faire pour que les ressources à ma disposition soient utilisées avec le plus grand souci d'économie, d'efficacité et de transparence. Je veux croire que par vos décisions vous veillerez à ce que la FAO soit en mesure de répondre aux besoins immenses et urgents que le Sommet a mis en lumière et aux attentes légitimes qu'il a soulevées chez les plus vulnérables et les plus pauvres du village planétaire. (Continue en chinois)
Thank you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

**MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II
MESSAGE DE SA SAINTETE LE PAPE JEAN-PAUL II
MENSAJE DE SU SANTIDAD EL PAPA JUAN PABLO II**

Cardenal Angelo SODANO (Santa Sede)

Señor Presidente, hoy día hablaré en castellano en homenaje a las numerosas delegaciones de América Latina.

En primer lugar deseo agradecerle, señor Presidente, el haberme dado la palabra ante esta distinguida asamblea que ve reunidos a los representantes de todos los países del mundo, expresión de una universalidad concreta y de una efectiva adhesión a los ideales que animan a la FAO desde su institución.

A Usted, señor Director General, manifiesto mi sentida gratitud por la acogida dispensada y, sobre todo, por haber permitido este encuentro en el momento de la solemne apertura de la vigésima novena sesión de la Conferencia de la FAO.

Las palabras que ha pronunciado antes, para presentar a la Conferencia las líneas de acción de la Organización en el próximo bienio, son una garantía de continuidad en una obra meritoria y una fuerte llamada a las obligaciones y responsabilidades de cada uno.

Mi presencia aquí está en continuidad con el tradicional encuentro que, desde 1951, año de la llegada a Roma de la FAO, cada Conferencia tiene con el sucesor de Pedro. Este año, particulares circunstancias no permiten al Papa renovar personalmente el encuentro y apoyar con su palabra y su aliento los esfuerzos que se están haciendo. El Santo Padre me ha encargado, pues, que haga llegar su saludo a todos ustedes y renovarles su estima.

En nombre del Sumo Pontífice, quisiera, además ofrecerles algunos puntos de reflexión a la luz del magisterio de la Iglesia.

No hay duda de que con la creación de la FAO la comunidad internacional pone de relieve el deber de llevar a cabo una acción con vistas a alcanzar el importante objetivo de liberar a tantos seres humanos de la desnutrición y de la amenaza de sufrimiento a causa del hambre.

Al mismo tiempo, incluso la acción emprendida recientemente por la Organización ha evidenciado una importante evolución, no solo conceptual, hacia la cultura de las relaciones internacionales. Esta cultura había sido olvidada muy a menudo para dar paso a un pragmatismo carente de un sólido fundamento ético-moral.

En las conclusiones de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación se subrayó efectivamente que el hambre y la desnutrición son fenómenos no sólo naturales o incluso un mal endémico de algunas áreas determinadas. En realidad son el resultado de una más compleja condición de subdesarrollo, pobreza y degradación. El hambre forma, pues, parte de una situación estructural económica extremadamente negativa para la plena realización de la dignidad humana.

Esta perspectiva está, por lo demás, sintetizada en el Preámbulo de la Constitución de la FAO, que proclama el compromiso de cada país de aumentar el propio nivel de nutrición, mejorar las condiciones de la actividad agrícola y de las poblaciones rurales, a fin de incrementar la producción y poner en marcha una eficaz distribución de los alimentos en todo el planeta.

Entre los primeros derechos fundamentales del hombre está justamente el derecho a la nutrición, que no sólo es parte integrante del derecho a la vida propio de cada ser humano, sino que, me atrevería a decir, es una condición esencial para el mismo.

¿Cómo es posible olvidar esta realidad en el momento en que la comunidad internacional se dispone a dar el debido relieve a la Declaración Universal de los Derechos del Hombre en el cincuentenario de su proclamación? Además, los compromisos asumidos recientemente en las conclusiones de la Cumbre sobre la Alimentación han señalado justamente en el derecho a la seguridad alimentaria de los pueblos la dimensión comunitaria de este derecho fundamental.

Así pues, el objetivo de la FAO tiene un carácter primario que hoy es absolutamente necesario alcanzar. En efecto, es un hecho evidente que el subdesarrollo, la pobreza y, en consecuencia, el hambre minando en su raíz la convivencia ordinaria de los pueblos y naciones, pueden convertirse en causas de tensión y, por consiguiente, amenazar la paz y la seguridad internacional. Ante nuestros ojos se dan tristes situaciones en las cuales se muere de hambre porque se olvida la paz y no se garantiza la seguridad; o bien situaciones en las que por saciar el hambre los hombres llegan a enfrentarse hasta olvidar la propia humanidad.

Incluso el pan de cada día para todo hombre sobre la tierra, aquel *Fiat panis* que la FAO ha puesto en su lema, es instrumento de paz y garantía de seguridad. Este es el objetivo a alcanzar y compete a los trabajos de esta Conferencia indicar los caminos a recorrer.

De la documentación preparada para vuestros trabajos emerge un elemento significativo al cual me parece necesario dirigir la atención: la realidad mundial debe modificarse si se quiere garantizar una actividad agrícola equilibrada y, por tanto, una lucha eficaz contra el hambre. La situación actual, bajo el aspecto económico-social, nos hace conscientes a todos de cómo el hambre y la desnutrición de millones de seres humanos son el fruto de inicuos mecanismos de estructura económica, de criterios desiguales para la distribución de los recursos y de la producción, de políticas llevadas a cabo mirando exclusivamente la salvaguardia de intereses partidistas o de formas diversas de proteccionismo.

Es una realidad que, si se examina con categorías de orden moral, pone de relieve una inclinación a ciertas tendencias como el utilitarismo o, aún más radicalmente, el egoísmo y, en consecuencia, la negación del hecho del principio de solidaridad.

La solidaridad es, pues, una opción de vida que se lleva a cabo para los individuos y para los pueblos en plena libertad de quien da y de quien recibe. Practicar concretamente la solidaridad requiere superar los estrechos límites derivados de una insuficiente afirmación del principio de reciprocidad, que pretenda a toda costa considerar al mismo nivel los Países que, en cambio, son desiguales por un diferente grado de desarrollo humano, social y económico.

Es necesario comprender las razones de un cuadro tan complejo para modificar después la actitud de cada uno de nosotros, especialmente la actitud interior. Si queremos que el mundo esté libre del hambre y de la desnutrición debemos interrogarnos sobre nuestras convicciones más profundas, sobre qué es lo que inspira nuestra acción, sobre cómo nuestro talento se pone al servicio del presente del futuro de la familia humana.

Muchas son las paradojas que hay debajo de las causas del hambre, empezando de la paradoja “de la abundancia”. Creo interpretar aquí los sentimientos de cuantos se acercan a vuestra documentación, en la cual sigue suscitando admiración el hecho de que actualmente la tierra con sus frutos está en condiciones de alimentar a los habitantes del planeta. Aunque en algunas regiones haya niveles oscilantes de producción y, por consiguiente, los parámetros de seguridad alimentaria causan preocupación, a nivel global se produce lo suficiente. Entonces, ¿por qué frente a una potencial disponibilidad son tantos los que sufren hambre?

Las causas que ustedes bien conocen, reflejan en su raíz una cultura del hombre carente, a veces, de razones éticas y de fundamento moral, lo cual repercute en el planteamiento de las relaciones internacionales y en los valores que deberían orientarla.

Para una lucha eficaz contra el hambre no basta, pues, pretender un correcto planteamiento de los mecanismos de mercado o alcanzar niveles de producción cada vez más altos o funcionales. Es preciso ciertamente dar al trabajo agrícola el lugar que le corresponde, valorizando cada vez más los recursos humanos que son los protagonistas de esta actividad, pero es preciso también recuperar el verdadero sentido de la persona humana, su papel central como fundamento y objetivo prioritario de toda nuestra acción.

En esta perspectiva un ejemplo concreto se encuentra en la Agenda de trabajo de esta Conferencia, por su atención a la cuestión ambiental entendida como salvaguardia del ambiente humano. Una acción que ve a la FAO comprometida en reducir los daños al ecosistema agrícola, preservándolo de fenómenos como la desertificación y la erosión, y de una actividad humana imprudente. Así como permitiendo un uso más racional y reducido de sustancias fuertemente tóxicas por medio de específicos “Códigos de conducta”, que son instrumentos eficaces aceptados en las políticas de los Estados Miembros.

El desafío futuro en este delicado sector está en los compromisos asumidos a nivel internacional en defensa del ambiente natural, que ponen de relieve el papel central de la FAO en la realización de muchos de los programas del *Action 21* de Río de Janeiro y en la conservación de las diversas especies biológicas.

Este último aspecto exige un esfuerzo ulterior, para asumir el necesario planteamiento de orden ético al afirmar que la disponibilidad común del patrimonio genético natural es una cuestión de justicia internacional.

La disponibilidad de los diversos recursos biológicos es de la humanidad, por pertenecer a su patrimonio común, como la FAO puso de relieve ya en 1983 adoptando el específico *International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources*.

La Iglesia católica está cercana a ustedes en este esfuerzo y en particular la Santa Sede. Lo atestigua también la atención y el compromiso con los cuales la Sede apostólica, por su parte, sigue desde 1947 - han pasado ya cincuenta años - la acción de la FAO, la primera entre las Organizaciones intergubernamentales del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas con la que estableció relaciones formales.

La Iglesia, al llevar a cabo su propia misión de difundir la Buena Nueva a todas las gentes, no deja de recordar la invitación de Cristo de pedir al Padre que está en los cielos el “pan de cada día”. Por esto se siente cercana a la realidad de los últimos, de los olvidados; conoce también la vida de los que trabajan la tierra con fatiga y esfuerzo, y está dispuesta a sostener las iniciativas de cuantos trabajan para procurar a todos los hombres el pan cotidiano. Estos colaboran en una acción que en el mensaje cristiano es la primera de las obras de misericordia, porque la medida del obrar cristiano es corresponder diligentemente al “tuve hambre y me diste de comer”.

Este es un principio que parece acompañar toda la acción de la FAO, con un esfuerzo justamente realista y al mismo tiempo serenamente optimista. Como demuestra vuestra presencia y vuestro compromiso, la FAO no parece desanimarse viendo los numerosos obstáculos en su camino, no parece detenerse ante las dificultades objetivas, sino que prefiere afrontarlas.

La Iglesia, fiel a su mensaje, resalta ampliamente este espíritu positivo, de servicio desinteresado, de desafío razonable, sostenido por la confianza en la posibilidad de resolver uno de los grandes problemas de la familia humana.

Que Dios Omnipotente y rico en misericordia haga descender la gracia de su Bendición sobre ustedes y sus trabajos. Este es el augurio que me ha encargado traer personalmente Su Santidad Juan Pablo II.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

The meeting was suspended from 10.40 to 10.50 hours.

La séance est suspendue de 10 h 40 à 10 h 50.

Se suspende la sesión de las 10.40 horas a las 10.50 horas.

**INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL'S STATEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE
DECLARATION DU PRESIDENT INDEPENDANT DU CONSEIL A LA
CONFERENCE
DECLARACION DEL PRESIDENTE INDEPENDIENTE DEL CONSEJO A LA
CONFERENCIA**

José Ramón LOPEZ PORTILLO (Presidente Independiente del Consejo de la FAO)

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia, señor Director General, Excelencias, distinguidos Delegados, señoras y señores.

Una de las últimas y acertadas actuaciones del Consejo fue nominarle a Usted, señor Vanclief, a la presidencia de la Conferencia. Así, rendimos homenaje a la contribución de su país al fortalecimiento de la FAO y de sus objetivos.

Apreciamos también su discurso inaugural, lleno de ideas sabias y creativas y estamos seguros que bajo su dirección esta Conferencia mantendrá un espíritu de cordialidad y de eficacia de los trabajos.

Quiero también felicitar al Director General por su magnífica y comprensiva declaración, por el Informe de Actividades de la FAO y por la defensa que hizo de la misión de esta Organización y del reto que representa dar alimentos para todos. Admiramos también, sus extraordinarias capacidades lingüísticas y la forma tan eficaz con la que ha ampliado su repertorio de idiomas.

Asimismo, permítanme destacar la declaración del Cardenal Sodano que ha precisado el marco moral en el que se debate el derecho a la alimentación, que es el derecho a la vida.

Señor Presidente, la tradición requiere que antes del debate general, el Presidente Independiente rinda cuenta a la Conferencia de las acciones del Consejo.

La eficacia del Consejo depende, en buena medida, del trabajo de los comités técnicos y de los no técnicos que le son subsidiarios. Juntos representan un formidable mecanismo de coordinación y de negociación que permite que las deliberaciones del Consejo cubran todos los asuntos de mayor interés para la Organización. La labor y funcionamiento del Consejo no podían estar alejados de los esfuerzos de los Países Miembros para aumentar las economías y mejorar la eficacia en la gestión de los órganos estatutarios. En 1995 el Consejo inició su examen sistemático de sus propios métodos de trabajo y los de sus Comités y encargó a los Comités de Finanzas y del Programa, que incluyeran de forma permanente en su reunión conjunta el tema "Economías y Eficacia en la Gestión".

Sin querer abrumarles con cifras, me parece necesario señalar que el Consejo ha llevado a cabo su misión tan cumplidamente que, incluso se ha manifestado por parte de algunos Países Miembros la preocupación que las sesiones del Consejo y sus Comités se han reducido hasta el

punto de que ulteriores recortes pondrían en entredicho la efectividad de la labor misma de estos órganos.

En efecto, en 1993 estos Comités y el Consejo se reunieron en su conjunto durante 72 días, en 1995 lo hicieron durante 63 días y en 1997, 54 días. El Consejo está consciente, sin embargo, de que ni la operatividad ni mucho menos la calidad y el volumen de trabajo se vieron reducidos proporcionalmente. Las mejoras y economías subsiguientes, tanto para la secretaría como para los Países Miembros, son debidas exclusivamente a una mejor y más económica gestión de las reuniones de estos órganos.

En los últimos años hubo un descenso en los costos globales de estos órganos, incluido el Consejo, de un total cercano al 25 por ciento de 1993 a 1997. Estos ahorros son aún más notables si se tiene en cuenta que se incluye en las cifras el aumento extraordinario de actividad del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial, que tuvo que preparar la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación.

La documentación más reducida y manejable, la limitación en las introducciones por parte de la Secretaría y un uso más juicioso y consciente del tiempo de interpretación han facilitado mucho nuestro trabajo.

Deseo en particular llamar su atención al hecho de que los gastos del Consejo en el año de la Conferencia bajaron de 2.400.000 de dólares en 1993 y casi 2.000.000, un poquito menos, en 1995 y en este año tan sólo 1.100.000 dólares, es decir, han disminuido al 51 por ciento con respecto a 1995 y mucho más respecto a 1993. En este sentido, quisiera destacar la forma en que el Director General ha permitido que estas economías y estos ahorros se den. Ha dado el marco, ha dado la libertad para generar estas transformaciones. Deseo también destacar en particular el esfuerzo que han hecho primero el señor Röbbel y luego el señor Pérez de Vega, siempre coordinados por el doctor Zenny.

Pero la eficacia en el desempeño de las tareas encomendadas a nuestro Consejo y sus Comités no puede ser juzgada sólo en cifras. El papel único que tiene la FAO como foro democrático de discusión, armonización y coordinación en materia de políticas agro-alimentarias es demasiado importante para que se escatimen los recursos necesarios.

El Consejo ha cumplido su cometido ampliamente y será fundamental no perder en el futuro el espíritu de disciplina alcanzado en estos años y los beneficios que se derivan de ello. Personalmente creo, como varios miembros de la FAO, que una ulterior reducción en los recursos y la capacidad operativa de nuestros órganos rectores podría llegar a ser contraproducente.

El papel del Consejo se ha transformado substancialmente con el tiempo. Primero, lo constituyó la tercera sesión de la Conferencia de la FAO. Entonces tenía una membrecía de 18 miembros y su primera tarea fue, entonces, la de mantener un examen del estado de la agricultura y la alimentación en el mundo. Este papel ha persistido aunque de manera más limitada. El COAG, Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial y otros Comités del Consejo profundizan en ese examen.

El Consejo ha adoptado pues una función más ejecutiva y se ha concentrado más en preparar las decisiones de la Conferencia y evaluar y orientar la labor de sus órganos subsidiarios.

Entre otras, destaco dos tareas del Consejo en los últimos dos años: una fue coordinar y propiciar los trabajos que condujeron a la Cumbre Mundial de Alimentación, la otra, fomentar la preparación de un proyecto del Programa de Labores y Presupuesto para el bienio 1998-99, que redujera al mínimo el peligro de una crisis como la que se dio en la Conferencia pasada al adoptarse un nivel presupuestario menor al propuesto. En este sentido, y a pesar de que no se ha alcanzado un consenso en torno al nivel presupuestario, contamos hoy con elementos de juicio mucho más completos y con un espíritu de mayor cooperación y armonía.

La Secretaría ha hecho un gran esfuerzo al ofrecer opciones claras e información más manejable.

Quisiera subrayar que en la preparación del Programa de Labores y Presupuesto 1998-99, es normal que los departamentos sigan un proceso, formal o informal, de planificación estratégica. Un ejemplo particular de esto es el Departamento de Montes que ha preparado un borrador "El Plan Estratégico Forestal de la FAO", en respuesta al Comité de Montes, copias del cual están disponibles en la mesa afuera de este salón.

Considero que existen las condiciones para aprobar por consenso un nivel presupuestario que no vaya en demerito de la Organización y que ningún país le vote en contra. El grado de frustración y desmoralización del personal de la Organización y la desilusión de muchos países por la restricción de su capacidad de respuesta a problemas crecientes, ha llegado a un nivel crítico.

Admiramos, por tanto, la defensa que ha hecho el Director General del Presupuesto de Labores para el próximo bienio y del papel de la FAO en el combate a la inseguridad alimentaria y el hambre.

La FAO no debe ser nunca más víctima de la polarización ni de victorias pírricas.

Fortalecer los foros intergubernamentales y el carácter multilateral y democrático de la FAO y de las Naciones Unidas en general, representan fórmulas mucho más efectivas y económicas de enfrentar y responder a los efectos de la pobreza, el hambre y la malnutrición, que combatir el desencadenamiento de las fuerzas de la opresión, la guerra, la prepotencia, la injusticia y la desigualdad.

Cierto que la FAO, per sé, puede hacer poco para transformar el mundo. Es por ello necesario fomentar un diálogo multidisciplinario y multiparticipativo y una toma de decisiones que involucre a todas las instancias. Como Usted dijo ayer, señor Presidente, todos deben sentirse parte de la solución.

La FAO tiene que seguir mejorando pues su presencia internacional y nacional como un centro de excelencia, como una organización imparcial, no burocrática, técnicamente calificada al más alto nivel, democrática y capaz de cooperar con otras instancias y ofrecer soluciones viables y demostrables, en el campo, a problemas nuevos.

Muchos cambios acertados ha introducido el Director General en la descentralización y reestructuración de la FAO, en la agilización de trámites y logro de ahorros y mayor eficiencia. Los Estados Miembros también han tomado una iniciativa mayor y más responsable en la revisión de sus órganos estatutarios y los métodos de trabajo.

Los Estados Miembros podrían continuar tomando una iniciativa mayor en el diseño de los planes futuros de la Organización, en su estructura, políticas y criterios a la luz de los viejos y persistentes problemas del hambre y de los nuevos acontecimientos científicos, tecnológicos, medioambientales, políticos, económicos y comerciales. Creo que debe continuarse revisando sistemáticamente los mejores y más eficientes métodos de trabajo y de gobierno y encontrar fórmulas para designar candidatos a posiciones parlamentarias, entre otras cosas, enfatizando también las características personales y profesionales que deben reunir. Asimismo, identificar áreas de mayor eficiencia y coordinación interna y sinergia con el resto de Naciones Unidas y con otras instancias nacionales e internacionales.

En todo caso, no perdamos de vista que el mundo diplomático en el cual nos movemos debe empatarse y servir eficazmente al mundo de las angustias, de las fatigas y de la acción de los agricultores y pescadores y, sobre todo, a superar la agonía y la ignominia de quienes padecen hambre y desnutrición.

Creo que debemos todos seguir trabajando para adecuar a la FAO a los retos del siglo XXI; desde luego, producir y distribuir más alimentos y lograrlo de manera sostenible pero también, movilizar una agricultura basada en insumos y orientada a la producción, hacia una actividad integrada al cuidado del medio ambiente y capaz de responder efectivamente a las necesidades nutricionales de todos, en virtud de que hoy muchas de esas necesidades no pueden traducirse en demanda efectiva en el mercado, ni en precios representativos.

La ecuación de la seguridad alimentaria, como tanto se enfatizó en la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación, es mucho más compleja que el problema de la producción, la estabilidad comercial y el acceso a los alimentos. Incluye, entre otros, el problema del crecimiento poblacional, las cambiantes pautas del consumo alimentario, la dinámica de la desigualdad y de la injusticia y una participación mayor de la población y de la mujer en el desarrollo agroalimentario. También debe atender el deterioro de la base natural de recursos sobre los que se finca la agricultura y la pesca, la degradación del medio ambiente y la utilización de tecnologías apropiadas. El entrelazamiento de estos factores y otros factores tiene efectos multiplicadores que pueden llevar a toda estrategia de seguridad alimentaria al éxito o al fracaso.

Como he expresado en otras ocasiones, en el cumplimiento de sus objetivos, la FAO compite por recursos financieros escasos y por espacios de credibilidad y de atención de la opinión pública más críticos y selectivos. Compite también con poderosos intereses comerciales y políticos, que no ven en Naciones Unidas los medios idóneos bajo su control o influencia, para promover sus productos y servicios y asegurar sus intereses. Compite la FAO, asimismo, con organizaciones que representan fracciones de la sociedad civil y que desconfían, muchas veces, de los poderes intergubernamentales. La FAO debe pues, fortalecer su credibilidad, su poder de convocación, su excelencia técnica y su participación y cooperación con otras agencias para ser una organización viable en el futuro.

Lamentablemente, señor Presidente, en años recientes, muchos elementos del sistema de seguridad alimentaria que se habían venido construyendo por muchos años, se han debilitado. La relación de existencias internacionales de alimentos siguen por debajo del mínimo necesario convenido, aunque en este año se han recuperado. La ayuda alimentaria se ha contraído, así como la asistencia externa a la agricultura y el financiamiento del desarrollo, en términos reales, también las contribuciones a la reserva internacional de emergencia y otras contribuciones que administra el PMA.

A pesar de cierta recuperación, en general, de la producción agropecuaria y pesquera, que ofrece mayor optimismo ahora que en el año pasado, muchos países y pueblos siguen inmersos en una situación de grave escasez alimentaria. Lo ha descrito el Director General con gran lujo de detalles. Esto y otros procesos de largo plazo siguen llevando a una desigualdad creciente entre países y entre las poblaciones de muchos países: unos con ingesta de alimentos relativamente alta y otros con un suministro de energía alimentaria muy bajo. El peso financiero creciente de las importaciones de alimentos y la pobreza y desigualdad siguen limitando el acceso a ellos.

No obstante, como ha sido ya mencionado, existen las condiciones para modificar esta situación. Así lo puntualizó y así lo quiere y así lo decidieron ustedes en la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación. Permítanme sólo mencionar dos puntos específicos: el acceso a insumos y crédito por parte de pequeños agricultores y pescadores, independientemente de su capacidad adquisitiva, así como mecanismos para promover la venta de sus productos a precios remunerables. Esto debe enfatizarse entre otros en la cooperación de FAO con el PMA.

El trabajo es la fuente principal y sostenible de ingresos para garantizar el acceso a los alimentos. La generación de trabajo y su diversificación en economías en crecimiento ha sido una razón principal de la rápida reducción de la inseguridad alimentaria que prevalecía en varias regiones y países, tomen en cuenta el caso del este de Asia. La lucha contra el desempleo y contra la baja capacidad adquisitiva, está en el centro del problema de la seguridad alimentaria, especialmente la incorporación de la mujer al desarrollo y su papel en la seguridad alimentaria y en la mejora del nivel de vida de las familias rurales.

Todos estamos pues obligados, moral y políticamente a llevar a buen término el plan de acción aprobado en la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación. Es un instrumento vital para la sobrevivencia de muchos cientos de millones de seres humanos y para la armonía de la comunidad internacional.

Por otra parte, la comunidad internacional, y los países en desarrollo en particular, deberían poner más énfasis en el papel activo y responsable del sector privado y del impulso del comercio internacional. Asimismo, debe explorarse el potencial productivo y la aplicación responsable de nuevas tecnologías, inclusive la biotecnología y la ingeniería genética en la agricultura y la producción de alimentos. Esta es un área donde FAO podría hacer más, por lo menos en darle seguimiento y, en ciertos casos, asesoramiento sobre los posibles efectos negativos sobre el medio ambiente o positivos de esas tecnologías sobre los rendimientos y buscar también, una mayor comprensión al respecto entre todas las instancias interesadas.

La FAO posee importantes ventajas competitivas. Sólo por mencionar algunas: el sistema mundial de información y alerta, el sistema de información y cartografía y la difusión de la situación de la seguridad alimentaria, la conservación y utilización apropiada de los recursos genéticos, la rehabilitación y conservación de suelos, el manejo sostenible y responsable de recursos hidráulicos, el Codex Alimentarius, la gestión sostenible y estratégica del sector de montes, la promoción de la pesca responsable, el combate de plagas y de enfermedades, la ejecución del procedimiento de información y consentimiento previos y de la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria. Posee también el poderoso instrumento del PCT, que debe seguir probando su efectividad y su reproducibilidad como solución a problemas específicos y el fomento, también, a la CTPD y CEPD que tienen un potencial enorme por explorar.

En todo caso, señor Presidente, creo que debemos seguir buscando una mayor compatibilidad entre los viejos y los nuevos problemas agro-alimentarios, ambientales y de seguridad alimentaria. Compatibilizarlos con la mejor priorización de las actividades de nuestra Organización, con el diseño del plan a plazo medio que enfoque mucho más las ventajas competitivas que residen aquí en esta Organización. Obviamente, la estructura organizativa y operativa, el balance de las actividades normativas y operativas y la preparación y final aprobación del Programa de Labores y Presupuesto, son algunas áreas donde se puede poner más atención.

Finalmente, señor Presidente, yo he estado vinculado cercanamente a FAO una buena parte de mi vida, no sólo por designación, sino también por convicción. Estos quince años y en particular los últimos cuatro como Presidente Independiente del Consejo me han honrado mucho, pero también me han mostrado la responsabilidad y el reto que todos debemos tener y atender en la persistencia y en la lucha contra el hambre, la desigualdad y los peligros medioambientales que hoy amenazan a toda la humanidad.

Permítanme pues terminar agradeciendo a los miembros del Consejo su apoyo y actitud constructiva y armoniosa. Permítanme también agradecerle al Director General su amistad y augurarle todo el éxito en lo que resta de su gestión.

Al gobierno de México mi agradecimiento por el respeto con el que me honró.

A mi esposa e hijos por su amor y comprensión en las muchas ocasiones en las que me ausenté.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much Chairman Portillo for your statement. On behalf of all the Conference and FAO, I would like to thank you for your personal dedication and guidance to the Council over your term of office. We thank you sincerely for your tremendous contribution to FAO over the years.

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION

**DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE
INTRODUCCTION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL
ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACIÓN**

6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

H. DE HAEN (Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Department)

MrChairman, FAO's annual publication, "The State of Food and Agriculture 1997" (SOFA) has just been released. Although it briefly covers also fishery and forestry I would also like to refer to FAO's regular publications "State of World Fishery and Aquaculture" (SOFIA), as well as the "State of World's Forests" (SOFO), which cover more detail in these respective sectors.

The two documents before you, C 97/2 plus a supplement, summarize the state of food and agriculture. The general picture is that of an improved situation despite a wide range of uncertainties. This is so with regard to the global economic environment characterized by strong economic activity overall, and in much of the developing world. These features support favourable conditions for agricultural development and for food security overall. However, other factors, and not least the weather, have determined contrasting trends in recent agricultural performances.

Indeed, the documents depict a generally improved situation for agricultural production in 1996 in relation to the previous year 1995, but less than bright expectations for the current year 1997. The growth in global crop and livestock production is expected to slow down markedly this year, in developed and developing countries alike, falling to the lowest growth rates in two decades in the developing countries. In the case of cereals, expectations for 1997 are for a marginal increase in production to nearly 1.89 billion tons, bringing cereal supplies close to expected consumption requirements in 1997-98 but not allowing for any recovery in stocks estimated at about 15 percent of total utilization. Food and agricultural prospects for next year are uncertain and will depend, among other factors, on the weather effects of the *El Niño* phenomenon which may hit hard producing areas in the southern hemisphere.

Whilst most of the developing country regions are expected to share the slowdown of production growth in 1997 contrasting situations are observed. Some regions, where *per caput* food production performances were on the whole already favourable in the early part of the 1990s, are expected to achieve a further increase in *per caput* food production in 1997 and these include a number of Asian countries, including China. Latin America and the Caribbean will just maintain their *per caput* production levels, and cereal production in this region is expected to rise despite the substantial damage in some areas due to *El Niño*. For Africa, in particular North Africa, we expect a significant reduction in *per caput* agricultural production. For the developed country regions on the whole prospects are for a marginal decline in agricultural production in 1997 after a sharp rise in the previous year.

A large number of countries worldwide face particularly acute food shortages requiring emergency assistance. As many as 29 countries worldwide, of which more than half in Africa, are in this situation compared to 26 reported in SOFA last year. Other than the necessary mobilization of emergency assistance, major efforts are needed to adequately meet the rehabilitation needs of the countries concerned.

You will notice that the most recent estimate of total food aid shipments in 1996-97 ending 30 June 1997, has been brought down to 4.9 million tons, which is 2.8 million tons below the level of the preceding year. The latest estimates for 1996-97 indicate that total shipments of food aid, including pulses and derived products, measured in wheat equivalent just barely exceeded the minimum commitments of some 5.35 million tons agreed under the 1995 Food Aid Convention.

In closing, to put these contrasting recent developments on a broader perspective, I should like to point out some results of a review of recent developments in world food security also presented in the document. Despite the major progress achieved in food security over the last decades, the gap appears to be growing between those developing countries already enjoying satisfactory levels of food consumption and those at the lower end of the scale. This appears to be the case with disturbing consistency with regard to all the main indicators considered in the review: *per caput* food availability and production, average incomes, ability to finance food imports. This trend, which has wide ranging negative implications for global food security and, in fact, for security of all, will be carefully monitored and reported by the Secretariat under this agenda item in future years.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

DEBAT GENERAL

DEBATE GENERAL

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION

DECLARACIONES POR LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES

China, Netherlands, Sudan, Denmark, Korea (Republic of), Mauritius, Czech Republic, Iran (Islamic Republic of), España, Tanzania

LIU JIANG (China) (Original language Chinese)

It is my great pleasure to come again to this beautiful and ancient city of Rome and discuss issues concerning global food and agriculture with my old and new friends. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude, on behalf of the Chinese Government, to the Director-General of FAO and to its Secretariat for their efforts in preparing this Conference. Now please allow me to make a few observations on some relevant issues. The full text of my statement will be available at the Documents Desk.

To eradicate hunger and poverty is the common desire of people all over the world. The World Food Summit, held in November last year, has opened a new chapter in mankind's efforts to eliminate hunger and poverty and improve food security. The Summit is of great significance in mobilizing forces from various social sectors, strengthening international cooperation in the field of agriculture and promoting food and agricultural development in the world.

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to food security and regarded feeding its people as the highest priority. Since the World Food Summit, we have intensified our work to this end and formulated a series of policy measures aimed at strengthening and protecting agriculture, trying to increase agricultural inputs and improving conditions for production. Further efforts have been made in order to solve the food security problems of nearly one quarter of the world's population. Our efforts have produced good results. China's total grain output in 1996 reached over 490 million tons, that of meat 59.15 million tons and that of fish products 30.85 million tons. This year, in spite of the severe drought, we are still hopeful of achieving a good agricultural harvest. China's rural economy has maintained its momentum of rapid and healthy growth and farmers' income is steadily increasing. The solution of the problem of basic subsistence for over 1.2 billion Chinese people will no doubt greatly contribute to global food security.

China is a developing country with relatively limited arable land and water resources. Presently, there are still 58 million people living in absolute poverty. We are therefore still faced with the formidable task of further steadily increasing total grain production, developing diversified food products and constantly improving people's standards of living. Although we emphasize that we rely on our own efforts, at the same time we sincerely hope to benefit from further support and cooperation from the international community. Mr Chairman, the world state of food and

agriculture has achieved some improvement in the past two years, particularly following the World Food Summit. However, problems and restraints which have long been threatening world food security still persists, and the prospects of global food security appear far from gratifying. Presently, there are still 800 million people in the world suffering from chronic hunger and malnutrition. Many Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries are pressured with the double burdens of inadequate food production and lack of food import capacity. The global food stock level is only around 15 percent, lower than the minimum level that FAO considers necessary to safeguard world food security. The balance between food supply and demand remains very vulnerable. External assistance to agriculture in developing countries has continued to decrease. Therefore, all governments have the common responsibility and task of carrying out the follow-up activities to the World Food Summit, enhancing international cooperation in the field of food and agriculture, boosting food and agricultural production, eliminating hunger and malnutrition and improving world food security as a whole.

To solve the problem of food and eliminate hunger and malnutrition requires not only national efforts by countries, but also mutual assistance and collaboration between countries. Developed countries are obliged to provide necessary agricultural development assistance to developing countries and make substantial efforts towards debt reduction and exemption, as well as elimination of trade protectionism and prejudices, while developing countries should further enhance agricultural technical cooperation among themselves in order to learn from each other's experiences in achieving common prosperity.

Since its inception, FAO has done a great deal of work to promote global rural economic development, improve world food security and eradicate hunger and poverty by providing useful financial, technical and policy support and assistance to developing countries. Since he took office, Dr Diouf has further adjusted FAO's Programme of Work, giving highest priority to increasing food production in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries and ensuring food security and implementation of the Special Programme for Food Security, which achieved tangible results. For this, we express our appreciation and support. We have noted that FAO has made practical efforts in streamlining administration, decentralization, strengthening cooperation with other international agencies, increasing recruitment of national experts, reducing the number of meetings, saving on expenditures and improving efficiency. All this has resulted in significant progress. We support FAO's efforts in this regard.

Regarding FAO's Programme of Work and Budget for 1998-99, we hope that Member Nations will make a concerted effort during this Conference so as to establish a rational and feasible budget level. We also hope that, in formulating its Programme of Work, FAO will continue to give adequate attention to field activities, including the Special Programme for Food Security and the Technical Cooperation Programme.

The Chinese Government has always highly valued the role FAO plays and has maintained a good, cooperative relationship with the Organization. In the future, we shall, as ever, render support to FAO's endeavours. We are ready, together with other Member Nations, to make greater contributions to the promotion of world agricultural development and to the improvement of world food security.

J.J. van AARTSEN (Netherlands)

On behalf of the European Union, and therefore needing a little bit more time than five minutes, it is my pleasure to address this Twenty-ninth session of the FAO Conference, one year after the World Food Summit.

The many initiatives in the Member States of the European Union, taken by governments, the private sector and the NGO community, show that there is a strong commitment to the implementation of the Plan of Action, but, at the same time there is no reason to congratulate ourselves. A tremendous joint effort is required to achieve our common goal of food security for all, especially given the environmental constraints on the use of land: a goal, which raised many

expectations, especially with the 800 million people who do not have enough to eat or suffer from malnutrition. We have to live up to the commitment we made at the Summit.

In our opinion, one of the most important conclusions of the Summit was that although we can produce enough food for the growing world population, the main problem is the availability and distribution of food, access to food, and the development of sustainable production techniques.

Food insecurity is a problem of poverty, low productivity, lack of purchasing power, isolation of the rural areas, as well as a result of poor storage techniques.

If we seriously try to solve these problems, we have to focus on those areas. After all, it is in the rural areas where most of our food is produced. In many countries the rural population constitutes more than half of the total population. If, in those countries, we want to achieve balanced and sustained economic growth, rural people must be involved and participate. If that does not happen, the result will be severe disruptions in society, further impoverishment of the rural population, and even more migration from rural to urban areas.

We have to realize that we cannot count on the cultivation of new land in the future without destroying the world's already severely-threatened biodiversity. Effective solutions should permit an increase of production of sufficient amounts of food primarily on existing agricultural land in a sustainable way. High productive agriculture is not contrary to conserving biodiversity. In fact, increasing the productivity of current agricultural land will reduce the pressure on biologically-valuable ecosystems. Genetic resources are of actual and potential value for food and agriculture. One of the instruments to manage the world's biodiversity is the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Convention is crucial in effectively linking the goals, activities and players involved in national and international policy-setting, according to the principles of complementarity and synergy. We are pleased that FAO and the CBD have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, especially on the development of a multi-year programme for agro-biodiversity, focusing on farming systems and agro-ecosystem approaches.

Another important step is finalizing the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources - another instrument - on which we have made significant progress earlier this year. The European Union is committed to finalizing the negotiating process for this revision as soon as possible. For that reason the EU has taken the initiative to submit a Resolution to this Conference stressing the importance of this subject.

The European Union is very pleased that we have finalized the revision of the International Plant Protection Convention, and we hope that this revised convention will be implemented as soon as possible.

It goes without saying that sustainable forest management is another important pillar of food security. The Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June 1997, decided to continue the international dialogue on this subject in an Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. However, with deforestation continuing at a net rate of 11.3 million hectares per year, time for prolonged negotiations is limited. We have to show the international community concrete results as soon as possible, and we have to agree on further action at the international level. We have to identify possible elements of, and work towards consensus on, international arrangements and mechanisms, including a legally-binding instrument. FAO, as a centre of information and data collection, has to take a leading position in this field again.

In this rapidly-changing world not only governments have to adapt themselves and reform, but the authority of international organizations is also no longer taken for granted. The organizations have to rethink and restructure their role, core tasks and governing structures. The political consensus reached at the World Food Summit and the ongoing process of UN reform provide a window of opportunity for streamlining and strengthening the Rome-based institutions, FAO, WFP and IFAD, which are active in the field of food security.

We need a Strategic Vision for the future work of FAO, taking into account the global character of FAO and the synergy between its normative and its operative activities.

In that context, the European Union welcomes the proposals for new medium-term planning. We think that this should include a clear mission statement for FAO, which provides a set of core objectives, based on the principles of relevance, impact, efficiency, accountability and transparency.

Reforming and strengthening FAO also means a more rigid setting of priorities, for example in the field of sustainable agriculture and forest development. More effective decentralization is also needed, without, and I want to stress this, without eroding performance at FAO, Headquarters which must be a real Centre of Excellence.

Decentralization implies support to the national governments in their decision-making and implementation of national plans for sustainable agriculture. This has to be accomplished within the budgetary framework within which FAO must operate. In this context, the EU aims at a budget level which leaves room for flexibility within the budget for priority programmes. That can only be done by improving efficiency and by saving on non-substantive programmes.

For its future direction, I am sure that we can call on the Director-General of FAO to take a positive and pro-active stand on the UN reform proposals of the Secretary-General for the benefit of this Organization, and for the benefit of those who suffer from malnutrition - the reason why we are here.

Our political guidance must give new momentum to achieve our goals of sustainable agriculture, sustainable forest management and sustainable fisheries. It is up to the Member States to unambiguously guide FAO into the next millennium as an efficient and effective Organization ready to assist mankind in reaching the overall goal of food security for all.

Nafei ALI NAFIE (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, peace and the blessings of God be upon his profits.

Mr Chairman, Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I should like to greet you wholeheartedly and to express to you Mr Chairman and to the Vice-Chairmen, my delegation's sincerest congratulations on the confidence placed on you as Chairman of the Conference. We wish you every success. We should also like to congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan for having joined the family of FAO.

The food problem has emerged once more as one of the fundamental issues threatening the lives of millions of people towards the end of the twentieth century, particularly in developing countries, for there are over 80 developing countries suffering food shortages, most of which are in Africa. The number of those who do not receive sufficient food in the world is estimated at 840 million and calls for consolidated country, regional and international efforts in order to overcome this serious problem.

Sudan has been blessed with immense agricultural resources estimated at 100 million arable hectares of which only 20 per cent have been used. The Government of the Salvation Revolution, since it came to power in 1989, has accorded the issue of food security special attention by providing such production inputs as of fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, and financing. It has increased productivity by using high-yield and high-quality techniques and it has invested in animal and agricultural research and practical training for those involved in agriculture. The government has also accorded due attention to small farmers and shepherds, particularly in the rainfed areas, with the purpose of increasing productivity and production, and to sustainable development endeavours to alleviate taxation in the agricultural production and animal husbandry sectors. It has encouraged investment in the agricultural sector by providing financial incentives to both national and foreign investors. It has established disease-free zones, and provided protective services and

establishment of quarantines and improved the quality of veterinary services to encourage the production of meat. It has also set up slaughter-houses and provided concentrated feed and fodder.

These policies have reflected on the continued growth of the GNP, which amounted to 7.8 per cent in the period from 1992-97 as compared to 1.2 per cent in the period 1985-91. This considerable expansion in agriculture is mainly due to the increased attention by the Government and the participation of the agricultural sector. The GNP has increased from 38 percent in the early 1990s to 48 percent in 1997.

The increased food production in developing countries calls for further assistance and allocated resources through the agricultural sector, yet information indicates that external agricultural assistance is diminishing, if measured in real terms. The total sum of allocations for agriculture in the broad term of the word for developing countries, amounted to US\$10 billion in 1995, as compared to the actual requirements amounting to US\$41 billion. Sudan appreciates the guidelines that are adopted by FAO under the wise leadership of Dr Jacques Diouf to bridge the food gap and combat malnutrition.

That is why Sudan was happy to participate in the World Food Summit held in Rome at the end of 1996 at the highest level. We pledged to fulfil and implement all our commitments emanating from the resolutions of the World Food Summit and to follow-up on the Summit resolutions. A special development strategy has been implemented and drawn up in Sudan covering the period up to 2010. Sudan is concerned with the development of rural women and increasing their productive activities. In this respect, a project to consolidate the institutional capabilities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the field of women in development has been implemented with the assistance of FAO and with financing from the Government of the Netherlands. We would also like to comment favourably on FAO's concentrating its activities within the next biennium on the role of women in development.

Sudan supports the general trend to draw up Plans of Action to combat desertification as indicated in the programme, in keeping with the Earth Summit resolutions in 1992 and the International Convention to Combat Desertification.

Sudan further supports the priorities of the programme on crops, particularly in the field of genetic resources and international conventions for plant protection. Sudan also supports the focus on control programmes for transboundary animal and plant diseases, as well as the contingency programme on desert locusts in the central zone and the programme against trypanosomiasis in Africa.

Sudan is concerned and preoccupied with the increased diminution and reduction of meat and dairy production activities. We believe that priority should be given in the programmes to dairy production development and to reforestation and afforestation of areas which are prone to desertification.

Sudan believes that FAO should adopt a strategy to solicit support for regional projects, the effects of which would transcend country borders and boundaries. Since they are very difficult to finance on a bilateral basis, one such project could be desertification control in the region of the Sahel, south of the Sahara in Africa, whereas another could deal with transboundary water protection and the protection of the Nile River waters.

In conclusion, Sudan would like to avail itself of this opportunity to express its support of the ambitious programmes and the constructive initiatives committing itself to fulfil all the resolutions it can.

Henrik Dam KRISTENSEN (Denmark)

Just one year ago at the World Food Summit, governments made a commitment to obtain food security for all, and a Plan of Action was adopted. Since then, Denmark has been cooperating with the Nordic countries and with the countries of the European Union to increase the impact of

our efforts. Denmark has committed itself strongly to achieve the said goal, and that is why we spend more than 1 per cent of our Gross National Product on international development. We want to urge those who can to do the same. A rise in the global food production is necessary to secure food for all, but this is not enough. We must step up the fight against poverty and inequality, so that the food produced reaches those who need it most.

We shall pay special attention to the low potential areas where we have to secure sufficient income levels, and we should always remember that the youngest daughter in the poorest family also needs proper nutrition. Improving the conditions for rural women is a key to food security. They represent the highest number of poor persons in the world, and they are the ones responsible for cultivating the land and for securing the food supply at household level.

All the same, our efforts to solve the great problems of today should create even greater problems for our children tomorrow. Respect for the environment must be part of all our endeavours. FAO has a central role in the pursuit of food for all. Denmark supports this role and highly appreciates the expertise of the Secretariat. We expect FAO to work in close cooperation with Member Nations, the rest of the United Nations System and other international organizations. Good production planning and policy-setting are important for such cooperation.

The Medium-Term Plan is well suited for this purpose. It should express visions for the further work of FAO, and in that way becomes a strong tool for priority-setting. The aspects of sustainability must be integrated in the programme models. The importance of post-harvest environments must be reflected in the Plan. Reliable control systems should be given serious attention.

Denmark highly values the normative work that FAO conducts in relation to strategy and policy setting at a global level. This includes the work related to biological diversity, the Codex Alimentarius, and the International Plant Protection Convention. We feel that the role of FAO as a Centre of Excellence and a forum for debate is a cornerstone in the Organization and must be treated as such. Denmark supports the position of the FAO Council in giving higher priority to forestry, and to the recommendations of the Panel on Forests.

A reasonable FAO budget is necessary to confront the great problems in the food and agriculture sector. FAO should direct its efforts and its financial resources to the core activities of the Organization. This means that FAO must take initiatives to further limit administration costs, and to consider carefully the relationship between the use of resources and the impact of programmes. However, FAO can only obtain a sound financial basis if Member Nations pay their contributions in full and on time.

Finally, we should all remember what we said at the World Food Summit, and we should support the work of FAO in the spirit of good cooperation. That way we can reach our aim - Food for All.

Lee HYO-GAE (Korea, Republic of)

I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak in this Session on world food issues and also to extend my congratulations to His Excellency Lyle Vanclief on his election as the Chairman.

With humanitarian assistance and concerted efforts of the international community, there has been remarkable progress made in the global food supply in the last two decades. Despite such developments under FAO's initiatives and continued dedication, the global food situation still remains a challenge that must be tackled with our utmost efforts. It is a striking fact that more than 800 million people still suffer from malnutrition and the recent decline in the growth rate of agricultural production makes this unfortunate situation difficult to be improved upon effectively. The situation became more complex by the population growth and environmental degradation, which are factors that cloud our optimism. In addition, continued climatic changes add to the volatility of food supply.

According to FAO studies, “world food reserves are likely to be concentrated in major exporting countries, whereas total stocks in other countries would continue to decline,” and that “almost three-quarters of world imports of cereals are now accounted for by the developing countries compared with less than half 15 years ago.”

Given the foregoing, I would like to point out the structural problem in the world food supply system which tends to depend heavily on a few exporting countries. Under these circumstances, I firmly believe that sustaining and increasing domestic production through effective utilization of existing resources is a positive and distinct way that each Member Nation should adhere to. Korea strongly supports each country’s efforts to increase food production. Along the same lines, the Rome Declaration adopted at the World Food Summit also emphasizes the importance of an increase in food production.

The World Food Summit was effective and timely in raising global awareness and political commitment at the highest level and in taking concerted action to improve world food security. Acknowledging the multi-faceted character of food security, the World Food Summit was a meaningful achievement for all participants to reach a consensus in pursuing strategies and actions based on overall perspectives of agriculture, beyond the limitations of trade-based supply stabilization.

I believe it is very important to convey the view on food security set out by the Summit to other international organizations so as to enable their discussions on food and agricultural matters in a harmonious manner. Along those lines, I am compelled to raise the question as to whether FAO has lived up to the trust that its Member Nations placed in its ability to play a decisive role in the fight against food insecurity.

Throughout its history, FAO has engaged in activities in various fields, and one of the contributions it has made was production increases through world agricultural development and reduction of populations stricken by famine and malnutrition. Nevertheless, the endeavours made by FAO to come up with a new vision to cope with the ever-changing global agricultural situation were inadequate. Therefore, it is required that FAO serve the central role in initiating reforms and in taking new and concrete action in becoming a more efficient, competent and future-oriented Organization.

Now is the time for the Secretariat and the Director-General to be retrospective of the past and to make new resolutions for a promising century ahead. In addition, the implementation of appropriate policies and programmes and the broadening opportunities for under-represented Members to participate in the Secretariat are all important elements that should be placed among the present and future priorities of FAO.

I would like to conclude my statement by stressing my hope that we should play a more active role in achieving “Food Security for All” and reducing “hunger and malnutrition”, the goals agreed to at the Summit, so that all of us will advance toward a more prosperous Twenty-first century.

Arvin BOOLELL (Mauritius)

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, I convey to you the greetings of the Government and the people of Mauritius. Mr Chairman, 1996 will go down in history as the year when attainment of world food security was universally acknowledged as the most pressing challenge facing mankind.

The World Food Summit was the culmination of a long process resulting in the unanimous approval of a Policy Declaration and a Plan of Action for the achievement of the ultimate objective of universal food security. Indeed, in the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, we had pledged our political will and national commitment to achieve world food security and eradicate hunger in all countries of the world. We had set ourselves an intermediate objective of reducing the number of undernourished to half the present level by the year 2015. We had

emphasized the urgency of taking immediate action to fulfil our responsibility to achieve food security for the upcoming generation.

FAO, the leading agency for food and agriculture, has been entrusted with a special responsibility to ensure that the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit is implemented.

It is to be recalled that twenty-three years ago, the 1974 World Food Conference had solemnly proclaimed that food insecurity would be eradicated within a decade. Not only was this goal never attained; hunger and malnutrition have, in fact, progressed in many parts of the world, mostly at a time when trade barriers and frontiers are being eliminated and multinationals are crossing the borders. Globalization and liberalization should not become ineffective.

Therefore, Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, history should not repeat itself and the commitments of the 1996 World Food Summit should not simply fall by the wayside. It would only be logical for developing countries and Small Island Developing States like Mauritius to expect that FAO should be provided with the necessary resources to fulfil its broad mandate. Unfortunately, FAO, for quite a number of years, has had to face a persistent impulse of developed countries and donor agencies to cut the already-insufficient resources of the Organization. My delegation is satisfied that the Director-General has made every possible effort to contain cost increases and rationalize the activities of the Organization. His statement confirms that he has started to challenge radical thinking and move into the realm of strategic thinking. My delegation therefore appeals to the developed countries and other major donor agencies to understand the effort that FAO is making to fulfil a noble mission, which is primarily to foster agricultural development and extend technological transfers to those in dire need of such assistance.

Mr Chairman, in recent years the international environment has been shrouded by the emergence of the World Trade Organization and the new global trading system. There seems to be an almost unquestioning acceptance that the liberalization of the world economy holds the promise of salvation for all countries of the world - a necessary condition for assuring sufficient food production and adequate access to food by the poor.

Unfortunately, there is little in the history of the now-rich industrial countries over relatively-successful developing ones to suggest that this was the path that they actually followed. With the globalization of the world economy today, developing countries, especially landlocked and small island countries, are faced with the serious risks of marginalization and social disruption.

For example, the recent report of the World Trade Organization Panel on the EU Banana Regime has sent tremors across many of these countries. The banana issue has already demonstrated the inhuman and unjust nature of the new Trade Regime. Be it as it may, increased liberalization of the global economy thus makes the role of the FAO more important, not less. Those who go around advocating the level of playing field concept and virtues of market liberalization should thus not be contemplating the reduction in FAO's budget at precisely a time when the developing countries need effective assistance. Indeed, the FAO should endeavour to assist the developing countries to prepare for their active participation in the next round of multinational trade negotiations, due to start in the year 1999.

My delegation wishes to avail itself of this opportunity to appeal to the FAO to give serious consideration to the organization of a Conference, sometime in 1998, to discuss issues related to Small Island Developing States whose agricultural sustainability is hampered by their size and their geographical isolation.

Václav SLAVICEK (Czech Republic)

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, as head of the Czech delegation, I have the honour to be here for the third time. It means I can observe and evaluate the work of FAO and our cooperation with it over the past several years. I am pleased to say that FAO management is aware of necessary changes that would lead to the recovery of useful activities provided by this international governmental organization and to the elimination of the non-efficient international

bureaucracy. Positive steps to decentralization and more efficient FAO operations have been adopted and the Government of the Czech Republic welcomes them.

The Czech Republic has suffered from a big natural disaster this year. Unprecedented floods, during which part of the state territory was covered with water within several days, quite naturally caused the low-cost measures in the state budget and this will be manifested even in the field of assistance provided to developing countries. The total damage caused by floods amounted to about US\$2 billion and direct losses in agriculture are costed at US\$350 million. Damage to the environment and human health cannot be given in figures at all.

This is an unpleasant situation, and we must cope with it as soon as possible. Despite all these problems, we try to comply with all international obligations and contribute to the elimination of hunger and malnutrition in the world according to the obligations of the World Food Summit. I would like to express my thanks officially to all governments that provided assistance to the Czech Republic on the basis of solidarity. Both the Government and citizens of the Czech Republic highly appreciate this.

I have already stressed from this forum several times that the Czech Republic has enough good specialists who are able and willing to offer results and experience for use at the international level. Our people are ready to be involved in FAO projects and in its structure.

Despite all the problems caused by the nature of the disaster, we are ready to participate in international cooperation. The Czech Republic is active in cooperation with a number of specialized FAO sections up to now. I signed a new agreement on cooperation, as a special case with the Director-General yesterday. In the past I participated in the formation of new FAO regulations and articles of associations as a member of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters. We are convinced that we actively participated in the committee activities, and therefore re-propose our candidacy for this important committee for the next term of office.

I see the cardinal FAO mission being the coordination of events that will result in elimination of hunger and malnutrition in the world. I am happy that the Czech Republic associate its efforts with other countries for the solution of this global problem for the world. The Czech Republic perceives this as a moral appeal and a call for solidarity.

I wish FAO much success in this complicated position and I assure you that the Czech Republic will contribute to the achievement of this goal.

Issa KALANTARI (Iran, Islamic Republic of)

In the name of God, compassionate, the merciful. Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere and heartfelt pleasure on your deserved election as Chairman and also extend my sincere gratitude to His Excellency, Dr Diouf for his relentless efforts to actualize food security.

The World Food Summit was a turning point in the history of FAO's achievements, following which new and palpable priorities were eliminated by Member Nations with the aim of poverty alleviation and the reduction of food insecurity.

This new period coincides with three semi-global problems as follows:

- decrease in the amount of foreign financial aid for development, which contravenes the World Food Summit goals;
- emphasis, by many countries, on leaving agricultural production and development affairs totally with the free-marketing and trade forces, which at least in the short-term, would badly afflict farmers in developing countries; and
- negative budgetary predispositions on FAO by some countries under labels such as “cost effectiveness”, “increased efficiency” or “cost reduction”.

Although the above-mentioned issues all seem to give desirable and rational results in the long run, not foreseeing a transition period of adjustment shall no doubt make an irretrievable impact on the agricultural development trend of developing countries.

A study of food security indexes shows that, despite the average increase in agricultural productivity, the nutritional gap between high-energy-intake-countries and low ones has become wider. Among the most significant factors affecting the problems of food provision and availability in developing countries are:

1. unequal food distribution the world over and among countries;
2. lack of purchasing power for the destitute;
3. outbreak of tensions and wars;
4. fast population increase;
5. limitation of water and land resources, destruction of natural resources; and,
6. lack of sufficient investments in agriculture and food production.

The agriculture sector in the Islamic Republic of Iran has improved remarkably during the past two decades as regards the exploitation of lands and new water resources, per hectare production, upgrowth of technology level, and, as a whole, agricultural modernization. This has resulted in a more than threefold pure increase in the amount of agricultural production within the past 20 years. The average value added growth rate in this sector, during the post-war period, has been above 5 percent, i.e. about 2.5 times the population growth rate.

For the realisation of worldwide food security, the Islamic Republic of Iran announces its suggestions and proposals as follows, while emphasizing the necessity for the implementation of WFS obligations so as to stabilize durable peace:

- Pushing aside all political predisposition and prejudices and full consideration of human respect, self-esteem and moral values in adopting economic measures in order to alleviate poverty, improve technology, and upgrade the production and trade of food commodities.
- Preventing pollution, and to control and improve environmental qualities as well as preservation of natural resources (including the genetic, soil and water resources).
- Expansion of research activities and applied studies, as well as the improvement of policy-making for sustainable development in various economic, social, cultural and political sectors.
- Optimization and expansion of proper and safe technology and international extension of effective methods for minimizing losses.

Sra Doña Loyola DE PALACIO DEL VALLE-LERSUNDI (España)

Excelentísimo señor Presidente, excelentísimos señores Jefes de Delegación, excelentísimo señor Director General, señoras y señores, hace ya algunos años Nehru, Primer Ministro de la India, afirmó: “Most things except agriculture can wait”, afirmación que hoy mantiene todo su vigor.

Los hombres y mujeres que aquí estamos hoy reunidos lo hacemos no para estar simplemente juntos, sino para hacer algo en común. Es urgente acometer una empresa colectiva de ámbito universal a favor de la agricultura, para utilizarla de una manera eficaz en la lucha contra el hambre y la pobreza. Como muy bien ha señalado en nombre de la Unión Europea el Ministro holandés Van Aartsen, hoy existen suficientes alimentos en el mundo pero lo que hay son terribles deficiencias en su distribución, y aprovecho para hacer mías en todos sus puntos las preocupaciones de los 15 países miembros de la Unión Europea respecto a la situación de la agricultura en este momento a nivel mundial.

España, encrucijada en las relaciones norte-sur entre Europa y Africa y encrucijada también entre el viejo y el nuevo continente, participa de la necesidad de acometer una acción intensa en el medio internacional, y en particular en FAO.

El Rey Don Juan Carlos manifestó el 15 de junio de 1994 en Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), con motivo de la IV Cumbre Iberoamericana de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno, que hay que prestar atención preferente a los problemas que subsisten todavía como la marginación, la pobreza, la injusticia o el hambre.

No se trata de retórica sino de hechos. España ha incrementado su aportación al presupuesto ordinario de FAO hasta ser el octavo contribuyente, con más de 8 millones de dólares, aparte de otros 4 millones dedicados a proyectos con fondos fiduciarios (PESA, COPEMED, etc.). Además, señalar sus aportaciones para programas y actuaciones especiales como 22 millones de dólares para el Programa Mundial de Alimentos o su participación a través de Televisión Española en el Programa TeleFood, impulsado desde FAO y en nuestra opinión de gran éxito.

También ha contribuido España en los últimos tiempos con la incorporación a la FAO de expertos españoles de gran competencia y capacidad para colaborar en sus tareas que, por diversos motivos, debe hacerse creciente en el futuro, merced al alto nivel de su preparación.

Por otro lado, mi país va a ser anfitrión de reuniones relevantes para organizar adecuadamente la agricultura y la pesca en el concierto internacional. Así, recibirá en los próximos meses a quienes han participado en la redacción del Codex Alimentarius de Europa, al Grupo Internacional de Frutos Cítricos, al Grupo de Trabajo sobre Economía y Estadísticas Pesqueras del Consejo General de Pesca del Mediterráneo. Además, hemos participado y continuaremos haciéndolo en los trabajos relacionados con el Compromiso Internacional de Recursos Genéticos, cuya Comisión hemos presidido hasta hace poco tiempo.

En este aspecto, la conservación y el uso duradero de los recursos genéticos o biodiversidad agrícola ha sido y es una de las principales preocupaciones de la FAO en los últimos 20 años y España ha jugado y pretende seguir jugando un papel clave y mundialmente reconocido. La propuesta para el establecimiento de una Comisión Intergubernamental que se ocupase de esta materia, así como el desarrollo del Compromiso Internacional de Recursos Fitogenéticos adoptado en 1983 y las Resoluciones Complementarias sobre los "Derechos del Agricultor", adoptadas unánimemente por FAO en los años 1989 y 1991, fueron iniciativas de mi país. Igualmente, también mi país fue el primero que ofreció poner su banco de germoplasma vegetal bajo los auspicios de la FAO para la conservación de colecciones mundiales *ex situ*.

España ha sido la puerta de entrada a Europa de los cultivos árabes procedentes de Asia y Medio Oriente, y la entrada también para Europa y Africa de los cultivos procedentes del nuevo mundo.

Por todo ello, España se ha encontrado en la encrucijada más importante de la transferencia y evolución dinámica de los cultivos que hoy alimentan a la humanidad.

Por otra parte, señor Presidente, estamos firmemente decididos a continuar colaborando con la comunidad internacional para conseguir el objetivo de que la actividad pesquera se realice en condiciones que aseguren el futuro, y con ella el aprovisionamiento de alimentos de origen marino, y en esta línea, acabamos de organizar la III Conferencia Internacional de Ministros de Pesca, el pasado mes de septiembre en La Toja, que reunió a los responsables de más de 50 países con los representantes de FAO. La temática, "El Comercio Responsable", respondió a nuestro deseo de abundar en este concepto, ya recogido en el Código de Conducta para una Pesca Responsable, en el convencimiento de que es imprescindible ampliar el ámbito del compromiso internacional en materia de conservación de los recursos pesqueros, más allá de la fase meramente extractiva, para abarcar también la comercialización. Toda esta enumeración, sin ser exhaustiva, demuestra nuestro claro compromiso real mediante hechos con FAO.

Ahora bien, por encima de todo quiero poner de relieve la disposición y la disponibilidad de España para hacer efectivo el derecho de toda persona a disponer de alimentos sanos y nutritivos, que es la formulación positiva del derecho radical a no padecer hambre. Pero eso no basta, debemos ser personas y no meramente seres animados. Este es el sentido propio de los derechos humanos, cuyas raíces tienen un estrecho parentesco con el estilo universal de la cultura española como parte de la cultura occidental, como lo prueba, sólo por hacer una referencia, la "*Relictio de*

Indiis” expuesta en la Universidad de Salamanca por Francisco de Vitoria, ante la personal presencia del emperador Carlos V de Alemania y Primero de España, cuyo quinto centenario vamos a celebrar próximamente. En ese momento nacía el derecho internacional moderno.

El Presidente del Gobierno español, José María Aznar, ofreció en la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación de la FAO de 1996 nuestra colaboración como Estado y como sociedad civil, a través de nuestras empresas, nuestras organizaciones no gubernamentales y nuestros profesionales, para conseguir los objetivos fundamentales que compartimos. Este ofrecimiento sigue hoy en pie y quiero reiterarlo.

Señor Presidente, al tiempo de felicitarle por su elección y desearle los mayores éxitos, me pongo a su disposición, en nombre del Gobierno español como lo estoy a la de todos los participantes en esta Vigésimonovena Conferencia de la FAO, para contribuir en la medida de nuestras fuerzas, de todas nuestras fuerzas, al logro de los objetivos señalados.

Paul P. KIMITI (Tanzania, United Republic of)

I hope, because I am the last speaker for this morning’s session, that you will give me extra time for that one. It will be recalled that one year ago we all met here and jointly adopted the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action. Implementation of the Plan of Action in Tanzania started with sensitization seminars and workshops as well as translation of the Plan of Action into the national language to facilitate access and understanding of the general public. A wide circulation of the translated version will be done when approval is received from FAO.

We have reviewed our agricultural sector policies, liberalized our crop marketing systems and we are now creating an enabling environment for the private sector to encourage investment in agriculture. We are also concerned with poverty eradication and, in this regard, a National Poverty Eradication Strategy has been prepared.

All these efforts notwithstanding food and water are among the major challenges my country is facing. During the 1996-97 marketing year, food production fell below requirements mainly due to failure of the short rains and the poor performance of the long rains. The shortfall in the food production during 1996-97 is having its effect on food availability for this season, the 1997-98 marketing year.

A food and crop assessment conducted by FAO in collaboration with the World Food Programme, USAID and my Government in January 1997 showed the food situation was unsatisfactory and that 13 out of the 20 regions in the country had been adversely affected.

This situation was aggravated by incidence of crop pests and disease outbreaks, coupled with the high input prices. In short, 1997-98 has been declared a year of food shortage, reflecting a deficit of about 760 000 tons. The Government is now encouraging private traders, through tax relief incentives, to embark on maize importation for the domestic market. The Government has also submitted requests to the World Food Programme for the 76 000 tons food to support an estimated 1.4 million vulnerable people.

I am advised that the proposal is now with the World Food Programme Headquarters awaiting approval. I am advised also that several countries have assisted in this. I would like to take this opportunity to commend FAO and the World Food Programme for the excellent coordinating arrangements put in place for the emergency food relief and seed appeal, as well as the field operations. I would also like to thank the Governments of Finland, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Korea, China, France, India and Canada for their confirmed pledges in advance of the approval of the emergency operation. I acknowledge the other donors who have expressed their support but would confirm their pledges when the relief assistance is approved. I would like to express my appreciation to the Governments of Ireland and Sweden for their generous support to fund 1005 tons of seeds urgently needed for planting during the short season rains, and the FAO for supplying 127 tons of various seeds to Zanzibar.

Due to prolonged drought we have experienced frequent pest outbreaks including armyworms and quelea quelea birds. We still face the problem of red locusts although control operations have been mounted to suppress the red locust population. I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Japanese Government to fight quelea quelea birds and the red locusts. The Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa and the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa are also acknowledged for their support.

Tanzania is among the beneficiary countries for the FAO-assisted Special Programme for Food Security. The pilot phase has given remarkable results so far. In particular, the Programme has been able to demonstrate in less than two years that it was possible to create a strong momentum for a self-sustained dissemination of technologies through the promotion of small groups that link directly, saving/credit objectives with concrete initiatives to increase productivity and the establishment of a network of small private input suppliers. Demonstrations of improved water control practices in several schemes have led to a widespread intensification of maize production and to an expansion of maize cultivated land from 1.7 tons per hectare to 4.3 tons per hectare.

Livestock sector performance is still constrained by diseases and lack of veterinary drugs. Out of 15.6 million cattle, 4.5 million cattle are at a risk of trypanosomiasis, while 4 million people live in an endemic area of sleeping sickness. So far sterilization techniques to control the tsetse fly have proved very successful. I wish to recognize FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency who, in collaboration with the Government, have embarked on this technique.

In this sector, the natural resources sector, our major concerns are sustainable harvesting of fisheries, forestry and wildlife products. Measures currently undertaken to ensure that those concerned are improving the knowledge base of natural resources including a thorough assessment, inventory and research, and promotion of the private sector contribution to sustainable resource management. The national environmental policy which integrates the natural resources sector is under preparation.

Lastly, may I once again on behalf of the Tanzanian Delegation, commend FAO, and in particular the Director-General, for his continued support to the Member Nations through the several innovative initiatives he has undertaken since he was elected in 1994. He has also restructured the Organization, decentralized the operations, streamlined the procedures and has succeeded in reducing the costs by transferring some of the staff from Headquarters to the field. This is what we need. We sincerely wish that he will be given the opportunity and all the support to enable him to pursue and consolidate these reforms in the future.

The meeting rose at 12.40 hours.

La séance est levée à 12 h 40.

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.40 horas.

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite)

INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION (continuación)

6. REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)
(C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACIÓN (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

DEBAT GENERAL (suite)

DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION (suite)

DECLARACIONES POR LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

France, New Zealand, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Germany, Burkina Faso, Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of), Japan, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Mauritanie, Republic of Croatia, Canada, Algérie, Swaziland, México, Jordan, Turkey, Finland.

Louis LE PENSEC (France)

Je suis à la fois heureux et honoré de participer à cette 29^{ème} session de la Conférence générale. Elle fait suite au Sommet mondial de l'alimentation de novembre 1996, qui a permis d'attirer l'attention internationale sur les perspectives d'ajustement difficile entre l'offre et la demande alimentaire au début du 21^{ème} siècle. Il a conclu sur la nécessité de protéger nos ressources naturelles et s'est achevé sur notre engagement à réduire de moitié, d'ici 2015, la population souffrant de la faim dans le monde. C'est un objectif trop modeste, mais qui reste malgré tout ambitieux. Car il ne s'agit pas là d'une simple déclaration d'intention, mais d'un engagement clair et solennel, un engagement qui prend date pour le siècle prochain, assorti d'un objectif chiffré.

Cela situe toute l'importance des débats qui vont se dérouler dans cette enceinte.

Nous savons tous ici que, si le problème de la faim n'épargne plus les pays industrialisés, il demeure principalement concentré dans les pays en développement.

Il ne s'agit plus, à ce stade, de fournir des sacs de blé ou des boîtes de lait en poudre pour répondre à telle ou telle situation ou pour faire la soudure avec la prochaine récolte. Ce qui est en jeu, c'est la mise en place des conditions durables de la sécurité alimentaire des populations de nos pays.

En tant que représentant d'un Etat signataire de la déclaration de Rome, en tant que Ministre de l'agriculture et de la pêche d'un Etat de l'Union européenne, et à ce titre m'associant à la déclaration du ministre des Pays-bas, où s'ouvrent les débats sur l'avenir de l'agriculture européenne et sur les relations avec une majorité d'Etats du sud, je souhaiterais vous faire part d'une triple conviction: conviction que la politique agricole commune de l'Union européenne commune doit s'inscrire dans la perspective du 21^{ème} siècle, afin qu'elle continue de jouer pleinement son rôle pour la sécurité alimentaire mondiale; conviction de la nécessité d'une

approche associant les pays en développement et les pays européens, dans le cadre d'un partenariat rénové, qui ne s'en tienne pas à l'acceptation passive du simple jeu de la mondialisation; conviction du rôle premier que doit jouer l'OAA, notre Organisation, dans l'établissement des conditions durables de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale.

Oui, les Européens doivent préparer leur agriculture à entrer dans le troisième millénaire, sans mésestimer les enjeux de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale. L'Union européenne devra adapter sa politique agricole, sans oublier ses obligations envers les pays en développement. Pour ma part, je considère que ce grand projet européen doit viser: une agriculture performante, qui réponde aux besoins non seulement de l'Europe, mais aussi d'un marché mondial pour lequel les perspectives d'ajustement entre offre et demande apparaissent de plus en plus tendues; une agriculture soucieuse de la qualité des produits et qui réponde à l'attente des consommateurs -- je souligne, à ce titre, le rôle essentiel de notre Organisation dans ses fonctions normatives; une agriculture qui contribue à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'emploi; une agriculture économe des ressources naturelles et dont le développement respecte notre environnement; une agriculture, enfin, qui ne soit pas repliée sur elle-même et qui participe à la solidarité internationale -- je souhaite vivement, en effet, que l'agriculture et le secteur agro-alimentaire européens soient parties prenantes d'un partenariat rénové avec les pays en développement.

L'objectif de ce "nouveau partenariat" doit être la mise en place de programmes pluriannuels de développement, de formation et de recherche, ainsi que de coopération commerciale. A cet égard, l'Union européenne et les pays ACP ont, depuis longue date, jeté les bases d'une relation privilégiée et solid, qu'il convient aujourd'hui d'adapter.

En effet, les principes qui régissent nos relations commerciales dans le cadre de l'OMC, ne sont pas susceptibles, à eux seuls, d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire de la planète. Lors de l'Uruguay Round, la France, soutenue par ses partenaires européens, a promu le principe d'une "exception alimentaire", réaffirmée lors de la Conférence de Singapour en décembre dernier. La sécurité alimentaire ne dispose cependant toujours pas, dans les faits, d'un traitement spécifique qui puisse la soustraire aux aléas de la mondialisation.

Il est urgent de faire prévaloir une vision moins mercantiliste des échanges agro-alimentaires mondiaux. A cet égard, je me réjouis des discussions en cours sur la mise en place d'un code de conduite international sur l'aide alimentaire, dont l'objectif est l'amélioration de son efficacité pour les pays du Sud. Je forme le voeu que l'ensemble des donateurs s'engage rapidement dans cette voie, en privilégiant l'intérêt à long terme des pays bénéficiaires de l'aide sur leurs intérêts commerciaux à court terme.

Ne craignons pas de faire preuve d'imagination et d'audace pour proposer de nouveaux concepts, basés sur l'intérêt à long terme des pays en développement et l'intérêt conjoint, bien compris, des pays industrialisés: en rendant applicable la Déclaration ministérielle des Accords de Marrakech en faveur des Pays les Moins Avancés et des Pays En Développement Importateurs Nets de Denrées Alimentaires; en rééquilibrant les termes des échanges Nord-Sud, facteur premier de la pauvreté de nombreux pays en développement; en favorisant l'émergence d'entités régionales susceptibles de devenir, demain, de véritables marchés communs capables de protéger des agriculteurs du sud aux "désavantages comparatifs" trop évidents.

Pays du sud et du nord, de l'est et de l'ouest, doivent tirer parti de leurs complémentarités, pour créer les conditions nécessaires à un véritable décollage économique. Il y va de leurs intérêts réciproques. La sécurité alimentaire mondiale est manifestement au coeur de cette approche.

Nous pouvons utilement dans ce contexte faciliter et accompagner tous les partenariats et donner toutes ses chances à la coopération Sud-Sud qui se développe à grands pas et à laquelle le Directeur général de l'OAA apporte, et souhaite apporter encore, un soutien efficace dont je me réjouis.

Notre Organisation doit s'engager aujourd'hui plus fortement encore dans sa réflexion. Elle doit s'affirmer par ses capacités techniques, par son rôle de forum international, face à d'autres

instances, dans lesquelles les déclarations des pays les plus nantis couvrent parfois la voix des plus démunis.

Je souhaiterais rappeler combien sont importantes ces missions de conseil en politiques agricoles et alimentaires, de vulgarisation, de progrès techniques et de formation, ainsi que de mobilisation des systèmes de recherche particulièrement dans le cadre de la mise en oeuvre du plan d'action du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation.

Alors que nous sommes entrés dans la civilisation de l'information, que la multiplication des situations de crise nécessite de plus en plus d'interventions d'urgences, je voudrais réaffirmer tout l'intérêt des activités de l'OAA dans la collecte, le traitement et la diffusion des données, notamment celles du SMIAR (système mondial d'information et d'alerte rapide).

Ces informations sont le point de départ d'un programme de terrain cohérent avec le mandat de l'Organisation et susceptible de valoriser les compétences de l'Organisation au plus grand bénéfice des pays du Sud et de leur sécurité alimentaire. À cet égard, je rappelle l'appui de la France à la mise en oeuvre du programme spécial de sécurité alimentaire.

Les activités normatives enfin, je les ai déjà rapidement évoquées. Montrons-nous à la fois vigilants et responsables pour l'adoption des textes internationaux consensuels et veillons particulièrement à ce que les normes alimentaires du Codex Alimentarius ne nous entraînent pas vers des modèles de consommation uniformes, où nous perdrons collectivement la diversité de nos cultures, qui est aussi notre richesse. Permettez-moi aussi, à ce sujet, d'insister sur la nécessité de prendre en considération les attentes des consommateurs dans l'établissement des normes de qualité des produits.

Chers collègues, Monsieur le Président, nous devons renouveler notre confiance dans cette Organisation et lui donner les moyens d'agir. La discussion que nous aurons sur le projet de programme et de budget est à ce titre essentielle. Naturellement les positions divergent, montrons-nous collectivement responsables dans la recherche d'un compromis viable.

Les organismes internationaux ne peuvent échapper aux contraintes alimentaires, aux contraintes budgétaires auxquelles sont soumis leurs membres. L'Organisation doit poursuivre les efforts d'économie entrepris. La contrainte budgétaire doit également constituer une opportunité de recentrage sur les tâches que nous considérons prioritaires.

Cependant, n'exigeons pas de notre Organisation des efforts démesurés que nous-mêmes ne pourrions accepter. N'entravons pas, par une rigueur excessive, le bon accomplissement de ces responsabilités internationales, alors même que nous souhaitons leurs donner davantage d'écho.

Rendons hommage ici au travail considérable des personnels de l'Organisation sous l'impulsion du Directeur général, Monsieur Jacques Diouf.

Enfin, commençons par appliquer la rigueur au règlement rapide des arriérés de contribution qui pénalisent toujours lourdement le fonctionnement de cette institution.

A l'aube du 21ème siècle, un an à peine après le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, rappelons-nous que les engagements que nous avons pris en faveur de la sécurité alimentaire ne sont pas une simple déclaration d'intention, confirmons notre confiance dans l'Organisation pour appuyer la conduite du plan d'action adopté. En 2015 aura lieu la 38ème Conférence. C'est presque déjà demain. Je forme le voeu que nous ayons alors, non pas atteint mais dépassé notre objectif de réduction de moitié de la population souffrant de la faim. Nous seuls pouvons l'exaucer.

Bruce ROSS (New Zealand)

We are here, one year after the World Food Summit, to give further impetus, both as individual nations and collectively, to the follow-up measures set out in the Plan of Action.

The World Food Summit document provides the long-term vision and strategies for the Organization and its Members. At this Conference, we must give direction to FAO by agreeing its Medium-Term Plan and by setting the budget level and priorities for the next two years.

Each country will approach the challenge of food security from its own perspective and use the means available to contribute to a global solution based on common efforts. New Zealand is making both bilateral and multilateral contributions to tackling food security in developing countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific Region, through our Official Development Assistance Programme. This includes contributions to multilateral development agencies, strengthening international agricultural research capacity and more broadly, efforts aimed at further liberalization of international trade in agriculture.

There are no simple answers to this complex problem, but there are some fundamentals to which we subscribe. Developing self-reliance, not self-sufficiency, in food production, encouraging the growth of the private sector and the role of women in development, and, on a wider front, freeing up international agricultural trade based on comparative advantage, to allow countries, particularly developing countries, to earn export earnings from what they produce best. These are critical to sustainable development and future food security.

We recognize that both the food security problem and its solution are multi-faceted. Hence the diverse elements that make up the Rome Declaration and the Plan of Action: an enabling political, social and economic environment; national policies to eradicate poverty and ensure participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development policies; and trade and trade policies, to name some of these elements.

If there is one single reason for the unparalleled growth in the world's *per capita* wealth over the past few decades, it is in the expansion of world trade. All the evidence shows that trade is essential to growth. For this reason, New Zealand appreciates the support FAO lends to encouraging trade in agricultural products, its advocacy of further trade liberalization, and its normative and field work on activities that facilitate trade.

As the World Food Summit reminded us, the number of people with inadequate access to food remains unacceptably high. We have the technical and biological resources to feed everyone on the planet. Recent years have seen continuing improvements in the technology that will further increase output and, crucially, access to that output. And if we think we are short of financial resources, we might reflect on some aspects of global assistance to agriculture. In 1995, the financial assistance by the developed countries to agriculture in developing countries amounted to US\$ 10.3 billion. This is the sum that the developed countries gave to 'agriculture', which in this definition includes forestry, fisheries, water and the environment. But compare that US\$ 10.3 billion with what the OECD countries gave to their own farmers in the same year - US\$ 333 billion. The agricultural and trade policies of OECD countries result in their spending more than 32 times as much on their own farmers as they give in aid to agriculture in developing countries.

And what has been the effect of this US\$ 333 billion? Most importantly, it has curtailed trade opportunities for agricultural exporters, many of which are developing countries. These countries simply cannot compete against their highly subsidized counterparts in the developed countries. In addition, it has generated subsidized production surpluses, which then have to be dumped on overseas markets, further destabilizing prices and markets for farmers in developing countries and elsewhere.

A high priority for the global economy should be to ensure that the trend towards a market-oriented world trade system is vigorously pursued. Increasing opportunities for global economic growth will result from countries reducing trade barriers, particularly to developing countries' exports, and by progressively eliminating trade distortions caused by the way farmers are supported in wealthy countries.

Fundamental to FAO's mission is the indicator 'food per capita'. Perhaps we have focused more on the 'food' rather than the *per capita* side of the equation. Accordingly, further attention should

be given to fully integrating population concerns into development strategies and devising appropriate population policies, as called for in the World Food Summit Plan of Action.

New Zealand has long stressed the need for FAO to exercise rigorous discipline in the use of its resources for its work to flourish. We believe that the Organization has recognized the need for the new environment in which it must operate. We have followed with interest the management reform and efficiency proposals that have been put forward by the Secretariat over the last two years.

I should like to congratulate the Director-General and his staff for the way in which they have faced up to the challenges of economic management reform. New Zealand believes that the approach being taken is in the right direction, and that with further creative thinking, and with the intellectual support of member countries, FAO will come up with a structure and a planning and management approach that will provide the best value for its limited financial resources and so carry the Organization into the next century as a recognized centre of excellence.

We are particularly pleased with the establishment of the FAO Subregional office in Apia in Samoa, and the positive start it has made to developing FAO's presence in the region.

It is not only on these larger themes that we wish to emphasize our full encouragement and support. The individual programmes and objectives that underpin FAO's mission are critical too. New Zealand would like to highlight one particular programme - the International Plant Protection Convention, and its recent revision that brings it into line with the WTO SPS Agreement. We are very pleased to see that the work of the experts has come to fruition at this Conference, in the form of a revised text. It is with much satisfaction that we note the Resolution before this Conference to approve the amendments to the text. New Zealand will be supporting the passage of this Resolution, and we hope that all other delegations will do likewise.

This Conference will set the course for FAO for the next two years. Let us make sure that as the Organization prepares to enter the new millennium, it is well-placed to respond in a dynamic and positive way to the different kinds of challenges and opportunities that will inevitably arise.

Mrs KIM YONG SUK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (Original language Korean)

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on your election to the chair of this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference and express my firm belief that this meeting will bear fruitful results under your proficient chairmanship.

On behalf of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea delegation I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Director-General and to all FAO staff who have made sincere efforts for the success of this session.

Today, as we are nearing the Twenty-first century, it is a matter of prime concern of all nations to guarantee sustainable world food security.

At present, the food problem is of particular importance and its solution allows no delay. Today 800 million people are chronically undernourished in developing countries, and more than 10 million children under the age of five are dying of starvation and malnutrition every year across the world.

The FAO has always taken note of this poignant situation and exerted all possible efforts in order to take common international action to cope with this situation.

The World Food Summit which was held last year was a turning point in resolving the acute food and agricultural problems as it set the target for decreasing the undernourished population to half the present number by the year 2015 and presented ways for its implementation.

Last year, FAO convened the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources and emphasized in it that plant genetic resources are not only the common wealth of

mankind, but also the prerequisite for world food security and advanced ways of strengthening international cooperation in developing, conserving and using plant genetic resources.

At a practical level, FAO has taken effective actions and measures such as the Technical Cooperation Programme and Special Programme for Food Security to help the food insufficient countries to increase food production in the manner of sustainable agricultural development.

As briefly mentioned, the past two years since the last Conference witnessed an increase in international concern over world food security and the great advances and changes in the activities of the Organization to alleviate hunger and poverty on a worldwide scale by resolving food and agricultural problems.

Mr Chairman, in the past, my Government set as its important task to realize self-sufficiency in food by means of increased agricultural production, and gave all its energy to its implementation.

The great leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung, who always paid deep attention to people's living and spared no pains for its improvement, taught us that agriculture was the foundation of the country. He always found himself among farmers to discuss agricultural matters and put forward concrete ways and methods to increase agricultural production, in keeping with the actual conditions of the country.

His instructions are our precious guidelines, enabling us to strive energetically to develop agriculture with pride and confidence in the face of unfavourable circumstances.

As already well known, the country's food shortage is still serious, since its agricultural sector was affected by enormous damage and losses due to severe drought and tidal waves this year, which added to the 1995 and 1996 flood effects.

Under the leadership of the great leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il, we have undertaken work to sustainably increase agricultural production by rehabilitating land and agricultural facilities damaged by natural calamities and expediting land management development projects.

The country's arable land being limited, this year we implemented two test double-crop schemes for barley to be harvested before rice and maize transplantation and it resulted in some success. We acquired experience and we continued to expand the area of arable land by reclaiming new land and the tideland. Necessary measures are taken to secure the sources of organic manure for increased fertility of soil and avoid much dependence on chemical fertilizers and encourage the production of biological fertilizers.

With a view to radically enhancing the income and living standards of farmers in mountain areas, the Government is also directing much of its energy into livestock-breeding with a plan to appropriately combine grass-eating animals and short-bred poultry with a relatively low level of grain consumption.

The disaster affected areas are being recovered and people's life is being stabilized thanks to the people-centred policies and emergency rehabilitation measures of the Government and the struggle of the entire people of the country.

Today the Korean people, with great national pride in having elected the great leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il, as the General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, are firmly determined to safeguard and develop their people-centred Korean style socialism under his leadership, whatever adversity they may face.

The greater part of the rehabilitation work will be taken by our people and the humanitarian aid from the international community will certainly encourage us.

Many governments, FAO, the World Food Programme, governmental and non-governmental organizations and individual organizations have expressed sympathy with our country for the big natural disasters it has suffered, and is supplying it with food and other commodities out of humanitarian motivations.

On behalf of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I take this opportunity to express gratitude to those governments and organizations for their assistance.

Mr Chairman, food security for all is a centuries-old desire of human beings.

We believe that the most important thing in achieving world food security is for each government and its people to formulate their own agricultural policies in keeping with their actual conditions to make effective use of human and material resources for agricultural development and to achieve self-sustenance in food. We think that priority should be given to work that copes with all abnormal climatic conditions, the major cause of continuing food insecurity, to remove blight and to improve infrastructures in the rural areas.

We also consider it important to strengthen international cooperation in minimizing the consequences of natural disasters which befall many parts of the world.

The present world food and agricultural situation calls for an enhanced role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

We highly appreciate the Organization's efforts and activities to reduce hunger and poverty across the world, and help developing countries to improve agriculture and increase food output.

In the light of the present world food and agricultural situation, we presume that the 1997-98 Programme of Work and Budget submitted to the Conference by the Director-General is well balanced and practical and therefore we express our support for it.

In conclusion, I hope that this Conference will bring good results in achieving world food security through fruitful discussions of all agenda items with appropriate contributions from all participants.

Franz-Josef FEITER (Germany)

The Federal Republic of Germany, the Federal Government, has been listening with great interest to the Director-General's statement this morning because it really gives us great ideas, and it's very right indeed. To fight hunger and improve nutrition - one year after the World Food Summit are two aims which continue to be before us, and they are a national challenge for many countries and require a commitment by the national community to strengthen its efforts. These two aims have not lost their burning importance.

With regard to the reasons why millions of people do not have enough food, we have to take action to make sure that food security for all is a reality. And this includes, as part of the alleviation of poverty, the creation of a framework of internal and external conditions in political and economic, and in social matters. It is only if we do this that we will be able to improve access to food for millions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America and to provide incentives to increase food production.

Political instability and civil strife keep on upsetting and interrupting time and again the peaceful work of farmers throughout the world. In many countries existing natural and human resources cannot be effectively used to ensure a sustainable food supply. For instance, here in Rome we adopted the Declaration on World Food Security and the Plan of Action; and the Plan of Action is a proper framework and a balanced framework for the states to take action and for the international community to take action in this matter. This means, and for my own country too, a commitment to develop in our own countries, to develop further a kind of agriculture which is ecologically; economically-and-socially-sound to support countries which suffer from considerable food deficits. Germany takes this commitment very seriously.

For the implementation of this Plan of Action, FAO obviously has an outstanding role to play on the grounds of its mandate and of its technical competence. A prerequisite, however, to be able to manage this task successfully is an efficient use of all available means and resources, and this is why Germany is supporting ongoing efforts of the United Nations to analyze activities of the

organizations, programmes and bodies working in food security and to improve their coordination.

Germany welcomes the proposals made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, to reform the institutions of the United Nations to make them leaner and more efficient to instil new life and new strength into them. And this also requires FAO's contribution, and the Secretariat of the Organization should seize every opportunity to rationalize administrative work, to take advantage of synergy effects both externally and internally, and to strengthen cooperation with our organizations. Priorities must be changed and their relevance has to be checked and adjusted if new conditions so require. Scarce funds and budgetary bottlenecks compel FAO to save and to make the most efficient possible use of its financial resources. With its wealth of data, knowledge and experience, and its great reputation as a neutral intergovernmental organization, FAO is challenged to focus on the task where its know-how offers comparative advantages. That is to say FAO must concentrate on normative tasks like establishing standards and providing advice and information for the solution of global and regional agricultural and food problems. In this context, measures to preserve and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources are acquiring ever greater importance.

This means also agricultural research must make its contribution, because only if you have new solutions which are relevant to every individual situation and are environmentally-sound and are based on scientific findings that take into account the needs and conditions in the less developed countries only if all this is achieved will it be possible to produce sufficient food with less land to feed the growing global population. My country attaches major importance to FAO's coordinating worldwide implementation of these principles.

Last year the Federal Government hosted, together with FAO, the Fourth International Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, held in Leipzig. I was the Chairman of this Conference and I was honoured to welcome you all there. The Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Diversity of the Genetic Base of our Crops adopted at that Conference has set the course for food security for future generations

Germany considers that a swift conclusion of the negotiations on the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources and its adaptation to the Biodiversity Convention is an important pre-condition for the implementation of these measures.

On the threshold of the Twenty-first century all these tasks represent a major challenge for our Organization, FAO. With the support of all Members - and I would like to underline that we are confident here - FAO must and will succeed in successfully overcoming these challenges as an efficiently-managed Organization.

Michel KOUTABA (Burkina Faso)

La tenue de la 29e Session de la Conférence de notre Organisation me donne l'occasion, au nom de la délégation du Burkina Faso, d'adresser à vous-même, Monsieur le Président, au Directeur général de la FAO, Monsieur Jacques Diouf, ainsi qu'à ses collaborateurs, toutes nos félicitations pour tous les travaux nécessaires à la convocation, l'organisation et la tenue effective de la présente Session un an, presque jour pour jour après la tenue, ici au siège même de la FAO, de l'historique Sommet mondial de l'alimentation. Notre délégation voudrait également saisir l'occasion de cette session pour partager les réflexions que lui inspire la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture dans le monde et singulièrement au Burkina Faso.

Il ne manque cependant pas de relever les grands écarts qui existent toujours entre les pays développés et ceux dits en développement dont l'Afrique, en particulier sahélienne, où à la fois l'absence et la non-maîtrise des technologies, la pauvreté et les difficultés climatiques constituent des obstacles qui limitent les progrès vers une sécurité alimentaire satisfaisante. Un tel constat interpelle la conscience universelle et nous rappelle qu'aucune initiative, aucun effort ne

devraient être épargnés tant que des hommes et des femmes de par le monde continueront de souffrir de faim et de malnutrition.

C'est à ce combat que nous nous attelons au Burkina Faso, où la satisfaction des besoins nutritionnels demeure encore trop faible (2 140 kcal/personne/jour contre les besoins exprimés à 2 500 à 3 000 kcal/personne/jour), et où les efforts des populations viennent d'être sérieusement compromis par une campagne agricole tardive doublée d'un déficit pluviométrique sévère qui ont entraîné une baisse de production de 8 % pour cent par rapport à la dernière campagne. Cette baisse de production se traduira par un déficit céréalier important qu'il conviendrait de combler. Aussi, et afin de limiter les conséquences de la crise alimentaire en perspective, le Gouvernement a-t-il déjà adopté un Plan d'urgence comportant un programme d'aide alimentaire et un programme d'appui aux activités susceptibles d'accroître soit les disponibilités alimentaires dans le cadre du maraîchage, soit les revenus dans le cadre d'activités diverses (artisanat, embauche, commerce).

L'évolution de cette campagne nous aura surtout révélé la précarité des conditions de production de notre pays où la maîtrise de l'eau constitue plus que jamais une priorité pour le Gouvernement.

Cela renforce notre engagement dans la mise en oeuvre du Programme spécial de sécurité alimentaire (PSSA) qui poursuit entre autres objectifs non seulement d'accroître la production mais aussi de la sécuriser.

Il me plaît de renouveler toute la gratitude et les encouragements de Son Excellence Monsieur Blaise Compaoré, Président du Faso, au Directeur général de la FAO, Monsieur Jacques Diouf, pour son dévouement et sa détermination pour la cause des 800 millions de pauvres dans le monde.

Le Gouvernement du Burkina Faso se réjouit des initiatives prises dans le cadre de la Coopération Sud-Sud en vue du renforcement du Programme spécial de sécurité alimentaire qui offre des perspectives quant à la réalisation des orientations de la politique de production agricole et pastorale inscrite au coeur de notre politique de développement, comme rappelé par le Président du Faso, lors de son adresse au Sommet mondial de l'alimentation.

Je cite: "Les axes d'effort de cette dynamique s'articulent autour de: la modernisation et la diversification de la production à travers une technologie maîtrisable; la maîtrise de l'eau et la sauvegarde de l'environnement; l'appui à la coopération paysanne en vue d'un meilleur encadrement des producteurs; l'implication massive des jeunes dans la production en favorisant leur installation dans leurs terroirs; la promotion des activités rémunératrices des femmes à travers leur organisation, leur encadrement et l'appui au financement de micro-entreprises à leur profit; la mobilisation de l'épargne nationale pour le financement du secteur agro-pastoral; la transformation de nos produits locaux et la promotion de leur consommation".

Dans le cadre du suivi de la Déclaration de Rome sur la sécurité alimentaire et du Plan d'action du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, la société civile burkinabè s'est manifestée pour accompagner les efforts du Gouvernement dans la poursuite de la sécurité alimentaire.

Ainsi, elle s'est organisée dans les composantes suivantes: communautés coutumières et religieuses; mouvements en faveur des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie; association de femmes, de jeunes; organisations d'artistes, d'hommes du spectacle et de lettres, et représentants du monde du sport et des médias; organisations non gouvernementales caritatives et de développement; organisations professionnelles agricoles; Industriels et hommes d'affaires.

Cette mobilisation de la société civile lui a permis de lancer le 17 Octobre 1997, dans le cadre de la Journée mondiale de l'alimentation et d'Alimentel, un appel contre la faim et pour la sécurité alimentaire.

La sécurité alimentaire, la lutte contre la faim et la pauvreté demeurent des enjeux imposent aux gouvernements et à la communauté internationale des engagements renouvelés. Aussi, pour un

meilleur devenir de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture dans le monde, mandat que la FAO assume avec beaucoup de persévérance depuis plus de cinquante ans et auquel Monsieur Jacques Diouf a donné une nouvelle impulsion, voudrais-je me convaincre que notre Conférence ne manquera pas de penser aux moyens conséquents dont notre organisation a besoin pour cette noble mission.

Pour ce faire, le Gouvernement du Burkina Faso invite les Etats Members à déployer plus d'efforts pour la réalisation des engagements pris au Sommet de Rome, notamment en soutenant au moins les propositions relatives au scénario d'un budget à croissance zéro réelle.

Pour terminer, il me plaît ici d'exprimer toute la gratitude du Gouvernement du Burkina Faso pour l'assistance dont il a toujours bénéficié auprès de la FAO. C'est également ici le lieu de renouveler notre confiance et nos encouragements à son Directeur Général.

Hamad AL DUAJ (Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of) (Original language Arabic)

On behalf of the Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia I wish to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of this Conference as well as to your Vice-Chairman, wishing you every success in the tasks assigned to you. I also wish to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation in considering the items of the agenda in this session. We hope that our deliberations and the resolutions to be adopted by this important international Conference will help realize the aspirations of the people of the developing countries and the world at large, namely the provision of healthy food for all, facing up to future challenges, and curbing the spread of hunger and the eradication of dramatic situations afflicting many people of the world.

It also gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Director-General of FAO and his assistants for the positive achievements which he enumerated in his comprehensive statement delivered this morning, hoping that this capacity to give on their part would enable the Organization to continue its march for the good of humanity.

We are all aware of the fact that the prices of most of the food and agriculture commodities will gradually increase during the forthcoming period as a result of the application of the World Trade Organization agreements, particularly the prices of those commodities imported from the developing countries. This in turn will make the bill of imported food commodities much higher, particularly for the developing countries which depend largely on importation for the provision of most of their food commodities to its people at a time when the latter, the developing countries, are still overburdened with heavy external debts. As referred to by the Director-General the total world debts amounted to US\$ 2 177 billion in 1996, whereas the national income of the developing countries has sharply declined. This situation will have a great adverse impact on the economic and social conditions of the developing countries. In this context, we urge the international community to endeavour seriously with perseverance to find solutions to these problems in having them overcome this obstacle so that they may depend on their national production and achieve self-sufficiency in many of their agricultural commodities.

On this occasion, the Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to highlight the achievements of the agricultural sector in the Kingdom despite the limited natural resources with which we are endowed. Over the span of a few years, the Kingdom has been able to achieve self-sufficiency in many food commodities thanks to our ambitious leadership which adopted sound policies and plans aiming at developing the agriculture sector. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has become an exporting country for many of the commodities instead of being a food-importing country.

The realization of any measure of self-sufficiency within limited resources is in itself a remarkable achievement. The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took the lead in this regard. It has, therefore, earmarked since the First Development Plan huge appropriations to the agricultural sector, programmes and projects. Equal appropriations were made available for all

the institutions that would, directly or indirectly, contribute to the achievement of the goals of the agricultural sector, at the forefront of which was the Arab Saudi Agricultural Bank which extended soft loans free of interest that amounted to 28 billion rials, the equivalent of US\$ 7.5 billion. The necessary funds were also allocated for the establishment of infrastructure and institutions, particularly research centres, human resources, training institutes and agricultural extension centres, in addition to a comprehensive survey for a system of plant irrigation and conservation of the natural resources. The Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia takes pride in referring to the fact that their agricultural sector in the Kingdom achieved an annual growth rate of 8.4 percent during the period 1969-95. The GNP of the agricultural sector has amounted to 31.6 billion Saudi rials in current value of 1995. Thus the contribution of the agricultural sector to the GNP of the non-oil sectors reached 10.4 percent in 1995. The crop areas of the Kingdom have increased from 600 000 hectares to 1.6 billion hectares with a subsequent increase in plant and animal production which enabled us to achieve high rates of self-sufficiency as follows: 80 percent in vegetables and fruits and with surplus for exports during the peak period of production.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has followed with great interest the proposed Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 1998-99. Taking into account the ongoing debate on the PWB, we hope our Conference will reach consensus on the proposed Programme of Work and Budget so as to enable the Organization to fulfil its mandate at the desired levels.

Before concluding I wish, on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to welcome the Republic of Kazakhstan which has just joined our Organization, assuring it our full cooperation and appreciation in advance for its contribution.

In conclusion I cannot but reiterate our thanks to the Chairman of the Conference for his good leadership, to the Director-General of the FAO and his assistants for the excellent preparation of the Conference which facilitated the tasks of the delegations, hoping that this Conference would reach positive results which, in turn, will enhance the objectives of the Organization. I thank you for your attention.

Beglar Tavartkiladze, Vice Chairman of the Conference, took the Chair
Beglar Tavartkiladze, Vice-Président de la Conférence, assume la présidence
Ocupa la presidencia Beglar Tavartkiladze, Vicepresidente de la Conferencia

CHAIRMAN

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to preside over such an important session as the Plenary meeting of the FAO Conference. I would like to express gratitude for this opportunity, on behalf of the Georgian Government.

Mitsuzo KISHIMOTO (Japan) (Original language Japanese)

I am greatly honoured to have this opportunity to represent the Japanese Government at this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference, and to have a close and candid exchange of views with such distinguished delegates. At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, Your Excellency Dr Lyle Vanclief, for your unanimous election as Chairman of this Conference and express my deep respect to Dr Jacques Diouf for his successful accomplishments under his strong leadership since being appointed as FAO Director General.

I believe the World Food Summit, which was held last November, was very meaningful in raising many people's awareness on food and agriculture issues and in affirming the political will of the Heads of State of all countries to achieve world food security through concrete actions as agreed in the Plan of Action. I believe that the Rome Declaration and the Plan of Action should serve as the basis for addressing various problems that hinder the achievement of world food security in all countries and the Plan of Action and it should be respected. It is important that individual governments that have the primary responsibility to realize the Plan take specific action in cooperation with international organizations and civil society.

In order to eradicate hunger and achieve world food security, I believe the following points are essential:

First, food-importing countries need to promote sustainable domestic production by effectively utilizing their production resources, and appropriately combining food imports, reserves and domestic production to secure stable food supplies.

Secondly, food-exporting countries have the responsibility of ensuring stable food supplies to their trading partners.

Thirdly, food aid is needed, as a temporary measure, for developing countries with many undernourished people; these countries also need to improve their food production capacity by themselves, with technical and financial support from the international community. In addition, an appropriate level of domestic production needs to be maintained so that agriculture can properly play its multifunctional role. I recall that these ideas were affirmed by the Rome Declaration and the Plan of Action.

With respect to the world cereal supply and demand situation, my country, as the largest net food importer in the world, is concerned that the world cereal stock level is currently estimated to remain at the low level of 15 percent. We are also concerned about the crop damages arising from the drought which has supposedly been caused by *El Niño* since last March, and other natural calamities, especially in Southeast Asia and Latin America.

Moreover, in the mid-to long-term, against a backdrop of the growing world population and the rapidly improving diet, it is apparent that, in the future, there will be more constraints placed on increasing food production, such as the emergence of global environmental problems and the finite nature of resources for food production, which includes land and water resources.

When we consider the vulnerability of world food and agriculture production and the existence of over 800 million undernourished, mainly in Asia and Africa, I believe it is most important for each country, especially those in the developing world, to make efforts to secure a stable food supply by promoting sustainable domestic food production to achieve food security. Food, as well as the environment and population, is a global issue to which mankind should devote its wisdom in the coming Twenty-first century.

With this recognition in mind, my country has actively been promoting technical and financial cooperation to increase domestic food production in developing countries, along with their self-help efforts, and pursuing sustainable agriculture and rural development. As a result, Japan's share of the world's total bilateral assistance in the area of food and agriculture is currently at 26 percent.

Despite an increasingly severe fiscal situation in Japan in recent years, my country is determined to place a high priority on food and agriculture in our international cooperation programmes and will strengthen its efforts, as far as possible, to realize effective and efficient cooperation, despite our limited budget.

I would like to touch upon the issues of forests, forestry and fisheries. I believe the united efforts of the international community to pursue sustainable forest management is important. I expect that FAO will continue to strengthen its activities towards the resolution of problems in forests and forestry such as the Global Forest Resources Assessment and will continue to study the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation in cooperation with other international organizations into the future.

Now, with regard to the fishing industry, this plays an important role in food supply and in job creation. In the light of future population growth, the role of fisheries in achieving food security is expected to increase its importance. However, we face problems such as insufficient information on marine fish stocks, lack of biologically-sound criteria for the assessment of marine fish stocks, and over-fishing resulting from excessive fishing capacity.

Since FAO is a unique UN Specialized Agency which deals with the fisheries issue from a global perspective based on scientific and socio-economic knowledge, I expect FAO to further contribute to the promotion of the sustainable use of marine fish resources by actively addressing these urgent issues.

As agreed at the World Food Summit, in order to solve the difficult world food problems and attain world food security as we reach the Twenty-first century, it is indispensable to address the subject in a comprehensive and well-balanced manner.

I think all countries should reaffirm and act in conformity with the results of the World Food Summit and should sufficiently take them into account in the discussion on food and agriculture at other international fora so that they will be fully reflected. In this case, I believe, FAO, as an international organization, with comprehensive responsibility over food, agriculture and food security problems, should contribute most actively to the discussions on food, agriculture and food security.

I would like to conclude by saying that my country will contribute to enhance the function of FAO in order to solve world food problems and to develop world agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Carlos Agostinho DO ROSARIO (Mozambique) (Original language Portuguese)

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Mozambique, I would like to congratulate you on your election, Sir, to the Chairmanship of this Conference as Minister of Agriculture and Agrifood of Canada. I would also like to extend my special congratulations to FAO and particularly to its Director-General, Mr Jacques Diouf.

Mozambique is predominantly an agricultural country. The agrarian policy and the strategy for its implementation adopted by the Government of Mozambique, as well as the climatic conditions, are in general favourable to the agricultural development of Mozambique.

The production of cereals in Mozambique has been increasing successfully by 22 percent in 1995-96 and by 11 percent in 1996-97, this last year achieving a production of 1 469 000 tons. It is important to take into consideration the fact that, for the first time since the independence of Mozambique in 1975, the country has achieved self-sufficiency in maize production, exceeding the annual consumption requirements of the population by 100 thousand tons. However, in spite of these positive results in the last four crop years, food deficits in cereals are still about 200 thousand tons, mostly because of a deficit in rice and wheat production.

In Mozambique, efforts are being made to achieve food security and this is very visible, but we recognize that much still has to be done. In fact, in pursuing the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, the Government of Mozambique is developing a number of activities with emphasis on the following points:

The development of National Agricultural Programmes for which the final evaluation by the donor community will take place this year. This programme was conceived to cover the next five years and it is of great importance for agrarian development in Mozambique. It will involve an estimated investment of about US\$200-300 million and will allow integration of public sector investment in agriculture in order to have a multiple impact on development of agricultural activities, thus reflecting the policy and priorities of the Government in agricultural development, and we are happy to take this opportunity to request support of the donor community for this programme.

We are now also in the process of reviewing and revising the National Plan for Nutrition.

In Mozambique we have concluded the preparatory phase to launch a Special Programme for Food-Production in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries, and this phase has been concluded with the support of FAO. For this purpose, six districts have been selected and we hope to extend the programme to two more districts, with potential for rice production.

We have registered a deficit in the production of rice, though the country has some comparative advantages in Southern Africa in what concerns agro-ecology for this type of cereal.

The multiparty Parliament of the Republic of Mozambique approved the new Land Law, which constitutes the main tool for access and use of land by peasants and attracts national and foreign investment.

We have already concluded the elaboration of the Guiding Plan in Fisheries.

We are in the process of implementing the Programme for Livestock and, as a result of this, cattle production increased from 214 thousand head in 1993 to 400 thousand head in 1997.

We are continuing the elaboration of legislation for the rational and sustainable use of forest, wildlife and fisheries resources, involving local communities.

With support from FAO, we are also carrying on implementing our Programme for Red Locust Infestation.

Information on the evolution of the *El Niño* phenomenon shows that the Southern Region of Africa will be seriously affected by drought in the crop year 1997-98. Thus the Government of Mozambique has prepared a Special Action Plan with measures to deal with any drought arising in Mozambique. If drought occurs in Mozambique, this situation will create difficulties for our current efforts to achieve food security. We would therefore like to ask the international community and the United Nations to help us in this Plan to fight against the consequences of the *El Niño* phenomenon.

We recognize that food security is not only something that has to be assured through agricultural production, but that the Government of Mozambique has to have as its priorities sustainable development, mostly in rural areas, using human resources to the best possible extent, and making rational and sustainable use of natural resources. It believes that investment in infrastructures supporting production, construction and rehabilitation of roads, commercial networks, irrigation networks as well as small-scale infrastructures for conservation of post-harvest production, is especially important at the production level.

Most of the activities undertaken in Mozambique to combat hunger and malnutrition are beyond the actual capability of the Government, and their implementation would not be possible without technical assistance from FAO and other institutions of the United Nations system. We need continuous support, like most developing countries, to achieve food security and therefore my Government supports the zero real growth option for the FAO budget for the next biennium. We think that other options being considered by some Member Nations will only result in cutting out some projects which are of high priority for our countries, and thus endanger the achievement of the goals of the World Food Summit.

Lastly, Mr Chairman, the Republic of Mozambique reiterates once again its support and commitment for transforming the Rome Declaration on Food Security and the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit into concrete actions, as adopted in this very Hall in 1996.

A.M.M. SHAWKAT ALI (Bangladesh)

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to address the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. The Twenty-ninth Conference of FAO is a very significant event which, after a year of the momentous World Food Summit, has given us opportunities to evaluate our performances in alleviating hunger and poverty in the world.

We have carefully read document C 97/2 and have observed with great pleasure that the growth rate of global production of crops and livestock in 1996 was 2.6 percent, which is a little higher than the growth in the previous year. However, growth rates varied significantly across regions and countries. While we appreciate the strong growth rates in developed countries, especially in Africa, it is with great concern that we note that the growth of agricultural production has slowed down quite dramatically in Asia and in the Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Low-

Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs) are caught in a vicious circle of poverty, undernourishment, unemployment and low growth. It is of grave concern to observe that during the last five years, *per capita* food production in the countries with lowest energy intake has remained at the same level. It implies that the modest growth that in some cases has occurred has been overshadowed by the growth in population.

At the World Food Summit, world leaders pledged their political will and commitment to eradicate hunger where it occurs most, within a reasonable timeframe. However, the following features underscore the contradictions between commitment and actions.

First, the successful negotiations of GATT and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have not yet helped the export of agricultural products from developing countries to developed ones in a meaningful way.

Secondly, the price of major agricultural commodities produced in LDCs were not encouraging in 1996. The adverse terms of trade of the tradeable agricultural products from LDCs has put extreme pressure on these countries.

Thirdly, the level of food aid for development purposes has fallen dramatically during the last few years. In the LDCs, food for development has helped not only to create infrastructure and employment in rural areas, but also helped in reaching the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children, in order to ensure that they receive a minimum level of food.

Fourthly, external assistance to agriculture from bilateral and multilateral donors has been falling at an alarming pace. Paragraph 22 of the document indicates that in 1995, assistance to agriculture recorded an 8.6 percent decline compared to the previous year.

It is in the process of production intensification where FAO's role becomes important. Due to the inability to increase the present cultivable area and to create employment opportunities in and out of agriculture, intensification of production appears to be the logical answer to the problem of food security. We have always considered FAO as the Centre of Excellence in agricultural matters and have benefited immensely from it. Technical Cooperation Programme projects in various countries have moral responsibilities to share the benefits arising out of advanced research in biotechnology and genetic engineering.

It is necessary to understand that no amount of international, bilateral and multilateral assistance will be fruitful unless appropriate policy and other process-oriented actions are undertaken effectively at the national level. We, in Bangladesh, as a follow-up measure to the World Food Summit, have adopted a long-term National Strategy for Agricultural Development.

As a follow-up to the World Food Summit, in collaboration with FAO, the Bangladesh Government has taken the initiative of setting up different projects covering important areas of food security at national, regional and household levels. We have already identified 19 projects. Meanwhile, UNDP has also shown an interest in funding some of these projects. We are continuing the dialogue with other development partners to find the needed assistance for the rest of the projects which remain unfunded. Moreover, the following action has already been taken by the Government of Bangladesh: the Ministry of Agriculture, with the assistance of FAO, has prepared a government document entitled "Major Strategies and Programme Framework for Agricultural Development in Bangladesh"; in order to implement the decisions of the World Food Summit, and a policy document entitled "Strategy of National Agriculture Development Horizon 2010" is being drafted in close collaboration with FAO. The document indicates the medium-term development strategy to attain food security; the Government of Bangladesh, in collaboration with FAO and other donors also has prepared and finalized the National Plan of Action on Nutrition.

Some of the on-going collaborative efforts with FAO include areas such as strengthening support services to irrigated agriculture, development and use of hybrid rice and creation of strategies and programme frameworks for agricultural development in Bangladesh.

There are as many as 12 projects in the pipeline covering various aspects of agricultural development, including community empowerment of household food security. It is expected that the completion of these projects will enable Bangladesh to attain the objectives of the World Food Summit.

The Government of Bangladesh is fully aware of the food insecurity situation in the country. Accordingly, it always tries to ensure minimum required supplies of grains, especially rice to the market, through domestic production and imports in bad harvest years in the form of food aid and grants or large commercial purchases. The output of cereals has risen from 19.1 million metric tons (mmt) in 1996 to 20.34 mmt in 1997. This was largely due to favourable weather, better input supply management and low pest attack. The target for cereal output for 1997 is expected to be 6.72 percent higher than that of 96.

We are also hopeful that, in collaboration with FAO and support from other development partners, we will be able to eradicate poverty and reduce the number of undernourished people in our country, thus fulfilling the pledge made at the World Food Summit 1996.

Lastly, Mr Chairman, I would like to thank the Director General of FAO for his unfailing efforts to assist developing countries in achieving global food autonomy.

Lembrabott S. Mahmoud OULD CHEIKH AHMED (Mauritanie) (Langue originale arabe)

Permettez moi tout d'abord, Monsieur le Président, de vous adresser nos félicitations les plus sincères à l'occasion de votre élection à la présidence de notre présente session. Nous sommes certains que vous allez pouvoir diriger au mieux les travaux de cette session afin que nous puissions parvenir aux résultats auxquels nous aspirons.

Je voudrais également saisir cette opportunité pour remercier le Gouvernement italien pour l'accueil chaleureux et l'hospitalité généreuse dont nous avons été l'objet depuis notre arrivée dans cette ville éternelle de Rome.

Je voudrais également remercier le Directeur général de la FAO, Monsieur Jacques Diouf, et ses collaborateurs, pour la parfaite organisation de cette Conférence. Je voudrais également adresser nos félicitations à la République du Kazakhstan qui vient d'être admise comme Membre de la FAO.

La présente Conférence revêt une importance toute particulière pour plusieurs raisons. D'une part, c'est la première conférence générale de notre organisation après le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation qui s'est tenu ici même, dans cette salle, il y a un an. Ce Sommet, dont le suivi occupe une part importante de l'ordre du jour de nos présents travaux, a été une occasion pour les dirigeants et Chefs d'Etats et de Gouvernements de réaffirmer au plus haut niveau leur engagement, d'éliminer la faim et la malnutrition et d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire pour tous en honorant les sept engagements du Plan d'action adopté à l'issue du Sommet. Notre pays a joué un rôle d'avant-garde dans la préparation de ce Sommet, en ce sens que le choix s'est porté sur Son Excellence le Président de la Mauritanie Monsieur Maaouiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya pour faire partie du Comité des souverains et Chefs d'Etats chargés du parrainage de cette manifestation internationale historique. La deuxième raison pour laquelle la présente session est si importante est qu'elle se tient dans un contexte où l'Organisation, en sa qualité de principal organisme responsable de la sécurité alimentaire à l'échelle planétaire, a mené à bien d'importantes réformes structurelles qui ont accru ses capacités et ses performances.

Si au cours des précédentes conférences nous avons attiré l'attention sur les insuffisances qui limitaient l'efficacité de l'Organisation, à savoir la centralisation excessive des moyens, particulièrement des moyens humains, la confusion des orientations, la dispersion des efforts, et les lourdeurs du système bureaucratique, il est réconfortant de constater aujourd'hui que les réformes engagées par le Directeur général ont grandement contribué à trouver des solutions idoines à ces problèmes.

En effet, des orientations claires ont été définies; elles accordent la priorité absolue à la sécurité alimentaire grâce à l'exécution d'une série de programmes spéciaux tels que le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire, et le programme EMPRES, système de prévention et de réponse rapide contre les ravageurs et les maladies transfrontalières. De même, la révision de la structure de l'Organisation a permis le transfert de plusieurs compétences aux bureaux nationaux et régionaux, la simplification des procédures et l'allègement des coûts.

La délégation de mon pays, tout en enregistrant avec satisfaction ces réformes et adressant à cette occasion ses chaleureuses félicitations au Directeur général pour le travail accompli, voudrait rappeler en même temps la nécessité de déployer davantage d'efforts afin que l'Organisation puisse répondre aux exigences de promotion des moyens de production alimentaire dans le monde.

En effet, nombreux sont les pays en développement qui ne possèdent pas encore les technologies de production nécessaires. Cela apparaît à travers l'utilisation de méthodes primitives dans les systèmes de production végétale et animale, l'absence d'utilisation des intrants de production moderne, la non-maîtrise de l'eau et l'absence de techniques de conservation et de stockage des produits agricoles.

Le concept de sécurité alimentaire est un concept complexe ayant plusieurs facettes si la réalisation de la croissance économique peut être considérée comme un élément clé de la sécurité alimentaire. Cette condition fondamentale reste néanmoins insuffisante à elle seule. Cette croissance doit plutôt se faire dans le cadre de politiques économiques globales, multisectorielles, qui mettent l'accent sur le développement de l'agriculture, fixent des systèmes appropriés de prix et de lutte contre la pauvreté et prennent en considération la dimension environnementale dans l'activité de production afin que l'exploitation des ressources naturelles puisse se faire de façon à assurer le renouvellement et la durabilité de ces ressources.

Partant de cette approche, le gouvernement de mon pays a procédé depuis le milieu des années 80 à une révision globale de sa politique économique. L'assurance d'une alimentation appropriée aux populations occupe une place de choix dans nos nouvelles orientations économiques. En effet, une politique claire dans les domaines de développement des ressources agro-pastorales, de la pêche et de la lutte contre la pauvreté a été définie. La politique agricole ainsi mise en oeuvre vise l'augmentation du taux d'autosuffisance alimentaire dans l'ensemble du secteur rural, l'amélioration des conditions de vie des populations, l'augmentation des revenus et la préservation de l'environnement et des ressources naturelles. Pour ce qui est du cheptel qui contribue pour près de 20 pour cent au PIB, la politique du gouvernement a permis de limiter les pertes qui résultaient des maladies frappant le cheptel, de créer un premier noyau d'industrialisation de ce secteur, en particulier les laiteries. La promotion et la modernisation de l'élevage constituent actuellement la préoccupation majeure des pouvoirs publics. Au niveau de la protection de l'environnement, les superficies reboisées au cours de la période entre 1985 et 1995 ont atteint 44 896 hectares.

Nous voudrions ici rappeler que notre pays a signé et ratifié l'essentiel des conventions internationales adoptées dans le domaine de la protection de l'environnement comme les conventions de Rio relatives aux changements climatiques, à la protection de la biodiversité, ainsi que la Convention internationale de lutte contre la désertification. Nos efforts portent actuellement sur l'élaboration et l'exécution de programmes d'application de ces conventions.

Pour assurer la sécurité alimentaire, les politiques de l'offre et de la demande ne suffisent pas à elles seules, particulièrement dans les pays en voie de développement qui souffrent d'une baisse du taux de scolarisation et de l'insuffisance de la formation professionnelle. Il faut y ajouter aussi l'enclavement, car des zones entières sont enclavées. Il est donc impératif de mener des politiques d'appui aux communautés les plus pauvres, ce qui justifie la nécessité de mettre en oeuvre des politiques nationales de lutte contre la pauvreté.

Permettez-moi de réaffirmer à nouveau l'engagement de la République islamique de Mauritanie et son attachement aux résolutions du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation et nous ne ménagerons aucun effort pour l'application de la Déclaration de Rome et du Plan d'action issus de ce Sommet historique. Nous oeuvrerons sans relâche pour traduire ce document en actions concrètes dont nous espérons tirer sous peu les fruits et dont les générations futures pourront bénéficier.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much for your interesting statement and we wish you a successful implementation of the particular Special Programme for Food Security in your country which is so important for the food security in developing countries.

Miroslav BOSIC (Croatia)

It is a great honour and pleasure to address participants of the Twenty-ninth Conference of FAO on behalf of the Republic of Croatia. Please let me thank our hosts, the Republic of Italy, for the exceptional hospitality and organization surrounding all the Conference.

The Republic of Croatia became a Member of the United Nations in the spring of 1992 and soon after that became a Member of most of the Specialized Agencies of the UN. It became a Member of FAO in November 1993. In so doing, Croatia has recognized its aim to become a Member of a circle of countries that intend to develop the process of democratization by cooperation, and thus join the countries with a developed democratic system and market economy. Although the use of economic potentials and natural resources in agriculture was severely reduced due to war damage, I can with pleasure say that Croatia has, together with international humanitarian help, pursued agricultural and economic policies that have enabled us to avoid restrictions in food supply.

At the same time, Croatia has not lost sight of the orientation of reconstruction and development towards market economy principles. Such vitality of agricultural production, even in the most severe war conditions, is a good sign of the real agricultural potential of Croatia and a realistic basis for future reconstruction and development.

During previous years, the Republic of Croatia had fruitful cooperation with FAO through its Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry which was focused on analysis of the agricultural sector in Croatia and defining of the strategy of its development and infrastructural and institutional building of Croatian agriculture. Since the Republic of Croatia became a Member of FAO in 1993, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has cooperated with FAO in several projects. Firstly, it has cooperated in the strategy for development of agriculture. It should be pointed out that this project has been successfully completed, resulting in the publishing of a document "Overview of the Situation and Strategy for Development of Croatian Agriculture". The authors are both Croatian and international experts, and the document has become a basis for the agricultural policy in Croatia, which is currently being implemented. Then the projects on Farmer Support Service and Wholesale Market Programmes are also being implemented successfully.

We believe it is also necessary to underline the participation of Croatia in the World Food Summit in November last year. As a new country on the political map of the world and a new member of FAO with a strong tradition in development of agriculture, agricultural sciences and education, as well as relatively huge agriculture production capacities, Croatia pays special attention to problems of food supply and therefore strongly supported the idea of holding the World Food Summit.

It is obvious that modern civilization is facing important historic changes in agriculture. It is important to assure the necessary quantity of food while, at the same time, keeping the environment, air, soil and water, clean and ensuring profits for producers which will motivate them to constantly increase production, which is not an easy task at all.

The decision of Croatia to implement sustainable development programmes in which tourism and agriculture will have an especially important position is unquestionable. Such orientation presumes a protected environment on the one hand, and a wealthy and diverse supply of food on the other hand; including of course, the special quality food which is produced in alternative ways.

Despite our complex economic situation and similar problems which I would say all the transitional countries face, especially in Central and Eastern Europe where my country is situated, Croatia is continuing to improve its agricultural sector. In spite of big losses in production capacity due to war and the loss of markets due to the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, the agricultural sector in Croatia has proven to be very elastic even in the most severe war conditions. The main development potentials are a high level of technological competence, the readiness of private farmers - and Croatian agriculture is dominantly led by private farmers, natural and other conditions for the reconstruction of production and concentration on the varieties of production for which Croatia has comparative advantages. It is the intention of the Government to balance its support for the overall development of the rural areas, through which the migration of rural population to towns will diminish, together with a decrease in unemployment and the rise of the living standards of the rural population.

The Croatian Government will continue to demonstrate its readiness to cooperate with the recognized international experts with the aim of developing rural areas, especially in light of its acceptance of the strategy for development whose provisions are compatible with the final document of WOTOU, for the four aspiring members to the EU ranks.

Lyle VANCLIEF (Canada)

Canada has been a strong supporter of FAO since its inception. In yesterday's paper, here in Rome, an Italian paper, it was said, and I quote, "Canada is a strong country ... it is a country that helps build consensus."

Representing Canada here, I hope that I can live up to that reputation.

We need to build a strong consensus around the objectives of this Organization, and around its work programme. We need to work together to alleviate hunger and ensure food security.

Our resolve to work together should measure up to the challenges before us: we cannot fail.

In recent years, agriculture all over the world has been confronted by globalization, demands for greater efficiency, for protecting the environment, improving productivity, adapting to new trade rules and fiscal restraint. These are our day-to-day realities, our challenges and, at the same time, our opportunities.

Let me say a few words about the State of Food and Agriculture in Canada. In Canada, we have chosen to confront the forces of change and we have made comprehensive policy reforms.

We have significantly reduced spending on the agricultural sector. We opened the sector to more competition - our industry went truly global. In the face of these pressures, our industry did not falter. It rose to the challenge and has become more self-reliant. It has achieved its world trade objective by reaching \$ 20 billion in exports, four years ahead of its target.

I am encouraged by the level of optimism in the sector and the willingness of different players to work together as partners, to adapt, to increase competitiveness, and to pursue opportunities.

Canada supports a well-functioning multilateral trade system and further trade reform. Such a system contributes to the goal of the World Food Summit Plan of Action - "to provide food for the world".

We recognize that some countries are not as fortunate as Canada. Many have not yet been able to take advantage of the opportunities created under a more open trade environment.

Canada has supported the special provisions for developing countries within the new WTO framework. These provisions will allow them more leeway in implementing their commitments.

While we prepare for negotiations that will start two years from now, we need to build more bridges between developed and developing countries. These bridges will help ensure that all partners can fully take part in these talks.

FAO's role is that of a catalyst. It can help to ensure that the necessary bridges are built between countries, governments and civil society.

The United Nations and its Agencies have recognized that new ways of doing business must be found. To meet rising expectations of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency, FAO will need to adopt new work methods and technologies. It will need to forge new partners and new partnerships with the private sector.

We commend the Organization on achieving economies and encourage it to continue its efforts of reform and budget restraint.

Like the other 185 countries at the World Food Summit, Canada endorsed the Rome Declaration to reduce hunger and malnutrition by half by the year 2015. During the past year, we in Canada have worked toward a truly collaborative National Plan, a National Plan of Action for Food Security.

We have been taking stock of food security in Canada and of our international development programmes. We have consulted with 350 non-governmental organizations. We have asked what they are doing and what parts of society are not reached. We will create a plan that is flexible and responsible - where everyone takes responsibility, not just government.

Last November, we agreed that progress in achieving food security is strongly linked to participation and inclusion, it is also strongly linked to the respect for human rights, peace and an end to conflict.

Canada has been at the forefront of the campaign to eradicate the use of land mines in the past year. Farmers cannot plant seeds if they are afraid of losing a leg. Over one hundred countries from every corner of the world are expected to sign an agreement in Ottawa in early December to ban anti-personnel mines. I urge each of your governments to come to Ottawa to help put an end to their use.

To conclude, let me renew Canada's pledge to take responsibility at the national level - and to work in partnership within the international community to ensure that we reach or exceed the goal we set a year ago.

Colleagues, a few moments ago I said that in order to cut the number of hungry people in half by the year 2015 we need to work together. I ask everyone to note how close the flags are in this room today. We need to be that close, colleagues, in our goal to reduce hunger. We need to leave this hall and this Conference, after talking the talk, we need to walk the walk as members of FAO.

CHAIRMAN

We had no doubt that such an excellent Chairman of the Conference would represent his Government's statement with equal success.

Benalia BELAHOUADJEB (Algérie) (Langue originale arabe)

J'ai le privilège au nom de la délégation algérienne que je conduis et en mon nom personnel de vous adresser mes chaleureuses salutations pour votre accession à la présidence de la 29^{ème} Conférence de la FAO.

Nous sommes convaincus que, grâce à votre présidence éclairée, à votre compétence et à vos qualités personnelles, nos travaux seront couronnés de succès.

Nos félicitations s'adressent également aux membres du Bureau.

Qu'il me soit permis ici également de rendre un vibrant hommage à Monsieur Jacques Diouf, Directeur général de la FAO, pour ses initiatives nombreuses mises au service de nobles objectifs tels que l'éradication de la faim et de la malnutrition et la lutte contre la pauvreté dans le monde.

Au nombre de celles-ci, nous voudrions faire référence au Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, tenu en novembre dernier ici à Rome, et plus récemment au TéléFood réalisé grâce au concours précieux de la télévision italienne, à laquelle nous adressons nos vifs encouragements.

Les efforts que Monsieur Jacques Diouf déploie pour les grandes causes, et l'engagement indéfectible et soutenu dont il ne cesse de faire preuve pour gagner la bataille contre la pauvreté dans le monde, sont un gage certain de la concrétisation des principes et des idéaux de l'Organisation.

Pour la communauté internationale, l'élimination de la faim et de la malnutrition constitue un impératif irréversible et le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation en définit le tissu. Un tel impératif dont la communauté internationale a déjà saisi l'ampleur doit, pour sa réalisation, reposer sur un ensemble cohérent de politiques et de mesures afin d'assurer les bases d'un système de sécurité alimentaire collectif, viable et durable.

L'Algérie, consciente des enjeux et des défis, milite pour sa part pour que l'objectif de développement de l'économie rurale soit placé parmi ses priorités nationales.

Fort de son expérience, ainsi que de l'engagement pris par son Gouvernement lors du Sommet mondial pour assurer à sa population une sécurité alimentaire, l'Algérie oeuvre pour libérer toutes les initiatives nécessaires au développement agricole et à la promotion des conditions de vie et de travail des populations rurales.

Dans ce cadre, notre pays consacre des efforts considérables pour canaliser toutes les énergies afin de doter le monde rural de l'environnement nécessaire pour un développement agricole soutenu et viable.

Dans cette optique, la lutte contre la pauvreté et la conjoncture qui favorise la pérennité de la sécurité des approvisionnements alimentaires restent pour nous des priorités essentielles.

Dans cette marche résolue, l'Algérie a initié une action stratégique qui vise à mobiliser les ressources financières, techniques et humaines pour atteindre l'objectif escompté.

Nous sommes convaincus que le développement de l'économie rurale reste un objectif essentiel.

Monsieur Jacques Diouf, Directeur général de la FAO, qui nous a fait l'honneur d'assister l'année dernière à la Conférence nationale sur le développement agricole a pu prendre connaissance des efforts de l'Algérie pour la définition et la mise en oeuvre d'un programme d'actions communes impliquant toutes les composantes de la société pour assurer la redynamisation d'un développement multiforme de son agriculture.

Ce programme, consolidé et enrichi, comprend des actions nouvelles. Il a été approuvé par notre Parlement en août dernier et se propose des actions nouvelles visant à surmonter les contraintes liées notamment à : la précarité et la variabilité des conditions climatiques liées à un taux d'irrigation et de mobilisation hydriques inadéquats; la faiblesse des surfaces en terres cultivables et les retards qui prévalent dans les modes et les techniques culturales; les difficultés liées à l'accès aux crédits bancaires et aux financements, ainsi qu'à l'intégration des secteurs intervenant dans le développement agricole; les contraintes issues des contentieux fonciers et de l'absence d'un cadre législatif de nature à favoriser l'investissement et la modernisation agricole.

Ce programme tient également compte de la dynamique d'intégration de l'économie nationale, désormais libre, aux exigences de la mondialisation, mais aussi la protection indispensable des efforts de relance et de développement agricole.

C'est dans ce contexte que l'Algérie, partageant le même souci avec les pays de sa région et, en général, de ceux en voie de développement souhaiterait voir la FAO jouer un rôle plus important dans l'assistance technique à l'adaptation des économies rurales aux nouvelles données de la mondialisation.

C'est aussi dans ce contexte qu'une participation plus active de la FAO dans la lutte contre les grands fléaux tels que la désertification, le criquet pèlerin et d'autres est plus que souhaitée.

Voilà pourquoi enfin nous appuyons tous les efforts visant à garantir la mobilisation des ressources financières nécessaires à notre organisation afin qu'elle puisse répondre aux besoins d'assistance les plus urgents des pays en développement.

Je ne terminerai pas sans rappeler que, dans un monde en pleine recomposition, assurer pour tous l'accès à une alimentation saine et suffisante relève d'une exigence morale et politique certes, mais traduit également un besoin de solidarité rendue plus nécessaire que jamais par les interdépendances croissantes qui structurent l'économie mondiale.

L'Algérie, pays importateur net de produits agro-alimentaires, s'applique à concrétiser les impératifs de la sécurité alimentaire pour toute sa population, mais compte pour ce faire sur la collaboration d'une coopération économique intégrée, qu'elle soit sous-régionale, régionale ou mondiale.

Dambuzo II LUKHELE (Swaziland)

It is exactly twelve months ago that world political leaders met here to express their personal and their country's commitment to the eradication of the scourge of hunger and malnutrition. As a follow up to the 1996 World Food Summit, the Kingdom of Swaziland launched a permanent national consultative committee on food and security. This committee, which comprises a broad section of stakeholders, from the public, the private and NGO sectors, is charged with the responsibility of assisting the country to undertake a number of crucial post-Summit activities, which will hopefully lead to a 50 percent reduction of the hungry and malnourished population by the year 2015.

We have also completed most, if not all, the preparatory work for the launching of the Special Programme on Food Security in early 1998. For this we wish to express our appreciation for the dedicated commitment of the administrative technical staff of the FAO Sub-regional Office in Harare, Zimbabwe.

In effect, my country also wishes to commend the Director-General for recommending the move to decentralize FAO services by establishing the Sub-regional offices. I can only hope that our sentiments in Swaziland on this positive experience are shared by our neighbours in Southern Africa and other FAO regions. My delegation is aware that dramatic improvements in agriculture and rural development often take time, but that cannot be an excuse to marginalize these important sectors. History tells us that the basis for the Industrial Revolution in the West and elsewhere was a vibrant agricultural economy. I would like to mention that agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa still needs special attention. In this region, this sector provides an average of 70 percent employment, contributes 30-80 percent to the gross domestic product and provides about 40 percent of export earnings. However, fertilizer use in the same countries is only 9 kg per hectare, as opposed to 70 kg per hectare in India as an example. The irrigated area is less than 5 percent of cultivated land as opposed to 49 percent in China as another example, despite the fact that sub-Sahara Africa is criss-crossed with abundant water resources in the form of streams, rivers and lakes. This, therefore, demonstrates that such countries have to harness a lot of resources so as to accelerate technological advancement in agriculture. In particular, my delegation wishes to recognize with satisfaction the Director-General's emphasis in the area of sustainable water resource development for irrigation. This emphasis is shared by my Government. In the next five to eight years, my Government plans to develop close to 25 000 hectares of smallholder irrigation lands comprising three major projects in the north, central and

southern parts of the country. We are being assisted in this endeavour by our friendly countries and the donor community. While we are most grateful for this assistance, we appeal for more help, since most of the projects are still at feasibility stage.

The globalization and liberalization of the world economy is a trend that is acceptable by the Kingdom of Swaziland, however, in implementing these international trade reforms we should take the cognizance of the fact that such trends do not always lead to a situation where the merging developing agricultural economies are placed at favourable trading positions. In conformity with these trends, we are seriously reviewing our development and agricultural policies to cope with the new trading environments. The marketing and pricing of the major food cereals is being liberalized so as to allow for active participation of the private sector. Whilst adopting these new policies, however, we believe certain trading arrangements such as the Southern African Customs Union and the ACPEU Law Convention need to be retained with modifications so that gains of our agricultural sector can be consolidated and strengthened instead of being eroded.

Meteorological experts have already indicated that this cropping season may experience below average rainfall due to a drought that may occur in Southern Africa. In its consultancies, the Kingdom of Swaziland has already advised crop and stock farmers to adopt drought mitigation strategies. However, in the current drought predicted, southern Africa, including Swaziland, may require massive food aid. We therefore wish to appeal again, in advance, to the international community to come out to our rescue should the worst befall us as a nation.

Before concluding my intervention, allow me to express my country's appreciation for the visit last year by the Director-General to the Kingdom of Swaziland. Dr. Diouf's field visit to the rural areas of Swaziland to see for himself several projects of our small farmers, especially those of rural women, was most inspiring. It is for that reason that representatives of these small farmers have requested me to convey to the Director-General and FAO Secretariat their sincere gratitude for the visit and the FAO support in their agricultural and rural endeavours.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you Mr Minister of Swaziland for your statement and we believe that all questions raised in your statement will be taken into consideration by this Conference.

Mario MOYA PALENCIA (México)

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia, Señor Director General de la FAO, Señor Presidente Independiente del Consejo, distinguidos Delegados: México se congratula que esta Conferencia esté presidida por el señor Lyle Vanclief, Ministro de Agricultura de Canadá, país vecino y amigo, al que distingue una notable vocación en favor de la cooperación internacional para el desarrollo.

Esta es la primera vez que la Conferencia de la FAO se reúne después de la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación, evento que representó un parteaguas en nuestros trabajos.

Al reafirmar hoy los compromisos asumidos en este significativo evento, deseamos señalar el firme respaldo del Gobierno de México al logro de los objetivos del Plan de Acción de la Cumbre. Mi país ha emprendido una vasta serie de iniciativas en tal sentido, enfocando el problema de la seguridad alimentaria desde una perspectiva integral y a largo plazo. Ha sido en este marco que el doctor Ernesto Zedillo, Presidente de la República, anunció hace unos meses la creación de un importante programa que contempla acciones conjuntas en los campos de educación, salud y alimentación y representa un paso significativo para avanzar en la tarea fundamental de garantizar la seguridad alimentaria a todos los mexicanos y combatir la pobreza.

Una de las principales responsabilidades de los gobiernos, en el plano agrícola, consiste en apoyar a sus propios productores con objeto de que resulte rentable su actividad, impulsando de esta manera una producción suficiente de alimentos. Con ello, se cumple uno de los compromisos

sociales del Plan de Acción, en la perspectiva de garantizar a la población el acceso al consumo adecuado de nutrientes.

Nuestro país, históricamente, ha sido un convencido defensor del principio de la soberanía, al que el Gobierno asigna la prioridad más alta. Los mexicanos concebimos la soberanía como la capacidad exclusiva de tomar decisiones propias para trazar y avanzar de manera libre y autónoma nuestro destino. A fin de que la soberanía no quede reducida a un concepto abstracto, la fortalecemos promoviendo los intereses nacionales, la estabilidad económica y el bienestar social, y dentro de ello, perseguimos el firme propósito de la seguridad alimentaria, el desarrollo rural y la lucha contra la pobreza. Sabemos que un pueblo mejor alimentado siempre será un pueblo más soberano.

El año pasado México logró una producción de granos superior a 31 millones de toneladas, la cifra más alta en su historia. Estimaciones recientes y objetivas indican que este año alcanzaremos un nivel 3 por ciento mayor a pesar de los problemas de sequía y los derivados del huracán Paulina que hace un mes afectó la costa sudoeste del país. En producción de maíz, cereal que constituye la base de la dieta nacional, alcanzaremos una producción de más de 19 millones de toneladas, en tanto que en frijol, aquella arrojará 1 millón 300 mil, equivalentes al consumo nacional. En trigo y sorgo mantenemos niveles semejantes al los de 1996.

Con respecto a otros productos básicos, la tendencia es también positiva. Por ejemplo, en producción de leche el año pasado se registró un aumento de casi 6 por ciento, que a partir de 1998 ascenderá a 7.8 por ciento. El pollo y otras aves están desplazando a los demás productos cárnicos: su producción y consumo crecieron el año pasado más del 10 por ciento.

En general, la producción de alimentos básicos registra un incremento superior a la tasa de crecimiento demográfico - que actualmente se sitúa en 1.8 por ciento anual - lo que por décadas ha constituido un objetivo primordial de la política agrícola de México, junto con el de lograr un mayor equilibrio en la balanza comercial agropecuaria, que el primer semestre del corriente año registró un saldo positivo.

La participación de los diversos sectores en la producción de alimentos se está logrando a través del programa "Alianza para el Campo", el cual conjuga los esfuerzos del Gobierno Federal y los gobiernos estatales con los productores y las organizaciones civiles. Esta iniciativa alienta las acciones productivas, apoyando el acceso a tecnologías mejoradas y a recursos financieros, elementos esenciales para obtener un incremento sostenible y sustentable de alimentos.

Para contener y revertir los niveles de sobreexplotación, contaminación y degradación de los suelos, recursos pesqueros, agua, aire y climas, es necesaria la convergencia del esfuerzo internacional, por la complejidad misma del problema. El impacto de los desequilibrios ambientales y la explotación irracional de los recursos, traspasan muchas veces las fronteras, por lo que la responsabilidad de enfrentarlos debe ser compartida por los países de acuerdo con su decisión soberana, circunstancia socioeconómica y dinámica ambiental. Esto último se refiere a su capacidad de generar contaminantes y degradar biomasa.

Dentro de los objetivos de nuestra política destaca la importancia que damos a los apoyos del sector forestal mediante dos programas de incentivos económicos directos, tanto a bosques naturales como a plantaciones comerciales. Resulta prioritaria, asimismo, para el país la aplicación del Código de Conducta para la Pesca Responsable que la comunidad internacional acordó en el marco de la FAO, y las disposiciones y recomendaciones del Subcomité sobre Comercio Pesquero de la Organización.

Señor Presidente, si bien la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación representó el más importante evento que auspiciara la FAO, durante el último bienio ésta - dirigida atinadamente por el señor Jacques Diouf - ha desplegado una intensa actividad en todas las áreas vinculadas con su mandato. Cabe destacar en este sentido la Cuarta Conferencia Técnica sobre los Recursos Fitogenéticos así como las diversas reuniones del Codex Alimentarius. Expresamos nuestra satisfacción porque México haya hospedado la Séptima Reunión de la Comisión del Codex sobre

Frutas y Hortalizas Frescas. Consideramos que los trabajos de este Programa Conjunto FAO/OMS, resultan fundamentales para aprovechar los beneficios derivados de la Ronda Uruguay; en este sentido, apoyamos que la FAO fortalezca sus acciones de cooperación en favor de los países en desarrollo de Africa, Asia y América Latina.

Esta Conferencia tiene una extensa agenda de trabajo: deseo referirme a un tema de particular importancia. Durante los últimos años la Organización ha enfrentado una severa crisis financiera porque su reforma administrativa, con el objetivo de incrementar su eficiencia, ha contribuido lamentablemente a eliminar puestos de trabajo y recortar programas técnicos. Las dos opciones que se plantean para el nivel presupuestal durante el próximo bienio, constituyen en sí alternativas no deseables considerando las enormes tareas que compete desempeñar a la FAO frente a la magnitud de los requerimientos de los países en desarrollo y los compromisos asumidos por la comunidad internacional en la Cumbre. Exhortamos a todos los Estados Miembros para que en una saludable y constructiva actitud de consenso aprobemos la alternativa que apoye y permita cumplir cabalmente con las tareas de la institución, que durante más de medio siglo ha respaldado al mundo en desenvolvimiento en el campo agrícola y alimentario.

Señor Presidente, distinguidos Delegados, para terminar queremos hacer patente nuestro reconocimiento al trabajo realizado por el señor doctor José Ramón López Portillo y Romano, Presidente Independiente del Consejo, durante los cuatro últimos años. En el merecido homenaje que los Países Miembros le brindaron hace un par de días en el marco del Consejo, se resaltó la capacidad intelectual y la calidad humana de este distinguido compatriota nuestro, así como el sentido de la imparcialidad y la eficiencia operativa con los que siempre ejerció su importante cargo. Para México es un orgullo que hoy entregue tan buenas cuentas.

En los umbrales del tercer milenio, cuando los avances tecnológicos empiezan a hacer realidad aquella fantasía de la "aldea mundial", resulta paradójico que problemas antiguos y básicos como el del hambre y la alimentación insuficiente, no sólo no se hayan resuelto sino se hayan agravado. Nuestro compromiso dentro de la FAO, más allá de su significado institucional, constituye un empeño humano y ético indeclinable que todos debemos cumplir para que la gran brecha entre poderosos y desposeídos, entre los 800 millones de hambrientos y el resto de la humanidad, no siga abriéndose más. En esta Conferencia debemos todos asumir la responsabilidad que nos toca.

Mijhem KHREISHA (Jordan) (Original language Arabic)

It is a great pleasure for my delegation to take part in the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference, I am honoured to convey to you the greetings of the King of Jordan. Its Government and its people wish your Conference every success and wish FAO further progress in achieving its noble objectives and purposes, namely sustainable food security for all. We in Jordan are following up with great interest the efforts deployed by FAO to increase its efficiency by allocating a bigger portion of resources to support the field organs in the different regions, by adjusting and balancing the normative and operational activities, by facilitating the access to information, by supporting training activities and by providing good quality expertise to the Member Nations. We greatly appreciate those efforts deployed and the endeavours made in order to reconcile between the aspirations and ambitions, on the one hand, and the resources available on the other, under the zero growth of the budget.

In spite of the remarkable progress achieved in the world food situation during the past two decades, 20 percent of the people of the limited agricultural developing countries still did not have access to sufficient food at the beginning of this decade, in comparison with 35 percent 20 years ago. In other words, one person out of five is still suffering from undernourishment in the developing world, bringing the number of undernourished to 800 million people. Against this backdrop, the World Food Summit was convened last year. These facts should motivate us more than ever to proceed with the implementation of the World Food Summit resolutions, declarations and decisions at all levels. In this context, I wish to underline the close link between poverty and unemployment, the importance of national efforts in combatting these two evils and

the necessary support of the international community to efforts made by the developing countries to this effect.

Allow me to give you a brief account of the accomplishments of Jordan during the past two decades in a bid to achieve self-sufficiency in the food sector, in spite of the limited agricultural resources, particularly water resources. Jordan is considered to be a country with very scarce water resources. However, we have managed to double our production of vegetables by 200 percent, fruits by 220 percent, red meat by 200 percent, white meat by 400 percent, milk production by 350 percent and eggs by 350 percent. Thus, we have been able to achieve high rates of self-sufficiency in most of our crops with the exception of grains, fodder and red meat.

Two years ago, we started in Jordan the application of an agricultural adjustment programme aiming at building up a modern agriculture based on the concept of comparative advantage and the competitiveness of Jordan's agricultural products in external markets. Therefore, agricultural trade has been liberalized, non-technical constraints have been replaced by some custom duties and agricultural production inputs and supports have been eliminated. The state intervention in pricing inputs and outputs has been totally stopped, and many productive activities have been privatized. While recognizing the positive impact of such measures over the long and medium-term, we must admit that negative effects have overshadowed some farmers, particularly small livestock breeders and rural women.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the efforts deployed by the Director-General of FAO and his collaborators during the past biennium, particularly those efforts made to implement and follow up the World Food Summit conclusions thus enabling the Organization to achieve further levels of efficiency through decentralization, delegation of authority and simplification of procedures.

Mustafa TASAR (Turkey) (Original language Turkish)

First of all, I would like to extend our warm congratulations to you, Mr Chairman, as well as to your Vice-Chairmen, on the occasion of your election. I am confident that under your wise guidance our deliberations will be concluded with full success.

I would also like to extend our most sincere welcome to the delegation of the Kazakhstan on the occasion of their admission to FAO as a full Member of the Organization. I take pride in noting that, with this new membership, the number of Member Nations belonging to the Turkic family of nations rises to five. I would also like to state that we fully support the request of the Azerbaijan Republic to be considered as part of the European Region for Council election purposes.

The FAO efforts, supported by actions of Member Nations and assistance of relevant international organizations, have provided substantial contributions to the agricultural development of Member Nations, thus resulting in great improvements in the world food situation. Nevertheless, when within the preparations to welcome the Twenty-first Century we look at unsolved problems of this century, we observe that poverty and hunger still continue to constitute the most important human questions. Turkey believes that in order to attain the basic goal of the Rome Summit and to assure in the next century the well-being of the world population, global international cooperation should successfully be realised in the achievement of the commitments of the Rome Declaration. Since the adoption of this Declaration, Member Nations as well as FAO have pursued their work in relation to these commitments. At this Conference we should endeavour to evaluate the results so far achieved. Such an evaluation will allow us to see where our common efforts deployed to prevent hunger and to assure food security for all have succeeded and where efforts are still needed. Turkey attributes special attention to these commitments and has worked to the best of its ability to translate them into national projects and programmes. Turkey also takes them into consideration when defining agricultural policies. In this context, the Law on Food has recently been enacted; the General Food Codex,

prepared in conformity with the Codex Alimentarius has been promulgated and put into effect, and codexes on various food products are being promulgated in succession.

The World Food Day, which was celebrated on 16 October 1997, had focussed on the theme "Investment in Food Security". Since poverty is the main reason for food insecurity and hunger, the theme of the World Food Day meant investing in activities aiming at reducing poverty. In line with this objective, substantial increases were made in our 1998 budget in allocating larger sums for investments in the food and agricultural sector. Works are proceeding on new projects aiming at increasing our agricultural production. My government has also accelerated the works for the completion of the South-East Anatolia Project, or GAP for short. This multi-purpose and integrated development project, once completed, will not only contribute greatly to substantially augment our national agricultural production, but it will also constitute an important contribution to efforts aiming at ensuring food security for the whole region.

We are also working closely with the FAO and the UNDP on the "Inter-Country Project on Capacity-Building in Policy Aspects of Agricultural and Rural Sector in the Countries of Central Asia and Caucasus", and I have the pleasure to affirm that all the concerned parties are exerting efforts to put into practice this project as early as possible.

In this context, my Government would like to suggest that preliminary exchanges of views among all concerned parties be conducted with a view to assessing whether the time has come and, we do believe, it has come - to convert the FAO Representative's Office in Ankara into a "FAO Sub-regional Office for Caucasus and Central Asia", entrusted with the task of coordinating FAO activities for this Region.

Customarily, the Turkish people cannot remain indifferent to those in need. To share our bread with our neighbour is our way of life. In line with this tradition, and in conformity with the spirit of global solidarity, Turkey has always extended a helping hand to those in need of assistance, and will continue to do so, because we firmly believe that hunger is not the problem of only those who suffer from it, but of the whole of humankind. It is with this understanding that Turkey actively participates in all joint efforts to combat hunger, poverty, epidemic outbreaks of contagious animal and plant diseases and environmental pollution. It is also with this understanding that on 1st October 1997, the President of the Republic inaugurated the "The Bread for All" campaign. The voluntary donations to be collected through this campaign will be spent on national and international food security projects. Always in line with the above understanding, Turkey has provided during the last ten years 62 500 tons of food to 37 Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries.

To achieve a sustainable development not damaging to the environment is also important for the agricultural sector. To assure such a development is indeed primarily the responsibility of governments, but international cooperation is also required. We, therefore, support the related FAO projects and programmes and we request that more emphasis should be given to such activities. We also believe that activities in the field of genetic resources constitute great assistance to sustainable agricultural development and that they should be vigorously pursued.

Turkey also attributes due importance to the fight against animal diseases, and I am pleased to state that we have obtained some preliminary, though important, success in our fight against Foot and Mouth Disease. Every success in our efforts to control and eradicate Food-and-Mouth Disease will also be to the benefit of our European partners. I have to admit, however, that our success remained limited to the transboundary animal movements and I have to underline that further regional cooperation is required for complete success. This regional cooperation is also envisaged in the Emergency Prevention system for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases, or EMPRES for short, and I have the pleasure to state that we have reached an agreement with the European Union on a project for the control in Turkey of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease. My Government hopes that the formalities required for putting this project into effect will be completed soon, and I would like to thank FAO officials who assisted us in elaborating this project.

We support FAO efforts to eliminate gender related issues in agricultural development, and, while believing that it is first the responsibility of the governments to improve the condition of the rural women acting in the agricultural sector, we are expecting that the FAO will continue to lead international efforts on this point. In this context, I would like to affirm that we support the Regional Plan of Action for Women in Agriculture in the Near East, RPAWANE 2 000, and we were happy to host in 1995 its first meeting, and on 23-26 September 1997 its second meeting.

The “ World Apparel Fibre Consumption Survey” was suspended in 1996 due to budgetary restrictions. My Government would like to see the re-activation of this Survey, because its findings, in our judgement, were very helpful in following the world fibre consumption, thus providing a useful tool in the elaboration of production planning.

We were honoured and pleased to host the XIst World Forestry Congress in Antalya on 13-22 October 1997. The Congress enjoyed a wide participation and was concluded successfully. For the first time in an international congress on forestry, sessions targeting only women and the youth were held. We are convinced that the decisions of the Congress will contribute to enhance the role of forestry in sustainable agricultural development.

Allow me to conclude my intervention by renewing my best wishes for the success of our Conference.

Kalevi HEMILÄ (Finland)

One year has elapsed since Heads of State and Government agreed at the World Food Summit here in Rome to make serious efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition from the world. Although national governments, civic society and the whole United Nations System have a heavy responsibility for the implementation of the commitments of the Summit, the follow-up of the Summit is of decisive importance for the future work of FAO.

The Rome Declaration and the Plan of Action of the Summit must form the strategic foundation for our Organization’s activities during the next 15-20 years. It is imperative that FAO and other Rome-based institutions work in an efficient manner in close cooperation with each other and with the United Nations organizations and international financing institutions. Finland, for its part, will do the utmost to ensure that the targets of the World Food Summit will be achieved.

Two years ago at the FAO Conference, I stated that the membership of Finland in the European Union has caused considerable adjustment problems to our agriculture and the farming population. Today, I can state that although the adjustment process to the Common Agricultural Policy is still going on, there is emerging optimism about the future among the farmers. We trust that our agriculture and rural areas will survive, and that our farming will contribute its share to the regional and world food security.

The United Nations is at present going through a challenging process of reforms at all levels. In his reform proposals the Secretary-General tackles issues like the need to prioritize activities and reduce unnecessary overlapping. The general principle is to improve cooperation within United Nations System and to increase coherence. The key issue is not staff reductions and savings as such, but efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations System. Finland strongly supports the comprehensive UN reform package. These overall reform objectives apply to the United Nations funds and programmes, as well as to the Specialized Agencies like FAO.

In the Twenty-first century FAO has a vital role in the United Nations System insofar as it is capable of responding to the various challenges of sustainable rural development, poverty alleviation and food security. To be able to do this, FAO must carry out its work based on careful strategic planning, where attention is continuously given to medium term planning as well. This way, FAO can ensure that activities can meet the financing needed and that the costs are continuously under surveillance.

Sustainable and people-centred development can only be reached with equal participation of women and men. Neglecting gender-based disparities leads to inadequate planning and ignores the key role of women in agricultural production and household food security.

Involving both women and men in planning and decision-making, and with special attention paid to disadvantaged women, is not only an issue of equality but also an issue of social and economic efficiency. We welcome the efforts made by FAO to mainstream the gender aspects in all FAO policies and programmes and we further encourage FAO to implement the Gender Action Plan at all levels.

Concerning forestry, I would like to express our appreciation to the work done by FAO in the lead of the Inter-Agency Task Force of the International Panel on Forests. The successful work has led in the international forestry community to FAO's high profile which many Member Nations have requested the Organization to take. We hope that this leading role will continue during the work of the International Forum on Forests.

Work in the international Forum on Forests, however, is not all that is needed in forestry today. Efforts of Member Nations toward sustainable forest management need support from FAO in several ways and this work must not be forgotten. A high profile in the public debate would only be an empty shell without concrete action. This means that the Organization needs to prioritize forestry in its own programmes of work. We note with concern that the resources given to forestry are relatively small, and we wonder whether the Forestry Department will continuously be able to meet the challenges. Prioritisation within the forestry sector is under way in the form of a new Strategic Plan for Forestry. This will secure the efficient use of given resources, which we note with satisfaction.

The meeting rose at 17.00 hours.

La séance est levée à 17 h 00.

Se levanta la sesión a las 17.00 horas.

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite)

INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION (continuación)

6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

DEBAT GENERAL (suite)

DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION (suite)

DECLARACIONES POR LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

Syria, Myanmar, United States of America, Sweden, Colombia, Liban, Fiji, Belgique, Iceland, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Viet Nam, Greece, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Estonia, Kenya, Austria, Hungary, Uganda, Suisse, Portugal.

Asaad MOUSTAFA (Syria) (Original language Arabic)

Allow me, Mr Chairman, to begin by congratulating you on the confidence that has been placed in you as well as your skill and knowledge regarding the items that we are discussing. I would also like to thank the Director-General, Dr Jacques Diouf, for the efforts that he is making to focus the programmes and projects of the Organization to ensure that they serve those countries who suffer the most from hunger, poverty and malnutrition.

I believe that the achievements of the staff, whether it be at Headquarters or in the regional and national offices, goes hand in hand with the growing involvement of the Organization in the area of international cooperation, and this is becoming all the more important when we see the worsening of food security throughout the world and the increasing needs of many people. We would like to support the activities of the Organization and the support that it gives to developing countries, and we also support the Director-General's efforts to rationalize the administrative activities of the Organization to ensure that a large portion of the budget of the Organization will be earmarked for supporting services to countries with particular food deficits and problems. In this respect, we would suggest that consultants be used and ensure that the persons chosen are extremely competent in FAO's field of expertise.

In order that we may overcome the problems, we have to give support to the decisions taken at the World Food Summit in 1996 and its Plan of Action. Syria, for its part, intends to implement the following programme to ensure that it is a success. We believe that zero real growth for 1998-99 would be a minimum level if we hope to be able to successfully implement the programmes of this Organization as approved at the Summit. Syria, under its leadership of President Hafez Al-Asaad, has tried to prioritize, in its development plans, food security. Over the past few years, we have adopted new projects and programmes to help the neediest areas in our country so that greater means are given to rural families, and particularly rural women.

As regards the scarcity of food and the deteriorating natural resources, Syria is also continuing to defend its territories to liberate those that are still occupied. Efforts are being made by Syria to free the occupied Arab territories and to establish a just peace in keeping with international law

and in keeping with the Madrid Agreement, which was unanimously recognized as the only path to peace and security for all people.

Syria, during the last few years, has been able to achieve substantial progress and meet the challenges of sustainable development. We are working towards increasing our agricultural production, to ensure a rational use of land and water resources. We are also trying to establish an equitable distribution of water resources amongst neighbouring countries according to international law so that all countries can attain prosperity.

In conclusion, I would like to warmly thank the Director-General as well as the Independent Chairman of the Council for the efforts that they have made. I would also like to thank the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme for their support. We would also like to thank the Italian Government and the Italian people for their support to this Organization's activities so as to be able to give greater support to all developing countries in need.

Khin MAUNG (Myanmar)

It is with a sense of pride that our delegation welcomes Kazakhstan to join our Organization. The growing membership of FAO once again affirms its commitment to achieve food security for all and to reduce by half the more than 800 million currently undernourished people no later than the year 2015.

In 1996, the World Food Summit adopted a very challenging Declaration and Plan of Action, such as the need to promote investment in both the private and public sectors, to enhance food production and supply, as well as to improve physical and economic access.

Allow me to outline, in brief, the situation of the agricultural sector development and investment in the irrigation sector of our country. Like most of the developing agrarian economies, the agricultural production of Myanmar is in the hands of the small farmers. We are in the process of transforming over 87 percent of small farmer families from subsistence to commercial farming systems. Therefore, investment should be focused on our people, agriculture and natural resources.

In this context, I have pleasure in informing this Conference of our experience in investing in the irrigation sector. Crop production in Myanmar is mainly based on rainfed agriculture of the total irrigable area. The Government of Myanmar is heavily investing in the development of a nationwide irrigation network in order to ensure the availability of adequate irrigation water. We have constructed 81 dams with a total investment of 10.4 billion kyats. Moreover, eight major large-scale, 23 medium-scale and 228 small-scale pump irrigation projects, by utilizing the water from rivers and streams, were also implemented at a cost of 1.3 billion kyats. Therefore, we are utilizing only 6.3 percent of the total water resources available annually, which is estimated at 870 million acres. This clearly indicates the immense potential to expand irrigation to increase food production and to prevent degradation in the dry zones.

Agricultural mechanization programmes are being implemented by importing, as well as by domestic production, of agricultural machinery and implements. Moreover, the Myanmar Industrial Development Committee, consisting of ten Ministers, has been formed with the main objectives of mechanizing the agriculture sector and establishment of agro-based industries. In 1996-97, altogether 76 000 tons of seeds and 9 million seedlings of good variety crops and plants were distributed to increase crop production.

With the improvement of production in livestock and fishery products, *per capita* consumption of meat and fish has been increasing annually. According to the 1996-97 data, *per capita* meat consumption has risen to 2.2 kilograms from 2 kilograms, while fish consumption has risen to 6.6 kilograms from 5 kilograms in the same period.

Myanmar's forestry sector is also increasing its reserve forests to 30 percent from 14.8 percent of the total land area of the country, and its protected forest area is 5 percent to 10 percent as opposed to the present 2 percent. In addition to natural forest management, Myanmar has also been implementing a large-scale plantation programme. Currently, an annual target for plantation establishment is around 37,250 hectares.

We joined ASEAN in July this year. As a member of ASEAN, Myanmar is actively participating in regional cooperation programmes such as food security, harmonization of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, as well as quality and standards in livestock and fisheries and trade among others.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm our commitment and determination to further advance the noble ideals and principles of FAO in promoting food and nutrition, well-being and economic progress of mankind throughout its long years. I am hopeful that our endeavours at this Conference will help fulfil the hopes of the people to better their futures.

August SCHUMACHER Jr. (United States of America)

It is a great privilege to address you today and a special honour to represent the United States. My work first started with FAO some three decades ago as a young employee of the World Bank. I have closely followed your work in the ensuing three decades. I would particularly like to extend our appreciation to my good friend, Dr Jacques Diouf, for his tireless work on behalf of FAO this past year, highlighted by the World Food Summit last year. In this era of diminished budgets, FAO's difficulties are challenging and we greatly appreciate the Director-General's leadership in fostering change. I would also like to make a special note of the work of all the FAO staff. They do not get much support and I want to particularly thank them for improving and modernizing the world food system, especially in the poorer Member Nations. That is particularly noteworthy.

First, some thoughts on FAO's current State of Food and Agriculture Report. While we in the United States have a few differences with its specific commodity market forecasts, FAO's assessment provides a generally accurate description of global production and trade patterns.

The United States also concurs with FAO that some of the recovery from last year's low production reflects improvements in weather. However, we feel that not enough credit has been given to the effects of some of the more market-oriented policies in many countries, coupled with trade reforms under the World Trade Organization (WTO). These two factors are powerful forces for improved global well-being and food security.

FAO's report correctly notes the increase in United States bilateral commitments to agriculture as part of the overall development assistance programme. Like FAO, the United States recognizes both the continuing food security challenges facing regions in Sub-Saharan Africa and the recent gains in agricultural growth in that region. Continued support for improved food security is coming from a variety of sources, including the United States Agency for International Development's African Food Security Initiative.

At last November's World Food Summit, the United States joined more than 180 countries in this room in renewing our commitment to alleviating hunger and malnutrition around the world. Since then, we have been carefully and aggressively looking at how the United States, working with many of our other countries, can foster food security both at home and abroad.

Throughout the United States Government, including America more widely, food security is getting increased attention. We are working hard to develop a United States Action Plan on Food Security in full cooperation with American Non-governmental Organizations and the private sector. When completed, that Plan will include specific actions that United States governmental and non-governmental entities -- together and independently -- intend to take to alleviate hunger and malnutrition, not only internationally but domestically as well.

We have no illusions about the difficulty of the task we have set for ourselves. We are trying to do more for the chronically-hungry in an era of diminishing public resources, burgeoning populations, and growing environmental concerns. We owe it to ourselves and our future generations to succeed. According to a forthcoming report from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the "food gap" in developing countries is expected to widen in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Working together, we must find a way of diminishing that.

FAO has an important role to play in the follow-up to the World Food Summit. Reliable food insecurity and vulnerability information is critical to the follow-up effort. FAO has been and should continue to be the catalyst in assuring that there is effective coordination within the United Nations system and that there is full participation of developing countries, and that the system is built on shared responsibility in which many interlinked players have responsibility for parts of the system - not one overarching system run by one Organization.

With respect to FAO's own Programme of Work, we are encouraged by the Director-General's instructions to FAO staff to review all of their activities in light of the outcome of the Summit. A strong consensus emerged from the Summit: we need to work on all aspects of the food security equation at the same time if we are to eliminate hunger and malnutrition. Production improvements alone won't do it. Emergency programmes alone won't do it. Sustainability, trade liberalization, economic and political stability, and population stabilization all need to be addressed.

Several FAO functions are especially critical to the United States agricultural community and I will list them: technical assistance; trade and investment activities; information and early warning systems; development of science-based standards, especially with trade; programmes to contain the spread of agricultural pests and diseases; the conservation and management of biodiversity; and activities focused on nutrition, fisheries, forestry, and sustainable agricultural development. The United States also has an important interest in moving forward on the basis of consensus with the revision of the International Plant Protection Convention. We would also like to see an increase in the number of women in FAO. Placing more women in FAO positions in these areas would reap wide-ranging benefits for Member Nations by utilizing untapped resources.

Sustainable development should rank among the highest global priorities -- whether it's preserving farmland, forests and fisheries, reducing population pressures or addressing changes in global climate. In the United States, President Clinton has set up his White House Task Force to study global climate change. Initial work shows some change in climatic patterns is likely and the greatest need to adjust will fall on the agriculture and forestry sectors. We need to begin a dialogue on appropriate ways that we can monitor changes in the world and help farmers adapt.

Of course, all of these priorities must be reconciled with continued budget constraints. In our view, FAO could save millions of dollars over time by focusing on administrative changes, without slashing important programmes. In a period of United Nations reform, it is important for FAO to demonstrate a willingness to be a full partner in finding ways to achieve organizational efficiencies that are consistent with other United Nations organizations. For example, FAO could bring its grade structure in line with those of other United Nations organizations having similar missions, by eliminating duplication of work; reducing the number of country offices where there is overlap; and consolidating sub-programmes.

In conclusion, we commend FAO on its efforts to reduce its staff, especially administrative staff. We realize it is a hardship in the short-term, but in the long-term it will produce a leaner, more efficient organization that shows it can adapt successfully to change.

Regarding the FAO budget and finances, the United States continues to be firm in supporting a reduced budget level for the upcoming biennium and immediate approval by FAO of the Scale of the Assessments to be adopted this December by the United Nations General Assembly. We will be working closely with other Member Nations to negotiate a budget this week which, we hope, will reflect a position we can all support.

While some may feel that the United States has taken too firm a posture on reducing the FAO budget in recent years, let me assure you that our stand comes from necessity. As the Director-General and our colleagues from both developed and developing countries know only too well, the current budget situations are critical. There is broad political support in the United States to put our relationship with the United Nations on a sound footing and to deal decisively with the question of arrears.

This week, we must work together to make the difficult choices needed to shape a budget which reflects our commitment to keep funding alive for programmes critical to the well-being of millions around the world.

Ms Annika AAHNBERG (Sweden)

At this the first session of the Conference of FAO after the World Food Summit, we must assess how FAO can best support implementation of the Summit's Plan of Action. It should form part of a process of setting the long-term strategic objectives and priorities of FAO. I would like to express my appreciation of the Director-General, Dr. Jacques Diouf, and his constructive work and my conviction that he will be successful in assisting us, the Members of FAO, when we develop a long-term strategy that would guide FAO into the third millennium.

Let me read some words from Mahabharata, one of the greatest epic poems in the world of literature. They summarize the monumental teachings of Bhishma. In my view, they also form the ultimate foundation for our work in Ministries for Food and Agriculture and in FAO.

“The world is sustained by food.

Life arises from food:

this is observed all around,

and there can be no doubt about it.

The giver of food is the giver of life,

and indeed of everything else.”

The world today is not acting in accordance with the wisdom of Bhishma, as expressed in Mahabharata. As a consequence, the most awesome challenge that faces the world community today is the achievement of sustainable food security.

By eradicating poverty, we must come to grips with the unacceptable fact that hundreds of millions of people are chronically undernourished, in a world that produces enough food to feed its population. World food production has to double in the next 30 years in order to provide food security for a growing world population. It must be done in ways that are compatible with sustainable development.

FAO is the focal point of the world community in its efforts to meet this challenge. It is the agency of the United Nations System that has the responsibility for agriculture, food, fisheries, forestry and rural development. FAO is the catalyst in the urgent process to implement the Summit Plan of Action.

The world community needs a strong and effective FAO to guide and support its efforts to achieve sustainable food security.

Let me stress that new, long-term priorities for FAO would have to be founded in the political, social, economic and ecological realities of today's world, and in the trends towards those of tomorrow. We have moved a long way from the world of 1945, when FAO was established.

In the follow-up of the Summit Plan of Action, FAO should, in the view of Sweden, concentrate its forces on supporting action in three major clusters of issues.

The first is the eradication of poverty, through action in the mandated areas of FAO: agriculture, food, fisheries, forest management and rural development. The second is integrated management of the natural resource base of agriculture, fisheries and forests, in ways that are compatible with sustainable development. The third is action to promote safe food in the world.

More than half the world's poor live in rural areas. The subsistence farmers in the least developed countries, in particular the women farmers, and the farm workers, are the poorest of the poor.

FAO has a major responsibility to support governments in the development and implementation of strategies, policies and actions in the field of agriculture, fisheries, forest management and rural development for the elimination of poverty in rural areas.

Agricultural growth in low-income countries, where the bulk of the population depends on small-scale farming for their living, is strongly correlated with growth in other sectors. Employment and income depend, in one way or another, on agriculture. Rapid agricultural growth, in particular among the small farmers in the least developed countries, is a most powerful and cost-effective poverty reduction strategy.

Successful action to promote rural development, and a living, sustainable countryside, is of major importance in slowing down the accelerating flow of the rural poor to the slums of growing mega cities.

Programmes to promote the empowerment of women are crucially important contributions to the elimination of hunger and poverty and to the achievement of food security. Women farmers have to be provided with what they, to a large extent, are lacking today: land titles, membership in farmers' organizations, access to extension services, as well as inputs and credits that can help enhance food production.

The farm workers are the lowest paid workers in the world. Their real wages are not increasing in pace with rising labour productivity. They have the highest level of on-the-job injuries and include the highest percentage of child labour. FAO should cooperate closely with ILO and other relevant UN agencies and bodies to address this deplorable situation. Action should be developed with a sense of urgency to improve the appalling conditions of the farm workers.

The agricultural, forest and marine ecosystems are the very basis for human life on earth.

They sustain the production of food and basic raw materials in the world. Their maintenance is the responsibility of the economic sectors using them, and for which they constitute the natural resource base. I refer primarily to agriculture, forest management, fisheries, rural development and coastal area management.

If we, the Ministers for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests, do not take our sector responsibility for ensuring a sustainable management of these basic ecosystems, they will be further degraded and might, ultimately, crumble.

Our perspective has to be the long term and, by longer term on these issues, I do not refer to 30 or 50 years. The long-term perspective, as concerns the maintenance of the vital ecosystems of this planet, has to be one of millennia.

FAO has the sector responsibility of the world community for these basic ecosystems. It thus carries a major responsibility for the survival of future generations.

In many parts of the world, the agricultural, forest and marine ecosystems are under increasing stress, from unsustainable practices in techno-industrial agriculture, forest management and fisheries, and from poverty. Threats of serious degradation are mounting. Degradation of soils affects more than 1.2 billion hectares of land world-wide. Overuse of freshwater in agriculture is causing water stress in an increasing number of countries. The erosion of agricultural biological diversity is alarming. Overuse of pesticides and chemical fertilizers is causing extensive damage to groundwater, freshwater and marine ecosystems. Global deforestation continues at an appalling pace - over 11 million hectares annually. Many of the world's major fish stocks have collapsed or are harvested at levels far beyond sustainability.

Decisive action to move towards sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forest management is urgent. Unsustainable agricultural practices must be transformed to sustainable production

practices. An ecosystem approach is called for. In this context, I would like to highlight the major contributions made by the further development of practices of organic and ecological farming. In an era of rapid urbanization, I would also stress the importance of efforts to build an ecocycle society that would recycle nutrients from the waste mountains and sewage of urban centres to the soils of agriculture. With a certain pride, I would also refer to progress in my own country in the development of sustainable forestry through the application of the ecosystem approach to forest management.

FAO should, in the view of Sweden, increasingly focus on natural resource management that is compatible with sustainable development. Integrated pest management and plant nutrition systems, as well as land and water resources management and watershed and coast area management, should be merged into a consolidated and forceful key activity. The fact that over 80 percent of deforestation is caused by conversion of land from forest use to land in agricultural use is a case in point in support of an integrated systems approach to natural resource management.

Action to promote conservation and sustainable use of the biological diversity and its components in agricultural, forest and marine ecosystems should form part of the activities in support of integrated natural resource management. The further development and application of the ecosystem approach to management should be promoted. FAO should reinforce and strengthen its role as a Centre of Excellence in this crucial area.

FAO is, and should continue to be, the United Nations Agency on forests. Its action to promote sustainable forest management should, in the view of Sweden, be strengthened. It should reflect the many important functions of the world's forests: for the production of raw materials, energy, food and pharmaceuticals, as well as a host of crucial ecological services. Sweden would like to see an increased emphasis on the interface between forest management and agriculture in a rational and sustainable use and management of land resources.

FAO should continue to focus on support to the development of national forest policies and programmes that are compatible with sustainable development, including institution building and human resources development. FAO should further continue its active and, I would say, crucial support of the CSD process on forests and, also in this way, support action to halt the awesome global deforestation. The success of the Inter-governmental Forum on Forests is depending on active FAO support.

The regional FAO forest commissions should be mobilized as major vehicles for national reporting and regional dialogue on the implementation of the Rio Forest Principles and the recommendations for action of the Inter-governmental Panel on Forests.

FAO should also reinforce its role as the UN Agency responsible for fisheries management. Urgent action is needed to promote the implementation of the pioneering Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. FAO should prepare for assisting in the build-up and strengthening of the regional fisheries organizations, the major vehicles in the implementation of the Code, in particular in developing country regions. It should assist these organizations in developing and implementing sustainable fisheries management regimes, based on the application of the precautionary and the ecosystem approaches.

In this context, I would suggest that FAO, with a sense of urgency, carry out a comprehensive study on possible options for mobilizing resources for the financing of the considerable fixed and operating costs of regional fisheries organizations and arrangements. All possible and imaginative sources should be studied, including the Members' ability to pay for the benefits from the fisheries in the High Seas, covered by the organizations.

Hundreds of millions of people suffer from diseases caused by contaminated food and water. In some countries, consumers are increasingly worried over toxic substances from pollution, pesticides and herbicides in food. They feel deeply concerned at the potentially adverse effects of

increased use of hormones, artificial feeding practices, genetic engineering techniques and antibiotics in industrialized animal husbandry.

FAO has a major responsibility in supporting national efforts and in functioning as a catalyst for strengthened international cooperative action to ensure the safety of food supply in the world.

In this context, I would like to propose that action be taken, in close cooperation with WHO, to move decisively towards a stop of preventive use of antibiotics in food production.

We are living in a world where trends towards globalization of markets and increased economic integration are dominating. Goods and ideas move around the world with increasing ease and speed. Significant steps are being taken to liberalize agricultural trade. New agricultural production patterns and technologies are developed and disseminated all over the world, in particular by the transnational corporations of the agro-industrial complex.

These developments carry opportunities, as well as major challenges.

The on-going trade liberalizations will gradually remove obstacles for the development of agriculture in the Third World. Farmers will, as this process proceeds further, no longer have to compete with highly subsidized agricultural products from the North. They will be able to avoid negative consequences on their agricultural production and rural development.

This is an important perspective in the on-going considerations within the European Union on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, the CAP.

The enormous challenges of globalization, in particular in the field of social justice and the degradation of the environment and the natural resource base of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, will have to be identified, and decisively addressed.

The world community needs a strong and effective United Nations System, including a forceful FAO, in order to promote a sustainable globalization with a human face.

On the initiative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations has started to reform its structures and operations. Sweden strongly supports the reform process. We hope that proposals may be already implemented next year. Any overall reform of the United Nations requires a great degree of concerted will and coordinated action through the System as a whole. Cooperation between the Specialized Agencies and the other parts of the United Nations needs to be strengthened. We see some very promising progress at the field level. It forms a good point of departure for the elaboration of common UN Agendas for Development with participation of the Specialized Agencies. Sweden welcomes these winds of change and reform throughout the United Nations. They are blowing also here in Rome.

In the wake of globalization, the differences between developed and developing countries are becoming less and less obvious. The differences within these groups of countries are, in a growing number of issues, often bigger than those between them. Local ecological conditions, rather than identification as member of one of these groups, decide whether there is a need for extensification, or scope for intensification, in the agriculture of developed as well as of developing countries.

There is a North and a South with a common future and a common responsibility.

Having said that, let me make it absolutely clear that I, in no way, intend to play down either the appalling and increasing gaps between developed and developing countries, and in particular the least developed among them, nor the urgent need for all of us to join forces in decisive action to eliminate hunger and starvation in developing countries.

We must not let different perspectives in the North and in the South form obstacles to our common efforts to achieve food security. The world needs a continuous dialogue of listening to and learning from each other, from our successes as well as from our failures, in developed as well as in developing countries. It should be based on openness among the participants.

We, the industrialized countries, should contribute to the dialogue by conveying the successful results of our attempts at developing a sustainable agriculture. Many of the modern sustainable technologies produced by intensive research and development hold promise of providing major contributions to increased productivity in food production. So do new sustainable farming practices. They, however, should not be presented as alternatives to locally-adapted farming systems, but be disseminated as useful and important contributions to the further development of these systems toward higher productivity.

One basic input to the dialogue between, and within, North and South should, in my view, be the experiences and knowledge of the farmers from the many sustainable farming systems, in particular in the developing countries, that are based on adaptation of farming systems and agricultural practices, by trial and error over generations and centuries, to the local biotic and abiotic conditions, in conformity with the ecosystem approach. These farmers have developed and kept a concrete and practical knowledge of the agro-ecosystems over millennia. They have also conserved, *in situ*, the plant genetic resources that are of such a long-term interest to global plant breeding, *inter alia*, for horizontal polygenetic resistance, and to the future of agriculture.

World agriculture badly needs that knowledge and these resources when outdated and unsustainable agricultural practices are being transformed into a modern sustainable agriculture. The diversity of practices in these locally-adapted and sustainable farming systems provides a sort of insurance to a world agriculture that has developed ever more uniform, and often unsustainable, farming systems, practices and technologies.

A fundamental sustainability flaw is built into the more or less uniform production system of techno-industrial agriculture that has emerged during the second half of this century. It is based on an adaptation of the agricultural ecosystems to the technologies and practices, instead of adapting the latter specifically to local biotic and abiotic conditions.

Many of the sustainable farming systems in the third world are at risk of being transformed in ways that are incompatible with sustainable development by the introduction of unsustainable practices of techno-industrial agriculture. The 10 000 years perspective of agriculture from the Neolithic, that is specifically adapted to local conditions, is thus at risk of being replaced by the 50 years perspective of the globally widely-adapted techno-industrial agriculture of the late Twentieth Century with its systemic sustainability flaw. Major efforts should be made to minimize these risks. Farmers' participation in a reinvigorated national and international agriculture research, and in expanded extension services, would provide a major contribution.

The mutual listen and learning process in FAO should be strengthened.

I would highlight the joint programme that is being developed between the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and FAO. It contains proposals from the Conference of the Parties of the CBD, that countries would be encouraged to set up and maintain local-level fora for farmers, researchers, extension workers and other stakeholders, to evolve genuine partnership. FAO has put forward proposals on the application of farming systems and agro-ecosystems approaches. I warmly welcome these creative proposals that hold promise of providing major contributions to the development in all countries of sustainable agriculture. Their further development and application should, in the view of Sweden, be given priority. A joint programme between FAO and CBD should include a major component on the development and application of the ecosystem approach to agriculture, fisheries and forest management.

Let me, in this context, express my support for the Resolution on Agricultural Biological Diversity, which has been presented by the President of the European Union on behalf of the Member States.

An increased emphasis on a listen and learning process, addressing the potentials as well as the enormous challenges of globalizations, should, in the view of Sweden, have an impact on the way FAO directs its work in a longer-term perspective.

It should guide the further development of the normative work, which constitutes the very basis of FAO. The development of global inter-governmental instruments, such as the Code of Conduct on Responsible Fisheries, the Codex Alimentarius, the Leipzig Global Plan of Action, the important International Plant Protection Convention, that we are going to adopt at this Conference, and the no less significant International Undertaking on Plant Genetics, presently under renegotiation, are good examples of outstanding normative work. FAO should also, in its capacity as Centre of Excellence, be in the foam of the wave of international knowledge of what should be done in all parts of a rapidly-changing world, in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forests and rural development. The long-term trends should be assessed in a broad and holistic way. The threats to the natural resource base of agriculture, fisheries and forest management should be carefully evaluated and properly introduced in the global perspective studies.

FAO should, in the field of agriculture, be a Centre of Excellence on a broader basis than a narrow focus on often outdated, and not seldom unsustainable, techno-industrial agricultural practices that are sometimes, wrongly, presented as modern agriculture.

The implementation of FAO's mandate, with its focus on the normative work, would, however, not be effective without operational activities that will make it possible for, in particular, developing countries to increase their own capacity in the mandated areas of FAO. The development of new and imaginative ways of addressing problems, as well as methodologies, for implementing strategies and policies, are examples of operational activities that are giving life to the norms. The same goes for projects that demonstrate their successful application in different regions.

The further development and broadening of the Special Programme for Food Security should be guided by an increased emphasis on a listen and learning process that would address the potentials and challenges of globalization and one that would build on local knowledge and the further development of sustainable local farming systems.

The information and awareness-raising activities of FAO should also be reinforced by such a process. It would make FAO better fit to respond to the increasing demand from civil society for information on the sustainability of agriculture, fisheries and forest management in all parts of the world.

In this context, I would like to highlight the role of the consumers. They are increasingly requesting information, not only on the safety of food, but also how food is produced. Through their increasing interest in the sustainability of food production, they are taking a commendable responsibility for future generations.

As one example, I would mention that many consumers today, as a consequence of the growing threats to major fish stocks in the world, are requesting better information on the sustainability of fisheries management. FAO should respond to this by directing more of its information on sustainable fisheries in a global perspective to the consumers, in close cooperation with regional fisheries organizations and regional marine environment and fisheries research organizations.

The Summit Plan of Action recommends an active role for civil society and its organizations in the follow-up of the Summit. On the international level, however, we would, in accordance with the Plan, have to wait until 2006, at the Special Forum for a review of the implementation of the Plan, before civil society is actively involved in the international follow-up. That is too late. In Sweden, we have seen how important it is that the civil society actively participate from the very start of the implementation process. I would like to see an active involvement of civil society and its organizations in conjunction with every session of the Committee on Food Security.

I started out by stressing that the world needs a strong FAO and suggested preparations for the setting of long-term priorities for the action of FAO.

The Programme Committee has discussed the development of a long-term Strategic Framework. Sweden supports the development of such a framework for the years 2000 to 2015. It would be a

major political document. That is why it is so important that all Member Governments be actively involved from the very start in the preparation of the long-term strategy. The Member Nations of FAO should be deeply involved in this process. The preparations for the World Food Summit is an example of how this could be done.

A long-term Strategic Framework would provide a very good basis for considerations of FAO's long-term financial needs. In the meantime, it is the view of Sweden that the activities of FAO should be developed and redefined, based on today's realities, and that maximum efficiency be pursued, but that the financial resources for substantive programmes should not be cut down.

We, the Member Governments of FAO, must make all efforts to develop a visionary and realistic long-term Strategic Framework that would lay down the road of FAO into the third millennium, in time to be adopted by the FAO Conference at its next session, in 1999, at the very threshold of the new millennium.

Antonio GOMEZ MERLANO (Colombia)

Señor Presidente y señores Jefes de Delegación: Para mi país, Colombia, es retador y desafiante compartir con cada uno de ustedes no sólo nuestra preocupación por la ineficacia con la cual hemos venido dando respuesta a los problemas del hambre, de la pobreza, de la marginalidad y de la desnutrición que padecen más de 800 millones de personas, sino fundamentalmente para invitarlos a repensar y reflexionar sobre lo que venimos haciendo en esta materia, con el propósito de comprometernos todos para hacer lo que sea necesario en el camino de jalonar un nuevo futuro para la sociedad mundial, donde predominen nuevas formas de relacionamiento y trabajo conjunto, que faciliten el desarrollo económico, equitativo y sostenible.

Dentro de este contexto, es necesario romper la vieja concepción que señalaba a un tercero, llámese Estado, bloque económico y/o ciudadano, como responsable de nuestras propias desgracias, y en consecuencia, bajo la teoría de la dependencia, sólo ellos eran los culpables de nuestra creciente problemática social, dificultades económicas y deterioro de nuestras instituciones políticas.

Contra todo esto, el mundo de hoy nos exige tener una visión interdependiente, de construcción conjunta, de propósitos comunes y, dentro de ellas, todos trabajamos y somos responsables de lo que nos pasa a nivel mundial y nacional, y en consecuencia, debemos actuar rompiendo los paradigmas que impiden un verdadero desarrollo integral.

Es indispensable desafiar lo existente, la forma en cómo venimos haciendo las cosas, desechando patrones que han demostrado su fracaso o se han agotado, y actuando con el criterio de que siempre hay una manera distinta y diferente para lograr nuestros propósitos. Sólo con creatividad e imaginación podemos avanzar. No importa cuán doloroso sea, pero tenemos que llegar a una nueva fase superior e integradora que rompa con el pasado, pero que, simultáneamente, permita la construcción de un futuro interdependiente y proactivo.

Quiero compartirlo con ustedes, y ojalá, más temprano que tarde, puedan impulsarlo en sus respectivas naciones y organizaciones. Sin discursos, y con metodologías apropiadas, iniciamos un proceso de focalización estratégica con la participación de los gremios de la producción, de las organizaciones campesinas, de los representantes de las cadenas productivas y del gobierno, no simplemente para generar los tradicionales planes estratégicos para aumentar la producción, ni para estandarizar procesos ni hacer ajustes institucionales, sino para contribuir a un cambio de comportamiento de la gente involucrada en el sector agropecuario, en cuanto a valores, creencias, prácticas sociales, habilidades y conocimientos, con el fin de crear una relación de confianza, solidaridad, de comunicaciones fluidas y, especialmente, interiorizar en ellos la necesidad de aplicar el principio del gana-gana, como regla general en las relaciones productivas, económicas y sociales entre los miembros de la cadena productiva y las organizaciones sociales.

Desafiamos a los miembros del Gobierno, de los gremios y de las organizaciones campesinas para que trabajaran en un proceso de modernización que les implicara una mayor responsabilidad

con sus asociados, un compromiso más profundo con su gente y la decisión de siempre dar respuestas oportunas y claras a las peticiones, actuando de manera integral, no simplemente reactiva y epiléptica.

Posteriormente construimos distintos escenarios sobre el presente y el futuro del sector agropecuario colombiano, concluyendo en la necesidad de luchar por abrirle paso a lo que podría denominarse un escenario ideal para el campo y, con esta meta, comenzamos a reflexionar sobre el valor agregado que cada una de las partes involucradas debía aportar, de manera nueva y diferente, para facilitar el logro de ese ideal, generando muchísimas posibilidades en este aspecto. También concretamos la necesidad de dejar de hacer muchas cosas, que hoy estamos haciendo, y que creaban graves dificultades a la consecución de la meta para lograr un desarrollo efectivo de nuestro sector agropecuario.

Este proceso estratégico y construido con la participación de todos, sirvió para romper la concepción tradicional que de los asuntos del Estado se vienen manejando en muchas de nuestras naciones. Desafiando temores, hemos construido una cultura de trabajo interdependiente entre todos los sectores sociales y económicos vinculados al campo. Todo esto, ha facilitado una verdadera alineación de la gente alrededor del propósito fundamental de fortalecer este sector de la economía nacional. Alineación que no implica unanimismo ni es sólo concertación. Es mucho más: es construir juntos, responsabilizarse juntos, actuar juntos y, jalonar el futuro juntos, buscando resultados que permitan superar los niveles de pobreza que subsisten en muchos de nuestros pueblos y, que se convierten en generadores de conflictos, produciendo todo tipo de problemas relacionados con la falta de legitimidad y credibilidad de nuestros Estados.

Construimos entre todos, no solamente el norte para el sector agropecuario, sino que priorizamos nuestros objetivos futuros en la necesidad de abrir espacios de convivencia y paz para superar la violencia y la guerra, de fortalecer la lucha para superar la pobreza, de crear condiciones para generar reactivación, competitividad y rentabilidad, de buscar una comercialización integral fomentando la agricultura por contrato, los sistemas de inteligencia de mercados y de precios, de lograr un verdadero desarrollo del talento humano en el campo; trabajando para que la ciencia y la tecnología, su transferencia y adopción no se quede en vía experimental o en grupos privilegiados; logrando que los mecanismos de financiación y capitalización se acomoden al flujo de fondos de las actividades productivas; entrenando y capacitando a los productores y a los miembros de la cadena productiva para que trabajen en desarrollo sostenible y entiendan la importancia del equilibrio generado, no sólo por el respecto a la biodiversidad, sino al manejo de los recursos naturales; e impulsando la transformación de las instituciones y de las organizaciones públicas y privadas para acomodarlas a las nuevas exigencias de un mundo dinámico y de cambios rápidos.

No podía terminar sin extrapolar este trabajo a las relaciones entre las naciones. La internacionalización de la economía y su globalización, no implica una relación excluyente ni imperial. Por el contrario, es necesario trabajar en forma interdependiente. Debemos entender que la apertura económica de nuestras naciones debe ser gradual, selectiva y recíproca, porque a los países en vías de desarrollo no se les puede exigir una apertura inmediata e indiscriminada, mientras los países desarrollados, no sólo no liberan su comercio, sino que mantienen ingentes subsidios a su aparato productivo. La experiencia en muchos de nuestros países de una apertura radical, fue la ruina de sectores productivos importantes y, entre estos, el sector agropecuario.

Señor Presidente, soy un convencido de que sólo pensando y actuando de esta manera podemos mejorar internamente nuestras naciones, dinamizar y fortalecer organizaciones como la FAO y, generar un relacionamiento verdaderamente equitativo, de confianza y transparencia entre los países desarrollados y en vías de desarrollo. El reto es grande pero tenemos el compromiso histórico con nuestras naciones de desafiar lo existente para construir juntos, privilegiando la colaboración a la confrontación.

Chawki FAKHOURY (Liban) (Langue originale arabe)

Monsieur le Président, au nom de la délégation du Liban, j'ai le plaisir de vous présenter nos félicitations pour votre élection à la présidence de cette présente session. Je saisis cette occasion pour rendre hommage à l'action de la FAO visant à alléger les souffrances des peuples démunis et de sauvegarder l'agriculture malgré tous les obstacles, y compris la marginalisation du secteur agricole qui a déséquilibré la sécurité alimentaire dans les pays en développement, pays avec lesquels nous avons encore des tensions politiques et des conflits régionaux et internationaux. Nous souffrons également de la réduction de nos capacités productives et de notre aptitude à gérer de façon équilibrée nos ressources naturelles.

Le Liban n'est-il pas l'exemple de cette triste réalité ? Car nous continuons de subir l'occupation israélienne dans une partie du Sud et de la Bekaa et nous résistons avec détermination à des agressions quotidiennes et injustes. Celles-ci nous privent de nos ressources et contraignent nos agriculteurs à l'exode vers les grandes villes autour desquelles se forment des ceintures de pauvreté qui sont autant de foyers de crises sociales. D'autant plus que toutes les régions visées par ces agressions sont des territoires agricoles exposés en permanence à la politique de la terre brûlée qui détruit tout, ruine les gens et ne laisse derrière elle que sang, larmes et désespoir.

Comme dans notre cas, un grand nombre de résolutions ont été adoptées pour faire cesser l'injustice dont souffre le tiers-monde. Elles sont restées lettre morte et l'injustice et la faim continuent de sévir dans une grande partie du monde. Nous nous demandons donc : est-il pensable que l'homme qui a atteint la lune reste incapable de résoudre le problème de son alimentation ? Est-il raisonnable qu'il dépense sans compter, au lieu de se consacrer à résoudre les problèmes de la pauvreté, de la faim et de la misère qui frappent la plupart de nos sociétés ? N'est-il pas insensé que les dépenses affectées aux armements grèvent l'essentiel de nos budgets, alors que nos ressources naturelles restent inexploitées et que l'on n'en parle que sous forme d'allégories et de recommandations qui n'assouviennent pas la faim ?

J'en appelle à la conscience de tous les gouvernements et des institutions compétentes pour que cette Conférence impose à la communauté internationale de faire cesser les pressions exercées sur le développement durable et sur la certitude d'une alimentation suffisante et saine capable de garantir à tous les peuples un avenir meilleur. Je me demande en effet quelle sécurité alimentaire nous leur préparons vu la dégradation des taux de développement et la détérioration de la situation alimentaire.

Au Liban, nous avons refusé et nous refusons la soumission et le désespoir, et à chaque crise il nous faut reprendre à construire et à progresser. La meilleure illustration est la véritable résurrection que nous connaissons et qui transcende tous les obstacles. Il en est ainsi du lancement du plan du développement agricole intégré qui englobe parfaitement les décisions du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation et qui met en pratique sa Déclaration de politique. Ses objectifs portent sur une utilisation rationnelle des techniques modernes, sur l'intensification des recherches visant l'accroissement de la production, l'amélioration de sa qualité, ainsi que l'assurance d'une distribution équilibrée des produits alimentaires dans le cadre d'un développement rural intégré, où la femme rurale joue un rôle essentiel dans tous les domaines de développement.

C'est dans cette perspective que nous avons dûment étudié les questions à l'ordre du jour et nous demandons avec insistance le retour à un développement équilibré de la production alimentaire au niveau mondial.

Nous appuyons les propositions d'unification des normes en matière de quarantaine pour les produits agricoles, nous appuyons également l'élaboration d'un instrument juridique contraignant pour l'application de la procédure de consentement préalable après information qui nous intéresse au plus haut point, et nous proposons à la Conférence l'adoption d'une recommandation claire qui engagerait les pays producteurs d'insecticides à appliquer un régime strict qui ne permet leur production et leur commercialisation pour l'agriculture qu'après une période

d'observation suffisante, afin de vérifier qu'ils sont conformes aux normes sanitaires et de l'environnement à l'instar des médicaments.

Nous affirmons qu'il est nécessaire d'adopter la Convention internationale de protection des végétaux et nous proposons que soit appliqué le principe du consentement préalable après information pour l'exploitation des produits de reproduction, notamment lorsque leur commercialisation et leur culture ne sont pas autorisées dans les pays d'origine.

Nous insistons sur l'application du Plan d'action visant à intégrer la femme dans le processus de développement présenté à la Conférence lors de sa 28ème session de 1995.

Nous réaffirmons l'importance du renforcement du programme de coopération technique si efficace au service du développement.

Au moment des réformes structurelles en cours à la FAO, nous ne souhaitons pas anticiper les résultats mais nous soutenons l'objectif principal de la décentralisation qui doit étendre les attributions des bureaux de l'Organisation, afin que les représentants résidents soient à même de prendre les décisions nécessaires pour accélérer l'exécution des activités opérationnelles plutôt que de se perdre dans le labyrinthe de la routine administrative.

Avant de conclure, permettez-moi de vous dire ces mots qui viennent du fond du coeur : chacun de nous lit l'histoire et en tire des leçons. Combien sont les puissances qui ont atteint leur apogée par leur force militaire et qui ont disparu par la suite parce qu'incapables d'assurer l'alimentation de leurs citoyens.

Permettez-moi dès lors de lancer aujourd'hui un appel à toute les nations : soyons conscients et déterminés dans notre marche vers la sécurité alimentaire et vers la pax alimentaria, et soyons généreux dans nos efforts pour défendre nos intérêts communs dans tout ce qui a trait à la sécurité alimentaire. Car le monde est aujourd'hui une chaîne intégrée et toute atteinte à l'un de ses maillons se répercute sur la communauté tout entière, car la faim n'est pas l'ennemi d'un peuple particulier mais de toute l'humanité et elle touche aussi bien les Etats riches que les pauvres.

C'est pourquoi seuls le partenariat et la solidarité peuvent nous conduire vers un monde libéré de la peur et de l'injustice où ensemble, partout, et sans discrimination raciale ou religieuse nous pourrions oeuvrer pour la justice et la prospérité.

Monsieur le Président, au nom du Liban je salue vos efforts et ceux de tous ceux qui oeuvrent au service des objectifs de l'Organisation et je prie Dieu pour que les décisions de cette Conférence répondent aux aspirations de nos peuples dans le cadre d'un calendrier d'exécution, et qu'elles ne restent pas de simples recommandations ou des vœux pieux.

Militoni LEWENIQILA (Fiji)

I am indeed honoured to be here again, in the Eternal City, amongst the world's major stakeholders, in our collective effort for world food security. As a small island country, Fiji is very much concerned about declining trends in the world food supply and is committed to all global efforts aimed at addressing this situation.

Being located half-way around the world and encompassed with all the attributes associated with remoteness, our presence here is testimony to the deep commitment and resolve that Fiji has for the objective and outcomes of the Conference, and with the programmes of FAO.

At the World Food Summit last year, I had informed this august forum of Fiji's total commitment to the Rome Declaration. We have not shifted from this position.

At home, we are finalizing several policies and strategies to put our commitments to the Summit's Plan of Action into operation.

The formation of our National Food and Nutrition Committee into a Statutory Body is in line with our commitment to emphasize the importance that food and nutrition have in our daily lives.

This Statutory Body is coordinating the formulation of plans of action for improved food security and is the focal point of the implementation of the Summit Plan of Action.

The consolidation of the National Disaster Management Committee has been a major spin-off from Fiji's quest for greater food security. With the assistance of international donors, Fiji has embarked on a Flood Mitigation Programme through a three-year watershed management study that should reduce the risk of flooding throughout the agricultural basins in our country.

The creation of a Ministry of Environment is also indicative of Fiji's recognition of the relationship between environmental conservation and the promotion of development, and the recent passage in our Parliament of a Conservation Bill is further testimony to this commitment.

As a signatory to the World Trade Organization, Fiji is fully committed to its objectives. To this end, we are moving towards opening an office in Geneva in furtherance of our commitment. We are also strengthening our internal institutions in this area.

Fiji's own Trade and Investment Board has been the driving force in creating the right environment for private sector development. Policies have also been formulated for major reforms in the public sector to make it more efficient.

It would be a serious omission on my part if I did not express our sincere gratitude to FAO, and in particular to the Director-General, for his initiative in establishing an FAO Sub-Regional Office in the South Pacific.

Indeed, we have benefited immensely from this move as it has brought about a closer working relationship between FAO and its Member Nations in this Region. The office in Samoa and its hard-working staff under Dr Fuavao have provided the responsive mechanism to meeting our expressed needs in a timely manner.

I would like, at this point, to register the plight of the Small Island Developing States, like mine, in meeting our obligations for most of these initiatives.

In this regard, we will be calling on the international community, our global partners in this quest, for development and technical assistance in order to maximize our potential in meeting these challenges. Their willingness to oblige us will indeed go a long way in ensuring that these initiatives become a reality in our everyday lives.

It is an honour to once again have this opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with you on issues that are the very essence of our very livelihood.

Karel PINXTEN (Belgique)

Au Sommet de l'alimentation à Rome, l'année passée, les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement se sont engagés à parvenir à la sécurité alimentaire pour tous aux niveaux national et international. Je voudrais d'abord dire un mot sur le niveau national.

En ce qui concerne mon pays, la Belgique, si je jette un regard sur le passé, je constate que c'est la politique agricole de la Communauté européenne qui a garanti le développement de notre agriculture et qui a permis de dépasser l'autosuffisance dans de nombreux secteurs tout en veillant à sa restructuration.

De cette formidable restructuration de l'agriculture, accompagnée d'une forte augmentation de la productivité, c'est le consommateur qui a été le principal bénéficiaire. Aujourd'hui, pour se nourrir, il doit consacrer un tiers à peine de son revenu contre un montant bien plus important il y a 50 ans. Malheureusement, encore 5 pour cent de la population belge, malgré toutes les dispositions de la sécurité sociale, ne jouissent pas de revenus suffisants et vivent dans la pauvreté. Par conséquent la sécurité alimentaire ne leur est pas garantie dans notre pays. J'ai pris de nouvelles dispositions pour que les excédents en provenance de l'Union européenne puissent être redistribués gratuitement aux organisations caritatives. J'y attache une attention particulière

parce que l'objectif d'une politique agricole est de produire des produits agricoles et non de les détruire.

Mais quel sera demain le sort de notre agriculture, aux prises avec une mondialisation croissante? Suite aux accords pris à l'OMC, elle devra s'orienter vers les exigences d'un marché mondial de plus en plus ouvert mais comportant certaines limites. Faut-il en effet rappeler que l'agriculture, la foresterie et la production halieutique forment un secteur particulier dont la matière première est vivante et qui reste soumis aux aléas climatiques? La biotechnologie doit, à cet égard, retenir toute notre attention, compte tenu de ses potentialités du point de vue de la sécurité alimentaire, de la durabilité des systèmes de production et de l'environnement. Une évaluation objective et multidisciplinaire de ces nouvelles technologies s'avère toutefois opportune en concertation avec d'autres instances internationales compétentes en la matière.

L'agriculture devra veiller aussi à rester durable. Autrement dit, il convient de créer les conditions nécessaires pour que les générations futures puissent également compter sur une base de production qui servira à répondre aux besoins d'une population croissante. Parmi les différents éléments qui interviennent dans la sécurité alimentaire, la salubrité des aliments constitue une préoccupation majeure. Des divergences existent à ce sujet et le droit de déterminer son niveau propre de protection au plan sanitaire est essentiel, ce qui n'empêche pas de rechercher une certaine harmonisation au niveau mondial en vue de faciliter le commerce. Dans cette perspective, la Belgique soutient également les activités du Codex Alimentarius pour qu'au niveau mondial soient disponibles des données de référence fiables sur les normes à respecter au niveau de la chaîne alimentaire.

J'en viens alors au plan international. La faim dans le monde reste un problème lancinant qui mérite toute notre attention. Comme la Belgique est persuadée du rôle central que joue l'agriculture dans la solution de ce problème, elle apporte son soutien actif à la FAO. Nos interventions se sont diversifiées en coopérant à un nombre significatif de projets.

Nous ne pouvons, en outre, omettre de signaler l'importance des actions menées au sein du Fonds de survie belge pour le Tiers monde, initiative parlementaire dont les objectifs correspondent spécifiquement à l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire au niveau des ménages.

Toutes ces actions visent à consolider notre appui au niveau des sept engagements du Plan d'action du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation qui nous a rassemblés en novembre de l'année passée. Je suis persuadé qu'outre son rôle d'information, de récolte de données et de normalisation, la FAO est l'instance qui a les compétences requises pour conseiller les gouvernements des pays en développement dans leur politique agricole, pour exploiter au mieux les potentialités de la production vivrière et les autres, et apporter au besoin son assistance technique sur le terrain. De ce fait, j'insiste une fois de plus sur l'importance d'un développement équilibré des activités tant normatives qu'opérationnelles de l'Organisation.

Depuis qu'il a assumé la direction générale de la FAO, Monsieur Diouf s'est employé à réorganiser cette institution pour la rendre plus opérationnelle par rapport aux disponibilités. La Belgique se félicite d'avoir pu contribuer à cette entreprise par la participation active et convaincue de sa représentante au Comité financier.

Le 5 février de cette année, le Directeur général est venu inaugurer, au sein des locaux du Ministère de l'agriculture belge, le Bureau de liaison de la FAO auprès de l'Union européenne et de la Belgique et ainsi marquer une nouvelle étape dans la collaboration de mon pays avec cette Organisation.

Je tiens également à souligner la nécessité d'une meilleure coopération entre toutes les instances internationales qui viennent en aide d'une manière générale à l'agriculture et en particulier aux agriculteurs. Dans toutes les instances internationales, la Belgique continuera à défendre le rôle spécifique que doit jouer l'agriculture familiale, où la femme, à côté de l'homme, a un rôle essentiel à jouer.

Dans les pays développés comme en développement, l'agriculture est un secteur économique avec des caractéristiques propres qui doivent être prises en compte lors de l'établissement des politiques qui s'y rapportent. Tant au niveau mondial que national, il faut garantir suffisamment d'espace et de possibilités à cette agriculture pour qu'elle puisse fournir de manière durable une nourriture saine et en quantité suffisante, assumer pleinement son rôle multifonctionnel dans les zones rurales et assurer à ceux qui la servent un revenu décent.

Gudmundur BJARNASON (Iceland)

To many people it does not seem possible that there is agriculture in Iceland. The very name of the country and a look at its location so far north in the North Atlantic would support this belief.

The fact is that the 270 000 inhabitants of Iceland now enjoy an abundance of nutritious and healthy food, meat, milk and vegetables grown under our sub-arctic conditions.

Our 1100-year history is marked with long periods of food shortages leading to famines, diseases and emigration. Modern technology has not only taught us how to produce high quality meat, milk and garden products under our unfavourable climatic conditions, but it also allowed us to harvest an abundance of fish in the fertile fish banks around Iceland. Iceland is thus, perhaps paradoxically, a major net exporter of protein-rich food.

It was with this experience that Iceland was able to contribute to last year's World Food Summit. It is an example of how a poor nation situated in a part of the world which has been said to border on the uninhabitable, has been able to farm the land and harvest the sea to ensure full food security for itself and a standard of living among the top ten countries in the world.

We were proud that our former President of the Republic, Mrs Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the world's first woman to be elected as Head of State, was selected by FAO to head the Group of Eminent Persons which was given the task of reviewing the outcome of the World Food Summit and of formulating its recommendations.

It was thus a day of pride for all Icelanders, when on 22 October last, the Director-General, Dr Jacques Diouf, came to Iceland to announce the issue of the CERES medal, honouring our former President with a medal carrying her image, honouring her for her contribution to the cause of world food security.

We have been happy to see how the Director-General and the FAO are taking measures to promote food security as a priority in a number of Low-Income, Food-Deficit Countries, primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa. The approach chosen is sound: the know-how and technology is available to double food production on many lands in these countries.

Having said this, at the same time, I make an urgent call for increased attention to scientific research and technology in order to allow us to confront the food security problems which, unfortunately, will have to be faced in the years and decades after 2015, when the descendants of our grandchildren will demand their right to food and food security.

Being also the Minister for the Environment, I am aware of the challenges lying ahead. How do we double food production without further damaging the environment? How do we reduce soil erosion? At an International Conference on Rangeland Desertification, held in Iceland in September, it was stated that the rate of soil loss caused by man is 12-15 thousand million tons per year. At that rate there will be no soil left on earth in a few hundred years!

Can we accept and accommodate the vast increase in the use of fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation water required for presently known agricultural methods to double or triple food production?

Will this expansion in agricultural production eventually lead to the extinction of the world's forests? Will it result in a dwindling of biodiversity? Can the world's oceans tolerate a greater intensification of fishing?

All of these questions must be pondered by Ministers of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment together. All these questions call on FAO to take the international lead and guide us into the next century to help attain sustainable food security.

In the task facing agriculture in the Twenty-first century, the challenge of attaining food security for double the present world population will have to depend on peoples' participation. Both men and women must be provided with the knowledge and technology required for sustainable food production at a high enough level. Young people must be attracted to working in agriculture at all levels: as farmers and fishermen, as advisors, and agricultural research workers.

FAO has a crucial role to play in motivating peoples' participation in attaining food security for all in the next century, but FAO can only be as strong as we, the Member Nations, want it to be and how we express and provide our support for its activities.

Dissanayake M. JAYARATNE (Sri Lanka)

Allow me, Chairman, in the first instance to congratulate you on your election as Chairman. I am sure that under your able guidance, the deliberations of this Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization will be fruitful.

Allow me also to bring to this assembly and in particular to you, Jacques Diouf, the Director-General, the greetings of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and the people of Sri Lanka who wish this biennial conference all success.

We are meeting just one year after the successful completion of the World Food Summit. At that historic Summit, several resolutions were passed, the most significant of them being the international realization that we need to intensify our food production programmes in order to meet the challenges facing the world in the next millenium. By the year 2005 we must be in a position to ensure that almost the entirety of the 800 million presently starving people around this globe will be able to have the assurance of adequate food to meet their basic food needs, which will provide them with a decent standard of living.

In recognition of the fact that all nations should try to the utmost extent possible, in the first instance, to be self-reliant in their basic food requirements, my Ministry has developed programmes to produce all of my country's basic food requirements by the year 2005.

Sri Lanka's major staple food item is rice. At the moment, our requirement of rice is approximately 2.7 million metric tons. In years of normal rainfall we are able to meet approximately 80-85 percent of this requirement. However, during periods of drought, our imports go up to as much as 30 percent. Our total requirement of vegetables per annum is approximately 2 million tons. Similarly, the total requirement of fruit is one million tons. Sri Lanka has developed proposals to meet these requirements with special production programmes for cultivation of paddy and other food crops. Twelve selected fruits and 21 selected vegetables have been developed.

The entire strategy revolves around the fact that, by the year 2005, we would be self-reliant in most of our food crops and minimize dependence on foreign sources, which can be both risky and quite expensive in the long term.

Sri Lanka's agriculture is facing many challenges, with international agreements such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the proposed South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) placing it in a vulnerable situation. At the moment, great emphasis is being placed on regional associations such as the European Union, ASEAN, NAFTA, and now SAFTA. While these associations concentrate on ensuring regional cooperation and coordination, it should not be forgotten that interactions across different regions need to be maintained. We would appeal, therefore, for a move towards a global approach in order to have a more equitable distribution of resources rather than two extremes of having very rich countries on the one hand and very poor countries on the other.

Sri Lanka's level of technology in relation to some agricultural crops is still relatively low. It is necessary for us to have time to develop our technologies to the levels of developed countries so that we can increase our productivity. In the absence of such technologies and our inability to increase productivity and farmers' income, the buying power of our people will be further aggravated if this situation continues. In this respect, we need the assistance not only of FAO but also of the other developed countries in order to collectively achieve this goal.

In view of the increasing costs of producing most of our food items, primarily due to high labour rates, our production programmes have taken into account the need to mechanize and move towards modern and more advanced levels of technology for food production, thereby increasing productivity and reducing costs. With newer and more innovative marketing strategies, we intend to give our farmers better and stable prices, and thereby enhance their incomes. To this end we would appeal to FAO and to other countries for their assistance.

One of the major problems facing production programmes in my country is the non-availability of quality certified seed and planting material. In order to move away from foreign dependence for the supply of this very basic input, we have developed means to produce them locally with the active participation of the private sector.

The main cause for the shortfall in food production and its attendant problems is that, for numerous reasons, farmers are placed at a disadvantaged position to produce the required food. While, both internationally and nationally, farmers are considered the backbone of the economy, in actual practice, by and large, they are relegated to a relatively minor role giving precedence to industry and other sectors of the economy.

In order to re-emphasize and make both the international and national communities sensitive to the significance of farming, I propose that the year 2000 - which will be the dawn of a new millennium - be declared the "Year of the Farmer". This would call for international recognition of the role farmers play not only in providing the required food for the nation or the region, but also recognition of their intimate involvement in the development of the economies of countries.

Accordingly, I have already submitted the following resolution to be presented at the current session of the Conference, to read as follows:

"This Conference resolves that in recognition of the importance of ensuring global and household food security and the consequent need to optimize food production to meet the requirement of an expanding population, the Year 2000 be declared by the FAO as the "Year of the Farmer". To give substance to such a declaration, the Conference further resolves that the special focus of Member Nations, international organizations and institutions be to provide the inputs and conditions for rapidly increasing farmer productivity and re-orienting the terms of trade in favour of agriculture".

I hope that this resolution by Sri Lanka will receive the wholehearted support and endorsement of the countries present at this Conference and of the FAO as well. I am sure it will lead to commitments from the different Member Nations and the international community towards more research and development activities for the development of the agricultural sector.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that the path and the direction that is set out during the deliberations of this Conference will develop a more comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the complexities of agrarian problems of countries in the region and that FAO would re-order its priorities and re-fashion its approaches to the extent possible, and thereby obtain the maximum possible benefit.

Abdullah NAJAM ABDULLAH (Iraq) (Original language Arabic)

On behalf of the Iraqi Delegation we are pleased to extend to you all our warmest greetings. I am pleased to express my thanks and appreciation to Dr Diouf, Director-General of FAO, for his invitation to take part in the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. Our thanks are also extended to his colleagues for the tremendous effort they have deployed in the organization of

this august gathering. Furthermore, we are happy to congratulate the Chairman of this Session of the Conference, as well as the Vice-Chairmen, for their election.

For the last two decades, Iraq has undertaken the task of promoting and rehabilitating the agricultural sector to help it fulfil its required role, namely, that of safeguarding food security for our society. Consequently, thousands of hectares of agricultural land were reclaimed, irrigation projects were implemented, and water draining networks were set up in order to combat soil salinity. Furthermore, an efficient poultry production base was set up for the production of meat and eggs, in addition to other major schemes, such as milk production, processing of dairy products, as well as supply of various veterinary services to animal breeders. Similarly, the annual subsidies of agricultural and industrial product prices, along with the easy access of farmers to the required inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, and improved seeds, were significant factors with a substantial impact on the extension of farmed lands. Moreover, this vital sector benefited from the backstopping from an increasing number of qualified cadres specialized in all relevant fields, which helped keep abreast of the development of agriculture the world over, and also helped adopt these developments to the indigenous situation of our country.

Agriculture was severely harmed after the aggression against Iraq. In fact, dams, reservoirs, pumping stations, were subjected to shelling from aircraft and missiles, in addition to the undermining of agricultural infrastructures, such as grain silos and cooling houses for agricultural and poultry products.

The comprehensive embargo imposed on my country for the last seven years has resulted in an acute shortage of the necessary agricultural inputs. In order to illustrate these effects, I should like to put forward down-to-earth examples. The majority of tractors and harvesting machines have long exceeded their operational life. Agricultural animal pests increased sharply due to the termination of inputs of agricultural pesticides, veterinary drugs and vaccines which, in turn, resulted in the emergence of numerous pests and diseases hitherto unknown to us, such as screw-worm fly, foot-and-mouth disease, and other pests affecting the crops and led to a sharp downturn in agricultural production rates.

The aggression and the comprehensive economic embargo still in force to this day, through various manifestations and methods, did not shake our faith and steadfastness and dedicated ourselves to our work as the true, real path towards salvation. As a matter of fact, the Iraqis under the circumstances were able to achieve what is still unachieved by a number of countries which suffered neither from wars nor from sanctions. In the final analysis, this bears witness to the ability of the Iraqis to overcome hardships and perform creative work.

At a time when the technical and diplomatic dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations Secretariat succeeded in reaching an agreement that is satisfactory to both sides on the Memorandum of Understanding on "Food for Oil" formula we notice that some countries are erecting various obstacles obstructing the practical implementation of the Memorandum's provisions either within the framework of the Sanctions Committee or through the administrative requirements for its implementation.

Here it should be recalled that every single day under the present sanctions means more suffering for the Iraqi people - more victims among children, the elderly and women as a result of this unjust embargo.

A number of United Nations Agencies, independent humanitarian organizations, and this Organization, the FAO, through reports prepared in 1993, 1995, and 1997, have substantiated the undermining effect of the embargo on my country, especially on the most vulnerable groups of the population, particularly in the food and health sectors - and this despite the state's efforts under the present difficult circumstances. Ladies and Gentlemen, history places responsibility on your shoulders - The responsibility of seeking a fair and just resolution, putting an end to economic sanctions, lifting the embargo, and letting Iraq recover its right to export its main commodities, thus enabling it to meet its most urgent needs in food and medicine.

We have carefully studied the documents submitted to this Session, and we praise the Organization for their preparation. We also wish to express our satisfaction with the fulfilment of the World Food Summit's goals - namely those of raising public awareness and opinion about the importance of Food for All and preparing the adequate framework for the attainment of these goals and objectives. We would also like to support FAO's efforts in combatting desert locusts, and we call upon the Conference, the international community, and the affected countries, to step up their support within the framework of the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (EMPRES).

As to the Director-General's proposal within the Programme of Work and Budget for the 1997-98 biennium, we would like to support the alternative of real zero growth.

In conclusion, and on behalf of the Delegation of the Republic of Iraq, may I pay tribute to FAO for its achievements in the promotion of agricultural development in the world, for its relentless assistance to us during the economic sanctions and for the training opportunities it gave to our cadres in the field of agriculture. Hence, we feel duty-bound to express our sincere thanks to the Director-General, his collaborators and all those working in this Organization. Again, we wish to reiterate our best wishes for a successful Conference.

NGUYEN THIEN LUAN (Viet Nam)

With the renovation policy, the agriculture of Vietnam has reached a stage of steady evolution and gradually entered into a position of stable development. During the past ten years, the agriculture of Vietnam has continuously achieved good results and high annual average growth, increasing by one million tons per year. The structure of agricultural production has changed, to move towards greater progress and effectiveness. The agriculture of Vietnam is changing to a stage of commercial production and is now export-driven. From a food-importing country, Vietnam is becoming a rice-exporting country of the world, with an average volume of 1.5 to 2 million tons of rice per year, especially during the year 1996, with 3 million tons of exported rice. Estimates for this year are more than 3.5 million tons of rice. Foreign exchange earnings from rice exports have contributed to increasing investments and resources for agriculture, ensuring a stability within the market and contributing to greater food security.

However, the food security of Vietnam is still in the initial stages and facing the following problems:

- Part of the people, about 10-15 percent of the population are still poor; of these, 5-7 percent are still suffering from hunger, particularly in the period close to harvesting, and at times of natural disasters. The malnutrition rate for pregnant women and children under 5 years of age is more than 5 percent.
- The economic effectiveness of agricultural production and food production in particular is also still low and farmers have not yet been convinced to invest in the development of food production.
- The high population growth rate makes the pressure on the supply of food a difficult problem, as well as the impact that this may have on the environment. The process of urbanization has reduced the area of food cultivation on the available land and has ended up leading to a speed-up in migration from the rural areas to the cities and other regions in the country.
- Natural disasters, which are a frequent occurrence in our country, have also increased over recent years. The change of food markets in the region has damaged producers and has also had a serious impact upon the living conditions of farmers.

These are the reasons why ensuring food security in Vietnam is still a very difficult task and requires greater investments not only from local, but also international parties. First of all, Vietnam should make, and try to ensure, favourable conditions for effective and increased food production, reform distribution, transportation of food to the whole of the country so that it is available to all our peoples, a change of the agricultural structure to ensure the increased

availability of nutritious food products for children as well as pregnant women and collaboration, in order to implement the Programme for hunger elimination and poverty reduction. We also need to ensure access to available food to all our population, so as to implement the resolutions of the World Food Summit of November 1996, and respond warmly to the TeleFood Campaign mobilized by FAO.

Stephanos TZOUMAKAS (Greece)

On behalf of the Greek Government, I would like, first of all, to congratulate you, as well as the other members of the bureau for your election to chair this session.

The overall setting into which the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference of FAO takes place, just one year after the World Summit Meeting took place, seems to be moving on a delicate balance.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates, the world economy is continuing at a moderate pace, with more balanced performance across the developed world, but with its strength still drawn mainly from the dynamic developing world.

However, even the still high, by historical standards, growth of the dynamic Asian economies has been moderated, and this is a sign of how delicate is the balance we stand on.

Indeed, the rate of growth in the majority of the developing countries still remains very low and well behind what is needed to achieve a sustainable economic growth and global food security. It is a concern for all of us - the persistent and emergency food shortages in many countries, as well as the slowdown in production growth rate in certain areas.

However, against the background of modest economic recovery in the developed world, high unemployment rates persist in a number of countries, particularly in Europe, thus creating a policy concerned with associated problems of poverty, social exclusion and widening income distribution.

The structure and the performance of the agro-food sector is affected by both the overall economic conditions and the national agricultural policies. In this context, the reform of agricultural policies is considered as an important long-term objective. On the other hand, the agricultural sector is widely recognized to have a vital and multifunctional role to play in the development process and this should well be taken into account when policy reforms are developed and implemented.

Among the diverse and indeed very important items of our agenda, I consider two most vital and timely to discuss. One is the Programme of Work and Budget of FAO, and the other is the World Food Summit Plan of Action.

The imperative of budgetary discipline is indeed high on the agenda, not only at the national level but also at international organizations. It is not therefore surprising that FAO is also facing the need for efficiency improvements and for a critical assessment of its Programme and priorities.

We need a clear prioritization of activities, taking into account the universal character of FAO and the synergy between its normative and its operative activities. We also need a careful analysis of the operating environment and the strategic choices open to the Organization, together with an implementation Programme to carry the vision into effect.

In this connection, we consider appropriate to examine the Programme of Work and Budget according to clear choices on high-priority activities.

At any rate, we would disagree with growth scenario that either dictate an “across the board” cut of activities, or on the contrary they imply an increase of our national contribution, while there still exist Member Nations, even large ones, that do not fulfil their obligations to FAO.

Instead we need FAO to remain the competent international forum, which through its expertise can have a role to play in achieving sustainable food security and food for all. In this regard, we

can accept a zero real growth for most important activities on the condition that there will be adequate savings from less important ones.

This brings me to the related issue of reviewing FAO's Statutory Bodies and Panels of Experts. We must recognize that this is an imperative we have to face, not only because of budgetary discipline obligations but also, because of the need to adjust to changing internal and external conditions. After a long and active history, we cannot but agree that FAO needs a "renovation" yet without undervaluing its unique and vital role in the international community. Irrespective of the number of Bodies and Groups that we will come up with, our main task should remain to find the most appropriate and effective ways to reach sustainable agricultural and rural development, as well as global food security.

The many facets of ensuring access to safe, adequate supplies of food for all the world's people have been elaborated.

The alleviation of poverty was once again identified as a major prerequisite to improving worldwide nutrition and was well-highlighted during the World Food Summit in Rome last year. A major challenge drawn from this Summit has been to ensure that the necessary increase of production is achieved efficiently, while maintaining the sustainability of the resource base.

I will not try to analyze what is very well-established in the World Food Summit Plan of Action, namely that the multi-dimensional nature of the follow-up to the World Food Summit includes actions at the national, intergovernmental and inter-agency levels.

However, I wish to stress once again the importance of ensuring that the process is demand-driven and undertaken only with full participation and agreement of the concerned governments.

From our part, we have also embarked on an effort to prepare a National Plan of Action as a follow-up to the Summit. This is two-fold. On the one hand we have tried to keep alive in the public eye the decisions taken at the Summit. On the other hand, having applied to become a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and we have intensified our efforts to increase our total Official Development Aid pledges by US\$ 90 million for the five-year period, 1997-2001.

We recognize that all these are not enough. I hope that nevertheless they are the basis of a good and promising start, which I trust we will be able to extend in the days to come.

K.M. KANGAI (Zimbabwe)

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. Let me begin by reiterating my congratulations to the Director-General and staff of FAO for successfully convening and hosting the World Food Summit in November 1996. This helped to create awareness of the problems of food security and hunger, and facilitated greater commitment to resolving the problems of agriculture.

This Conference provides us with an opportunity to update FAO on the agricultural situation in our different sub-regions and to share experiences on some of the measures that Member Nations are putting in place to resolve the problems facing the agricultural sector.

During the 1995-96 agricultural season, Zimbabwe, and indeed the Southern African region as a whole, experienced a favourable rainfall season which resulted in almost all agricultural commodities recording surpluses. However, the 1996-97 production year experienced a prolonged wet spell in January and February, which caused waterlogging and leaching of plant nutrients, and a reduction in crop yields. The 1997-98 season appears not to be encouraging because of the anticipated presence of the *El Niño* factor.

Zimbabwe, in its capacity as Chairman of the SADC Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector will be convening a meeting of Ministers of Agriculture from the 14 Member Nations in December to discuss the logistics in dealing with food supplies in the event of a drought affecting the region.

A related factor, which also periodically affects food production in the region, is the issue of the red locust. We appeal to FAO to give sufficient prominence to both red and brown locusts in their deliberations.

Zimbabwe now has a totally-liberalized marketing and production system, following the adoption of wide-ranging economic reforms in the past seven years. These reforms have provided significant incentives for farmers. Domestic support in the form of direct producer and consumer subsidies, is no longer an instrument of agricultural policy.

The Government is aware, however, that smallholder farmers still face major constraints that require some form of assistance if the goal of food security for all is to be achieved. My Ministry has therefore shifted to non-price support mechanisms, which include a farm input distribution programme, mechanization of smallholder agriculture, rebuilding of the cattle herd and support for farmer-managed smallholder irrigation projects. The input distribution programme involves centralized bulk purchasing of seeds and fertilizers at ex-factory prices using a voucher system to target the correct beneficiaries, facilitation of transportation and the provision of warehouse facilities by agricultural input dealers and local marketing agencies.

Irrigation is a major contributor to the future of agriculture in Zimbabwe. It is, I understand, a priority of the Director-General. Our policy thrust is to develop smallholder irrigation schemes which are managed directly by farmers. I would like to acknowledge the assistance we have received from FAO in the development of a Smallholder Irrigation Policy strategy in Zimbabwe. Smallholder farmers in irrigation schemes are now producing high-value crops like beans, vegetables, wheat and sweet potatoes throughout the year and make profits up to US \$3 000 per year, giving them a standard of living almost equivalent to that of a school teacher.

During his recent visit to Harare on the occasion of the OAU Summit in June this year, the Director-General of FAO commissioned an Irrigation Engineering Technology Testing Centre, which I am pleased to report is functioning very well and is also available for irrigation specialists from other neighbouring countries. During the same visit, the Director-General also had an opportunity to visit a Smallholder Irrigation Scheme where he gave a very big morale boost to the farmers. He also helped the wives of the plotters to start a Poultry Project to supplement incomes and supply meat and eggs in their area, by donating two start-up hens to each of the twenty women on the Scheme. This project is working very well indeed.

I wish to compliment the Director-General for launching the Telefood Programme during World Food Day this year. This Programme will go a long way in creating awareness of food issues in the world, and in mobilizing resources to improve the situation. Zimbabwe is also participating in the FAO Special Programme for Food Security and has already identified a number of smallholder projects under the Programme. I again wish to thank the Director General for taking the initiative of developing this Special Programme, and hope that many donors will support us in funding the identified food security projects.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, allow me to reiterate my deep appreciation for the work of FAO and the Director-General, and urge them to continue with their activities in follow-up to the World Food Summit.

A.W. QAZI (Pakistan)

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to address this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, and Members of the bureau of the Conference, on your unanimous election to preside over this important session. I also take this opportunity to convey our greetings and sincere best wishes of the people and the Government of Pakistan to the people of fellow Member Nations, and especially to Kazakstan, the most recent member of the FAO family.

This gathering here today affords us an opportunity to once again confront the harsh reality of a world in which hunger and malnutrition provides us with a daily reminder of our failure to meet the most basic of our needs, that is, food. A year ago, in this very Hall, Heads of States and

Government from all over the globe, had pledged their solemn commitment to strive to ensure Food for All. The World Food Summit gave hope to over 800 million hungry and malnourished people around the world. We cannot shirk from our responsibility, indeed our duty, to convert that hope into reality. We are heartened to see that Dr. Jacques Diouf, the Director-General of FAO, is unrelenting in his efforts to turn the objectives of the World Food Summit into concrete actions. We commend him for his numerous endeavours and initiatives such as the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS), the South-South Cooperation, as well as his untiring pursuit to seek additional resources so as to fund programmes for alleviation of food insecurity. The recent celebration of World Food Day with focus on “ Investing in Food Security” and the convening of the first-ever globally-telecast “ TeleFood” are also significant steps. We assure him of our unreserved support, and we reaffirm that we shall be full partners in the battle for the banishment of hunger.

Pakistan, even though having made considerable progress in overall economic development, is still facing the challenge of ensuring food security for a rather large segment of its over 139 million people. Growth in agricultural production has not kept pace with the growing population, resulting in large food deficits which have to be met through imports. In order to ameliorate this situation, the present Government has introduced, under its National Agriculture Policy announced last April, some far-reaching measures in the agriculture sector. The salient features of this Policy are: social equity, self-reliance, enhanced productivity, sustainable agriculture, and export orientation. These have already started showing positive results. Substantial enhancement in the support prices of cotton, rice and sugarcane have resulted in the current bumper rice and sugarcane crops while the cotton crop, too, is much better than last year despite unprecedented and untimely rains last month. The winter sowing season, which has just started, has been declared as “ Wheat Year”. All necessary inputs like fertilizer, seed and water have been arranged in adequate quantities. To back up all this, the Government has arranged much larger credit facilities, especially for the small farmers, to enable them to purchase vital inputs for the wheat crop in particular. Pakistan’s efforts are aimed at not only producing enough wheat for its own consumption but also to have some meaningful surpluses to contribute to the global wheat pool in due course of time which, we hope, will not be far off.

The Government of Pakistan is aware of its primary responsibility in ensuring food security and we acknowledge all the external assistance, including that from FAO, which has made a valuable contribution to our efforts. The FAO during 52 years of its existence has played a key role, especially in the developing countries, on the one hand by providing assistance, through human resources and materials, to the individual Member Nations; on the other hand, and what is even more significant, in fusing together the world community for the common goal of ridding the world of hunger and malnutrition. Despite many constraints, FAO’s performance on both these counts has been most creditworthy and all those associated with the Organization, including you, Sir, the Director-General of FAO, must feel proud of its achievements. Pakistan is deeply appreciative of the role FAO has played in our agricultural economy over all these years, and looks forward to this continued participation in our efforts in this field in the future as well.

In view of the critical role FAO has played in alleviating poverty and in increasing food production, millions of food-insecure people across the globe regard FAO as an indispensable institution. It is, therefore, our collective responsibility to take all possible measures to strengthen the Organization further to enable it to deliver in a meaningful manner. We need to equip FAO to adequately meet the challenge of food security for all, and to rid the world of the scourge of hunger which haunts us today even though in another three years from now the world will be entering the next century. We, therefore, urge that sufficient means should be provided for the Organization to carry out its Programme of Work. We also believe that its crucial programmes, such as the Technical Corporation Programme (TCP), Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (TCDC), as well as priority areas in the forestry, fisheries and livestock sectors, should receive additional resources. We trust the proposals for the Programme of Work and Budget for 1998-99 presented by the Director-General on the basis of zero real growth - though far short of

our expectations and the hopes generated at the World Food Summit - are realistic. We endorse the proposals and stress the importance of consensus approval of this Budget so that entire membership and the Organization can single-mindedly focus its attention and direct its efforts towards the daunting task ahead.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Pakistan's resolve in pursuing a dynamic but pragmatic course in the agriculture sector based on social equity, on the one hand, and our firm resolve to be an effective partner in the world community's efforts to banish hunger, poverty and malnutrition on the other. The FAO will find us, as always, a most willing partner in this endeavour.

Andres VARIK (Estonia)

It is an honour for me to address this distinguished audience. This is particularly so as Estonia will be host for the next FAO Regional Conference for Europe. We are very much looking forward and carefully preparing for this Conference to ensure that it will take place according to FAO standards. Since we will have during the Conference the opportunity to discuss Estonia's problems, I will today talk about agriculture, rural life, and nutrition more generally, while trying to focus attention on questions which might be relevant to the development of the European Region as a whole.

To the European Region have been added a number of FAO Member Nations which have quickly, due to the opening of their markets, merged into the European economic environment. The rapidly approaching access of a number of these European FAO Member Nations into the European Union is taking place. This means that the problems of the Union are turning into the problems of a great part of the European Region.

We also recognize that many European Union problems are turning into Estonian internal problems. For us, these problems are in the areas of agriculture and rural life. We recognize very clearly that putting the problems of agriculture and rural life into order not only in Estonia, but in the whole world, needs peace and stability, sustainability, economic growth and food security. In several countries of our Region, also growth in population seems to be necessary and in this the Ministry of Agriculture has much more of a responsibility than only in the field of agriculture. To solve these problems we have appreciated, and still feel need for, the support of FAO through advice and projects.

It is clear that to solve the problems common to the Region, priorities must be set. From this we derive the items to be proposed for discussion at the Conference. Under conditions of an open economy, it is much more effective to solve them when we have stable neighbours with effective economies. This is why I stress, once more, that regional priority-setting will be one of the main subjects at the European Regional Conference.

While comparing our Region to some other FAO regions, we must recognize that the European Region is relatively small, but very varied, and it includes a number of unsolved problems between the countries. I regret to note that some countries, important for the Region, are not FAO Members, and this certainly complicates the matter in solving the regional difficulties.

This is why we must ask European FAO Member Nations to pay attention to the need to solve the European problems. This idea concords well with the restructuring of FAO and the move towards decentralization. We very strongly support this development as a premise for solving the problems in all regions, but it must be reflected in the budget, including the creation of sufficient regional sub-budgets inside the FAO budget.

A significant part of FAO's activities in coordinating agriculture, according to the Basic Texts, is connected to agricultural research, education and advisory activities. The results expected from agricultural research have a peculiar aspect - they must be in the form of "ready-to-wear". If we look at the results in various countries separately, it is hardly probable to obtain this kind of result, but if we look at agricultural research as a regional network, we may achieve much better results. For this reason, we once more declare that Estonia continues to be ready to work with

organizations involved in agricultural research, including the Global Forum of Agricultural Research. In extending the activity of the CGIAR to the temperate zone, we are ready to apply for membership in this body.

In the European Region, a complex approach is needed, and this has historical reasons. If we do not resolve these problems with goodwill, there is danger that we will not be able to coordinate our activities as a Region and thus reduce our potential as a donor Region.

With the firm intent to find a balanced solution to problems in all regions, I appeal to all Member Nations to pay attention to their own regional problems. As a result of this, it is my hope that FAO will retain a greater probability to remain a sound body. I feel that it is one of the tasks of Regional Conferences - to recognize the regional problems, to set regional priorities and to arrange for the establishment of targets. This would strengthen the authority and effectiveness of FAO as a worldwide organization, and encourage Member Nations to solve their problems in agriculture on a regional basis.

Bob Francis JALANG' O (Kenya)

On behalf of the Kenyan delegation, I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to chair this important international forum. We have no doubt that under your able stewardship, you will guide this Conference to a successful conclusion.

As in many other developing countries, agriculture plays a critical role in the economy of Kenya. In addition to providing food to our population, the sector provides a livelihood for over 85 percent of our people, 70 percent of our agro-industrial raw materials, 60 percent of our foreign exchange earnings and directly contributes 27 percent of our gross domestic product. The sector employs over 70 percent of the active labour force, and therefore plays a significant role in the economy of our country.

During the last six years, our country has experienced very difficult times in terms of food supplies following variable weather conditions that have affected most parts of Kenya. While some years yielded good food production and below-normal demand for substantial food imports, harvests in other years, particularly in 1994 and 1995, were so good that over 400 000 tons (4 million bags) were exported to neighbouring countries. This fluctuating production trend coupled with our population which has increased four times since independence, and the many challenges in the area of food production, have resulted in this sector being given in the government's national plans.

As we strive to achieve food self-sufficiency and eliminate hunger and malnutrition, the Government has continuously reviewed the national food policy in line with new Government Master Plan. In particular, when Kenya fully liberalized the economy in order to keep abreast of the world economic order, a major revision was carried out in 1994 to remove irrelevant and outdated sections within the food policy. The major revisions included: free movement of grains to regions with food deficiency and where prices were attractive; liberalization of farm inputs supply; intensification of research; promotion of drought-tolerant crops and exemption from duty and other taxes on imported agricultural inputs. The tax exemption facility ensured that these inputs remained affordable by the small-scale farmers who are the backbone of our agricultural sector.

Members of this forum will note from last year's World Food Summit that, globally, the number of food insecure people rose from 400 million in 1981 to 800 million in 1996. In our own situation, there are times when the Government has had to provide famine relief to nearly two million people. In view of these experiences caused by natural disasters, the Government established among other measures, an early warning and food information system and a drought recovery relief rehabilitation programme to protect vulnerable groups from hunger.

Mr Chairman, you will no doubt agree with me that 70 percent of food production in sub-Saharan Africa is done by women. The Kenya Government has mounted gender-sensitive programmes to enable women to be productive both within and outside agriculture. We have further strengthened

our regional cooperation in the areas of food trade, pest and disease control through the East African Cooperation (EAC) and IGAD.

We wish to thank FAO for its invaluable support to Kenya in our implementation of the “ Special Programme on Food Production in Low-Income, Food-Deficit Regions” together with the other 24 countries. These activities, among others, earned us the Edouard Saouma Award during FAO’s Conference in 1995. Furthermore, during this Conference, one of the A.H. Boerma Awards for 1996-97 was presented to the Kenyan Association of Food and Agriculture Journalists. My delegation and my country are highly appreciative to FAO for these recognitions.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to make another reference to the 1996 World Food Summit, and specifically to Kenya’s country position paper which has now been translated into a future working document. My Government has established a Standing Committee drawn from all relevant food production, processing and distribution sectors. This Committee has been translating the World Food Summit recommendations in order to harmonize them with our existing policies and programmes. We believe this is the only way the Summit ideas can be made real.

Ms Hedwig WÖGERBAUER (Austria) (Original language German)

I have the honour to deliver the statement for the Twenty-ninth FAO Conference on behalf of the Federal Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr. Molterer, who regrets not to be able to attend this Conference, which is so important to FAO.

First of all I would like to congratulate you, Mr President, on your election to this responsible function.

Almost one year ago the World Food Summit, convened by FAO here in Rome, drew the attention of the public to questions concerning the nourishment of world population. The Rome Declaration, as well as the Plan of Action, have had the effect of a signal throughout the world and are an important approach to solving one of the most urgent issues concerning the future of mankind: sustainable world food security. The reduction of the number of undernourished people by the year 2015 to half of the present level, is a challenge both for the industrialized countries as well as for those where many people suffer from hunger and malnourishment. Austria not only took intensive measures in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations for the Summit, but it also consistently takes part in applying these measures.

Due to the existence of limited farmland and insufficient water reserves, an important role in order to improve the nutritional situation is the promotion of agriculture. In this respect, I would like to say that there has been a plan for expanding the FAO/IAEA laboratories at Seibersdorf for controlling food quality and the use of pesticides and a contribution of 1.7 million Austrian schillings has been made.

Austria supports FAO’s activities as far as possible, both on a regional and global level. The Thirtieth Session of the European Commission on Agriculture, which was successfully concluded only a few days ago in Nitra, underlined the importance of FAO and its role in Europe as a forum for the exchange of experiences and as a promoter of East-West and North-South cooperation. This is reflected in the changes which have occurred in many parts of the world, especially in Europe. Austria therefore intends to cooperate with FAO in order to organize a meeting in 1998 on environmentally- sound forest operations for countries in transition to market economies.

Food aid on a global level is a contribution that Austria makes through the regular programmes of the World Food Programme and within the framework of the International Emergency Food Reserve.

Allow me to make some remarks on the future of the Programme of Work and Budget and on the Medium-Term Plan 1998-2003. FAO’s leading role in the fields of agriculture and forestry, as well as water management in cooperation with other organizations, seems to be the right way

forward to adequately respond to international developments, but in setting priorities of important activities they should be classified more carefully as important and less important ones. The FAO budget should reflect these developments.

Now some remarks to the Austrian Agriculture and Forestry situation. The accession to the European Union in January 1995 entailed fundamental changes for Austrian agriculture, but the reduction of producer prices following the integration can be compensated by a considerable increase in direct payments. We have to protect agriculture and also ensure that we remove all obstacles such as environmental protection. In that respect, Austria is a leader in Europe. Farmers have coped well with the challenges following accession. The principle of sustainability has been given considerable importance. This means that we protect the environment with natural resources, we use renewable energies as far as possible and we carefully replace scarce resources. A vital point is the preservation of the environment within the framework of the United Nations programme and in order to continue to make a valuable contribution for the benefit of mankind.

Frigyes NAGY (Hungary)

It is my privilege to address the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Hungary. I would like to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, and also the Vice-Chairmen on their election. The Hungarian Delegation firmly believes that with you in the chair this important meeting will be a success. It is a special honour to greet the new FAO Member Nation. I trust the global character of FAO will further develop with the admission of new Member Nations.

A number of interesting documents have been prepared for the Conference and we feel that the Secretariat should be commended for their quality and concise presentation of the problems. My delegation appreciates, among other things, the publication of the summary of the State of Food and Agriculture, since this document gives an excellent picture of global trends in food economy.

Trying to keep the short time available for the Heads of Delegation to make their contribution, allow me to give a brief account on the present situation of Hungarian agriculture and on the basic principles and significant elements of our strategy of agricultural modernization.

Hungarian agriculture has still to recover from the far-reaching political, economic and social changes that took place in 1989-1990. Time is still needed for new structures to develop into an effective and harmonious interplay of market forces. This is closely connected with the fact that our Ministry has elaborated the Basic Principles of the National Agricultural Programme. The objective of this programme is to serve and promote the long-term strategy of the Hungarian agricultural sector, based on broad consensus creating a predictable and reliable long-term framework for agricultural development. We can improve our economic competitiveness only if there are clear-cut objectives, stability and a conscious effort to realize market-oriented policies. The Programme aims to make the agricultural sector competitive both within national and international conditions, place it on the road of development, solve the accumulated tension and prepare the agricultural sector for European membership.

The most important objectives of the National Agricultural Programme are the following:

- to contribute to rural advancement of the population in harmony with the area development programme;
- to ensure the population a supply of good quality domestic foodstuffs required for a balanced diet at reasonable prices;
- to produce competitive products for the increasing exports, also needed to sustain international liquidity;
- to create equal possibilities of agricultural producers in revenue-making;
- to serve the environment protection objectives of the society; to use the natural resources through environmental-friendly technologies.

The strategy of agricultural modernization has to take into account not only our plan to join the European Union and some socio-political aspects, but also the actual capabilities and long-term objectives of Hungarian agriculture. Food security, being a crucial point for both Hungary and other countries, has also to be kept in mind.

What Hungary needs is a competitive and export-oriented agriculture, giving high priority to quality and, at the same time, receiving the necessary support. We have the possibilities of meeting this challenge with a farm economy that makes use of the division of labour between large, medium and small-scale farms and also satisfies domestic demand. In order to achieve competitive agriculture with important export priorities, high-fertility lands must be fully exploited and the remaining area under less favourable conditions must be used for the problems of environment and employment. No development of agricultural production can be achieved without the stabilization of land tenure, promoting the concentration of land and up-to-date farm structures.

Our strategic objective is to keep up and spread private ownership and mainly middle-scale farms (family farms, group farms) in conformity with European standards. The modernization programme also has to take into account the remaining large-scale farms (cooperatives, groups, foundations, associations, state and self-government).

In the long-term, the production structure will have to be adjusted to our natural endowments. This will have to be done considering both international competition and our future membership in the European Union. A better exploitation of our capabilities would mainly result in a growing variety of our products to be placed in international markets.

A system of agricultural institutions matching the one operating in the European Union must be gradually developed. This means the development of different elements: the strengthening of the system of agricultural finance, including the subsidy of export credit guarantees and subsidy linked to insurance, the expansion of wholesale and option markets, the establishment of intervention organization, the establishment of a price monitoring and prediction organizations.

Allow me to give a brief account of the economic results achieved in 1996-97. In view of the economic achievements in 1996, stabilization was successfully attained, in parallel with gradually shrinking inflation, improved external balance, and positive economic developments which created a realistic platform for long-term economic growth. The analysis of the growth of economy indicates that production trends for several products have passed the turning point and economic growth of GDP is now 0.5 percent for the year average.

I would like to stress that FAO gave valuable assistance to the agricultural modernization of Hungary mainly through TCP projects. Most of these projects have already been concluded and presently only three are ongoing. Two of them, the "Development and Implementation of Containment and Control of the Western Corn Rootworm" and the "Regional Training in Veterinary Biotechnology for Improved Control of Livestock and Poultry Diseases" have regional significance.

Hungary highly appreciates FAO's endeavour to act as a Centre of Excellence, and we try to do our best to promote this aim according to our modest possibilities. We wish and will participate in the tasks we are going to be entrusted with by handing over Hungarian know-how, exchanging and offering information, as well as continuing, in spite of our financial constraints, our modest donor's role in financing food aid programmes.

The modernization of Hungarian agriculture proceeds alongside the development of its human resources, natural endowments, and production branches based on such renewable energies as agriculture, food processing and bioenergy, and related biotechnological industries such as pharmaceuticals, fermentation industries, and so on. The food economy's role in international economic relations, foreign trade and marketing of Hungarian goods cannot be substituted.

The contribution of agriculture to GDP is very significant; at the same time it plays an even greater role in rural development, maintenance of rural culture, protection and management of the environment.

Our region in recent years has experienced changes worth not years, but decades. There is still a lot to do, and we are sure that international organizations and FAO will continue in taking over major responsibilities and giving guidance in these matters.

Kezimbira Lawrence MIYINGO (Uganda)

Allow me to congratulate you on behalf of the Uganda Delegation on being elected Chairman of this year's Conference. We trust you will steer this top governing body of FAO so that the commitments of the World Food Summit continue to be progressively attained.

Let me from the very start express solidarity with the Director-General and the entire FAO administration for the firm commitment they have shown. Uganda sees a rejuvenated FAO under Dr Jacques Diouf. We support the decentralization policy which is pro-people, as services are brought nearer to them. Uganda's governance is based on a decentralized form of government, and we therefore speak from experience.

During World Food Day this year, Uganda participated in the TeleFood Programme, and its contribution will be remitted in due course. We support the initiative as a contribution to reducing the number of malnourished people in the world and as a means of drumming up awareness for food security.

The Special Programme for Food Security will be the answer to sustainable food production in developing countries. Uganda has applied to the Director-General for its participation at least in the irrigation component. We also support South-South Cooperation. FAO will not be able to fulfil all the commitments of the World Food Summit and live up to its other goals if we do not provide an adequate budget for it. We therefore support the zero real growth option.

The State of Food and Agriculture at the global level remains a challenge to mankind. It is generally accepted that global food production and supply is adequate to feed the world's estimated 6 billion people. Nevertheless, over 800 million of these people, which include 200 million children, are malnourished. They receive inadequate food, both in terms of quantity and quality. Most of these, unfortunately, are in poor, developing nations. Closer assessment indicates that the general food situation appears to be worsening, particularly in developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the *per capita* food production has been declining over the years, while population growth and land degradation are on the increase. Poverty, the major cause of food insecurity, is also on the rise.

In Africa, there is generally very low investment in agriculture, often amounting to only about one percent of the total budget of a country. This level of investment can only result in low commensurate returns. Climate is today unpredictable; droughts, floods and storms, which are more frequent than ever before, destroy millions of hectares of crops. This is especially so in the developing world, where there is no appropriate technology to counteract these catastrophes. Where climate is favourable, low productivity has affected yields, making food quantities lag behind population growth.

We, in Uganda, have a strong conviction that to improve the situation facing the world and especially the poor developing nations, there must be total commitment. While the developed countries have a moral obligation to assist the developing poorer nations to attain food security, developing countries should commit themselves to production rather than count on food aid. Loans and grants which developing countries receive need to be properly evaluated. A lot of money meant for agricultural development ends up paying allowances, consultancy fees and buying computers and vehicles. There have been too many studies carried out, and repeated over and over, without the money trickling down to the farmer to help him or her produce better crops. TCPs should also focus on real problems facing the farmer. A TCP of US\$100 000 could cause a

real change in a village if this money reached the people. It could, for example, provide a pair of rabbits to each of 2 500 households. This would go a long way in contributing to food security and income in an area. The multiplier effect of this endeavour could easily see rabbits spread over a district within a year or two.

Allow me a few minutes to take you through the strategy that Uganda has developed to fight food insecurity and poverty.

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government, led by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, set goals to be achieved during the new term of office after winning the 1996 general elections. Three goals were set:

- Provision of Free Universal Primary Education (UPE) for four children in each family. This is a long-term investment, but we realize that illiteracy and poverty are inseparable, and therefore sustainable food security will be supported by education.
- Attraction and development of industries in Uganda to increase the country's development and economic growth. Our average annual economic growth has been about 7 percent.
- Modernization of agriculture to eradicate poverty.

The Government has developed a medium-term agriculture modernization plan which has been approved by Cabinet. I intend to discuss sections of this with FAO to see areas that can be supported by financing agencies. Allow me to thank DANIDA which has agreed to support components of this plan with a grant. We also thank the World Bank for the initial interest so far shown. We are grateful to the Australian Government, which supported us with seeds.

In the modernization of the Agriculture Plan, the Government of Uganda has identified key areas which need immediate intervention in order to boost agricultural production and eradicate poverty. The Strategy has all been developed locally by involving all the stakeholders in the Agricultural Sector including peasants and local leaders. Through consultations and discussions, the following areas have been identified as crucial in the modernization of agriculture in Uganda:

1. Provision of water for agricultural production. Here emphasis is directed at water harvesting for domestic use, for crop, livestock and fisheries production. A task force has been set up to study the requirements of our country and a master plan is to be drawn up. Nearly 20 percent of Uganda's surface area is covered with water in the form of rivers and freshwater lakes. Uganda is the source of the great River Nile and has a portion of the second largest lake in the world, Lake Victoria, and yet we do not perform any substantial irrigation.
2. Provision of improved planting and stocking materials to the farmers. We intend to provide improved varieties of seed and livestock so these multiply and are available to the farmers.
3. Disease, pest and parasite control. These are limiting factors to production and we intend to fight them through regular vaccinations and quarantine. Let me express our appreciation to FAO for the emergency TCP which has supported our own initiative to vaccinate the entire national cattle herd against Rinderpest and CBPP.
4. We intend to strengthen the Research and Extension Farmer linkages which establish demonstration units at village level to show relevant research outputs to peasant farmers and also train farmers to be trainers of others.
5. The Government has started giving rural credit to farmers. This is a humble beginning, and we will need international support.
6. Agro-processing and Marketing: These are part and parcel of the whole modernization strategy to ensure that the farmer gets a good price for the commodity he produces so as to motivate him to produce more. Unless we start adding value to our produce, we shall remain condemned to poverty.
7. Revival of by-laws: By-laws that compel farmers to produce. During the colonial days the British forced Ugandans to grow coffee and food and sometimes even used the cane.

This improved the production of coffee, and last year we were among the highest producers and exporters of coffee.

This October, on the 35th Independence Anniversary, my President asked Ugandans to do a “full day’s work”. Africa and the developing countries must wake up to doing a full day’s work. Political leaders must give guidance to their people to produce and toil for their food.

Most of the strategies above address some of the provisions and commitments set out in the Rome Declaration of the World Food Summit and the World Food Summit Plan of Action of November 1996. These measures will definitely increase food production, making Uganda self-sufficient and also allow it to export to other countries, thus contributing to global food security. Household incomes will rise to an estimated US\$1 000 per annum. This is by no means a high income, but it will result in removing many Ugandans from abject poverty. A national food reserve to cater for disasters is in the offing as a constitutional obligation to reduce or even eliminate the issue of food aid. Pockets of famine as we have had this year due to drought would, in future, be managed internally without appealing to the international community. Uganda is not listed among the Food-Deficit Countries, and we are determined to live up to that expectation. My President, while here last November at the World Food Summit, pledged to exploit the potential of Uganda to feed all of Africa.

If our Agriculture Modernization Plan meets international support, we will work towards that commitment. We intend to present this Modernization Plan at the Paris Club Meeting which will soon take place and we appeal to all of you Members of the international donor and financing community to support us. Drawing from the Chinese saying, we in Uganda are developing our own notion: “Give me a hook and I will eat fish for ever”. Support our Agriculture Modernization Plan and we shall feed ourselves and others.

Michel PELLAUX (Suisse)

Il y a un an nos chefs d’Etat et de gouvernement ont adopté unanimement la Déclaration de Rome sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et le Plan d’action du Sommet mondial de l’alimentation. Dans son allocution d’alors, le Président de la Confédération suisse, Monsieur Jean Pascal de la Murra, avait lancé un appel pour l’éradication de la faim dans le monde. Il avait conclu son allocution en rappelant que la Suisse, pour sa part, s’engagera par une présence active et volontaire. Mon pays avait déjà joué un rôle actif dans les préparations du Sommet, il continuera à le faire dans le suivi et la concrétisation du Plan d’action. Permettez-moi tout d’abord de soulever quatre points concernant le suivi du Sommet:

1. Les instruments traditionnels de la Suisse pour améliorer la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde, c’est-à-dire la coopération au développement et l’aide humanitaire et alimentaire. Ces instruments ont fait leur preuve et vont bien entendu être poursuivis.
2. La stratégie que la Suisse met en place pour concrétiser les résultats du Sommet mondial. Elle prévoit d’examiner la compatibilité de nos politiques, notamment en matière d’aide au développement et à l’agriculture, avec les différents engagements du Plan d’action, d’en faire ressortir les points faibles et d’apporter les corrections qui s’imposent. Ce travail est concrétisé au niveau gouvernemental en consultant tous les milieux intéressés et concernés. Si nous voulons vraiment un monde libéré de la faim il faut non seulement améliorer la synergie entre les gouvernements mais aussi entre tous les autres acteurs, comme les organisations non-gouvernementales et les organisations gouvernementales.
3. La sécurité alimentaire proprement dite revêt une importance primordiale dans notre pays. La réforme en cours de notre politique agricole tient compte des besoins de la sécurité alimentaire nationale et internationale. Elle vise notamment à renforcer la durabilité du secteur agricole suisse par une plus grande compétitivité et une consolidation des composantes écologiques et sociales. Cette importante réforme est caractérisée par de nouvelles mesures de soutien au produit et un paiement direct non lié à la production. Cette nouvelle politique doit permettre de sauvegarder une

agriculture multi-fonctionnelle qui assure aussi la sécurité alimentaire au siècle prochain, dans un cadre en constante évolution.

Quant au principe de la sécurité alimentaire sur le plan mondial, chaque pays doit en faire l'une de ses premières préoccupations, quels que soient l'esprit du temps et les courants en vogue. En l'occurrence, le commerce et le marché ne peuvent pas régler à eux seuls les problèmes de cette sécurité alimentaire. C'est pourquoi tant que les exigences de la production durable respectueuse de l'environnement et de l'homme ne seront pas prises en compte dans les prix du marché sur le plan mondial, il faudra créer un cadre permettant aux paysans des pays industrialisés aussi bien qu'en développement d'intervenir dans ces domaines, autrement c'est la base même de leur sécurité alimentaire qui sera mincée. C'est à coup sûr un des défis que doit relever l'humanité tout entière;

4. J'en arrive au défi auquel est confronté la FAO après le Sommet.

Mon pays est de l'avis que le moment est particulièrement propice pour revoir les orientations prioritaires des activités de la FAO ainsi que les méthodes de travail, tant à l'intérieur de l'organisation que vis-à-vis des partenaires extérieurs. L'ONU, sous la direction de son nouveau Secrétaire général, vient de choisir la route des réformes. Ne nous limitons pas à assumer le rôle de spectateurs mais soyons actifs, acceptons les défis, ré-examinons les priorités et les méthodes de travail de notre Organisation, il en va du prestige futur de la FAO .

Pour conclure mes observations concernant le suivi et la sécurité alimentaire, permettez-moi quelques remarques concernant le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire de la FAO. La stratégie de la FAO ne tient pas encore assez compte des régions marginales, or c'est justement dans ces régions que vivent aujourd'hui la plus grande partie des populations souffrant de la faim. La création d'emplois, comme l'introduction d'innovations dans l'agriculture, est tout aussi nécessaire dans ces régions que dans celles à potentiel élevé. La Suisse ne soutiendra le Programme spécial qu'avec beaucoup de réserves, tant que la FAO ne s'engagera pas pleinement à respecter l'engagement "trois" de poursuivre des politiques et méthodes participatives et durables dans des régions à potentiel élevé comme dans celles à faible potentiel.

Avant de terminer, permettez-moi de faire un bref commentaire concernant le Programme de travail et budget et les quatre fonctions de la FAO. En ce qui concerne la première fonction, qui est celle d'organisme de développement, à notre avis la FAO doit continuer à la remplir car cette fonction lui assure un lien précieux avec les réalités et les problèmes du terrain. Toutefois nous savons que dans ce domaine d'autres organisations sont aussi efficaces, c'est pourquoi le budget prévu pour cette fonction ne devrait plus croître à l'avenir. Quant à l'une des activités traditionnelles de la FAO qui est celle de centre d'information, elle possède là clairement des avantages comparatifs. Pour prendre de bonnes décisions, les différents acteurs du développement agricole et rural ont besoin d'informations fiables. L'information est un domaine d'activité dans lequel la contribution de la FAO est cruciale aujourd'hui; elle le sera encore plus dans le futur.

Quant au rôle de conseillère des gouvernements joué par la FAO, il est important que cette dernière continue d'analyser les progrès réalisés dans le développement agricole et rural et l'élimination de la pauvreté et de la faim, et qu'elle fasse bénéficier ses pays membres de ses expériences et de ses conseils, et cela en collaboration étroite avec des institutions comme la Banque mondiale, car nous avons affaire ici à des politiques macro-économiques . Dans cette fonction la FAO est appelée à prendre encore plus d'importance. En effet, en tant qu'instance mondiale neutre où se négocient des normes internationales, fonction importante à notre époque, la FAO va sans nul doute jouer un rôle croissant à l'avenir.

Quant au budget proprement dit, je relève que quand nous parlons des 650 millions de dollars environ du budget ordinaire, il s'agit en fait de la moitié environ de la somme dont dispose la FAO, l'autre moitié provenant des fonds fiduciaires. Par rapport aux 140 milliards de dollars

investis chaque année dans l'agriculture au sens large des pays en développement, force nous est d'admettre que ces quelques 600 millions de dollars ne représentent qu'une goutte d'eau. Ce n'est donc pas ces ressources supplémentaires qui vont avoir beaucoup d'influence sur le développement rural. Ce qui est primordial c'est la valeur ajoutée: les synergies mobilisées par la FAO en vue d'une meilleure utilisation des 140 milliards de dollars par an investis par tous les acteurs. Une part importante de cette somme pourrait être mieux investie, comme le rappelle d'ailleurs une étude de la FAO sur les investissements dans le secteur agricole préparée pour le Sommet. C'est pourquoi la devise de la Suisse dans les négociations sur le budget sera 'faire mieux avec la même somme'.

João Diogo NUNES BARATA (Portugal)

I would like to start by congratulating you, on your election as Chairman of the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference and to wish you success in this task. I would also like to start by supporting the statement made by the European Union, made by His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture of the Netherlands.

This meeting takes place at a time when we are re-evaluating the mechanisms available to international organizations within the United Nations framework so that its action becomes more efficient and more flexible and less costly, both in financial terms and in terms of time spent in carrying out projects. It has to be recognized that in this respect some important steps have already been taken in this Organization. I believe that the Director-General, Dr Jacques Diouf, should be congratulated on the efforts that he has made in order to restructure FAO in order to increase its efficiency and profitability. We still have a long way to go, but the fact that we have grasped the nettle to start with is already encouraging.

If we want FAO to continue as an irreplaceable point of reference in dealing with matters of food and agriculture and a credible aspect in fighting hunger, and the fight against degradation of humanity's means of subsistence, we have to clearly define its priorities because resources available are insufficient to respond to all the appeals for help. It is also essential to avoid duplication of efforts. There should therefore be strict coordination among the various international organizations that have the same objectives and which act in similar areas.

The World Food Summit, although there was a paradoxical amount of resources used in organizing it, was a timely signal to the seriousness of the situation which the great majority of human beings live under at the end of this millennium. The Rome Declaration as well as the Plan of Action should be a benchmark for future action. We think that the Committee on World Food Security should be in charge of follow-up to these actions.

Portugal has promoted an awareness campaign for its population, especially as regards its youth. During the World Food Day, television programmes were organized dedicated specifically to this subject and Parliament organized a debate with youngsters where Government members and Members of Parliament participated. Posters were widely distributed regarding the World Food Day.

Internationally, and beyond the European Union, Portugal has given great thought to these problems, together with its partners of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which is represented by countries with very different characteristics. This contributes to better understanding and a better definition of what we have to do in the future. Cooperation activities have involved more and more non-governmental organizations, scientific and financial institutions and companies.

All this has been done because we believe that agriculture, apart from being a source of wealth which is important for the survival of the human race - but not only of human beings - is an essential factor of the economy of all our countries and of development of their cultures. To preserve our relationship with our planet and to protect its potential so that it is guaranteed for future generations is an obligation that we should all assume because we are all aware, of course,

that we have to promote development which is both rewarding and sustainable. It is, therefore, essential to promote technical knowledge and new cultivating methods in order to preserve the soils as recommended by organic agriculture so that we protect arable land and sustainable production, but so that we also offer a better competitive range of goods produced in these areas and so that we protect the environment in general.

It is also essential to give countries with fewer resources the financial sophisticated know-how so that they can anticipate and face - as well as developed countries do - the large price fluctuations of their main export products. As we know, and I will give you just one example, in these last few years prices of wheat and maize suffered a 40 percent drop or more. Next year there will also be fluctuations in the market because of the climate changes brought about by *El Niño* which have been exceptionally severe. It will therefore be important not only for rich countries to benefit from market knowledge, but for it to be available also to those countries that would be otherwise excluded very quickly if this trend should continue.

Better knowledge of global markets by developed countries should not be used against the poorer ones. Conventions on biodiversity, desertification and plant protection are working tools that we should use in order to protect durable, sustainable rural development. Portugal actively took part in producing the Convention to Combat Desertification and will continue to follow-up the work in this sector. Portugal will also organize in the second half of next year, in cooperation with Austria, the Third Conference for the Protection of European Forests.

Fisheries, which is an especially important sector for the Portuguese economy and we support all the conclusions made by COFI, but we do believe that there should be more transparency when applying mechanisms which allow us to put into effect better measures.

I come back to the beginning of my statement when I spoke of defining priorities in order to defend criteria when we select countries that are supposed to be beneficiaries of FAO's actions. One of these criteria, so my Government believes, is to respect human rights and human dignity. They should also respect political and economic rights. We should never lose sight of the fact that the defenceless populations are the ones that lose most when aid management takes place on the basis of political interests.

I would like to conclude by saying that hopefully FAO will once again play the important role that it should in arriving at consensus between rich and poor countries so that we do not have any country excluded. For that we have to reconcile principles with reality, thinking with action, donors with beneficiaries, rules with field activities. This is the only way in which FAO will increase its credibility within the framework of the United Nations organizations and will attract the resources that we need to make progress.

The meeting rose at 12.30 hours.

La séance est levée à 12 h 30.

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.30 horas.

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite)

INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION (continuación)

6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

DEBAT GENERAL (suite)

DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

CHAIRMAN

I'd like to say that the delegation of the United States of America has requested the Right of Reply at the end of this meeting.

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION (suite)

DECLARACIONES POR LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

Lesotho, Maroc, Philippines, Brazil, Bahrain, Italie, Norway, Madagascar, Kuwait, European Community, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Arab Organization for Agricultural Development.

Mopshatla MABITLE (Lesotho)

I feel greatly honoured to convey to you, to the Director-General and his staff and to all Distinguished Delegates, warm and fraternal greetings from the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

My Delegation shares with you the noble goals and objectives of this Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference of the FAO. We are aware that the Conference has to make difficult decisions that will determine the future existence of the Organization.

Allow me to take this opportunity to join other delegations in congratulating you on your well-deserved election to chair this important Conference. I am confident that with your skill and experience, you will steer the deliberations of this important Conference to a successful conclusion. Permit me to express further our gratitude to Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, and to convey through him our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for the excellent arrangements made for the holding of this Conference.

In November 1996 Heads of State and Government gathered here in Rome and pledged their political will to achieving food security for all and to reducing the present number of undernourished people to half their present level by the year 2015. My delegation wishes to renew its commitment to this pledge and to the objectives of the World Food Summit. We renew our dedication to the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and hope that we will jointly provide the necessary support that will allow us to attain our set targets.

We also wish to refer to the Hundred and Twelfth Session of the Council, where in the budget discussions, the majority of Member Nations stressed the importance of the World Food Summit. The Member Nations emphasized the need for an active role for FAO in assisting countries in the implementation of the Summit commitments.

My delegation attaches great importance to the Programme of Work and Budget of the FAO, and hopes that the budget level for the 1998-99 biennium will not be cut at the expense of programmes that support food security in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries. There is need for increasing resources for FAO to ensure fulfilment of its responsibilities since further reductions of FAO's resources would jeopardize the successful implementation of its mandate.

Taking into consideration policies of restraint in many countries, and throughout the UN System, it is imperative that FAO's technical capability and capacity be strengthened. My delegation would like to support the zero real growth scenario. This option will enable FAO to barely meet some of its challenges and to implement its important programmes as set by Member Nations. The zero real growth proposal ensures and embodies continuation of well-established priorities which favour Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries.

Regarding the State of Food and Agriculture, my delegation notes with appreciation the global growth of 26 percent of crop and livestock production as recorded in document C 97/2. It is even more encouraging to learn from this report the positive performance of Africa, which is estimated to have grown by 7.5 percent during the 1996 season. Although in 1996 Lesotho was reported to have made an impressive rate of production expansion of 22 percent, the 1997 predictions show a very low cereal harvest. Production was seriously affected by drought which occurred during the flowering stage. I must mention that the existing *El Niño* phenomenon is threatening production for 1997-98 summer cropping in the Sub-Region.

The erratic rainfall and the frequent occurrences of long spells of drought in the Southern African Sub-Region have become a common phenomenon. Climatic fluctuations which affect food production are the major source of uncertainty in food security in the Southern African Region.

It is now apparent that rainfed agriculture can no longer sustain food production in Lesotho. Recent studies on Lesotho water have shown that only about 5 percent of the water is consumed in the country, while more than 60 percent is run-off and flows to the Orange River, ending up in the Atlantic Ocean.

Water conservation and efficient water utilization policies need to be formulated, together with appropriate irrigation techniques if Lesotho has to produce sufficient food for its inhabitants. This is an area where the experience and expertise of FAO are highly needed in our development efforts.

Almost one year has passed since the World Food Summit. The Rome Declaration, and specifically the World Food Summit Plan of Action, have provided us with a comprehensive framework and a very clear direction for countries and international communities, including the private sector, in order to ensure global and household food security, and thus contribute to the reduction of malnutrition and hunger. We have discussed in different fora the implementation of the conclusions of the Summit and it is therefore necessary to reflect in concrete terms what has been achieved to date.

In as much as we agree with the monitoring system, as indicated in document C 97/7, my delegation wishes to reiterate that FAO has to be the lead organization in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the commitments and the Global Plan of Action. FAO should continue to work closely with other UN Agencies to develop appropriate indicators so as to enhance and coordinate the exchange of data and information.

We would like to take this opportunity to inform the Conference of the action Lesotho is currently taking to implement the Summit Plan of Action. The Government of Lesotho Task Force recently completed the elaboration of the Agriculture Sector Development Strategy within which an Agricultural Sector Investment Programme has been formulated. It is worth noting that the Ministry of Agriculture is pursuing three major sector policy goals of poverty alleviation, household food security and employment creation. These policy goals tie in very well with the theme for Lesotho's Eighth Round Table Conference planned for 21 November 1997 in Geneva

on "Poverty Reduction within the Context of Good Governance". This is because of the high priority Lesotho attaches to poverty alleviation.

My delegation appreciates the initiatives taken by the Director-General of FAO in signing agreements with financial institutions to promote rural development and food security. My country has already submitted its request for assistance as another concrete step towards household food security. In this regard, the urgency of realizing food security through rapid increases in agricultural production need not be over-emphasized.

Let me conclude by expressing our deep appreciation and indebtedness to the Food and Agriculture Organization and other international agencies that have assisted Lesotho in promoting rural development and food security, and by wishing the Conference every success.

Abdelaadim AL HAFI (Maroc) (Langue originale arabe)

Permettez-moi avant tout de présenter mes sincères félicitations à M. Vanclief pour la confiance placée en sa personne lors de son élection à la présidence de cette session. Je suis convaincu que sa vaste expérience lui permettra de mener à bien nos travaux à la poursuite de nos objectifs.

A cette occasion je voudrais encore une fois évoquer le rôle efficace de la FAO dans ses interventions concrètes destinées à garantir la sécurité alimentaire et à réduire le fléau de la faim. La déclaration du Sommet de l'alimentation, qui s'est tenu en novembre 1996, met fermement l'accent sur la détermination de la FAO à mettre au point des procédés clairs. Je désire également mettre en exergue le rôle éminent de Monsieur Jacques Diouf dans le développement de processus et de programmes efficaces, non seulement pour la promotion de la production agricole mais aussi pour favoriser la conjoncture alimentaire et combler le fossé qui sépare les zones urbaines des zones rurales.

La sécurité alimentaire est une responsabilité collective essentiellement liée à la mise en oeuvre d'un développement qui fait appel aux potentialités de production disponibles et qui mobilise les investissements souhaités et les crédits adéquats, d'où le recours à des sources de financement mondiales dans des conditions favorables à la qualité desdits investissements. En ce sens nous nous félicitons des accords récemment conclus par l'Organisation avec des institutions internationales et régionales telles que le FMI et la Banque africaine de développement pour accélérer le rythme du développement rural et de la sécurité alimentaire en Afrique.

Ces objectifs ne seront atteints qu'à travers une aide financière ciblée qui tient compte de la problématique de l'ampleur de l'endettement des pays concernés. La production des denrées alimentaires et agricoles représente l'axe de l'économie et de la sécurité alimentaire des pays en développement, de même que l'outil indispensable de la lutte contre le fléau de la faim. Les exportations agricoles jouent également leur rôle dans la dynamisation de leur économie tant qu'ils ont accès aux marchés mondiaux, à l'abri des contraintes dues aux quotas de production, aux délais, aux mesures protectionnistes, tels que les tarifs préférentiels et les barèmes techniques énormes qui entravent la pénétration des denrées dans les marchés.

La situation est aggravée par l'ampleur du fossé qui sépare le nord du sud en matière de technologies, notamment en ce qui concerne les normes et critères qui demeurent souvent hors de portée des pays du Sud, vu le développement rapide des moyens et des formes de production et des techniques modernes. Il serait ainsi souhaitable, dans le cadre de la coopération entre le Nord et le Sud, d'oeuvrer à l'ouverture des marchés aux produits de ces pays dans la perspective d'une intégration économique régionale et à la lumière des objectifs et des principes qui régissent les accords de la FAO.

Soucieux de renforcer ce principe et de faciliter les échanges de produits agricoles entre les pays du Sud, le Royaume du Maroc a décidé d'instaurer un régime de mesures préférentielles applicables aux denrées agricoles et industrielles des pays les moins avancés, en réduisant les produits douaniers et les autres taxes ayant un effet similaire, tout en respectant bien entendu les engagements du Maroc vis-à-vis de l'OMC.

Nous sommes convaincus que la FAO, conformément au Plan d'action sur la sécurité alimentaire, mettra son expérience au service de ceux qui la désirent afin d'aider les pays en développement et de les sensibiliser aux principes de l'OMC, compte tenu de l'importance de l'amélioration des conditions et de la qualité de la production. Ces pays auront ainsi la possibilité de suivre les événements qui se déroulent à l'échelle régionale et mondiale. La garantie de la sécurité alimentaire, qui constitue une priorité fondamentale, a amené le Royaume du Maroc à adopter une approche intégrale qui tient compte de la nécessité de préserver les richesses hydrauliques et d'exploiter au mieux les techniques modernes adaptées aux moyens de production.

En effet, les changements climatiques et la présence de 90 pour cent des terres cultivables dans des régions en friche justifient l'intérêt continu porté par le Maroc aux ressources en eau. En conséquence et au vu de la politique des barrages qui a permis de construire 89 barrages dont la capacité d'absorption est de 14 milliards de m³, un plan national d'irrigation a été élaboré pour donner un nouvel élan à l'agriculture et irriguer de façon permanente un million d'hectares, soit 75 pour cent environ de la superficie irrigable.

Bien que les superficies irriguées ne représentent que 10 pour cent des superficies cultivables, il n'en reste pas moins qu'elles participent à 45 pour cent de la plus value agricole. D'autre part, les superficies en friche sont soumises à une méthodologie qui consiste à intégrer les programmes de développement dans des espaces déterminés, à favoriser la participation des habitants concernés en tenant compte de la spécificité de chaque région sous l'angle du développement continu et de la conservation de l'équilibre de l'environnement. Tous ces principes s'appliquent scrupuleusement, quelle que soit la diversité des normes. La rareté des ressources en eau nous amène à mobiliser nos potentialités pour les préserver quand la conjoncture technique et économique le permet. C'est ainsi que nous procédons à la régulation des stocks et des réserves à la lumière de la variabilité des ressources et de l'instabilité des précipitations.

Nous sommes en outre soucieux de pousser à une consommation plus économique de l'eau et d'encourager les investissements agricoles les plus rentables. Nous nous préoccupons dans la même optique de la qualité de l'eau en évitant toute source de pollution, y compris l'utilisation abusive qui ignore les critères techniques liés aux quantités et aux méthodes d'application des engrais et pesticides, lesquels exercent des effets nocifs sur la nappe phréatique et les eaux de surface.

Dans les domaines des pêches, qui jouent un rôle primordial dans le développement grâce à leur contribution efficace à la sécurité alimentaire et au redressement de la balance commerciale, le Maroc a mis au point une stratégie ambitieuse destinée à préserver les richesses halieutiques nationales et à les gérer de façon durable.

Le Royaume du Maroc fait état de sa pleine satisfaction quant au niveau de coopération avec la FAO et aux initiatives de l'Organisation eu égard au renforcement de la coopération entre les pays du Sud. Le Maroc quant à lui n'épargne aucun effort dans ce sens, tout particulièrement avec les pays de l'Afrique du Nord-Ouest et du Sahel, dans la lutte anti-acridienne et avec les pays membres de la Conférence ministérielle sur la coopération en matière de pêche marine en Afrique. Le Maroc cherche en outre à renforcer sa coopération avec d'autres pays.

Pour conclure, je voudrais affirmer une fois de plus que le Maroc est entièrement disposé à participer au renforcement de la coopération entre les pays du Sud et à réaliser les objectifs du plan d'action de la sécurité alimentaire.

Domingo F. PANGANIBAN (Philippines)

On behalf of our delegation and the Government of the Philippines, allow me first of all in joining our colleagues in congratulating the newly-elected Chairman of the Conference and his Bureau.

A year has passed since the World Food Summit of 1996, in this very Hall. At that Summit, we committed ourselves to reducing the number of hungry and malnourished people from 800 million to 400 million by the year 2015. Ideally, between now and last year's Summit, the number of hungry and malnourished should have been reduced by at least 21 million, if we want to keep a real score card on the follow-up to the Summit.

However, I am afraid and deeply concerned that instead of showing how many hungry and malnourished were reduced, all we can show, after one year, are further debates and more meetings on how to count the number of hungry and malnourished.

The problem of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity remains intractable a year after the Summit, as the Food and Agriculture Organization informs us that for most indicators relating to food security, the overall pattern seems to be of a growing gap between the countries at relatively high, and those at relatively low, levels of average food intake. FAO also states that average levels of dietary energy supply declined from 1989-91 and 1993-95 in the countries where such levels were already initially very low.

However, the situation does not seem to be alarming, as mid-1997 global cereal stocks for crop years ending in 1997 were forecast to increase to 281 million tons, 9 percent above their reduced opening volume. The combined cereal carryovers held by major exporters were expected to increase for the first time in three years, approaching about 36 percent of the world total, compared to 28 percent at the beginning of the season.

If mid-1997 forecasts were to materialize, cereal output would be sufficient to meet expected consumption requirements in 1997-98, and should allow for a further modest replenishment of cereal stocks for the second consecutive year after the sharp drawdown in 1995-96. Nevertheless, the forecast global stock-to-utilization ratio would only reach 15-16 percent, and thus remain below the minimum level of 17-18 percent range considered safe by FAO.

Forecasts, however, have a way of going the wrong direction. For instance, we now have to contend with a weather anomaly and impending drought threat called *El Niño*. Complicating the picture were the recent speculative attacks on our Region's currencies which bring about larger import bills which, in turn, increase our borrowing and worsen our balance-of-payments.

In the region where I come from, rice is the staple crop and rice is the barometer of our food security. The rice economy has become an important component of our macro fundamentals in the Philippines. Volatility and upsurge in prices of rice result in higher levels of inflation, which unduly hurt the poor and food-insecure segments of our population.

For this year, global paddy production is forecasted at 567.4 million tons, a slight decrease in the estimated 567.6 million tons of 1996. Asia's share is 517.5 million, a decline from the 518.9 million tons for the same period.

World rice trade, on the other hand, is estimated at a constant 18.1 million tons. FAO's forecast for global rice stocks at the end of the marketing season in 1997 has remained little changed at 52.6 million tons, or 0.7 million tons below the 1996 level.

With the onset of *El Niño* things are not as rosy as they seem to be and food security is not a simple question of production.

We definitely agree with FAO's statement that the low level of reserve stocks means that a relatively minor deterioration in crop outlook could lead to sharp price rises with serious consequences for the food security of many Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries, particularly

those that depend on imports to meet a large part of their food requirements. The Philippines is not exempt from this statement.

For our part, we in the Philippines have put in place technological, institutional and structural mechanisms to reduce the incidence of hunger and malnutrition and to improve our food security situation.

In carrying out our commitments to the World Food Summit, the Philippines created an Executive Committee and Technical Working Group on Food Security on 3 December 1996.

This Committee is an interministerial one, including representatives from farmers' organizations and non-governmental organizations, which designs and implements appropriate policies, programmes and projects to effect a holistic and unified approach and Plan of Action for food security and sustainable development.

Within the Department of Agriculture, we have also created a Working Group on Food Security last December 1996.

In order to draw up our master plan for food security, we had conducted four regional consultations this year so that all sectors of our society could participate in this undertaking. We are also cooperating with FAO in the formulation of a Special Programme on Food Security in the Muslim areas of Mindanao.

Now in its fourth year, our self-reliance programme on rice and grain production aims to boost farm productivity and incomes in key grain areas best suited for rice and corn-growing. The programme focuses on the provision of irrigation, farm-to-market roads, post harvest facilities, and credit support in these key grain areas to enable farmers to get the best returns from their investments. Along with these, macro-economic policy reforms continue to be implemented to remove structural impediments to agricultural development in general and to improve the terms of trade for producers and processors of agricultural products.

For the first semester of this year, paddy production was 2.11 percent lower compared to the same period in 1996, due principally to the decline in hectareage as a result of localized dryspell, below-normal rainfall conditions and flooding in some areas.

On the other hand, corn production went up by 3.6 percent due to the expansion of hectareage during the second quarter.

The balance and optimal use of fertilizers, high-yielding varieties and a host of Gintong Ani, meaning Golden Harvest Programme interventions (e.g., irrigation development, post harvest, buffer stock and price policy) contributed to the growth in output.

In order to counteract the effects of *El Niño*, the government is fast tracking the construction and rehabilitation of all irrigation facilities placing priority on those projects to be completed within the year. We have also repaired damaged irrigation dams and canals. We have invested in raincloud seeding and rain making initiatives, constructed additional small water impounding projects; installed additional shallow tube wells, and constructed additional rain harvesting and soil conservation technologies and are pilot testing the use of water evaporation reducing mechanisms.

We have adjusted planting schedules and are advocating the use of shorter gestation rice varieties.

In spite of the enormous efforts of our government to reverse the negative impacts of *El Niño*, we do not remain complacent in our vigilance to maintain food security for our people.

We have been authorized to build up our buffer stocks by importing more rice, if necessary, in order to ensure stability in the rice supply and keep the price of this most important commodity at affordable prices.

We do hope that by the turn of the century, Philippine agriculture will become globally competitive through our Gintong Ani Programme. Under this, we are targeting rice yields at 4 tons per hectare this year and 5 tons per hectare next year, with a target of 3 tons per hectare for maize this year and 4 tons per hectare with next year's harvest.

This is planned through a combination of a rise in irrigation facilities, the use of better crop varieties, integrated pest management and the balanced use of both organic and inorganic fertilizers so that agriculture will become a sustainable and profitable venture for our farmers.

This plan for the Philippines would not be achieved without the cooperation and support of other countries and international organizations. Likewise, the Philippines is doing its share in order to help other countries reduce their hungry and malnourished population.

We have also adopted the FAO-initiated TeleFood project as one of our commitments to the World Food Summit. By raising the awareness of our people on the global magnitude of food insecurity, they can extend our support and sympathies to our brothers and sisters, even if we ourselves need their support and sympathy in the spirit of global solidarity.

We hope that FAO, in spite of its dwindling resources, would still extend its technical resources to us so that our goal of eradicating hunger and malnutrition in my country will be placed on the fast track.

The Government of the Philippines would like to reiterate its support to the Director-General's proposed zero real growth Programme of Work and Budget for the 1998-99 biennium, which we believe reflects the priorities and level of efforts developing countries would like FAO to pursue, given the budgetary squeeze it continues to face.

It is a pity that right after the Summit the Organization's resources are being cut, indicating a seeming lack of serious intent on the part of some Member Nations to eliminate hunger and malnutrition. We sincerely hope that the resolution and Plan of Action of the 1996 World Food Summit will be given the necessary political will and funds to succeed.

Arlindo PORTO NETO (Brazil) (Original language Portuguese)

Last year I had the honour to represent the President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in the World Food Summit, where we approved the text of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and a Plan of Action and committed ourselves to it. At that time, we undertook to provide food security for all to reduce the 800 million people that now suffer from malnutrition to half that figure by the year 2015. This is an ambitious undertaking, which comprises all sorts of social aspects of great importance, in order to assure the basic right to food for all, without any distinctions whatsoever. The Brazilian Government believes that it is possible to achieve this aim, provided no country falters in the continuous struggle to eradicate poverty and social inequalities, because these are at the root of the scourge of hunger and malnutrition that we experience on a worldwide scale.

We must take the opportunity of this Session of our Conference to review the current situation in food production and agricultural output in the world, if we are to achieve, by the next millennium, more efficient agricultural policies based on competitiveness and free access to markets.

Because of its large area and its favourable climate and soil, Brazil has 225 million hectares of arable land which are not currently in use. We also have more than 350 million hectares of forests. This being the case, Brazil can and should make a substantial contribution to world food security by increasing its agricultural output and help to reduce the risk of a world shortage of food supply.

Nevertheless, what we expect from agriculture in the Twenty-first Century goes beyond the mere expansion of production and trade. The increase of productivity through the use of new technologies is something that flows naturally from a competitive situation. The elimination of

non-tariff barriers and of subsidies that distort competitiveness, as well as improved access to world markets must constitute the corollary to trade freedom and to the process of irreversible globalization. The development of the Brazilian rural sector, which is one of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's main objectives, thus depends essentially on the effective liberalization of global trade in agricultural products.

As a member of the Cairns Group, Brazil considers it indispensable to achieve more significant progress towards the objectives of liberalized world trade, especially in the agricultural sector, where there are still high levels of protection in developed countries. Such progress is also needed in order to ensure world food security and to increase the income of countries that derive a significant part of their income from rural activities. It is for this reason, that the Brazilian Government firmly advocates the renewal of multilateral negotiations on agriculture in 1999, in accordance with Article 20 of the Agricultural Agreement of the World Trade Organization. To this end, cooperation among all interested countries will be crucial, if we are to ensure the success of this new round of negotiations.

Since Brazil's great agricultural vocation, the Government of President Cardoso is very much aware of the need to promote increases in rural income, in order to both stimulate sustainable development in Brazil and to increase food security everywhere. On the other hand, the process of adjustment which a number of countries are undergoing as a result of the opening up of their economies is having a negative impact on many segments of their populations, especially the poor people. It is thus necessary to develop new innovative initiatives of cooperation, so as to ensure a satisfactory joining of these countries in the scenario of globalization without rural poverty getting worse. The agricultural sector in Brazil employs about 18 million people and, if we think of agri-business as a whole, the figure of employment rises to 33 million people.

One of the priority goals for my administration, as head of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Supply, has been the establishment of the National Programme for the Support and Strengthening of Family Agriculture, known by the acronym (PRONAF). In 1996, this Programme has assisted 315 000 families, who received 546 million dollars in loans. In the current year, about 580 000 small farmers' families throughout Brazil will benefit from this Programme and they will receive loans amounting to a total of some US\$ 1.7 billion. PRONAF will make it possible for small farmers to achieve greater access to their basic requirements for the production of food staples, in addition to providing free technical assistance. The volume of the loans speaks for itself, and yet it is still insufficient to meet the growing needs of the sector, and these circumstances suggest that lack of adequate financing is one of the main bottlenecks slowing down development of the rural sectors in many countries.

I would now like to tell you about our Food Distribution Programme and the Employment and Rural Income Generation Programme. The former was established in 1993 on the basis of proposals from our National Food Security Council, which is directly linked to the President's Office. It's called PRODEA, and was originally conceived for emergency relief because it supplied food for populations suffering from prolonged droughts in Brazil's Northeast Region and in the Northern part of the State of Minas Gerais.

The Programme, however, is now established on an ongoing basis and is supplying food to an increasing number of municipalities. It has also widened its aid range, including now landless people and indigenous communities. More recently, the Amazon rubber tappers were also included amongst the beneficiaries of this Programme. This initiative goes beyond a mere food distributing service, because it has been conceived as a vast cooperative programme at a national level, involving the participation of the Federal, State and Municipal Governments, civilian sectors of the population, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and, of course, the beneficiary families themselves.

The second Programme I mentioned is known as PROGER. It was set up in May 1995, under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and is specifically aimed at small producers, small agro-industries and small-scale cooperatives. The purpose of this Programme is to generate labour, to generate

work opportunities and to develop income in rural by increasing production and improving productivity so as to be able to absorb a greater number of workers and keep people out on the land.

The main theme of our meeting here is of great importance to Brazil, because it is directly related to the survival and wellbeing of the millions of individuals who live in rural areas. In the case of Brazil, this historically means our North-eastern region and it is important, in every case we believe, to identify the areas where the greatest progress has been made or where more energetic action is necessary to raise agriculture to a proper level of competitiveness for the next century. In order to face increasing consumer needs, we must have greater concern with the quality of food and livestock products.

The Brazilian Government is very much aware of this need and has therefore been trying to improve our country's animal and plant health standards. We have recently completed a consolidation of the first Foot-and-Mouth-Disease Free Zone through an intense vaccination programme. This area is in the extreme South of Brazil, including the States of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, which are on the including 150 million heads of cattle and 20 percent of the big herds, that is about 34 million herds. We hope to have recognition soon of the disease-free zones from the International Office of Epizotics, a tribute to the enormous efforts undertaken by Brazil, also thanks to international cooperation from which we have benefited.

As regards the output of the Brazilian agricultural sector, our current estimates show our Gross Domestic Product should reach a level of US\$90 billion, that is to say about 12 percent of the global GNP of US\$777 billion. The agri-business gross profit should reach a level of some US\$300 billion which is about 40 percent of the overall Gross Domestic Product. The farmed areas should cover more than 50 million hectares; total grain production should be about 80 million tons; and of that total, soybean production, by itself amounts already to 26 million tons and corn production 36 million tons.

Sugar cane production should reach more than 320 million tons. Total coffee production should reach 24 million bags; fruit production should amount over 45 million tons, including, in particular, orange and banana production at 22 million and 6 million tons, respectively. Beef production should be of around 6 million tons; poultry production about 4.7 million tons; pig meat products about 1.6 million tons; and dairy production, milk, in particular, is expected to reach 20 billion litres.

Despite the fact that imports of agricultural products have increased much more than exports since commercial barriers were lowered in 1990, the agricultural trade balance is expected to increase. In 1996, it was US\$8.5 billion. The expected surplus for this year is estimated at US\$9.5 billion.

In closing, I hope that this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference will achieve the results we all expect, and that it will make a powerful contribution to strengthening the unity of Member Nations in our efforts to eradicate worldwide hunger and malnutrition.

Majid Jawad AL-JISHI (Bahrain) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to congratulate our Chairman, upon his election. I would also like to welcome Kazakhstan which has just joined us and has demonstrated the way in which the Organization has evolved. This session is all the more significant because it follows the Summit when a large number of Heads of State and Governments convened and at which time an international cooperation strategy was developed.

The World Food Summit was an SOS to fight poverty and hunger and to reinforce solidarity so as to ensure that all human beings have food regardless of race, ideology, *inter alia*. We feel that these efforts will help us in eradicating poverty, eliminating disparities and providing people with the economic material infrastructure which would then allow them at all times to have a balanced and healthy and sufficient food input. This will also allow us to relodge and reaffirm the

Declaration of Rome and the undertaking which was taken within that context at the Rome Summit.

These undertakings require considerable sustained efforts from all of us, particularly unflinching efforts at the international level if we want to save hundreds of thousands of human beings from the scourge of hunger and malnutrition. Taking stock of the food security situation in the world would, to a certain extent, allow us to be somewhat satisfied but there are real needs which are generated by demographic trends and consumption patterns. Some statistics indicate that at least 29 countries have registered severe food deficits for this year.

In addition, and although, grain reserves for human consumption this year is somewhat over 15 percent, this, nonetheless, is significantly below the 18 percent level beneath which no food security is possible. On behalf of those who suffer from hunger, whose numbers have increased from 920 million and in fact dropped to 840 million, we must on their behalf make this plea and we must understand that millions of people are still not able to meet their food needs. In addition, developing countries in 1996 have seen their situation worsen.

There have, however, been some improvements in agricultural production, but we must not cease our efforts. We must redouble our efforts so as to achieve the food levels to which we aspire with the purpose of guaranteeing a food security, a guarantor of social peace which, in turn, is a fundamental pillar of world security. At this stage, I would like to talk about the strategy in Bahrain which is being developed by the authorities as drawing inspiration from the principles stemming from the Summit.

This Plan aims at consolidating agricultural policies and better use of natural resources in the agriculture sector. I am also very pleased to note that there are a number of measures which aim at rational use of water in the agriculture sector, as well as development of substitution sources for water resources, quite simply because water constitutes one of the primary constraints to agricultural development in my country. We will shortly undertake this second phase of the Plan aimed at recovering waste water so as to use it for the agricultural sector. I should like to say that US\$178 million have been invested in this.

The idea is to achieve output of 500 million cubic metres. Obviously, we want to protect the watertable, we want to reduce waste, and we want to rationalize consumption patterns. In addition, we shall make an effort to restructure production so as to encourage farmers to have recourse to substitution crops that are less water intensive. We have worked and will work fearlessly so as to develop new methods of irrigation which will prove to be more effective through a scheme aimed at providing assistance to farmers. This we believe will allow us to reduce water consumption in the agricultural sector from 220 million cubic metres this year to 140 million cubic metres in the future.

We would also aim at reinforcing cooperation between my country and the Organization. We would like to promote this through technical assistance as well as through exchanges of experiences that are so very necessary in implementing measures that are perfectly targeted to achieve the objectives outlined. It is of crucial importance to seize whatever opportunities exist, allowing us to train our managers and to improve their performance.

Therefore, I am very pleased in my conclusion to have an opportunity to express my gratitude to the Director-General of FAO as well as to his assistants for the considerable efforts which they have made in the wise planning of this Conference and in their successful attempts to make all documents available to us. I do very much hope that decisions and recommendations will emerge from this working session which will allow us to eradicate poverty and hunger, and will put us on a path allowing us to consolidate those principles and objectives which emerged from the World Food Summit.

Michele PINTO (Italie) (Langue originale italien)

Je voudrais d'abord me féliciter avec mon collègue, le Ministre Vanclief, pour son élection à Président de notre Conférence; je suis sûr qu'il saura conduire nos travaux à des résultats positifs dans l'intérêt de l'Organisation.

Je passe maintenant à vous exposer quelques réflexions sur la situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture, sur ses perspectives futures et sur les actions prioritaires que la FAO devra mener afin de poursuivre ses objectifs, avec les ressources financières qu'elle pourra avoir à sa disposition.

Le Rapport sur la situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture ne présente pas un cadre particulièrement négatif, comme il a parfois été le cas dans le passé, cependant, ce Rapport signale qu'encore en cette année, au moins 29 pays auront besoin d'aide alimentaire exceptionnelle ou d'urgence à cause de pénuries très graves.

En outre, bien que la VI Enquête mondiale sur l'alimentation menée par la FAO en 1996 fasse état de progrès atteints en matière de sécurité alimentaire mondiale au cours des vingt dernières années, une lecture attentive des données met en évidence le fait que la fourchette de la sous-alimentation s'est élargie et que, bien que dans certains pays la situation montre des signes de reprise, dans d'autres pays elle s'est malheureusement aggravée.

A l'échelle mondiale, les déficits dans la disponibilité énergétique alimentaire (ce qu'on appelle DEA), ont été réduits; mais ils ont augmenté dans certains pays où, à côté de situations de carence chronique, d'autres nécessités apparaissent qui ne peuvent être affrontées que par les aides internationales et qui sont liées aux déplacements de populations à l'intérieur des régions frappées par des guerres.

Par conséquent, d'un examen de la situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture il apparaît évident que le moment n'est pas encore venu pour baisser la garde dans la lutte contre l'insuffisance alimentaire. Il existe encore la nécessité de trouver des réponses à même d'assurer à tout le monde le "droit à l'alimentation"; ceci en trouvant un meilleur équilibre entre les exigences des pays plus grands producteurs de denrées alimentaires - et des règles qui président à leur production et leur mise en commerce - et les exigences des pays qui sont chroniquement affectés par la sous-production et la malnutrition.

Il faut créer un contexte politique, économique et social où le respect des droits de l'homme, l'égalité, la solidarité et surtout la paix soient prépondérants.

Il n'est que dans ce contexte de grande démocratie qu'il sera possible d'éliminer la pauvreté et d'amorcer le processus de développement souhaité, dont la réussite dépendra de l'attention accordée au rôle de l'agriculture.

Il s'agit là du chemin déjà suivi dans les pays industrialisés et grâce auquel il a été possible de développer des investissements, des échanges commerciaux, de nouvelles technologies et surtout la sécurité alimentaire.

Je voudrais rappeler qu'avec la Déclaration de Rome sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale, nous avons affirmé solennellement notre engagement à considérer l'agriculture comme le point de départ de la croissance des pays en voie de développement et moins avancés.

Le secteur primaire, par son rôle multifonctionnel, est en gré de contribuer non seulement aux exigences de production fondamentales, qui restent prioritaires dans la lutte contre la faim, mais aussi à la création d'activités parallèles telles que l'artisanat et le tourisme vert, qui sont nécessaires pour maintenir le territoire actif, en évitant le dépeuplement et les migrations qui seraient nuisibles pour l'environnement et pour l'existence même des populations.

Dans ce contexte - après avoir examiné les perspectives à moyen et à long terme sur les principaux marchés agricoles, et compte tenu aussi d'éventuels déséquilibres tels que par exemple le phénomène récent que l'on appelle *El Niño* - je dois malheureusement constater qu'au

cours de la prochaine décennie l'on prévoit bien sûr une augmentation de la production agricole, mais à un rythme plus bas que celui enregistré dans le passé et en particulier, dans les pays en voie de développement, la croissance sera inférieure à la demande.

Les causes du retard et de la pauvreté sont très nombreuses, et il serait impossible de penser à une seule ou un petit nombre de solutions qui puissent être valables pour toutes les zones de la planète. Chaque pays nécessite d'un programme de développement spécifique, et donc d'interventions intégrées comprenant l'agriculture et la protection du sol, la conservation des aliments et leur transformation, outre l'extirpation des causes de la pauvreté, comme la lutte contre l'analphabétisme, le chômage et le sous-emploi.

En vue de la mise en place efficace du Plan d'action approuvé par le Sommet, le rôle de la FAO reste central, dans le cadre de son mandat, elle dispose désormais d'une plate-forme de programme bien précise, capable de donner un nouvel élan à ses activités opérationnelles.

Le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation a reconnu le rôle de la FAO et il lui a donné le mandat de suivre la réalisation des engagements pris dans la Déclaration de Rome et de coordonner aussi les activités menées, en raison de leur compétence spécifique, par les autres agences spécialisées, Fonds et Programmes du système des Nations Unies.

Tout en reconnaissant qu'en matière de développement le rôle principal appartient aux pays intéressés, dont l'engagement déterminé est une condition préalable pour atteindre les résultats souhaités, le rôle de la FAO reste extrêmement important et ses efforts pour affiner et actualiser le Programme pour le travail futur méritent toute notre appréciation.

Cela est bien visible dans le Plan à moyen terme 1998-2003. Pour ce qui concerne ce Plan, nous tenons à souligner la nouveauté de l'approche adoptée, qui considère la sécurité alimentaire et le développement durable comme les lignes directrices de la stratégie d'ensemble de l'Organisation. Nous partageons cette vision qui a amorcé un processus visant à une plus grande coordination et une intégration réciproque entre les différentes activités de la FAO.

En effet l'Italie soutient la nécessité d'un renforcement graduel du pôle romain des Nations Unies, afin de rendre les trois Organisations la FAO - le PAM - le FIDA un réseau plus efficace et interconnecté qui puisse mieux poursuivre l'objectif de la sécurité alimentaire et du développement durable dans le cadre d'activité général des Nations Unies.

Dans ce contexte, étant donné l'insuffisance des ressources financières par rapport à l'ambition des objectifs, les trois organisations du pôle romain doivent mener une action concertée de contrôle des dépenses, une sélection soigneuse conjointe des priorités, l'élimination des duplications d'intervention, la rationalisation des structures et une réelle décentralisation.

Cela devra comporter une coordination constante et efficace en amont et en aval des interventions de la FAO, le PAM et le FIDA aussi bien au niveau central qu'au niveau de territoire, afin de poursuivre une stratégie commune, cohérente et synergique visant à déraciner graduellement mais avec ténacité la faim dans le monde.

Du point de vue italien en particulier, nous sommes spécialement intéressés aux programmes concernant: l'agrobiodiversité, à savoir l'identification, conservation et valorisation des ressources phytogénétiques (permettez-moi d'exprimer ici mon appréciation pour l'action menée par l'Institut international des ressources génétiques); mais je voudrais dire la même chose sur les ressources génétiques animales; - la diffusion, dans les pays moins avancés, des connaissances scientifiques et technologiques des pays industrialisés, - l'agriculture éco-compatible et le développement durable des forêts.

Enfin, je voudrais confirmer encore une fois la nécessité de reconnaître aux femmes une pleine égalité des droits à la terre, aux moyens de production, à l'éducation et à tous les services.

Il faut de toute façon souligner qu'aujourd'hui encore, l'une des priorités dans la lutte contre la faim est de confirmer et renforcer les engagements en matière d'aide alimentaire.

Cet engagement, dont nous avons toujours été les promoteurs, devra être accompagné d'un objectif à caractère structurel et non pas conjoncturel, qui nous conduise à amorcer, dans les pays bénéficiaires, une politique concrète de développement agricole.

L'Italie peut-elle apporter des contributions significatives sur le 'plan structurel' pour combattre la faim et la malnutrition? La réponse est sans aucun doute affirmative.

Mon pays, et mon Ministère en particulier, peut et veut continuer à jouer un rôle important dans ce secteur, en fournissant tout le support technique nécessaire pour développer le potentiel de production et les capacités endogènes existantes dans les zones en voie de développement, en contribuant à l'introduction de nouvelles variétés végétales à haut rendement ou d'espèces et races animales adaptables et hautement productives, et en participant aux études pour la valorisation des ressources génétiques locales d'où l'on peut tirer des bénéfices qui soient à l'avantage de tous les agriculteurs, mais surtout des agriculteurs les plus pauvres.

La nouvelle impulsion que la stratégie actuelle de la FAO a donnée à ces thèmes nous semble significative et ce n'est pas par hasard que nous avons décidé de soutenir dès le début le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire. Nous voulons donner acte à la FAO d'avoir créé un instrument opérationnel qui au début montrait quelques déficits méthodologiques et structurels, mais qui a su s'évoluer et s'enrichir dans un processus qui est encore en cours.

Nous pensons que dans ce processus la FAO apprend de nouvelles formes de dialogue et de collaboration ouvertes à tous les interlocuteurs possibles et qu'elle doit poursuivre dans cette direction. Parmi les éléments intéressants introduits par le Programme spécial, nous pensons qu'il est important de mentionner la coopération Sud-Sud.

A ce propos, je voudrais saisir l'occasion pour exprimer l'appréciation du Gouvernement italien pour l'engagement montré par la FAO pour renforcer cette coopération. En particulier, dans le cadre du Programme spécial en faveur des pays à bas revenu et à haut déficit alimentaire, l'utilisation d'experts provenant de ces pays émergents nous semble très intéressante et importante.

Nous partageons complètement cette application concrète sur place de la coopération Sud-Sud, car elle correspond à l'une des priorités de la stratégie italienne. Par conséquent, je voudrais assurer au Directeur général que nous sommes prêts à examiner des formules qui nous permettent de soutenir l'initiative et d'y participer activement.

Un tel engagement ne peut aboutir à des résultats positifs qu'à travers la création d'un système de synergies complexe et articulé, où toutes les parties intéressées, les donneurs et les bénéficiaires, sont appelées à participer dans une vision solidaire.

Kåre GJONNES (Norway) (Original language Norwegian)

I have noted with pleasure that there has been an increase of world food production over the past few years. The prospects for this production year, as well as the next, are equally good and call for some optimism. Consequently, I would like to take the opportunity to comment on more principal questions relating to FAO's work and the follow-up of the World Food Summit.

All the main elements of Norwegian agricultural policy are considered to be in accordance with the priorities embodied in the Plan of Action from the World Food Summit. The Norwegian Government attaches great importance to promoting strong agriculture in all parts of the country, especially in low-potential areas with difficult natural conditions. We also stress the importance of developing agriculture in a more environmentally-sustainable direction.

Later this week, the Nordic Council will be invited to adopt a Nordic Programme for follow-up of the Summit. Important issues in the Nordic context are further development of sustainable agriculture for a Northern climate, consumer safety and food quality, and the utilization and conservation of genetic resources.

At the World Food Summit, Norway emphasized the importance of involving NGOs as active partners in the follow-up to the Summit. At national level, this has primarily been achieved by permanently expanding the Norwegian FAO Committee, but also by arranging a major Conference, which was held on 15 and 16 October this year. It was attended by representatives of the authorities, the research community and NGOs involved in food security issues. The Conference revealed strong and widespread interest in these issues and suggests vivid interest in all parts of the Norwegian population for questions pertaining to international food security issues, such as the right to food as a human right.

Undernourishment and unreliable access to food is primarily a poverty issue and a structural problem which cannot always be solved by increasing global food production, or even, in many cases, on a national basis. Just as often, food shortage and hunger are a result of the fact that a large proportion of the population has limited access to food. This might be due to a number of factors such as a lack of access to land for food production or to other means of production, or unemployment.

Land reforms and economic and social development are needed to improve the situation for large groups of people and to achieve a more equitable distribution of resources. Women and children are often the most seriously affected because they have neither economic nor political power. It is therefore important that both women and men take active part in development processes. Women often have valuable knowledge of local conditions in the fields of agriculture and nutrition, and it is essential to use this knowledge as a basis for positive development. To this end, we must focus our attention on the role of women in local communities and their access to and control over productive resources.

The World Food Summit is the latest of a series of Summits and Conferences arranged by the United Nations over the last few years. Coordination of the follow-up process within the United Nations System is very important. The conferences have helped us to develop a common understanding of the challenges and problems facing the global community, and many of the objectives identified by the Conferences have been closely related. We must now work together to turn these objectives into concrete action.

The main responsibility for implementing Plans of Action for the Conferences rests with the individual country. The task of the United Nations System is to support countries in these efforts, and in this context, it is important to establish a clear division of responsibilities between the various United Nations Agencies. Recently-adopted United Nations decisions have reinforced the authority of United Nations Resident Representatives, and are an important step towards improving coordination between agencies at country level and providing more effective support for individual countries in the implementation of their national programmes. It is essential that the FAO plays an active part in this coordination process for the benefit of all its Members.

Many countries will continue to need international aid for a long time to come in order to achieve a path of development that will provide greater food security for their populations. The Norwegian Government has recently presented its budget proposal in which we propose a substantive increase in Norwegian development aid. The fight against poverty and support to Africa will be given increased priority in the near future. Furthermore, we have suggested to increase the support to agricultural development. This includes considerable increases in the contributions to the United Nations Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and a large, extra, contribution to IFAD. We would consider granting more funds to FAO Field Programmes provided that the programmes are in keeping with Norwegian priorities, e.g. concerning poverty orientation.

FAO has an important role to play in the follow-up to the World Food Summit, both as regards specific measures at national level and in drafting policies in a number of key areas such as the conservation and management of forests, fisheries and genetic resources. The Organization has a key role to play in the major efforts to make progress towards sustainable management of all

forests in accordance with the provisions of UNCED and the proposals of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

We consider FAO's role as a coordinator in the informal Inter Agency Task Force on Forests to be very important. The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries is an important framework for measures dealing with the management of fishery resources. Norway will support the efforts to implement the Code internationally. We also give high priority to the negotiations on the incorporation of the International Undertaking for Plant Genetic Resources as a binding agreement within the framework of the Biodiversity Convention, and we hope to see results in the near future.

This FAO Conference is of great importance as we are about to adopt the first budget since the World Food Summit. The challenges are numerous and we wish to contribute by adopting a budget for the FAO which will enable the Organization to fulfil its commitments.

RANJAKASON (Madagascar)

Je voudrais moi aussi, à l'instar des délégations qui se sont déjà exprimées, vous féliciter, Monsieur le Président, pour votre brillante élection, ainsi que tous les membres du Bureau. Nous vous assurons de notre collaboration pleine et entière dans votre lourde et noble tâche.

Nous aussi nous souhaitons la bienvenue au Kazakhstan, nouveau membre de la FAO. Nous assurons au Kazakhstan notre collaboration et coopération permanentes.

Cette session de la Conférence est d'une importance capitale pour l'avenir de notre Organisation et de ce fait pour le sort des 800 millions de personnes souffrant de la faim dans le monde. En effet, c'est la première Conférence après l'engagement pris par les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement de 186 pays, au cours du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation de 1996, de réduire de moitié ce chiffre d'ici l'an 2015, avec l'ambition bien accueillie, par ailleurs, d'atteindre cet objectif dès l'an 2010.

L'objectif à atteindre est donc clair et très précis, et la Déclaration de Rome et le Plan d'action y afférant en définissent les voies et les moyens pour le réaliser.

Eradiquer la pauvreté et vaincre l'insécurité alimentaire à tous les niveaux est aussi l'objectif ambitieux que le Gouvernement de la République de Madagascar s'est fixé dans son document cadre de politique économique. C'est la raison pour laquelle mon pays a été partie prenante dans tous les travaux du Sommet et ses conclusions.

Nous sommes convaincus que la FAO a un rôle déterminant à jouer dans cette lutte gigantesque car elle est reconnue comme étant l'institution la plus spécialisée du système des Nations Unies, chef de file dans les domaines de l'agriculture, des forêts, des pêches et du développement rural. Son expérience et son savoir-faire n'ont d'égal que sa capacité à soutenir les Etats membres dans leurs efforts pour améliorer le bien-être de leur population.

D'ores et déjà, je voudrais, au nom du Gouvernement, féliciter le Directeur général, Jacques Diouf, pour les initiatives pertinentes qu'il a prises pour venir en aide à nos pays. Nous apprécions tout particulièrement le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire et EMPRES.

Madagascar figure parmi les pays bénéficiaires du Programme spécial, et apprécie grandement l'appui technique et financier que lui offre bien entendu la FAO, mais aussi les autres bailleurs de fonds tels la France et le PNUD. Le projet va démarrer au mois de novembre de cette année.

Je commettrais une grave lacune si je ne faisais pas mention des interventions fort efficaces du Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA) et du Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) dans le domaine de la sécurité alimentaire dans mon pays.

Plus de 70 millions de dollars, sont affectés par le FIDA aux projets de développement en faveur des plus pauvres répartis dans tout le pays, et qui touchent tous les secteurs : agriculture, élevage et, bien entendu, développement durable. Le PAM a alloué l'équivalent de 70 millions de dollars

environ pour l'aide alimentaire d'urgence et le développement de projets de nutrition, de cantines scolaires et de travaux à haute intensité de main d'oeuvre.

Nous accueillons avec beaucoup de satisfaction le fait que le PAM a décidé d'inscrire Madagascar dans la liste des pays devant établir leurs schémas de stratégie et leurs programmes en 1998.

L'événement auquel Madagascar n'a pas voulu manquer, convaincu de sa pertinence, est le TéléFood. Nous félicitons Monsieur Jacques Diouf de cette heureuse initiative.

A Madagascar, les 17 et 18 octobre, des manifestations télévisées ont été organisées sur la place publique par le Comité TéléFood composé de représentants de tous les départements ministériels concernés par la sécurité alimentaire, et par des artistes convaincus du bien-fondé de leur participation.

D'autres manifestations artistiques sont prévues au cours de ce mois pour la mobilisation des jeunes, des autorités et des opérateurs économiques.

Je voudrais mentionner également que le 15 octobre 1997, Madagascar a célébré la Journée mondiale de la femme rurale dont le thème a été "Investir dans la femme rurale, c'est assurer la sécurité alimentaire."

De nombreuses manifestations ont été organisées à cette occasion avec la participation active des autorités concernées et de nombreuses représentantes d'organisations féminines.

Je voudrais informer la Conférence des problèmes très graves qui se posent à Madagascar sur l'invasion des criquets cette année. Les conditions favorables créées par une pluviométrie abondante ont provoqué une éclosion massive de larves dans les zones de multiplication. Nous avons traité jusqu'à ce jour 700 essaims et il en reste encore quelques dizaines à anéantir. Nous attaquerons bientôt la première génération qui voit déjà le jour dans quelques endroits.

L'appel international lancé conjointement par le Gouvernement de Madagascar et le Directeur général de la FAO a été entendu par les bailleurs de fonds qui ont répondu très rapidement et favorablement. Nous leur en sommes reconnaissants.

Je voudrais pouvoir continuer à imprégner mon discours d'accents positifs et optimistes ; malheureusement, je dois regretter que certains Etats Membres, grands contributeurs au demeurant, semblent tergiverser dans la mise à disposition de l'Organisation des ressources financières dont elle a le plus grand besoin.

En fait, nous ne comprenons pas ces attitudes dans la mesure où ces mêmes Etats, à Québec, à l'occasion de la célébration du 50ème anniversaire de la FAO, avaient réaffirmé leur adhésion aux principes sur lesquels se fonde l'Organisation ainsi que leur soutien politique indéfectible dans l'accomplissement de sa mission : aider à construire un monde dans lequel tous pourront vivre avec dignité, dans l'assurance de la sécurité alimentaire.

Nous sommes désolés de relever une contradiction flagrante entre ces déclarations solennelles et la volonté manifestée au cours de cette session de priver l'Organisation de son minimum vital. En effet, comment concevoir une logique saine face à l'exigence de réduire à tout prix un budget à croissance zéro réelle.

Peut-on encore tergiverser devant un budget dont la différence avec le précédent consiste exclusivement en dépenses obligatoires prescrites par les Nations Unies et une inflation symbolique ? Connaissant déjà les méfaits d'une fixation arbitraire du niveau du budget lors du précédent exercice, je ne pense pas qu'il serait raisonnable de récidiver et d'infliger le coup de grâce à une institution si indispensable à nos populations les plus démunies.

Nous sommes convaincus que nous tous, sans exception aucune, présents à cette Conférence voudrions au contraire donner un nouveau souffle à la FAO.

Aussi n'avons-nous aucune difficulté à croire que le consensus se formera autour de la proposition raisonnable et raisonnée du Directeur général, à savoir un budget à croissance zéro réelle pour 1998-99.

Je voudrais clore mon discours en rappelant qu'au Sommet de la terre, les pays industrialisés se sont engagés à consacrer 0,7 pour cent de leur PNB à l'aide au développement. Mais cinq ans après, ils n'en sont qu'à 0,2 pour cent en moyenne, à l'exception des pays scandinaves et des Pays-Bas auxquels vont nos félicitations. Que leur exemple soit suivi.

Muhamed Assaid ABDUL MOHSEN AL RIFAI (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

On behalf of the Delegation of the State of Kuwait, it is my pleasure to congratulate you, Mr Chairman and your Vice-Chairmen, on the confidence placed in you by electing you to the high posts of the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. I also wish to congratulate the newly-elected Independent Chairman of the Council, wishing him every success in his future tasks. In this respect, I would like to pay tribute to the outgoing Independent Chairman of the Council for the great efforts he has deployed, wishing him every success in his future life.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to the Republic of Kazakhstan, hoping it may achieve all its aspirations for the good of its people. We hope that this assembly, through objective debate and constructive dialogue, will succeed in achieving the prosperity of humanity and alleviate the suffering of poor people due to undernourishment and malnutrition.

Once again, we meet four years after the election of the Director-General of this prestigious Organization. It is time for us to evaluate the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the last Session of the Conference, which will approve its performance in all fields. We deeply appreciate the decisions made by the Director-General for the reform of the Organization according to a new and modern strategy.

The international scene has witnessed many political developments, which have been reflected in radical changes in the economic field of many countries. We believe that the impact of such changes will have an extended effect on the world and regional conditions, during the first decades of the Twenty-first Century. The State of Kuwait has not been far away from these international economic and political transformations. Since we joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization, Kuwait has, and is still, contributing to the financing of many development plans and projects in many countries of the world through its financial institutions, out of a genuine desire to contribute to the development of agricultural sectors in developing countries. Despite the aggression our country was subjected to on 2 August 1990, which destroyed our infrastructure and our oilfields and polluted our agricultural lands, which are still suffering to date.

What makes this Session all the more important is that it is held one year after the World Food Summit was convened by FAO in 1996, which was widely supported by Heads of State and Government from all parts of the world. This Summit, after having considered all aspects of food security, laid down strategies on the eradication of hunger in the world. At this Session, we will identify the positive and negative aspects that face the Organization's Programme of Action in general, and in particular the implementation of the World Food Summit strategies, resolutions and recommendations.

On the other hand, we will, during this Session, review the State of Food and Agriculture, the latest developments of situations suffering from lack of food resources and current and future expectations of world food security, which do not seem to be optimistic. This fact emphasizes the grave situation faced by developing and poor countries in particular, resulting from the scarcity of resources and their misuse, the decline of the productivity of agricultural crops, the negligence of applied research, the fall of investments, unsustainable agricultural and rural development, the problems of pollution, desertification, and lack of environmental awareness.

Such major problems underline once more the importance of this current Session and the resolutions and recommendations which will be adopted, which will reflect the priorities in the activities of the Organization during the forthcoming period and within the available resources. In this connection, I wish to refer to the technical, administrative and financial items on the agenda of this Session, as well as the documents and publications issued by the Organization, especially the Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 1998-99 biennium, the Medium-Term Plan - its strategies and programmes, particularly those related to the implementation of the commitments approved by Member Nations at the World Food Summit.

All these documents rightly reflect FAO's awareness of the challenges facing world food security and its determination to face them. They also highlight the Organization's endeavours, with the scarce available financial resources, to mobilize the resources necessary to enhance its role and services extended to Member Nations, especially poor and low-income countries. Hence our support to the Organization is of utmost importance, so that it may honour its obligations to our Member Nations.

I wish to pay tribute to FAO's sincere efforts in the Near East Region and the technical assistance given to the countries of the region in many fields related to food security. At the same time, I wish to underscore the issues of interest to the region and the obstacles faced by the process of agricultural development which impede the realization of food security for most of our people, namely drought, salinity, desertification, pollution, scarce water and land resources, depletion of natural resources and the diseases that afflict agriculture.

Such a situation makes the countries of the region in utmost need of FAO's assistance, which in our opinion should be doubled in order to push forward the development process in the region, to increase food production, to protect the environment, and to halt the depletion of resources, due to constant population increase and lack of environmental awareness among the people of the region.

Out of the recognition of the importance of agricultural development and food security, the Kuwaiti Government has given special attention to the agricultural sector, through Government support, the provision of land and services, and the facilities given to farmers and breeders. In spite of the environmental and technical difficulties we are facing in our endeavours to achieve agricultural development, the State of Kuwait has managed to achieve a reasonable measure of self-sufficiency in the production of the necessary staple foods. Due to our belief that development and environment are two faces of the same coin, and that sustainable development cannot be achieved without environmental protection, we have also been able to achieve successes in the field of environmental conservation and the combatting of pollution.

On this occasion, I wish to refer to the fact that the Public Authority of Agriculture and Fisheries in Kuwait has recently adopted measures to reform and develop its organizational structures, develop its human resources, and promote its agriculture and extension services, consequently raising the level of performance and reaching the desired levels of administrative and technical development.

The Authority has also elaborated a comprehensive Agricultural Plan to develop the agriculture sector with its two components - namely plant and animal production - for the next two decades. Implementation is in process with an effective participation of the private sector. Huge efforts are also being undertaken to protect our fish stocks. The authorities are working on the afforestation of the country so that forests will be widespread. The activities on our part are in need of FAO's technical and advisory services during the forthcoming period.

Franz FISCHLER (European Community)

As Commissioner Responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development in the European Union, I feel particularly honoured to be able to share with you some thoughts today.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Minister van Aartsen stressed our commitment to the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. I will not repeat here what he said, so let me start with the latest outlook on world markets which was prepared by the services of the European Commission:

1. The world's population is expected to grow by more than 85 million people per year until 2005. More than half of this additional population will be in Asia.
2. At the same time, world income and economic growth will continue to increase, in particular in developing countries.
3. Both trends will have dramatic effects on food consumption, especially in Asia and Latin America, because of the high income elasticity of food consumption in these countries.
4. Although agricultural production is expected to increase relatively faster in developing countries, the annual rate of increase is still lower than the expected increase in demand.
5. We can therefore expect strong prices for agricultural commodities in coming years and world food trade must expand in order to meet the rising demand.

Improving food security will in the future depend on our capacity to increase agricultural productivity and to preserve our natural resources. That is, economic development must be sustainable and integrate biological, technological, economic and social aspects into a coherent framework. This must include the preservation of genetic resources which are of actual and potential value for food and agriculture. The European Union has stressed the importance of biodiversity by presenting a Resolution to the FAO Conference.

The European Union will do its part not to waste its resources and to contribute to world food supply at competitive prices. The Agenda 2000 proposals on reforming the Common Agricultural Policy just presented by the European Commission intend to do just that.

Market orientation should be increased by a further shift from price support to direct payments. Intervention, rather than helping in setting price levels for the domestic market, should return to its originally intended role as a true safety net in cases of serious market disruption. The market reforms should be accompanied by a renewed and strengthened rural development policy.

The European model of agriculture and rural development must increasingly respond to the requirements of consumers and society as a whole. High standards on food safety and quality, the preservation of animal welfare, the integration of environmental goals into the CAP, the development of the multifunctionality of rural areas and of the farmers' role in terms of management of natural resources and landscape preservation are the essential elements of this model. They must be strengthened further. Their relevance must be acknowledged at the international level.

At the end of the century, a new round of negotiations will be starting within the WTO. This will enable us to establish international rules which help to improve food supply by encouraging trade flows. But we will also have to talk about environmental and food safety standards. Higher food prices as they have been forecasted may in some developing countries encourage local food production and farm income. On the other hand, in net-importing countries, higher food prices are very likely to increase nutrition problems.

The European Union acknowledges that in the Less Developed Countries, the development of the agricultural sector is a priority. This is not only for food security reasons, but also because of its contribution to rural income and the expansion of internal markets.

The main responsibility for food security continues to lie at the local and national level. Basic human rights, democracy, political and economic stability, and the eradication of structural poverty must be priorities for a domestic policy of food security is to be enhanced.

However, the international community must be able to respond quickly and in an appropriate way to natural disasters and other unforeseen shortages in food supply. Therefore, food aid must

remain an important instrument of development cooperation and of a comprehensive policy to promote food security.

Within the European Union we have constantly improved the coordination between aid programmes and development policy. A new framework for European Union food aid has been established in 1996. This will contribute to improving cooperation with beneficiary countries and organizations and better targeting such aid.

The European Union will continue to cooperate with the developing countries through technical assistance, research, investments and in other ways in order to allow them to fully participate in international trade.

The planned adjustments of the CAP and the revision and strengthening of the rural development policy should lay the foundations for a successful integration of new Member States into the common agricultural market and establish a solid base for the European Union strategy in forthcoming multilateral trade negotiations.

Although Agenda 2000 is an internal European Union affair, it has world relevance and will have world repercussions. Which is why I have thought it useful to refer to it before this distinguished world audience today.

Mohammed Aslam KHAMOSH (Afghanistan)

Afghanistan is a mountainous country. Climatic condition exhibits seasonal variations, with cold winter and pleasant summer. the population before 1979 was 15 500 000, including some 2 500 000 nomads. The established annual growth of population in 1970-1980 was 2.5 percent decreasing to 1.4 percent in 1981 and 1982.

Afghanistan's estimated population density was 24 per square kilometre (62 per square mile). Only 11 percent of population lived in urban areas. Normally wheat is a staple food in Afghanistan. Afghan people had a tranquil life before 1979, but this tranquillity was destroyed by ten years' continuous war imposed on us. War from 1979 to 1989 and 1995 onwards disturbed the Afghan economy and destroyed the infrastructure of the country. Millions of people have been displaced. Agriculture has suffered from physical damage, the destruction of water canals and arable land. Insecurity and displacement of rural population have caused the reduction of food products all over Afghanistan. Eighteen years of continuous displacement, disturbance, which caused 31 percent of the people to leave the country, and 12.5 percent were killed or disabled. The number of disabled, widows and orphans and unemployed are among the highest in the world.

Agriculture is one of the most important economical foundations of Afghanistan. Agriculture resources are the life support of our people, since 84 percent of the Afghans are busy in agriculture and livestock raising. The high percentage of involvement in agriculture shows the degree of agricultural mechanization. In Afghanistan, agriculture is based on the traditional ways of our ancestors.

In the countries where agriculture is mechanized, less people are involved in it, like Japan, 21 percent, France 14 percent, and the United States of America 4 percent.

We do not need to explain the importance of food, because people have always known that they must eat to live, children must eat to grow normally and adults to keep strong. Modern science shows that all of us, regardless of purse, can add years to our life and life to our years if we know how to select the proper food. Persons of every age and every occupation require food to enable their bodies to maintain the best possible internal environment for all the cells and tissues. Both the kind and amount of food is important to those engaged in strenuous physical work.

As early as 1900 B.C., Egyptians recognized that diet could be a factor in the development of night blindness. Dr. McCollum (1957) reviewed reports from throughout the world during the 17th, 18th and 19th century that described extensive epidemics, which we now recognize

included systems of nutrition deficiency diseases, such as Rickets, Scurvy, pellagra, the neurological systems of beriberi, night blindness, anaemia and goiter. It is easy to say one needs food to live, but how to get it, from where to get it, is a problem which cannot be solved easily. Unequal distribution of human population over the surface of the earth, differing ratios of population to resources and techniques for food production means that population pressure is quite severe in some areas and practically non-existent in others. In general, population pressure is greater in Asia and the Near East.

Before 1979, food supply was enough to maintain life in Afghanistan, but during the war people were disturbed and displaced from their traditional home sites. Displacement of over five million Afghans, destruction of villages and agricultural resources, the presence of millions of mines scattered over agricultural fields, suppression of people, loss of livestock, especially oxen, which were the main means of ploughing the land for the cultivation of crops caused cereal production to fall from 4 126 000 metric tons to 3 435 000 metric tons. The same is the case with all foodstuffs.

Animals were sold, eaten, died of disease or starvation, their number fell much below the years before 1979. Heads of cattle were reduced from 3 723 000 to 1 650 000. Heads of sheep and goats were reduced from 23 000 000 to 7 000 000.

The above factors caused scarcity of food and the price of food jumped sky high. The price of the following items before 1979 and after shows the difference.

7kg wheat flour Afs 81 Now Afs 52 500

7kg maize flour Afs 63

7kg rice Afs 128 Now Afs 84 000 Special report of FAO, WFP

7kg mutton Afs 362 17 August 1997 (Shaukat Zamani)

7kg beef Afs 195

\$1=Afs 55

(Source: Ministry of Agriculture, 1978)

On the basis of the Standard Nutritional Unit (SNU) which is widely used all over the world for measuring each crop in terms of the calories it yields to sustain human life, one (SNU) represents 2 400 calories per day, reasonable average intake for human health. One acre of good land can produce 4 SNU. A loss of 583 000 hectares or 1 166 000 acres in war time caused the reduction of 4 665 000 SNU, which would have supported lots of Afghans.

At present the price of food is 648 times higher than before 1979.

At the end of 10 years of war in 1989 we thought we would get our happy life back by rebuilding our country; but unfortunately on 3 September 1995 25 000 men under the name of Taleban, fully armed, entered our country and started the trouble all over again. Their action has jeopardized peace and stability in the region and disturbed the process of reconstruction of the country.

This invasion has caused the following losses:

- Removal of 130 000 residents of Parwan Province from their homes by force.
- Destruction of Parwan canal which was built in 1967-71. It irrigated thousands of hectares of new land and supported 11 000 hectares already existing in Parwan Province. By committing this inhuman act, 900 hectares of land are uncultivated.
- Arable land in the provinces under the control of Taleban is now changed to opium fields. The United Nations Narcotics Control Section reports that the opium produced in Afghanistan under the authority of the Taleban is more than in the Golden Triangle of Burma, Thailand and Laos.

- The BBC, based on United Nations reports, has stated that Taleban have earned US\$ 65 billion from the sale of opium.
- Based on United Nations reports, 250 000 Afghan families in Kandahar and Helmand Valley under the control of the Taleban are busy in opium cultivation.
- When arable land under the control of Taleban is shifted from cereals to opium, this causes deficiency of wheat and other cereals which are already short in these areas.
- Panic and disturbances caused by the Taleban all over the country have put the farmers under social and psychological stress, in this condition farmers cannot devote full attention to agriculture and livestock. This situation shows that the reserve capability of people to continue life to feed themselves is being depleted.
- The Taleban are sending young kids to fight in the front line. Most of them are getting killed or wounded.
- The Taleban are destroying pistachio trees in Herat and Badghis provinces.
- The Taleban are selling Kunar Valley forest trees to wood contractors destroying the forest and exposing the area to mountain floods.

The UN General Assembly has reiterated that the continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan provides a fertile ground for terrorism and drug trafficking which destabilizes the region and beyond. The United Nations Information Services reported on 11 September 1997 a rise in opium production in Afghanistan to 28 000 metric tons in 1977, an estimated 25 percent increase over 1996. Mr Derek Fatchett, a minister in the British Foreign Office, pointed out in *The Guardian* of 25 June 1997 that the Taleban war is financed by drug money. Furthermore, 96.4 percent of Afghanistan's total opium production originates in the provinces currently under Taleban control, according to the United Nations Information Services.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of FAO to the mission sent to Afghanistan from 8 June to 19 July 1997. The mission stayed the whole time in the area under the control of Taleban, saying that for security reasons they could not go to the north. I am sure that, if they had brought this difficulty to the notice of the north, they might have arranged for them to go. On the basis of this report, the northern provinces with Kapisa, Parwan and Bamyan have 77.5 percent of the country's total population; it is not correct to skip 77.5 percent of the population.

Herewith, I would like to draw the attention of FAO to the seriousness of the food problem in Afghanistan and request the FAO authorities to take prompt action in sending a mission to Mazar-e-Sharif province, the present capital of Afghanistan, to study the ways of solving the problems, the need for improved seeds, cereals, especially wheat, animal and plant protection, fertilizer, pesticides, vaccines for animal infectious diseases, medicine for internal animal parasites, and medicine for animal treatment.

To finish, I would like to congratulate our friend Kazakhstan for being accepted in FAO as a Member.

Augustin IYAMUREMYE (Rwanda)

Permettez-moi d'abord de joindre ma voix à celles des délégations qui m'ont précédé pour féliciter le Président de la Conférence ainsi que tous les membres du Bureau pour leur élection et souhaiter plein succès à nos assises. Mes félicitations s'adressent également au Directeur général de la FAO, M Diouf pour la compétence avec laquelle il dirige notre organisation. Ma délégation tient à le remercier particulièrement pour la bienveillance qu'il accorde à notre pays, le Rwanda, bienveillance manifestée notamment à l'occasion des deux visites qu'il a pu nous consacrer malgré un emploi du temps particulièrement chargé.

Je remercie également les autorités et le peuple italien pour les services et l'accueil dont ma délégation a bénéficié depuis notre arrivée dans cette belle ville de Rome.

Que la FAO soit également félicitée pour tous les efforts déployés dans la lutte contre la faim et la malnutrition. Les engagements pris, tant à l'occasion des cérémonies qui ont marqué le

cinquantième anniversaire de la FAO en 1995, que lors du Sommet de Rome en 1996, représentent un énorme espoir pour tous nos pays confrontés au grave problème de la famine et de l'insécurité alimentaire. C'est pourquoi ma délégation soutient fermement le programme de travail et budget du biennium 1998-99.

Au moment même où se tenait ici le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, plus d'un million et demi de réfugiés rwandais reprenaient le chemin du retour et regagnaient en quelques jours leur mère patrie à partir des camps de l'ex-Zaïre et de la Tanzanie.

Ce retour massif, que mon gouvernement ainsi que la communauté internationale ont salué avec satisfaction, devait cependant se traduire par une situation critique sur le plan alimentaire.

En effet, alors que la communauté internationale dépensait dans les camps plus d'un million de dollars par jour pour assister les réfugiés, ces derniers n'ont pas bénéficié d'une intervention aussi massive sur le chemin du retour et lors de leur réinstallation dans leurs communes d'origine. Ils ont dû partager avec leurs compatriotes le peu qu'ils avaient, ce qui a contribué à aggraver le problème des disponibilités alimentaires, rendues encore plus précaires par les perturbations climatiques qui ont frappé toute la région de l'Afrique de l'Est.

Malgré ces problèmes, le Gouvernement rwandais est fermement décidé à relancer et à mener à terme les actions visant l'augmentation de la production agricole et l'accroissement des revenus des paysans; actions entreprises dans un contexte extrêmement difficile, puisque tant l'appareil de production que les structures d'encadrement ont été quasiment détruits par la guerre civile et le génocide de 1994.

Nos efforts, appuyés heureusement par nos partenaires de coopération, ont partiellement été couronnés de succès, puisque la production agricole, qui était tombée à 30 pour cent en 1994, a pu atteindre, en 1996, 81 pour cent de celle d'avant la guerre.

Malgré cette nette reprise, un déficit énorme en produits agricoles est encore enregistré.

A court terme, nous sommes donc confrontés à la fois à des problèmes de conjoncture liés au redressement de notre capital de production détruit en 1994 et à une situation régionale défavorable sur le plan alimentaire. En parallèle et pour le plus long terme, la reprise des actions structurantes s'inscrit dans une perspective globale de développement du secteur agricole que nous nous sommes efforcés de définir dans un exercice de programmation concrétisé par la publication d'un document de stratégie de développement agricole.

Ce document constitue l'outil de référence pour l'avenir de notre agriculture et s'inspire à la fois des nouvelles orientations de développement socio-économique prônées par notre Gouvernement d'union nationale et des conclusions tirées des expériences antérieures en matière de développement agricole, ainsi que des réalités présentes de notre pays.

Nous sommes convaincus que ce vaste programme, qui fait par ailleurs l'objet d'un plan d'action précis à l'horizon 2010 et d'un programme d'investissements publics à l'horizon 2003, servira de cadre de référence, non seulement pour les activités de mon ministère mais aussi comme instrument attendu par nos partenaires de coopération pour orienter leurs interventions futures dans un cadre logique et cohérent.

Je renouvelle ici ma gratitude envers la FAO, ainsi que tous les organismes et pays amis, non seulement pour l'appui fourni à la préparation de ces documents, mais aussi pour l'aide humanitaire dispensée à nos populations éprouvées.

Mon pays aura encore besoin, dans les mois qui viennent, d'aide alimentaire pour faire face aux problèmes conjoncturels de sécheresse et de retour des réfugiés qu'il vient de connaître, mais avant tout, nous souhaitons mener à bien les actions de développement agricole qui doivent nous permettre, à terme, de garantir notre sécurité alimentaire et de constituer des réserves suffisantes pour faire face à ce type d'aléas.

J'exhorte donc, au nom de mon pays, tous nos partenaires de coopération à manifester leur solidarité dans la lutte contre la pauvreté, la malnutrition et la faim, par leurs appuis, leurs conseils et leur participation aux programmes d'investissements agricoles que nous voulons mettre en oeuvre.

Je suis convaincu que cet appel ne restera pas lettre morte, confiant dans votre bonne appréciation des efforts internes que déploie mon pays et qui méritent d'être soutenus.

**Yahia BAKOUR (Observer for Arab Organization for Agricultural Development)
(Original language Arabic)**

It gives me pleasure today to address you on behalf of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development which consists of 21 Arab Member Nations in the Middle East and Northern Africa. I wish to convey to the Conference our deepest respect and our hope that it will adopt important decisions that will help to alleviate the suffering of the millions suffering from undernourishment as a result of natural conditions or lack of modern techniques in the agricultural sector.

It also gives me pleasure to convey to the Director-General our deep appreciation for the efforts deployed by the Organization under his leadership and for the constructive action undertaken by the Organization for the service of developing countries in order to increase their food production and improve their living conditions in rural areas. We also pay tribute to those decisions adopted by the World Food Summit, which was an important event for developing countries, and we hope that the developed countries will submit further assistance so that the developing countries will be able to invest their natural resources at the optimal level.

I wish to praise the constructive cooperation existing between the Arab Organization of Agricultural Development and FAO in its Regional Office in Cairo and the technical departments for the service to the countries of the Region. This cooperation has led to significant results in terms of information exchange and analysis, implementation of technical analysis in the field of environmental protection, struggle against desertification, human resource development, as well as problems impeding agricultural development.

I also wish to give you a brief account of the successes achieved by the Arab region with regard to food production and advanced levels of self-sufficiency in most of the food commodities which has increased by a rate of 13 percent in 1996 compared to the same figure in 1995. Such stories of success have been the result of clear orientations given by the Arab leaders and the great efforts deployed by the Arab Ministers and their commitment to implement the Tunis Declaration on Arab Food Security, which was adopted by the general Conference of our Organization in January, 1996, and which identified the means of achieving food security at the Arab level.

On the other hand, the Conference of Arab Ministers of Agriculture and Food conveyed by our Organization also adopted important resolutions as well as the Cairo Declaration on the principles of Arab cooperation in the field of the development, utilization and protection of Arab water resources. I also wish to stress the importance attached by the Arab Ministers of Agriculture to the cooperation between our two organizations in all fields, as well as the coordination of efforts and programmes and consultations that would benefit our two Organizations and countries of the region.

I also wish to refer to the contribution of the Arab Organization of Agricultural Development in the Afro-Arab cooperation context. We are currently involved in 16 African countries helping them in the preparation and implementation of important agricultural projects, as well as the financing of many others, and the training of agricultural technical people in order to achieve the objectives identified by the League of Arab States and the Organization of African Unity.

I also would like to stress the importance of the continued cooperation between our Organization, FAO, IFAD and development financing institutions at the regional and international levels to combat desertification, increase agricultural production, and protect it from all diseases.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our deep thanks and appreciation and we hope that we will come out with resolutions and decisions that will face up to the challenges awaiting humanity.

CHAIRMAN

The delegate of the United States of America has asked to exercise his RIGHT OF REPLY and his statement will be inserted in the Verbatim Record.

RIGHT OF REPLY

DROIT DE REPOSE

DERECHO DE REPLICIA

August SCHUMACHER (United States of America)

The Government of Iraq bears the primary responsibility for the continuation of sanctions imposed by the United Nations as a result of Iraq's aggression against its neighbours. These sanctions will continue in place until the Government of Iraq fulfils its obligations under the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. We look forward to the day when Iraq rejoins the family of nations as a responsible and law-abiding member.

The Government of Iraq also bears primary responsibility for the suffering of the Iraqi people. The Iraqi Government has continued to spend its resources on arms and benefits for the government elite, and delayed for many months the Oil-for-Food Programme that was available. The United States has no quarrel with the Iraqi people. We co-sponsored United Nations Security Council Resolutions 986 and 1111, permitting strictly-controlled and limited oil sales to pay for humanitarian goods. This Programme has served, and will continue to serve, to ease the plight of Iraqi civilians. Continuation of this Programme requires that Iraq live up to its promise regarding implementation.¹

The meeting rose at 16.40 hours.

La séance est levée à 16 h 40.

Se levanta la sesión a las 16.40 horas.

¹ Statement inserted in the verbatim records on request

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite)

INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION (continuación)

6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

DEBAT GENERAL (suite)

DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION (suite)

MANIFESTACIONES POR LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

Angola, Laos, Albania, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinée

CHAIRMAN

We will continue this morning with Agenda Item 6, the Review of the State of Food and Agriculture, until His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, arrives and graces us with his presence later this morning to deliver the Twentieth McDougall Memorial Lecture. Our first speaker this morning, and I think it is appropriate that he be our first speaker, is from Angola. Today is Angola's National Day, so I will ask His Excellency Carlos António Fernandes, Minister for Agriculture and Development for Angola, to come to the lectern and be our first speaker this morning.

Carlos António FERNANDES (Angola) (Langue originale portugais)

C'est avec un immense plaisir et beaucoup de satisfaction que je prends la parole devant cette auguste assemblée, après l'avoir fait il y a une vingtaine d'années quand, dans la ferveur de l'indépendance de mon pays, je suis venu le représenter à la Dix-huitième session de cette Conférence.

Aujourd'hui, l'Angola commémore le vingt-deuxième anniversaire de son indépendance.

C'est également avec beaucoup de plaisir que je m'associe aux illustres délégués qui m'ont précédé pour adresser mes chaleureuses félicitations à Monsieur le Président, et aux autres membres du Bureau pour leur brillante élection.

Je voudrais aussi saisir cette occasion pour remercier le Directeur général de la FAO, Monsieur Jacques Diouf, et ses collaborateurs pour l'appui que cette Organisation n'a cessé et continue d'apporter à mon pays.

A la lumière des événements politiques qui ont marqué l'histoire de mon pays ces dernières temps, l'Angola a ouvert une nouvelle page de son histoire en avril dernier avec l'installation respectivement du Gouvernement d'union et de réconciliation nationale et du Parlement, en conformité les résultats des élections réalisées en 1992. Cet événement, porteur d'espoir, soutenu par une paix effective et durable, vise la consolidation de la conscience démocratique et la poursuite constante du bien-être pour tous les Angolais.

Nous osons espérer que cette ère de paix qui s'amorce permettra au pays de se libérer définitivement du spectre de la guerre, et de concentrer ainsi toutes ses énergies dans la tâche ardue de la reconstruction nationale.

Face à l'évolution politique qui se dessine dans le pays, mon gouvernement s'est engagé à lancer de nouvelles bases en vue de la reprise de la croissance économique, notamment dans l'agriculture qui est considérée comme secteur prioritaire. Cette option permettra la libération définitive des populations rurales qui représentent 80 pour cent de la population totale du pays, des souffrances auxquelles elles étaient assujetties pendant des générations, et qui se sont traduites par des pertes humaines ainsi que par la soumission de millions de personnes à des conditions d'extrême pauvreté.

Avec l'appui substantiel de la communauté internationale et de la FAO comme chef de file dans la préparation des documents, nous avons eu l'opportunité, en mai dernier, de promouvoir un ample débat national sur l'avenir de l'agriculture angolaise et d'identifier les actions qui permettront d'améliorer les conditions de vie des familles rurales. Grâce à un large consensus résultant de ce débat, qui a réuni diverses compétences, sensibilités et groupes d'intérêts au niveau national, nous pouvons affirmer être parvenus à tracer un programme et des lignes maîtresses cohérentes qui nous permettront d'entrevoir l'avenir de l'agriculture angolaise avec sérénité et confiance dans l'espoir sue, d'ici peu, nous allons atteindre les objectifs de la sécurité alimentaire, de la nutrition, compatible avec le potentiel de production, grâce à la riche biodiversité biologique et autres vertus dont la nature a doté l'Angola.

C'est dans cette optique que nous prétendons d'orienter notre action dans la réhabilitation des infrastructures rurales, la stimulation de l'investissement privé, la réactivation des mécanismes de prestation d'assistance technique aux paysans, l'amélioration des systèmes de fourniture de facteurs de production, la reconstitution du tissu commercial rural et l'exploitation rationnelle des ressources hydrauliques et forestières, entre autres.

Ce sont là, en lignes générales, les tâches que nous nous proposons à court et moyen termes, ayant conscience que leur réalisation est la condition primordiale pour sortir de cette crise dans laquelle se trouve plongée l'agriculture angolaise. C'est ce défi que nous devons relever, tout en sachant que le point de départ ne nous est pas favorable et que nous avons de nombreuses embûches qui jonchent le chemin à parcourir.

Cependant, nous sommes animés par la conviction que sur cette voie que nous sommes en train de parcourir, nous ne serons pas seuls. Nous comptons sur la solidarité de nos amis et partenaires de la coopération bilatérale et multilatérale qui ne nous ont jamais abandonnés dans les moments difficiles et qui, également, maintenant, à cette étape de réparation des méfaits de la guerre, de la réactivation et réhabilitation de l'économie agricole, nos amis et partenaires, disais-je, continueront à nous apporter leur appui technique et financier. Cela nous incite à poursuivre le dialogue avec eux à la recherche de financement des projets et programmes qui englobent la perspective de réhabilitation du secteur agricole angolais.

Cependant, malgré les efforts que mon gouvernement entreprend en vue de l'augmentation de la production interne, une aide alimentaire aux populations victimes de la guerre sera nécessaire jusqu'à la prochaine campagne agricole.

On continue à observer en Angola la persistance de facteurs qui empêchent les paysans de travailler normalement, ce qui contribue, par conséquent, au bas niveau de production agricole observé dans le pays.

Parmi ces facteurs, nous voulons souligner l'effet inhibiteur et destructif que représentent les mines et autres explosifs disséminés un peu partout sur toute l'étendue du territoire national et plus particulièrement dans les zones rurales. On estime qu'en Angola environ douze millions de mines anti-personnes sont implantées, ce qui représente en soi une tragédie pour la société angolaise, à cause du nombre élevé des victimes provoquées par les explosions constantes des

mines. Cela se traduit également par un énorme effort en termes de coûts et de temps que représentent les opérations de déminage.

Les images télévisées sur les victimes d'explosions de mines en Angola ont déjà parcouru le monde entier et, certainement, ont laissé transparaître la dimension de cette tragédie et la nécessité d'un effort collectif pour une action urgente et nécessaire dans la conduite des activités de déminage, ainsi que la mise en oeuvre des mesures tendant à bannir dans le monde la production, la commercialisation, la distribution, l'utilisation des mines anti-personnes.

C'est l'occasion pour nous de lancer, à partir de cette tribune, un vigoureux appel à la communauté internationale pour qu'elle renforce sa coopération avec l'Angola, en lui accordant l'appui soit dans la poursuite des opérations de déminage, soit dans la mise sur pied d'une stratégie de délimitation et signalisation des zones minées, soit encore, dans le développement d'une vaste campagne d'éducation et de prévention d'accidents de mines, au niveau national.

L'initiative de l'attribution du Prix Nobel 1997 à la "Campagne internationale pour l'interdiction de l'emploi des mines", si elle représente, d'un côté, une reconnaissance à la noble tâche menée par l'Organisation, elle constitue également un appel à la conscience de l'humanité en vue de l'abolition de la fabrication et de l'emploi des mines. Nous profitons de cette opportunité pour exprimer notre vibrant hommage à l'Organisation lauréate.

S'agissant de l'ordre du jour de la Conférence, nous avons examiné avec soin les documents qui nous ont été soumis et les différents thèmes très pertinents et d'une importance capitale.

S'agissant de la situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture, nous ne pouvons qu'exprimer notre satisfaction pour l'expansion notable qu'a connue l'Afrique. Cependant, les pénuries alimentaires persistantes sévissant dans de nombreux pays en développement constituent une sérieuse inquiétude.

Concernant le Programme de travail et budget pour le biennium 1998-99, mon Gouvernement croit que l'option de croissance réelle zéro est la meilleure alternative. Une réduction nette des ressources, soit un budget inférieur à la croissance nominale zéro, serait réellement inopportune, le suicide de l'Organisation, compte tenu, d'une part, de la matérialisation des orientations issues du Sommet mondial et, d'autre part, de la nécessité pour la FAO de renforcer son appui aux pays membres, particulièrement les pays en développement.

S'agissant du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, qu'il nous soit permis de réaffirmer notre satisfaction pour les résultats obtenus et de manifester notre appui aux mesures que la FAO est en train d'adopter en vue de matérialiser les orientations de ce Sommet.

Dans le cas particulier de l'Angola, nous informons que des mesures sont en train d'être prises en vue de garantir, au niveau national, la réhabilitation des objectifs qui ont dicté la réalisation de cet événement important.

Avant de terminer mon intervention, j'aimerais profiter de cette opportunité pour souhaiter la bienvenue à la République du Kazakhstan, comme nouveau membre de notre Organisation. Je suis convaincu que ce pays va apporter des expériences très riches dans le domaine de l'agriculture.

Sitaheng RASPHONE (Laos)

I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and the Vice-Chairmen of this Conference.

First of all, I would like to congratulate FAO on its continued achievements in fulfilling its mandate since the last Conference and on the success of the World Food Summit held in November last year. It is indeed a great pleasure for us all to see the tireless concern that FAO placed in its contribution in ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger. I would especially like to commend FAO on its continued commitment to create worldwide awareness and win international support through its "TeleFood" programme and its concerted efforts at all levels to

address the persistent and often deep-rooted issues linked to the overall goal of achieving food security and of ensuring availability and access to food for all, especially in countries that suffer from chronic malnutrition.

Agriculture in the Lao PDR is still characterized primarily by a subsistence form of farm economy with, traditionally, rice as the staple food. The National Food Production Programme continues to focus primarily on boosting rice production in parallel with ensuring adequate supplies of plant and animal protein so as to ensure rice self-sufficiency and food security for both the urban and rural areas. However, due to low agricultural productivity, coupled with adverse impact from natural calamities and limited opportunities and capabilities for increased agricultural diversification and non-farm employment activities, it is estimated that 46 percent of the Lao population still falls below the poverty line. The incidence of poverty is found to be most significant in the rural areas, since it affects about 53 percent of the rural population, as compared to 23.9 percent in urban areas.

Even though the major rice cultivation areas have been hit by natural calamities and severe floods in August and September this year, the Government and the Lao people have joined efforts and done their utmost to achieve a paddy production of 1.6 million tons, which is about 89 percent of this year's indicative production target. In the field of livestock and fisheries, we were fortunate to have achieved a steady growth of our livestock, despite the difficult circumstances experienced this year. Livestock - cattle/ buffalo and pigs - increased at the rate of about 3.5 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively. Total fish production is estimated between 39 000 and 42 000 metric tons from capture fisheries and another 10 000 metric tons from aquaculture.

Even though the Government of Lao PDR has adopted a comprehensive programme of economic reforms since 1986 and has been provided with the necessary political, institutional, legal and financial support, due to our underdeveloped socio-economic status, the agricultural sector is still faced with numerous constraints.

Considering the strong commitment of the Lao Government to eradicate poverty in the country, especially in the rural areas, and to achieve a *per capita* GDP of US\$500 in the year 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is determined to continue the implementation of its national programmes in an effort to contribute to the realization of the National Socio-Economic Plan until the year 2000 and its fight to overcome rural poverty in the long-term. In brief, the aforementioned programmes consist of:

1. The Food Production and Commodity Production Programmes that aim to ensure an adequate level of food security country-wise, especially in rice and other major food crops and meat, and allow increased production surplus to launch the agro-processing industry and achieve increased commercialization of agricultural products, especially in the more added-value form of products.
2. The Stabilization of Shifting Cultivation, where major emphasis will be placed on decentralizing resources management, provision of clear tenurial rights and privileges to the rural communities and generating ecologically-appropriate land use and upland agriculture to ensure increased cash resource generating capacity and new employment opportunities for the rural population.
3. Development of appropriate water supply schemes and programmes, such as developing different levels of irrigation facilities and providing water pumps, to support the Food Production and Commodity Production Programmes.
4. Development of Agricultural Research and Extension capacity and capability to generate ecologically non-degradable, socially-acceptable, economically-viable and technically-feasible development alternatives.
5. Human Resources Development Programme with special consideration to the strengthening of the administration and technical support service structure, especially at the provincial and district levels, and upgrading of the managerial and technical capacity and capability of the Ministry. This especially concerns the necessary

institutional support to the process of decentralization of power to local government and village communities.

Over the past ten years, achievements in the agricultural sector were made possible thanks to the strong political and financial support provided by the Government, the great efforts and dedication of our staff at all levels, the positive cooperative behaviour between state agencies and local communities and last, but not least, the financial and technical support provided by international, regional, donor communities and NGOs. FAO, as a very well recognized international institution, has always shown concern and made significant efforts, providing resources that directly contributed to the gradual improvement of the well-being of our people.

Therefore, before concluding my intervention, allow me to reiterate that our future agricultural development priority is to continue to implement the National Programmes as mentioned above, so as to improve the performance of the agricultural sector at all levels and contribute to raising the standard of living of the Lao people by providing food security, increased income generation and new employment opportunities. Special consideration will be given to promote joint efforts to combine the strengths of the ASEAN Member Nations to improve the socio-economic status of each respective country by making efficient use of the region and individual countries' resource endowments and development capacity and capability. Also important is the continued strengthening of collaborative efforts with other countries in the Region and in the world, as well as with international agencies like FAO, and also other regional agencies to share resources and knowledge for the benefit of all.

The Government of Lao PDR and, more specifically, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, welcomes the opportunity of this important meeting to call upon all developing and developed nations in the world to continue to combine efforts and support the initiatives of FAO in the fight against poverty and achieve sustainable development in order to realize concrete and commendable development achievements before the turn of this century, laying a firm basis for development in the Twenty-first Century.

Lufter XHUVELI (Albania)

Please allow me to express my best wishes and those of the delegation I head, for your election as Chairman of the present Conference which will consider the present state and the future of agriculture and food in the world at the eve of the new century.

I have the pleasure of also hailing the Director-General of FAO, His Excellency Mr Jacques Diouf, for his contribution and his personal efforts in fulfilling the objectives and commitments of our Organization in the implementation of the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, in the Special Programme for Food Security and several other initiatives, such as those protecting genetic resources, the sustainable development of forests, the protection of rural environment, etc.

Agriculture is a priority in the economic development of Albania. It presently contributes 50 percent of its GDP. Development and progress in this sector cannot be achieved separately, without consideration of the environment and a sustainable and modern development of the agricultural sector.

The Albanian Government, which assumed office after the free and democratic elections, is a coalition one with a broad political base. Part of its programme deals with the recovery of the country's economy through measures to restore food security and tranquillity nationwide and to strengthen institutions through co-governing and cooperation based on principles of genuine democracy, and ones aimed at facing the numerous challenges present in Albania today.

The immediate aim of our economic programme is the elaboration of a strategy for agricultural development with a real vision, that is, increasing productivity of agriculture in order to ensure satisfactory living conditions for the rural population, the stabilization of agricultural markets and the guarantee of food security. This will be possible by implementing policies in support of

production activities, through investments and projects by international organizations and different donors, especially in the field of irrigation infrastructure development, seeds production, rational exploitation of natural resources, fisheries and aquaculture, as well as in the efficient development of agroindustry for the processing of agricultural products.

We are implementing agrarian policies, aiming at consolidating land ownership, creating and making the land market functional and increasing investments through a rational management of the natural resources in the country. The main objective of Albanian agriculture is the accomplishment of sustainable and constant growth of agricultural production through private enterprises. Our priorities will be supplying local markets with agricultural products, increasing exports, promoting orientation of products according to agricultural areas and implementing modern legislation to reflect the approximation with the European one, and implementing integration policies with other developed countries. In this context, attention will be paid to coordination of agrarian policies with industrial and social ones.

The Government appreciates the contribution that FAO has given to Albania in support of reforms and restructuring its agriculture towards a market economy through technical and advisory assistance provided by its experts and through projects run by FAO.

It is committed to supporting the Special Food Security Programme designed to back Albanian farmers, increase their agricultural outputs and their incomes, as well as to setting up local markets to sell such products.

To achieve our commitments in this vital sector of the country's economy, we need financial support in the form of soft loans for our farmers, technical assistance, support for applied research work, training of specialists etc.

The Programme of Work for the next two years, which will be discussed and approved in the course of this Conference, will undoubtedly allow our organization to successfully fulfil the engagements undertaken last year at the World Food Summit.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of the support of my country regarding the proposals made for the re-orientation of the restructuring activities of the FAO Bodies and for the strengthening of Regional Offices directly servicing Member Nations.

We are sure that in the new age of information, FAO will satisfy the different demands of Member Nations in finding new solutions to agricultural production problems.

The Albanian Delegation is optimistic and hopes in the assistance and support that FAO will provide Albanian agriculture to effectively manage its human and natural potentials and to further develop its agricultural production.

Amadou OUATTARA (Côte d'Ivoire)

Il y a un an, dans cette même salle, le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation a réuni les responsables de plus de 186 pays, dont 112 chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement. Ils ont pris l'engagement de lutter par tous les moyens contre la faim et la malnutrition avec un objectif intermédiaire qui est de réduire de moitié d'ici 2015 le nombre de ceux qui souffrent de la faim et de la malnutrition, nombre estimé à plus de 800 millions de personnes concentrées principalement dans nos pays en développement.

Le Président de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, son Excellence Monsieur Henri Konan Bédié, qui a eu l'honneur et le privilège de présider la seizième Journée mondiale de l'alimentation, et de faire partie du Comité de parrainage du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, ne ménage actuellement aucun effort pour réaffirmer l'engagement pris à Rome et préparer des actions pour ce noble objectif. Parmi ceux-ci, il nous plaît de citer la mise en oeuvre d'un programme de promotion des jeunes exploitants agricoles, la mise en place de fonds sociaux en faveur de certaines couches défavorisées de la population et le démarrage du projet de développement

durable de la zone de savane humide et de la région semi-montagneuse de l'Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire.

Ma délégation voudrait saisir cette occasion que lui offre la 29^{ème} session de la Conférence pour exprimer à Monsieur Jacques Diouf, Directeur général de la FAO, sa profonde reconnaissance pour ce double honneur fait au Président Henri Konan Bédié et à la Côte d'Ivoire.

L'analyse de la situation alimentaire de la Côte d'Ivoire met en évidence la disponibilité quasi permanente des principales denrées alimentaires. Cette disponibilité reste cependant marquée par le niveau très élevé des importations de céréales dont plus de 400 000 tonnes de riz et de produits d'origine animale et halieutique. Cette situation risque de s'aggraver avec l'urbanisation croissante (plus de 5 pour cent par an) si aucune action énergique n'est entreprise pour valoriser un potentiel largement sous-exploité. L'exploitation de ce potentiel n'est pas réalisable sans une politique rationnelle de maîtrise de l'eau.

Dans sa déclaration faite récemment à Libreville au Gabon, lors de la réunion des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement ACP, le Président Henri Konan Bédié rappelait à cet égard, et je cite : "les enjeux de la gestion durable des ressources de l'Afrique sont de taille car notre continent est une vaste région où l'eau est soit trop rare soit trop abondante en des endroits ou à des moments inappropriés et il faut donc la domestiquer. Gagner cet enjeu est tout à fait possible, compte tenu des immenses ressources en surfaces irrigables de notre continent et des techniques modernes d'irrigation. Nous savons maîtriser l'eau de façon rationnelle à partir de micro-barrages et développer partout des activités agro-pastorales, ou agrandir les zones de cultures vivrières fluviales. De nombreux gouvernements africains ont d'ores et déjà établi des plans nationaux de maîtrise de l'eau, cependant les stratégies requises demandent un appui technique et financier pour répondre aux impératifs d'un développement durable". C'est l'une des raisons pour lesquelles la Côte d'Ivoire a sollicité l'assistance de la FAO dans le cadre du suivi du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation pour participer au Programme spécial de la sécurité alimentaire dont les principaux objectifs pour notre pays sont : la maîtrise de l'eau, le développement de l'agriculture périurbaine, l'augmentation de la production de riz, la réduction des pertes après récolte, le développement des petits élevages et de la pisciculture, l'amélioration et la restauration des sols, la sécurisation foncière et l'éducation nutritionnelle.

La mondialisation de l'économie, ainsi que son corollaire de la libéralisation des prix, est certes un phénomène à la fois incontournable et irréversible. Elle devrait cependant s'accompagner de mesures appropriées pour permettre à nos gouvernements avec l'aide de la FAO de soutenir les organisations professionnelles agricoles afin de mieux les préparer à affronter la dure réalité du marché international. En outre le poids de la dette extérieure, les conflits armés, la diminution de l'aide extérieure sont autant de facteurs qui annulent les quelques progrès réalisés par certains de nos Etats.

Aussi mon Gouvernement adresse-t-il ses encouragements au Directeur général de la FAO pour toutes les actions qu'il mène depuis plusieurs années pour le développement de l'agriculture et la promotion de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale. Pour continuer à jouer ce rôle important qui est le sien, la FAO devrait, de l'avis de ma délégation, disposer de moyens financiers compatibles avec les objectifs majeurs de son mandat et de sa mission.

Ma délégation ne saurait terminer cette déclaration sans vous adresser, Monsieur le Président, ainsi qu'aux membres de votre Bureau, nos chaleureuses félicitations pour votre brillante élection à la présidence de la 29^{ème} session de la Conférence. L'engagement jamais démenti de votre grand pays, le Canada, à se lancer aux côtés des nations en développement dans l'aventure d'une coopération internationale qu'il a toujours souhaitée voir fondée sur la justice et le partenariat et votre parfaite connaissance des problèmes agricoles conjuguée à votre récente, mais combien solide, expérience des grandes rencontres de la FAO sont, pour ma délégation, deux raisons d'espérer que, sous votre autorité, les résultats des travaux de nos présentes assises seront à la hauteur des préoccupations et des aspirations profondes de nos populations.

Kwabena ADJEI (Ghana)

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for this opportunity to make a brief statement on behalf of the Government of Ghana at this Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference of the FAO.

Mr Chairman, I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your colleagues on your election.

As underlined in previous statements by other colleagues at this very Conference, the main issue that should occupy the attention of the Conference is the plight of the hungry in the apparent mists of plenty. One person in every seven faces hunger or severe malnutrition in the world today. In the developing world it is estimated that one person in every five does not have enough to meet his daily needs, and the records are even more critical in the African Region. This situation prevails in an environment where some sectors of the world community have enjoyed a dramatic surge in economic growth and food production. Achieving food security for all in the world would require a holistic approach which addresses issues of equity, peace and environmental sustainability in a comprehensive way. Since poverty is a root cause of hunger, poverty eradication programmes should be at the forefront of our fight to achieve food security for all. This has prompted the Government of Ghana to make rural development the cornerstone of its development programmes and to address poverty at the grassroots level where it is most endemic.

Progress towards the eradication of poverty would require all nations to take greater responsibility for their own food security by adopting policies to increase economic growth and employment. To achieve, this, however, more support would be required from the international community, both at the bilateral level and through multilateral assistance from organizations like FAO. It is, however, distressing to note in the FAO Programme Evaluation Report 1996-97 that field programmes are suffering from a decrease, both in number of projects and amounts allocated to these projects. In view of the nature of agriculture in most developing countries and the resources available to national governments, this decline in the field programmes could impair FAO's technical assistance contribution to national governments, which together with the Organization aspire to improve the conditions of life of the very poor rural farmers, and which constitute the backbone of our economies. Unfortunately, a reduction in FAO's contribution to national capacity-building for the agriculture sector in our various economies could have a catastrophic consequence for Planet Earth.

I wish to make a special appeal to FAO Member Nations to approve a positive budget that will make it more relevant to the hungry poor. The need for more funding for FAO may be understood in light of the Director-General's realization that the Organization cannot continue to rely on elaborate technical reports and consultancies that tend to reinvent the wheel. Emphasis is now on decentralization, leading to more funding. The approach adopted for the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDC) is one concrete demonstration of FAO's effort to become more specific with respect to improving global food security.

As part of the recognition of the important role of FAO, the Government of Ghana has requested to join the growing family of countries participating in the Special Programme for Food Security, and views it as an important and practical step towards promoting our national food security. This, however, would be implemented in the context of the national Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Programme (AAGDP), formulated by my Government. This programme is the result of a thorough review of the agricultural sector to concentrate on key areas that have the potential to increase production and income within the shortest possible time.

The components of the programmes are:

- Ghana Programme for Sustainable Food Security to promote medium and large scale agricultural enterprises;
- Accelerated non-traditional agricultural/ products export programme;
- Youth in Agriculture Programme;
- Public servant model farm programme;
- Agro-Processing promotion programme.

Alongside this Scheme, the Government will continue to enhance the environment for small-scale farming in terms of the provision of agriculturally-related infrastructure such as roads, improvement in storage facilities and less expensive methods of water management and control that are accessible both financially and technically to all producers.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that in developing the National Programme, the seven commitments of the World Food Summit held here in 1996 served as the guiding principles. These principles, which are well known to Distinguished Delegates, include sound social and economic environment, poverty reduction, sustainable development, increased trade and promotion of export-oriented commodities and the full participation of private investment to supplement dwindling public resources. Monitoring and reporting of the National World Food Summit Follow-up Committee will therefore fall in line with the monitoring requirement of the World Food Summit.

As a further move in our food production campaign, the Government has instituted a National Farmers' Day, which is celebrated on the first Friday of December every year to create awareness of the virtue of agriculture among the farming and business communities alike. The occasion also serves to encourage investment in food security and to say "thank you" to the farmers who have sustained the economy. On that occasion, farmers have often realized their self-importance, instead of being told that they are important. Some of my colleagues here have joined us in the past in celebrating the occasion, and I look forward to welcoming more of you during our next Farmers' Day celebration on Friday, 5th December this year.

Ibrahim FERRADAZ GARCIA (Cuba)

Señor Presidente, permítame en primer lugar felicitarle por haber sido elegido Presidente de este vigésimo noveno período de sesiones, e, igualmente a los restantes miembros de la mesa. Quisiera felicitar también al Dr. Diouf por el informe que ha presentado a esta Conferencia. Aprovecho también esta oportunidad para felicitar a la delegación de Angola que celebra hoy su Día nacional.

Señor Presidente, "el mundo tiene hambre, pero no tiene dinero para comprar comida, y paradójicamente, en el mundo subdesarrollado, en el mundo del hambre, se desalientan posibles expansiones de la producción de alimentos para mantener precios. Es la ley inexorable de la filosofía del despojo, que debe cesar como norma de relación entre los pueblos". El párrafo que acabo de leer fue pronunciado por el Presidente de la Delegación Cubana ante la Conferencia Mundial de Comercio y Desarrollo, celebrada en Ginebra en marzo de 1964. Han pasado 33 años, muchas cosas han cambiado, pero lo expresado allí por el comandante Ernesto Che Guevara, impacta por su vigencia.

La esperanza de que se produjera, con el fin de la llamada "Guerra Fría", una reorientación hacia el desarrollo de los recursos empleados en armamentos, se ha esfumado. Tampoco ha tenido una verdadera solución la carga de la deuda externa, la cual ha implicado para el Tercer Mundo dolor y sacrificios y sobre todo para las poblaciones más vulnerables como son las mujeres y los niños, además de obstáculos para su desarrollo.

En 1992 se cumplieron diez años del inicio de la llamada crisis de la deuda externa. La prensa de los países desarrollados se extendió en su análisis, congratulándose de que el desastre de una crisis financiera internacional se hubiese evitado.

Realmente el desastre se evitó para el Banco Mundial, con el sacrificio de los pueblos del tercer mundo. Por ello una vez más fueron dañados miles de millones de habitantes del mundo subdesarrollado, cuya deuda externa se incrementó entre 1985 y 1995 a un ritmo de crecimiento anual del 5 por ciento. Cada año nuestros países pagan 125 000 millones de dólares sólo por concepto de servicios de la deuda externa, el doble de los 69 000 millones de dólares a que ascendió la ayuda oficial al desarrollo en 1996. Nivel de ayuda, que por otra parte, significó un nuevo descenso en relación a años anteriores.

Lamentablemente, los países desarrollados cada año se alejan más de su compromiso de destinar el 0,7 por ciento del PIB a la colaboración con el Tercer Mundo, limitando las justas aspiraciones de los países en desarrollo de potenciar sus economías, aliviar la pobreza y acceder a nuevas tecnologías.

Una ola neoliberal recorre el mundo, provocando la polarización de las riquezas en unos pocos y la ampliación de la pobreza para la mayoría, hundiendo una parte importante de los habitantes del planeta en la indigencia.

Durante la década de los ochenta y los años transcurridos de la actual, se produjo un distanciamiento abismal entre riqueza y pobreza, cuyas diferencias extremas resultan cada vez más intolerables.

Cuba está sometida aún a un férreo bloqueo que dura más de 30 años, recrudescido por la Ley Helms-Burton, violatoria del Derecho Internacional y de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, que como es conocido pone en peligro la seguridad alimentaria de todo un pueblo. El bloqueo y sus leyes han ocasionado cuantiosos daños y ofendido a mi país, pero igual ofensa ha significado también para la Comunidad Internacional. Por ello no debe extrañarnos la votación de la semana pasada, en la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas, cuando 143 Estados Miembros, seis más que el pasado año, votaron a favor de la Resolución para que se ponga fin al bloqueo. La gran potencia del Norte sólo contó con dos aliados para votar en contra de la Resolución. Esta ha sido una nueva victoria, no sólo de Cuba, sino de la comunidad internacional. El mundo reiteró con firmeza su demanda para que cese esa política injusta, obsoleta, ineficaz y absurda.

Nuestro país fue objeto también de una agresión biológica proveniente de los Estados Unidos: la plaga del *thrips palmi*, que dañó una gran variedad de nuestros cultivos y, por ende, agravó la disponibilidad de alimentos para la población. La presencia de esta plaga nos obligó a denunciar este hecho y a solicitar ayuda, la cual, como es tradicional, recibimos de forma ágil y eficaz por parte de la FAO.

A pesar de todas estas dificultades, el Gobierno cubano realiza ingentes esfuerzos por continuar el desarrollo económico y social, de manera sostenible, garantizar la seguridad alimentaria y cumplir los compromisos adquiridos en el Plan de Acción de la Cumbre, para lo cual, tomando como base el informe presentado al magno evento, elaboramos la Estrategia para el Desarrollo Agrícola Nacional hacia el año 2010. Seguiremos con el proceso de cooperativización agropecuaria y desarrollaremos las producciones nacionales (agrícolas e industriales) que permitan elevar el coeficiente de autosostenimiento alimentario, importante sector en el que también hemos comenzado a disponer de los aportes de capital y tecnología de inversionistas extranjeros.

Conocemos la difícil situación financiera por la que atraviesa la FAO provocada por la negativa de algunos de sus principales contribuyentes a liquidar sus compromisos. El recorte presupuestario y la disminución del Programa de Cooperación Técnica limitan a nuestros países a recibir tan importante ayuda. La asistencia de la FAO desempeña un papel relevante. De ahí, la importancia de su fortalecimiento, empeño que compromete a la Comunidad Internacional para

que la Organización continúe cumpliendo sus objetivos bajo la acertada dirección del Dr. Jacques Diouf.

Albergamos la esperanza de que esta Conferencia haga presente la voluntad política requerida que nos ayude a enfrentar con éxito el mayor problema que aflige a la humanidad: la inseguridad alimentaria, así como que la Organización pueda contar con los recursos necesarios para poder realizar una cooperación efectiva hacia los distintos sectores.

En esa dirección, Señor Presidente, no quisiéramos terminar, sin antes hacer una mención especial a la histórica Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación que hace un año tuvo lugar en esta misma sala y cuyos acuerdos, tanto la Declaración Política como su Plan de Acción, constituyen un reto, y también recordar las palabras pronunciadas precisamente en esta tribuna por el Presidente Fidel Castro cuando afirmó: “las campanas que doblan hoy por los que mueren de hambre cada día, doblarán mañana por la humanidad entera si no quiso, no supo o no pudo ser suficientemente sabia para salvarse a si misma”.

Symeon MATSIS (Cyprus)

I am very pleased and honoured to have the opportunity to address this important Session of the FAO Conference.

As we all know, one of the major issues facing humanity over the last few decades has been the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, as more than 800 million people continue to lack the basic requirements for survival and productive work. The death and suffering caused by chronic hunger is clearly unnecessary and it becomes unacceptable if we consider that this situation exists, in spite of the fact that there is enough food in the world to feed everyone.

The state of food and agriculture in the world this year seems to be much better compared to previous years. World cereal production in 1996 is estimated to have been about 8.5 percent above 1995. Global cereal stocks for crops ending in 1997 were forecast to increase. If these forecasts were to materialize, cereal output could be sufficient to meet expected consumption requirements in 1997-98 and should allow for a further modest replenishment of cereal stocks. Nevertheless, the forecast ratio of global stock-to-utilization would reach only 16 percent, thus remaining below the minimum level considered safe.

These positive developments unfortunately have not reached those millions of people around the world who cannot yet secure the minimum food to stay alive. Ensuring that people everywhere have enough to eat is a complex daily challenge involving local farms, international markets, transport systems, consumer awareness and a stable economic, political and social environment. Effective investment is crucial to the existence and continuity of this food system, a factor highlighted on previous occasions. This is why we consider the theme “Investing in Food Security” for this year’s World Food Day to be the right one. The idea of the Director-General to appeal for financial contributions from countries, business and individuals through a global telecast programme named TeleFood was excellent.

Cyprus actively participated in TeleFood, and activities for this purpose were organized long before 19 October. With the help of the Cooperative Movement, the message of TeleFood for global solidarity was brought to every home in Cyprus. Radio and television devoted time and all private banks opened accounts receiving contributions for TeleFood. I am proud to report that the people of Cyprus received well the message and contributed generously to TeleFood.

I would now very briefly like to report on the state of Cyprus agriculture which, despite its gradually-reduced contribution to GDP, to between 5-6 percent, continued to be important - providing employment to about 10 percent of the economically-active population and 34 percent to domestic exports, thus supplementing the income of thousands of rural families. Our agriculture is characterized by crop diversity with leading crops such as potatoes, citrus, vines,

vegetables, cereals and olives. It also comprises a dynamic livestock sub-sector, which includes dairy cattle, sheep, goats, swine and poultry.

Being a small country, Cyprus never hoped to achieve self-sufficiency but the tragic events of 1974, which resulted in 37 percent of the country's territory being occupied by a foreign power and the displacement of almost half of the rural population, have accentuated the problem, while developments in tourism and urban growth further limited the area available for cultivation. Furthermore, unstable yields of rainfed field crops resulting from the low annual precipitation, negatively affect our efforts for agricultural development.

This year agriculture has suffered unprecedented destruction leading to the lowest production for years, particularly in the plant sector, because of the drought coupled with sudden damaging hail storms. As a result, water availability for domestic supply was negatively affected. This state of affairs often becomes a most limiting factor, not only to the expansion of the agricultural activities but to the broader development as well.

To mitigate the consequences of the prolonged droughts and having almost completed the programme for the construction of a wide network of dams and water distribution, the Government has launched a programme for seawater desalination plants. These plants aim to augment the supply of potable water to urban and other areas.

Regarding our priorities and taking into consideration that Cyprus is a candidate for membership to the European Union, our Development Programme aims, firstly, to harmonize the agricultural system with that of the European Union, secondly, to restructure and upgrade the agricultural sector and thirdly, to promote those activities that are sustainable over the long run ensuring, at the same time, that they remain friendly to the environment. This is not an easy task, and every effort will be made to introduce the required changes with the minimum cost to the farmers.

The shrinking financial resources available to our Organization is an area of major concern, and I believe we all need to make every effort to immediately fulfil our responsibilities to the Organization so as to enable FAO to implement its Programme for the improvement of mankind. After all, when all is said and done, we shall all, ultimately, be judged by the effects our collective deeds and actions will have on improving the quality of life of the rural poor, the underprivileged women, and the hungry and malnourished children.

Jean Paul SARR (Guinée)

Je voudrais tout d'abord, au nom du Président de la République de Guinée, Son Excellence le Général Lansana Conté, saluer chaleureusement toutes les délégations ici présentes et souhaiter plein succès aux travaux de la 29^{ème} session de la Conférence de la FAO.

Soyez assuré, Monsieur le Président, tout en vous exprimant mes sincères félicitations pour votre brillante élection, de la collaboration de la délégation guinéenne pour que cette session de la Conférence, qui se situe juste un an après le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, réponde aux aspirations de nos populations rurales.

Je voudrais saluer et féliciter le Directeur général, M Jacques Diouf, et à travers lui l'Organisation qu'il dirige avec compétence et dévouement. Je remercie très vivement le Président du FIDA et le Directeur exécutif du PAM pour leur précieux concours à nos programmes de développement.

Je saisis également cette occasion pour saluer l'admission du Kazakhstan comme membre de l'Organisation, admission qui vient renforcer son caractère universel.

Les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement du monde entier, ou leurs représentants, réunis dans cette salle même, en novembre dernier, ont solennellement déclaré: "nous encourageons l'affectation et l'utilisation optimale de l'aide publique et privée pour faire progresser les ressources humaines, les systèmes alimentaires, agricoles, halieutiques et forestiers durables et le développement rural dans les zones à fort comme à faible potentiel".

Cet engagement corrobore la position du Ministère chargé de l'agriculture qui a élaboré dans un premier temps un schéma directeur de développement rural qui fut suivi de la lettre de politique de développement agricole adoptée en 1991 par l'ensemble des partenaires au développement.

Cet outil, évolutif et pragmatique, révisé en 1996 dans l'optique de la stratégie de développement à l'horizon 2010, est en cohérence avec le programme national de développement humain.

Cette politique de développement agricole, fondée sur la sécurité alimentaire et soutenue par la participation de 493 000 exploitations familiales, commence à porter ses fruits. Nous avons entrepris dans ce contexte la réalisation des objectifs suivants:

- mise en place de textes juridiques et réglementaires concourant à la création de conditions favorables aux investissements institutionnels et privés;
- mise en oeuvre d'une politique d'aménagement hydroagricole et de désenclavement des zones de grande production qui a permis la mise en valeur de 23 203 hectares de bas-fonds et de plaines et la construction de 5 621 kilomètres de pistes rurales. C'est ainsi que de 1991 à 1997 la production vivrière est passée de 500 000 à 676 000 tonnes pour le riz, de 62 000 à 80 000 tonnes pour le maïs, de 223 000 tonnes à 600 000 tonnes pour le manioc, de 104 000 à 132 000 tonnes pour l'arachide coque. Cela explique la baisse des importations de riz qui, au cours des neuf premiers mois de 1997, ont été de 136 000 tonnes contre 171 400 en 1996 et 212 800 tonnes en 1995 dans la même période;
- dynamisation de la pêche et de l'élevage qui a permis d'une part la capture de près de 60 000 tonnes de poissons et, de l'autre, l'élevage d'un cheptel constitué de 2 320 000 bovins, 673 000 ovins, 830 000 caprins, 57 000 porcins, avec une production de 34 000 tonnes de viande et 55 000 000 de litres de lait;
- application de la législation phytosanitaire et du contrôle de la qualité des produits agricoles;
- mise en place d'une recherche agronomique adaptative et performante, et d'une vulgarisation agricole efficace;
- promotion de sociétés privées de commercialisation d'intrants agricoles;
- couverture de l'ensemble du pays par deux réseaux spécialisés de crédit mutuel et rural;
- fourniture régulière de 12 litres d'eau par jour et par personne à plus de 3,5 millions d'habitants en zone rurale et périurbaine par la réalisation de 8 037 points d'eau;
- mise en place de la Chambre nationale d'agriculture, présidée par le premier agriculteur de Guinée, le Général Ansana Conte, chef de l'Etat.

Il me plaît d'apprécier les initiatives du Directeur général de la FAO, par la mise en place d'un Programme spécial de sécurité alimentaire dans les pays à faible revenu et à déficit vivrier. La phase pilote de ce programme en Guinée a permis aux agriculteurs d'améliorer la production du riz paddy qui est passée d'une tonne par hectare en 1996 à près de quatre tonnes par hectare en 1997. Nous souhaitons le remercier et l'encourager très vivement, ainsi que l'institution qu'il dirige, pour la réalisation de ce projet, dont les résultats, prometteurs et positifs, s'avéreront bénéfiques pour nos populations.

A ces interventions visant toutes à assurer la sécurité alimentaire s'associent d'importantes perspectives qui sollicitent l'appui de la FAO et de la communauté des partenaires au développement, à savoir:

- l'appui à la mise en oeuvre de politiques économiques pertinentes permettant de renforcer la base productive agricole;
- le soutien à la recherche agronomique en Guinée;
- la modernisation des infrastructures rurales;
- le renforcement de la protection intégrée des cultures et la réduction des pertes après récolte dans le but d'améliorer la quantité et la qualité de nos productions agricoles et de protéger l'environnement;
- l'amélioration de la commercialisation des produits vivriers, etc.

La République de Guinée souhaite que la dynamique qui a été créée par la Déclaration de Rome sur la sécurité alimentaire et le Plan d'action du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation puisse se concrétiser par le soutien de la communauté internationale dans un élan de solidarité en faveur des pays les plus démunis qui vivent chaque jour dans l'insécurité alimentaire.

C'est pourquoi ma délégation voudrait inviter tous les pays du monde, soucieux de lutter contre la malnutrition, la faim et la pauvreté, d'appuyer sans réserve le Programme de travail et budget proposé par le Directeur général de notre Organisation.

The meeting was suspended from 10.40 to 10.50 hours.

La séance est suspendue de 10 h 40 à 10 h 50.

Se suspende la sesión de las 10.40 horas a las 10.50 horas.

V. OTHER MATTERS

V. QUESTIONS DIVERSES

V. OTROS ASUNTOS

32. Any other matters

32. Autres questions

32. Otros asuntos

32.1 McDougall Memorial Lecture (C 97/INF/9)

32.1 Conférence McDougall (C 97/INF/9)

32.1 Disertaciones en Memoria de McDougall (C 97/INF/9)

CHAIRMAN

You are about to listen to the Twentieth McDougall Memorial Lecture in a series which began in 1959. These lectures commemorate the late Frank L. McDougall, one of the founding fathers of our Organization, and are delivered at each biennial Conference session. I will now ask the Director-General, Dr. Diouf, to introduce this year's McDougall lecture.

LE DIRECTEUR GENERAL

C'est pour moi un grand honneur de vous présenter Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo, Président de la République gabonaise, qui a bien voulu accepter l'invitation de l'Organisation à prononcer la traditionnelle Conférence en mémoire de Frank L. McDougall, père fondateur de l'Organisation.

Depuis presque 30 ans, ces conférences ont permis aux plus hauts responsables de l'agriculture du monde, réunis tous les deux ans dans cette Assemblée, de partager les réflexions et les idées d'importantes personnalités politiques et scientifiques afin d'y trouver une source d'inspiration pour leur action.

Le Président Bongo a montré en maintes occasions sa préoccupation vis-à-vis des problèmes de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation et son engagement personnel à promouvoir le développement agricole, non seulement dans son pays mais aussi à l'échelle du continent africain.

A l'occasion du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, le Président Bongo a justement souligné que la création d'un cadre favorable à la production agricole et à l'adoption de méthodes de production durables devrait être désormais une des premières préoccupations des hommes d'Etat. Il a évoqué le rôle essentiel de la paix et de la stabilité pour le développement agricole ainsi que la nécessité d'améliorer les conditions de vie des populations rurales et d'augmenter leur revenu et leur contribution à la richesse nationale pour maîtriser l'exode rural et assurer la production et l'accès aux aliments.

Il est intéressant de noter que le programme de redressement économique du Gabon attribue un rôle fondamental au secteur productif non pétrolier et en particulier à la relance de l'agriculture. Plusieurs projets y sont en cours pour promouvoir l'agriculture paysanne et le développement

agro-alimentaire. De nombreux exemples témoignent également du soutien du Président Bongo à la cause de la coopération internationale. Le Gabon est l'un des membres fondateurs de l'Organisation africaine du bois dont il abrite le siège. En outre, le pays a pris l'initiative de transformer l'école nationale des eaux et forêts en un instrument régional pour l'Afrique centrale. Je voudrais aussi rappeler le soutien que le Président Bongo a fourni au Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, et en particulier à son initiative de recevoir au Gabon une réunion des forums africains du suivi du Sommet. A une échelle encore plus large, je signalerai que le Président Bongo vient d'accueillir à Libreville le premier Sommet des chefs d'Etat des pays d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique, les ACP. La FAO a préparé à cette occasion deux documents techniques, l'un sur les implications agricoles du nouveau cadre commercial international pour les pays ACP et l'autre sur le rôle que l'Organisation peut jouer pour renforcer la coopération agricole entre ces pays.

Monsieur le Président de la République, il m'est particulièrement agréable de souhaiter la bienvenue au siège de la FAO à l'homme des dialogues et des conciliations qui déploie des efforts inlassables pour la paix. Je voudrais en outre vous exprimer ma profonde gratitude pour avoir accepté de prononcer le discours McDougall malgré les importantes obligations liées à un calendrier chargé de Conférences internationales en Afrique et en Asie.

Je suis heureux de saluer ici l'importance de vos initiatives pour accélérer le progrès de votre pays et du continent africain vers le développement économique et le mieux être social. Enfin, je voudrais saisir l'occasion qui m'est offerte pour présenter mes hommages déférents à Madame Bongo qui a bien voulu être à vos côtés en cette mémorable circonstance.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

S.E. El Hadj Omar BONGO (Président de la République gabonaise)

Mes premiers mots seront pour Monsieur Jacques Diouf, Directeur général de la FAO. Je voudrais lui adresser ici mes remerciements sincères pour avoir bien voulu m'inviter à prendre la parole au cours de la vingt-neuvième Conférence McDougall.

Cette conférence qui réunit, tous les deux ans, d'éminents délégués venus du monde entier m'offre, aujourd'hui, l'occasion de rendre un hommage mérité à la mémoire de Monsieur Frank McDougall. Cette brillante figure australienne a su communiquer à la planète entière son profond attachement aux idéaux promus par la FAO, dont il fut l'un des pères fondateurs.

Je tiens également à féliciter à mon tour le Ministre de l'agriculture et des industries agro-alimentaires du Canada pour sa brillante élection à la présidence de cette Conférence.

Je voudrais enfin dire ma gratitude au Gouvernement du pays hôte, l'Italie, pour la qualité de l'accueil réservé à la délégation gabonaise et ses efforts en vue d'aider la FAO à accomplir ses missions. Je salue la présence dans cette salle de tous les chefs des délégations, des pays membres, ainsi que l'admission du nouveau membre de la FAO.

Nous voici à l'orée du vingt et unième siècle. Le monde a connu d'immenses progrès et d'importantes avancées technologiques.

La production de biens et de services se développe. Les technologies modernes sont, en théorie, à la disposition de tout le monde. Des nouveaux moyens de communication peuvent permettre de les rendre accessibles à tous.

Le monde n'a jamais été aussi riche. La production alimentaire mondiale a fortement augmenté et elle est aujourd'hui largement suffisante pour nourrir tous les habitants de la terre.

Et pourtant plus d'une personne sur cinq souffre de sous-alimentation et de malnutrition dans les pays en développement. Dans le cas particulier de l'Afrique, le nombre de sous-alimentés a

doublé au cours de ces vingt dernières années. Dans le même temps sa production agricole par habitant diminuait dangeureusement.

Alors pourquoi ce paradoxe ?

Les facteurs responsables de la faim et de la malnutrition sont nombreux et intimement liés à la pauvreté. Entrent également en ligne de compte les aléas climatiques, les taux d'urbanisation, les déséquilibres économiques et sociaux qui touchent une grande partie des populations.

Il faut ajouter à cela les conflits armés et l'insécurité civile, particulièrement graves en Afrique.

Il y a un an, à l'occasion du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, nous étions tous réunis dans cette même salle, avec maints décideurs.

Ensemble nous avons réfléchi sur les meilleures voies à suivre pour garantir le minimum alimentaire à tous les habitants de cette planète, sans exception. Nous avons tous reconnu qu'aucun développement ne sera durable s'il n'est pas mondial, respectueux de l'environnement et surtout équitable.

Nous nous sommes engagés solennellement à éradiquer la faim et la malnutrition partout dans le monde et à tracer les voies les plus appropriées pour y arriver.

Il incombe donc à chaque gouvernement de créer l'environnement économique et politique propre à l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire de tous et de chacun.

S'agissant de mon pays, situé sur la côte, en zone tropicale humide, les actions que nous devons mettre en oeuvre pour assurer durablement la sécurité alimentaire de tous sont fort différentes de celles d'un pays sahélien ou d'un pays de l'Asie centrale par exemple.

Le Gabon est producteur de pétrole. Les problèmes de sécurité alimentaire s'y posent plus en termes de malnutrition qu'en termes de sous-alimentation.

Par ailleurs, une urbanisation accélérée due à l'activité pétrolière a dépeuplé les campagnes au profit des villes. Nous devons ainsi faire face à une demande alimentaire grandissante.

Face à cette situation, le Gouvernement de mon pays a engagé plusieurs actions. Elles visent essentiellement à la relance de la production agricole et vivrière. Elles se traduisent par la mise en place d'une agriculture périurbaine basée notamment sur l'initiative individuelle. Les jeunes sont les principaux acteurs et opérateurs de cette politique.

En outre, dans le cadre de ce programme, le Gouvernement gabonais s'est attaché à promouvoir l'agriculture paysanne par la mise en oeuvre de divers projets visant à renforcer l'encadrement des populations rurales. Il a entrepris également le redéploiement des pôles de développement que constituent les nombreuses unités agro-industrielles disséminées à travers le territoire.

Tous ces projets, dont certains sont réalisés avec le concours d'organisations spécialisées des Nations Unies telles que le FIDA, ont pour vocation d'organiser le monde rural par des activités durables: production, transformation, conservation ou commercialisation des produits du cru, formation, vulgarisation des techniques culturales modernes, et encadrement technique et gestion des crédits par les populations elles-mêmes.

En définitive, cette action du Gouvernement gabonais tend à améliorer les conditions de vie des populations rurales, notamment en vue de freiner l'exode rural. Elle recherche également le développement des cultures de rente afin d'augmenter la contribution du secteur de l'agriculture, de l'élevage et de la pêche au produit intérieur brut (PIB).

Je dois toutefois souligner que le principal défi que le Gabon se doit de relever d'ici à 2000 est de parvenir à une croissance économique soutenue et durable. Il nous faut pour cela lever les obstacles majeurs auxquels ce secteur est confronté, à savoir notamment:

- le coût élevé des facteurs de production;
- l'état défectueux de certains axes du réseau routier national;

- l'étroitesse des marchés, le secteur agricole devenant l'un des moteurs de la relance économique attendue par tous.

Dans cette vaste entreprise, nous comptons aussi sur le soutien de la communauté internationale et des institutions spécialisées des Nations Unies pour garantir la sécurité alimentaire. Nous espérons également que, répondant à l'appel du Directeur général de la FAO, les promoteurs privés investiront dans le secteur agricole.

C'est le lieu de signaler que vingt-neuf pays sont encore en situation d'urgence alimentaire: la majorité de ces pays sont africains. La Corne de l'Afrique et la région des Grands Lacs en sont les principales victimes.

Le problème alimentaire et nutritionnel principal à résoudre par nos gouvernements n'est donc pas de connaître la moyenne nationale des disponibilités alimentaires par habitant, mais d'identifier avec précision les groupes souffrant d'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle.

Quand on se rend compte que la majorité des gouvernements des pays en développement n'ont pas les moyens de créer rapidement un environnement économique et social propre à assurer la sécurité alimentaire - faute en particulier de budgets adéquats - nombre de principes contenus dans la Déclaration de Rome adoptée l'an dernier risquent de rester lettre morte. Le Gabon n'échappe pas à cette réalité.

Dans une telle situation où l'Etat n'a pas les moyens d'agir et où le secteur privé ne trouve pas des incitations économiques suffisantes, la seule solution réside dans l'organisation des ruraux sur une base professionnelle, locale ou d'intérêt commun, comme le préconise le programme de redressement arrêté par le Gouvernement gabonais.

Il ne faut donc pas que les gouvernements abandonnent leur rôle de responsables du développement.

C'est pourquoi dans le cas d'une assistance alimentaire directe, le Gouvernement gabonais a débloqué exceptionnellement cette année une aide d'une valeur de 9 milliards de francs CFA au bénéfice des couches sociales les plus démunies.

La libéralisation des marchés et la globalisation finissent par mettre en concurrence des secteurs aux ressources et capacités disproportionnées.

C'est pourquoi, lors du premier sommet des ACP à Libreville la semaine dernière, j'ai lancé un appel aux nations hautement industrialisées. Je les ai invitées à oeuvrer avec nous pour nous préparer à la mondialisation de l'économie car, plus que jamais, les pays en développement ont besoin de la solidarité active des pays nantis.

Il faut investir pour garantir la sécurité alimentaire: c'est le grand défi d'un avenir très proche. Si l'on ne s'attelle pas immédiatement à la charrue du développement durable, ce sont nos propres enfants qui, dans quinze ans, auront faim et une telle perspective est inacceptable.

Réduire de moitié le nombre de sous-alimentés et de mal nourris doit plus que jamais rester l'objectif à atteindre et le temps qui nous est imparti nous interdit la moindre hésitation.

Certes, la FAO, dans ce domaine, déploie des efforts considérables depuis de nombreuses années. L'Afrique a cependant son mot à dire sur l'ensemble des préoccupations liées à la lutte contre la faim et l'insécurité alimentaire. La prochaine Conférence régionale de la FAO à Addis-Abeba devrait lui en donner l'occasion. C'est pourquoi je renouvelle, de cette tribune, mon invitation aux comités nationaux africains de suivi du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation à se retrouver au Gabon. Nous pourrions ainsi préparer au mieux les assises d'Addis Abeba et en faire le point de départ historique de la créativité de l'Afrique et de son engagement sans réserve dans la lutte contre la faim et l'insécurité alimentaire.

Permettez-moi maintenant d'insister sur ce que je nommerai la condition d'accompagnement indispensable à tout effort en matière de sécurité alimentaire: il s'agit de la paix et de la stabilité des institutions étatiques dans nos pays respectifs.

En effet, dans une Afrique en butte aux turbulences et aux déchirements de toutes sortes, seule une politique de dialogue, de tolérance et de paix a fini par s'imposer à nous gabonais comme étant la seule voie pouvant nous conduire vers une paix durable; cette paix sans laquelle le développement économique et social est condamné à ne demeurer qu'une simple invention de l'esprit, voire une utopie.

En conclusion, je voudrais rappeler que, lors du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, tenu en ces mêmes lieu et place l'année dernière, nous avons à la fois identifié les contraintes par lesquelles passe un développement rural durable, posé les bases d'une réduction draconienne de l'insécurité alimentaire et élaboré un plan d'action concret dans ce sens. Il nous faut maintenant assurer la réussite de ce plan avec l'aide de la FAO.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

I would like to thank His Excellency for his address to us and to this Plenary session this morning, and as we said earlier, Frank McDougall was Australian, so I will now call on the delegation of Australia to take the floor.

Bernard Steven WONDER (Australia)

On behalf of my Minister, John Anderson, I would like to thank you, Chairman, for this opportunity to respond to the McDougall Memorial Lecture given by His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, the President of the Republic of Gabon. His Excellency has provided us with a thought-provoking and an insightful address which highlighted some of the important issues and challenges facing FAO. My immediate response to the President's address is that it is a realistic assessment of the current world food situation and the underlying causes of food insecurity. I particularly appreciated the President's firsthand account of the food and agricultural situation in his own country. However, before responding more fully, I would like to reflect briefly on the man this lecture commemorates. As you all know, Frank L. McDougall was an Australian. As a fellow Australian, I am particularly proud of the outstanding contribution Frank McDougall made to the establishment of FAO more than half a century ago, and of FAO's ongoing recognition of his achievements by lectures such as this one.

This occasion provides us with a valuable opportunity to reflect on both the achievements of the FAO community as well as the tasks that still lay ahead. Last year we agreed on two important documents, the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the Plan of Action at the World Food Summit. I agree with His Excellency that the challenge for FAO Members now is to take immediate and effective actions which will give life to our words and meet the needs of each of our countries.

As affirmed by the World Food Summit, we live in a world that produces sufficient food to meet the needs of its growing population. With the benefits of new technology, better resource management and ongoing trade liberalization the world will continue to meet this growing demand into the future. However despite this, as President Bongo has pointed out, people in some 29 countries are in an emergency situation due to lack of food. Natural disasters of this kind will, regrettably, always occur although their impact can be reduced through improved forecasting, communications and risk management and the adoption of more sustainable practices.

Food insecurity is the result of many factors, and many of these are unfortunately of mankind's own making, but the single greatest cause is poverty. Inadequate food availability stems primarily

from problems of distribution and access to food, not the ability of the world to produce food in adequate quantities.

These circumstances require us to optimize the sustainable use of our lands to reduce poverty and to reduce the effects of harsh natural conditions. Achievement of these objectives will demand integrated policies as well as the right mechanisms capable of delivering cost-effective outcomes. In this way we can stimulate the necessary economic growth and encourage sustainable production and trade. While primary responsibility for its food security rests with each individual country, Australia, as a founding member of FAO, stands ready to accept its responsibility to work in concert with other nations to reduce hunger and malnutrition. Australia has long given practical support to food security by making its experience and expertise available to developing countries, principally through our aid programmes which assist the adoption of ecologically-balanced land management and agricultural production practices, and here I would like to share a small success story with you all. As you might be aware, the expertise Australia has acquired in sustainable agricultural production under variable and often tough climatic conditions is readily applicable to many developing countries. One of Australia's key research bodies, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, the CSIRO, in collaboration with indigenous aboriginal communities in Australia, has been engaged in a research project to grow Australian acacia seeds as an alternative food crop in Niger. Seeds of Australian dry-zone acacia species form part of the traditional diet of Australia's aboriginal people and the similarity of climates in semi-arid tropical West Africa and northwestern Australia has made it possible to transfer the technique to Niger. The project has been well received by the local people.

Australia, as a major food surplus producing country, is therefore a major contributor to world food security through its trade. For most principal agricultural commodities, the bulk of agricultural production in Australia is exported. Australia is strongly committed to the full implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements on agricultural reform and a further liberalization of agricultural trade. However, Australia also recognizes that trade liberalization sometimes does not come without short-term costs. We acknowledge that some developing countries, particularly the poorer net food importers, remain concerned that the existing agricultural reform programme agreed to in the Uruguay Round could have adverse effects through imposing higher international prices for imported agricultural goods. While there are no clear signs that this is occurring, we understand these concerns and support calls for the Marrakesh Declaration to be made operational. In this regard, Australia welcomes work which has now commenced to implement this decision, following the Singapore Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in December last year.

The Food Aid Committee, under the International Grains Council, is developing recommendations on the legitimate food aid requirements of developing countries during the reform programme. We look forward to the completion of this, and further work on the implementation of the Declaration.

Through aid programmes, the international community is also helping developing countries adapt to the post-Uruguay Round trading regime by providing funding for technical assistance. Our experience strongly suggests that assistance such as this will help to ensure that the less developed Member Nations gain the greatest possible benefit from agriculture trade liberalization resulting from the Uruguay Round and subsequent multilateral negotiations.

Australia, like many other nations, has actively participated in the World Food Programme as a donor to provide assistance to those at risk, and to help alleviate poverty. While our main targets are countries in our own region, a considerable proportion of this aid has gone to African countries.

I appreciate this opportunity to respond to the McDougall Memorial Lecture on behalf of the Australian delegation. President Bongo's theme of the current world food security issues facing all of us is indeed a most appropriate one. It is my belief that with a renewed commitment and

determination at all levels and with a better understanding of issues, thanks to FAO, McDougall's great dream of adequate food for all can become closer to reality in the foreseeable future.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much to the delegate from Australia.

I again would like to thank His Excellency for his very informative address to us this morning. It was very insightful, and certainly laid out the challenges facing all of us, not only here at this Conference, but as we leave here to go back to our relative countries, as well as to the continuing work of FAO. Thank you very much Your Excellency.

The meeting rose at 11.30 hours.

La séance est levée a 11 h 30.

Se levanta la sesión a las 11.30 horas.

Second Report of the General Committee (C 97/LIM/11)**Deuxième rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/11)****Segundo informe del Comité general (C 97/LIM/11)****CHAIRMAN**

If I can have your attention, we will call the Eighth Plenary Session to order. Before we return to the country statements, we have some other business to look after. I am informed that the Second Report of the General Committee, C 97/LIM/11, was distributed yesterday to all delegates in their respective pigeonholes at the Documents Desk on the first floor. The Report, which contains recommendations to the Conference, has to be adopted in the Plenary. On the understanding that the Report has been read by all present, can we now adopt paragraphs 1 and 2. Seeing no indication, it is so decided.

PARAS 1 AND 2 ADOPTED***PARAS 1 ET 2 ADOPTES******PARRS. 1 Y 2 ADOPTADOS*****Third Report Of The General Committee (C 97/LIM/18)****Troisième rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/18)****Tercer informe del Comité general (C 97/LIM/18)****CHAIRMAN**

We will now move to paras 1 to 10 of the Third Report of the General Committee, C 97/LIM/18. I will now ask if there are any comments on these paragraphs of the Third Report, document C 97/LIM/18. I do not see indication otherwise.

PARAS 1 TO 10 ADOPTED***PARAS 1 A 10 ADOPTES******PARRS. 1 A 10 ADOPTADOS*****First Report of the Credentials Committee (C 97/LIM/8)****Premier rapport de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs (C 97/LIM/8)****Primer informe del Comité de Credenciales (C 97/LIM/8)****CHAIRMAN**

There is one other Report that we could adopt now and that is the adoption of the First Report of the Credentials Committee and that is C 97/LIM/8, which was distributed to all delegates earlier today. Delegates, I would like to inform you that there is one typographical error in the printed Report. In paragraph 3, please delete Granada, which has presented valid credentials, and is listed in the Appendix. I repeat, in paragraph 3 please delete Granada and consequently adjust the first word in paragraph 3 to read '6' instead of '7'. Paragraph 3 will now read "6 Member Nations have advised the Secretariat that they will not attend the Conference. They are Bahamas, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia." That is an amended Paragraph 3.

So, having informed you of that, Ladies and Gentlemen, we will adopt the Report, paragraphs 1 to 5.

Paras 1 to 5 adopted***Paras 1 a 5 adoptes******Parrs. 1 a 5 adoptados*****INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)**

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite)
INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION (continuación)

- 6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture** (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)
6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)
6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)
DEBAT GENERAL (suite)
DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELAGATIONS (continued)
DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATIONS (suite)
DECLARACIONES DE LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Australia, Congo (République démocratique du), Malta, Botswana, Bulgaria, Venezuela, Nepal, Ireland, Guinee-Bissau, Ethiopia, Lithuania, Malawi, Costa Rica, Guinea Ecuatorial, Georgia, South Africa, Poland, El Salvador, Niger, Belarus, Federation internationale des producteurs agricoles.

CHAIRMAN

We will now return to the item on the Agenda, the reports of countries, and I would ask that you note in your Agenda that there has been agreement that, at the end of the day, after the last item on the Order of the Day, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers will also be speaking in this afternoon's Plenary.

It is my pleasure now to call His Excellency Dr. Sulaiman Hj. Daud, Minister for Agriculture, Malaysia.

Datuk Amar Dr. SULAIMAN HAJI DAUD (Malaysia)

I would like to join the other delegates in congratulating you on your unanimous election as Chairman of the Conference, and I would like to extend similar congratulations to the three Vice-Chairmen. Malaysia congratulates the Republic of Kazakhstan on its admission as a new Member of FAO.

Malaysia recognizes the importance of agriculture because of its contribution to national economic growth, employment, export earnings and, above all, food security. Although the prospect for world agricultural output for 1997 is expected to improve, we note with concern the declining rate of growth in crop and livestock production among developing countries since 1993. We are, however, pleased with the favourable performance recorded by the Southeast Asian countries and Africa, especially in the Sub-Saharan region.

Malaysia was concerned that by mid-1997, more than 29 countries worldwide would face acute food shortages, requiring exceptional or emergency food assistance. In addition to Africa, this problem has also recently occurred in the Asian Region. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was a victim of such circumstances.

These acute food shortages are further aggravated by the overall declining trend in external assistance in agriculture to developing countries and financial commitment to multilateral agencies. This trend is disturbing, especially when more than 800 million people around the world are hungry and malnourished. Hence, effective external assistance should be increased to contribute towards the creation of employment and food security.

As a caring nation and consistent with Malaysia's policies of "Prosper thy neighbour" and "Smart partnership" as well as our commitment to South-South cooperation, Malaysia has provided technical assistance in various forms to many developing countries. At present, 94 developing countries have benefited in varying degrees from the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP).

Based on our experience with ASEAN, promoting the above policies has brought tremendous mutual benefits to Member Nations. These policies not only stimulate growth within the Region, but also contribute to global economic growth.

Three days ago, I was in the Republic of Guinea to join His Excellency The President of the Republic to inaugurate the first harvest of an initial 800 hectares of rice plantation, a joint-venture project between a Malaysian company and the Government of Guinea. The project consists initially of 1 800 hectares of rice plantation, poultry rearing and fruit plantation. The project caters for the basic needs of the people, facilitates transfer of technology and provides employment opportunities.

Member Nations should recall the successful World Food Summit held in Rome a year ago, which has created awareness of the incidence of household and global hunger and malnutrition, and galvanized political will to reallocate resources, as well as mobilized society in a global endeavour to achieve food for all. In order to implement the World Food Summit Plan of Action, adequate resources must be made available and international cooperation ensured to enable FAO to carry out its mandate effectively.

In this connection, it is the moral obligation of Member Nations to fulfil their financial responsibility to FAO by paying their dues and arrears in full. As FAO has already implemented substantial reforms and organization restructuring resulting in cost savings, we urge Member Nations to support at least a zero real growth budget for the 1998-99 biennium to allow FAO to execute its responsibilities.

Malaysia applauds the innovative efforts of the Director-General in expanding FAO's collaborative network and partnerships, in particular with regional, multilateral and international financing institutions as well as in promoting South-South cooperation. In this regard, I would like to emphasize that South-South cooperation has been the cornerstone of Malaysia's foreign policy and Malaysia is prepared to continue extending its assistance and sharing its experiences within its modest capability and resources. The decision of my Government to sign the TCDC Agreement with FAO demonstrates our commitment towards further promoting this policy.

In the area of genetic resources, Malaysia regrets to note the slow progress in realizing the International Undertaking on Genetic Resources. By now the international community should have clear guidelines on priority actions that need to be taken to prevent the irreversible loss of valuable genetic resources, especially in the regional centres of biodiversity.

The International Undertaking would contribute to a fair and equitable system of access and exchange of genetic resources for food and agriculture and enable the sharing of benefits derived from their commercial utilization, including the legitimate rights of farmers. We therefore urge Member Nations, especially the more developed ones, to put the negotiation on the fast track.

Malaysia acknowledges the important work and contribution of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its committees in setting up and approving food standards, codes of practice, guidelines and recommended measures which facilitate international food trade. These may be used in dispute settlement in WTO. However, the procedures and processes related to the setting and approval of these elements should be transparent, equitable and easily accessible to all, in order to protect consumers' health and ensure fair practices in food trade.

Malaysia is fully aware of the tendency of some developed countries and regions of insisting on their own national and regional standards as Codex, or so-called international standards, without giving due consideration to the peculiarities of other countries and regions. This practice is

unacceptable as it will give unfair advantage to the developed countries and regions in international food trade and, consequently, can become trade barriers to developing countries.

Malaysia therefore strongly urges FAO, in collaboration with WHO, to review the existing processes and procedures. In addition, there is an urgent need to institute a built-in mechanism to allow time for developing countries to conform to the new standards which, under the present situation, take effect immediately upon approval by the relevant authorities.

In conclusion, I would like to express Malaysia's appreciation to FAO and, in particular, to the Director-General, Dr. Jacques Diouf, for the contribution to our agricultural development efforts. The tasks before FAO and Member Nations are indeed challenging, more so in view of trade liberalization and globalization of the world economy. We hope that developing countries are safeguarded from the risk of global imbalances. We always look forward to closer collaboration with FAO and Member Nations.

Saeed AL-RAGABANI (United Arab Emirates) (Original language Arabic)

I am particularly happy to congratulate you personally and on behalf of the delegation of my country for your election to the Chairmanship of this Conference. We know you are going to be very wise and good in guiding the discussion. It is an enormous honour for us to take part in the discussion of the future of the Food and Agriculture Organization in the world, and we reaffirm the role of FAO in order to reach its goals. We would also like to say how very much we admire the new vigour given by Dr Jacques Diouf to this Organization and express to him our immense gratitude for the efforts he makes continuously in order to reach our goals. Therefore it is not admissible, Mr Chairman, at this period characterized by economic and technological development, to see 800 million human beings suffering from poverty, hunger and malnutrition. We can only estimate the efforts undertaken by the Organization to help the countries suffering from these evils, and we encourage everything done in their favour.

In this respect we certainly support the innovative approach initiated by the Director-General in order to modernize methods. Mr Chairman, the State of the United Arab Emirates, under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, has always been concerned about countries that live under the threshold of absolute poverty. This is why we contribute towards helping these countries and we cooperate in many agricultural projects in order to improve the living conditions of these countries and reduce the impact of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

My country has accomplished considerable progress as far as agricultural development goes. Important achievements have been made in the fight against desertification, the preservation of genetic resources and the preservation of soil and water by mobilizing all scientific means available. We are all aware that climatic conditions and ecological conditions can slow down the extension of arable land. However, this has not prevented us from reaching high levels of agricultural growth. Our agricultural production allows us to grant our population excellent food conditions, which are close to self-sufficiency for plant, animal and fish products.

Comparison between figures for 1987 and 1996 show that in ten years the cultivated surface in fruit trees, except for date palms, has increased by 90 percent, cereal and feed cereals by 142 percent, poultry production has increased by 235 percent, red meat by 184 percent, dairy products 250 percent, egg production by 145 percent, and fish production by 125 percent. The market produce surface area has increased by 193 percent. Three hundred thousand hectares of land have been improved and reforested.

The state has invested considerably in scientific research in order to solve problems and obstacles to agricultural development. In order to overcome the difficulty of water shortage, the state has introduced irrigation methods and dams have been built to preserve water resources.

Recently the State of the United Arab Emirates celebrated World Food Day with the theme "Investing in Food Security". We feel that the implementation of this goal requires greater

synergy between the public sector and the private sector, in order to encourage investment. The agenda of our Conference includes numerous questions of the utmost importance and the delegation of my country stresses the importance of these questions, especially in relation with the World Food Summit.

We persist in hoping that the world will finally reach peace and prosperity and agriculture will contribute towards the development of humankind, putting an end to the suffering of poor countries.

Bernard Steven WONDER (Australia)

On behalf of the Australian Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of the Conference and wish you well for a successful outcome. I would also like to reaffirm Australia's commitment to the FAO. The need for an increasingly efficient, dynamic and forward-looking FAO will continue well into the next century. It is a cause for great concern that people in no fewer than 29 countries have faced acute food shortages during 1997. Australia is sensitive to the needs of people affected by such climatic catastrophes and is providing direct assistance. At the same time, however, we recognize that such situations have little to do with any ongoing or underlying structural global shortage of food. The world continues to produce sufficient food to meet the needs of its total population. But that is not to say that the new millennium will not require all of us to deal with a number of challenges.

One of the new challenges facing FAO in the world will be the role that gene technology is permitted to play. Given the enormous potential of gene technology to improve global food security, it is in all our interests to work to ensure that unwarranted and unscientifically-based restrictions are not placed on either the use of, or trade in, resulting products.

Another important challenge we must confront is to achieve sustainable agricultural production through the control of pests and diseases and ways to maintain and enhance the production base, while ensuring the availability of safe food. Australia is strongly supportive of, and actively involved in, FAO's important work in this area.

One of the key tasks of this Conference is to endorse the revisions to the International Plant Protection Convention. Yet another challenge is the ongoing development of scientifically-based Codex Standards which will enable Member Nations to gain maximum benefit from the world trading system through an effectively functioning SPS Agreement.

The World Food Summit confirmed that the solution to food insecurity lies in addressing the causes of the problem. This includes improved distribution and trade or market access and not only just producing more food. Agricultural trade liberalization has played and will continue to play an important role in improving world food security through improved allocation of resources and the development of efficient agricultural systems. Agricultural production in developing countries should be enhanced as subsidies in the developed world are reduced. These subsidies have distorted investment and production decisions to the disadvantage of developing economies. The benefits of trade liberalization will be accelerated by the effective implementation of the Marrakesh Declaration.

I would like to turn now to Australian initiatives of interest to this Conference. The Australian Government is committed to the sustainable management of agricultural, forestry and fisheries resources. Australia continues to contribute to international efforts and to promoting ecologically-sustainable management systems. Australia has also endorsed the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Forests proposals for action and looks forward to working with FAO and others to ensure their implementation. The Australian Government recognizes that the increased productivity and sustainability of agricultural systems depends on vigorous research, development and technology transfer. The expertise Australia has acquired in sustainable agricultural production is readily applicable to many developing countries. Indeed, we are making

this expertise available through our international aid programmes and through the work of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

I now wish to return briefly to the role and effectiveness of FAO in meeting the challenges in the next century. Australia acknowledges and commends the significant efforts the Director-General has made so far in reducing unnecessary costs, and increasing efficiencies of the Organization and in reassigning priorities. We know from our experience that this change process is not easy. Nevertheless, it is critical that FAO recognizes that it cannot do everything and it must prioritize and carefully target its efforts to those areas where it can make a real difference. Against this background, Australia believes it is imperative that this Conference resolve an appropriate budget for the coming biennium that meets both the highest priority needs of members and recognizes the fiscal realities of donor nations and their capacity to pay. Having considered the situation carefully, Australia believes that the adoption of a zero nominal growth budget for the forthcoming biennium would be appropriate.

The new century will present many new challenges for FAO and it is important that it be able to adapt to meet those challenges. For the years ahead, Australia considers that FAO's areas of importance are sustainable development of the world's natural resources, responsible management of fisheries and forestry resources, improved agricultural research and development transfer, particularly in plant genetic resources and gene technology adoption, integrated pest management and the facilitation of international trade in agricultural products through the standards-setting work of Codex and the IPPC.

Paul BANDOMA (Congo, République démocratique du)

Au nom du Gouvernement de salut public de la République démocratique du Congo et au nom de ma délégation, je voudrais m'acquitter d'un agréable devoir, celui de vous présenter nos félicitations, à vous-même ainsi qu'aux autres membres du Bureau, pour votre brillante élection.

Je suis certain que sous votre sage conduite les travaux de cette Conférence aboutiront à des résultats encourageants.

Un autre devoir est celui de féliciter au nom de mon pays et de mon président, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, les frères d'Angola qui célèbrent aujourd'hui leur fête nationale de l'indépendance. Je suis tout à fait sûr que cette fête a débordé aujourd'hui les 1 000 kilomètres de frontière qui nous séparent.

Je voudrais également associer à ces félicitations M Jacques Diouf, Directeur général de la FAO, dont la présence à la tête de notre Organisation rassure tous les pays membres.

Ma délégation saisit cette occasion pour saluer et remercier le Gouvernement et le peuple italien pour l'accueil très chaleureux qui nous a été réservé dans cette belle ville de Rome.

Je m'en voudrais de ne pas remercier tous les Etats Membres ici réunis pour la confiance placée en notre pays, en nous élisant à une des vice-présidences de cette 29^{ème} session de la Conférence de la FAO. Qu'ils trouvent en ces mots l'expression de notre profonde gratitude.

Je représente devant vous un pays situé au coeur de l'Afrique et qui s'appelle la République démocratique du Congo; un pays qui, jusqu'à la date du 17 mai de cette année, était encore cité dans tous les médias internationaux comme exemple malheureux des catastrophes causées délibérément par un homme, fils de ce pays et qui, tout au long de cette triste affaire, avait bénéficié de l'appui complice d'autres hommes, tant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur du pays.

Les événements qui ont plongé la République démocratique du Congo dans une crise grave et multiforme concernent à la fois les peuples d'Afrique et les puissances étrangères, qui viennent souvent y imposer des schémas "prêts-à-porter" de développement socio-économique durable.

Je ne vous apprend rien en rappelant que l'avènement d'une démocratie est un processus lent, difficile et qui avance à un rythme propre à chaque peuple et à chaque pays.

Dans ses efforts de reconstruction du pays, notre Gouvernement a adopté un programme triennal minimum, couvrant la période allant de 1997 à 1999 et qui a pour objectif de reconstruire à court terme le tissu économique et social complètement détruit.

Les priorités de ce programme triennal, telles qu'elles ont été définies par le chef de l'Etat, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, lors de la cérémonie de son investiture au mois de mai de cette année, sont les suivantes:

- la remise en état des infrastructures de transport et de communication;
- la mécanisation et la modernisation de l'agriculture;
- la relance de la production minière et agricole par l'industrialisation, l'accent étant mis sur l'industrie agroalimentaire;
- la remise en état des infrastructures sociales, par l'alimentation en eau potable et par la fourniture d'énergie électrique à toutes les provinces du pays, ainsi que celle des infrastructures hospitalières et de l'éducation;
- l'élimination du chômage par la création d'emplois.

En ce qui concerne le secteur de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation, l'objectif prioritaire visé est d'éradiquer la pauvreté, d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire durable et d'instaurer une agriculture moderne.

Pour la réalisation des activités prévues dans le programme triennal, le gouvernement compte avant tout sur l'apport de tous les fils et les filles de la République démocratique du Congo.

Cependant, au nom de la solidarité internationale, toute contribution venant de l'extérieur, tant sur le plan bilatéral que multilatéral, sera la bienvenue.

C'est ainsi que, tout en reconnaissant qu'il appartient au peuple congolais d'assurer son développement harmonieux et durable par la mobilisation de ses ressources internes, nous souhaitons vivement que tous les partenaires qui ont décidé librement d'entretenir des relations de coopération avec notre pays, respectent la voie que nous avons choisie vers le progrès et la promotion de notre dignité. Cela constitue la condition incontournable de l'instauration du climat de paix, de sécurité et de tranquillité propice à la réalisation de la sécurité alimentaire par tous.

En termes clairs, le Gouvernement de la République démocratique du Congo refuse toute aide conditionnée et demande que toute l'aide extérieure consentie à notre pays puisse s'intégrer dans les priorités définies par notre gouvernement.

La position de mon pays sur les points inscrits à l'ordre du jour de la présente Conférence vous sera communiquée en détail dans les différentes commissions.

Néanmoins, je me permettrais d'insister particulièrement sur le Programme de travail et budget, et sur le Programme spécial de la sécurité alimentaire.

En ce qui concerne le Programme de travail et budget pour le prochain exercice, ma délégation regrette que la conjoncture économique ne puisse permettre à la FAO de présenter des prévisions sur les apports réels en assistance que les populations des Etats Membres sont en droit d'attendre d'elle.

Ainsi, faute d'un budget à croissance réelle positive, ma délégation par esprit de consensus appuie le budget à croissance réelle zéro, que nous considérons comme étant un budget qui permettra à la FAO de réaliser ses programmes minimaux sur le terrain.

En ce qui concerne le Programme spécial de la sécurité alimentaire, ma délégation loue les efforts déployés par la FAO dans ce domaine et souhaite le voir s'étendre à d'autres pays.

Francis MONTANARO MIFSUD (Malta)

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is indeed an honour for me to address this Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference on behalf of my Government.

Let me first of all associate myself with previous speakers in congratulating you on your election; my congratulations go also to the Vice-Chairmen.

We are to address ourselves primarily at this stage to the State of Food and Agriculture in the world, and to take an overall view of the situation. My government welcomes the marked improvement in the world production of staple foods in 1996, and the resumed upward trend in global output after the disappointing harvest in several parts of the world in 1995. We also note, among the encouraging results in the developing country regions during 1996, the positive performance in Africa, where total crop and livestock production is estimated to have increased by 7.2 percent.

It will be recalled that poor grain harvests, combined with a contraction in carryover stocks in 1995-96 had contributed to substantial price increases in several grain importing countries. The global supply situation has since improved and prices have declined.

Cereal output sufficient to meet consumption requirements is forecast for 1997-98. Nevertheless, this forecast still indicates a global stock-to-utilization ratio below the 17 to 18 percent ratio considered the minimum safety level by FAO. We concur with the maintenance of the present benchmark, and would urge the Secretariat, in accordance with the mandate of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, to continue monitoring closely world food prices and food stocks.

It continues to be disquieting that numerous countries, several of them Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries, are facing acute food shortages. Experience has shown that in these circumstances it is the weakest and the under-privileged who are the first casualties. Thus notwithstanding the improved general scenario and the progress achieved in global food security over the years, there is clearly no room for complacency.

I should now like to refer briefly to the agricultural sector in Malta. The national economy is an open one, characterized by steady expansion, low population growth, and rising personal incomes. Agriculture, which is constrained by limited natural resources, and fisheries contribute no more than 3 percent to our GDP. Nevertheless, self-sufficiency levels have been reached in several basic products, including fresh vegetables, potatoes, poultry, eggs, pig meat and fresh milk. Although the value of food imports represents an estimated 8 percent of the total import bill, access to food on the part of all sections of our population is assured. Rather, the focus of concern is food quality, and Government attention is directed at reinforcing quality control and raising quality standards, as well as improving consumption patterns in view of the significant incidence of diet-related disease, and we appreciate the advice and assistance we have been receiving from FAO in this regard.

Agricultural policies have been aimed at increasing crop yields. Research and extension are developing new crop varieties and promoting horticulture. There being obvious constraints in land availability, sheep and goat grazing has long since been replaced by intensive stall-bred cattle and pig production. The severe shortage and high cost of water is another major constraint for agriculture.

My Government is at present reviewing its policy in the light of the fundamental goals which it has set for itself, namely: ensuring an adequate income for farmers and fishermen; improving marketing organization, including support for cooperatives; promoting food products of high nutritional value at affordable prices; and extending direct and indirect market-oriented assistance to farmers and fishermen to achieve efficiency through innovative methods and access to new technologies.

We recognize the multi-functional character of agriculture. Its importance in our national life is not limited to economic considerations, but has an essential place in our social and natural environment.

Before concluding, I should like to reiterate that Malta, as a traditional fishing nation, fully supports FAO in its vital role of fisheries management, including its efforts to prevent over-

exploitation of marine living resources. We trust that the Organization will continue, despite financial constraints, to perform this role, especially in view of the irreplaceable contribution of fisheries to world food security. Malta's participation in FAO's activities in the fisheries sector in general and in Mediterranean fisheries in particular, is directly in line with our commitment to regional and international cooperation, particularly in the utilization of shared natural resources.

In this connection, it gives us great satisfaction to learn that the Council last week concurred in the amendments to the GFCM Agreement, which were adopted by the GFCM at its Twenty-second Session last month, and which are aimed at making GFCM a truly effective regional fisheries body.

Thomas TAUKOBONG (Botswana)

As this is the first time I attend this important meeting, it is indeed a great honour and privilege for me to address this Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity on my own behalf and on behalf of the delegation of Botswana, to congratulate you and your vice-chairpersons on your election. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan on its admission as the newest Member of our Organization.

We meet once again following the celebration of FAO's Fiftieth Anniversary birthday and the historic World Food Summit that was held here in Rome a year ago, to review the world food situation and to chart a way forward in our continuing effort to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General for his untiring efforts to pursue the implementation of the Resolutions adopted by our Heads of State at that Summit. At that Summit, the Heads of State and Government and Senior Officials from 186 countries pledged their political will and support to continue the efforts to eradicate hunger from the world. This is indeed a very lofty and ambitious goal, considering the fact that the world's population is expected to increase from 5 700 million to 8 700 million people by the year 2030. This scenario means that agricultural production must rapidly increase and intensify while ensuring that natural resources are utilized on a sustainable basis. There is an urgent need for all stakeholders, national governments and the international community, to cooperate in ensuring that sufficient resources flow towards increased agricultural production and the protection of the environment.

In the follow-up to the World Food Summit, the Government of Botswana has moved swiftly to put a number of initiatives into place. These include amongst others, the institutionalization of the Food Insecurity Vulnerability and Mapping Information Systems for Botswana in collaboration with the USAID Famine Early Warning System Regional Programme for Southern Africa, to track food insecurity in the country. This will provide a framework for future policy interventions; I might add that through this facility Botswana will be able to host a high-level Drought Management Seminar for Southern Africa later this month.

Related to this event Botswana has recently signed and ratified the International Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought. In recognition of the crucial role played by local people in the management and conservation of natural resources, Botswana has held country-wide consultations to enlist their participation in the preparation of the National Action Programme on Desertification and Drought. The resolutions emanating from district seminars and the national forum form the basis of Botswana's National Action Programme.

We are gratified by the improved outlook in the cereal supply situation and encouraged by FAO reports with regard to the positive performance by African countries in crop and livestock production during 1996, which were due to improved weather conditions. Production growth rate figures for countries in Southern Africa are very impressive indeed, showing Lesotho with +22 percent, Swaziland +11 percent, Zambia +18 percent, Botswana + 16 percent, Malawi + 7 percent and Zimbabwe + 42 percent up from the previous year. The bad news, of course, for us is that

this positive trend appears likely to be offset by the imminence of the *El Niño* effect, which is forecast to result in severe drought, especially in Southern Africa.

While countries in the Region are preparing individually and collectively for the worst scenario, it is our view that FAO and the international community should also continue to monitor the situation and be prepared to assist, in the event that the Region is plunged into a severe drought situation. We in Botswana, and indeed all of us in the Region, are prepared to work closely with FAO and all international agencies to provide information that will enable all of us to plan for this eventuality.

Apart from the threat of *El Niño*, the other worrying fact in Southern Africa is the continuous outbreak and spread of livestock diseases. You will recall that Botswana was recently faced with an outbreak of Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) in the northern part of the country. This resulted in the destruction of over 300 000 cattle, in order to eradicate the disease. We are happy to report that we have successfully eradicated the disease where it had existed in the country. We are also about to complete a compensation and cattle re-stocking exercise for the affected livestock owners. In spite of these efforts, we were, however, alarmed at recent reports of recurrence of the disease elsewhere in the Region. We have also received reports of an outbreak of Food-and-Mouth Disease close to our northern borders. The eradication, control, compensation and re-stocking exercises were very expensive to us in terms of both financial and human resources.

While we can try to combat disease outbreaks on a national and regional basis, I believe that we will continue to require assistance from FAO and other international agencies to control these outbreaks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General of FAO and other cooperating partners for their timely assistance in the control and eradication of CBPP in Botswana.

The activities of FAO in the next biennium will be crucial for us as we implement the Sectoral Agricultural Development strategy to Horizon 2010 and the long-term Masterplan on the same theme. In this regard, we will certainly be looking to FAO for expertise in certain strategic areas in order to implement these plans. The level of resources available to FAO is important to us. In this context, we reaffirm the principle of zero real growth in the level of the Programme of Work and Budget 1998-99, and it is our hope that a consensus will be reached on US\$675.3 million for the next biennium. I believe that this is a reasonable budget level to which we can all agree. It is therefore not advisable to propose any further reductions to the budget, since to do that will jeopardize the effectiveness of the Organization's Programme of Work.

Finally, I would like to thank and congratulate the Director-General for his magnificent effort in organizing the successful global telecast, dedicated to Food for All (TeleFood) which was held in conjunction with the annual World Food Day celebrations. The success of this event, which was aimed at creating awareness among people of the world on the problems of hunger and malnutrition, and to mobilize resources towards alleviating the problem, is indeed the demonstration of a spirit of togetherness, which is necessary for the achievement of the goal of assisting all those faced with poverty, hunger and malnutrition. It is only through such solidarity that we can succeed in our efforts to make the world a better place for everyone.

Mrs Valia SAVTCHEVA (Bulgaria) (Original language Bulgarian)

With great pleasure I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Chairman, on your election to your high office and wish you and all the participants in the Conference every success. I would also like to express our profound satisfaction with the splendid work done by FAO under the guidance of Jacques Diouf in preparing this Session.

We highly appreciate the opportunity offered to analyze the state of global agricultural production and food security, which present real challenges and serious difficulties indeed to many regions and countries. The report submitted by FAO's Secretariat provides a clear picture of the state, results and forecasts concerning production, consumption and primary food prices. In

our view, the expectation of a lower demand in the international markets over the 1997-98 period on the one hand and the expectation of depressed prices, on the other, imply that an equilibrium between demand and supply can be achieved.

As pointed out in FAO's Annual Report, Bulgaria is among the countries registering a slump in agricultural production. Wheat, barley and maize production in 1996 hit a record low level compared to the past 20 years and remained almost twice as low as the average production volume over the 1991-1995 period. Drought, the smaller size of areas under crops and the lack of funding for agrotechnical inputs needed are considered to be the main reasons behind the 1996 production decline.

Due to the poor 1996 harvest and the large volumes exported in 1995 and 1996, the country was forced to import substantial amounts of bread wheat in early 1997. Wheat imports, in turn, led to an increase in bread and bread product prices. The relatively good 1997 harvest and high farmgate prices, introduced by the Bulgarian Government, allowed a relative stabilization of food provision security until the next harvest. The removal of customs controls and export taxes levied on primary farm products is expected to boost production growth and provide better conditions for quick recovery.

The establishment of the Agriculture National Fund, the policy to lease state land, the creation of conditions for the normal operation of the land market and the establishment of a market infrastructure are the factors which favour the afore-mentioned process. However, complete land ownership restitution still remains the main item on the agenda.

The Government has already committed itself to restore more than 90 percent of land ownership to former owners and carry out the privatization of 80 percent of state-run enterprises. To achieve these priority policy targets, Parliament has recently adopted substantial amendments to the current legislation. A separate law has provided for the restitution of forest ownership. Investments are one of the key factors for the development of the sector. The recently-adopted amendments to the Law on Foreign Investments provide a very favourable investment climate for foreign investors in Bulgaria.

FAO efficiency deserves a great deal of attention and consideration, for it has implications at all levels of the Organization. The analysis of food security and all measures bearing upon its attainment and stabilization, as well as the revamping of FAO and the reinforcement of its regional capacity have been, in our opinion, the right direction. And yet, there is more that remains to be done. Enhanced efficiency of programmes and projects, differential treatment of countries and regions, coordination and consistency of support to producers by improving the regulatory basis and international relations, implementation of the efficient environment-friendly technologies and closer cooperation and coordination with other international organizations can all be identified as priority issues to which FAO needs to pay due attention.

Last but not least, I would like to assure you that we are in principle supporting the proposals made and the solutions offered to the various agenda items. We are supporting the restrictive policy on the Organization's expenses as well as the zero real growth budget scenarios over the next biannual period as a good option for achieving consensus. We regard the sanitary and phytosanitary measures to be instruments that reinforce cooperation among all countries and facilitate international trade.

Expressing our support to the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, we would suggest that specific measures should be considered to address the situation in Central East European countries.

Raúl ALEGRETT RUIZ (Venezuela)

Señor Presidente, señores Delegados, quisiera comenzar mi exposición ratificando el compromiso de mi país con los acuerdos de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación y nuestro respaldo a los objetivos del Plan de Acción aprobado por la Cumbre. Asimismo nuestro

reconocimiento a la FAO por su permanente y valiosa contribución al desarrollo agrícola y la seguridad alimentaria.

Permítanme ahora presentar de manera resumida la situación de mi país en materia de agricultura y alimentación.

Durante décadas, Venezuela mantuvo una política de sustitución de importaciones implementando medidas orientadas a estimular la producción agrícola, basadas fundamentalmente en inversiones en infraestructura, subsidios directos e indirectos y restricciones a la importación.

Con el fuerte apoyo oficial, se obtuvieron logros significativos, tales como: crecimiento del producto, introducción de mejoras tecnológicas, incorporación de maquinarias y equipos para la producción y, en general, cierto dinamismo socioeconómico en las áreas rurales; pero al mismo tiempo se generaron aspectos negativos, como la distorsión del mercado de bienes y servicios para la producción y la comercialización, el estímulo a actividades, zonas y productores poco eficientes o no competitivos, y un exagerado e insostenible gasto fiscal. Por otra parte, el crecimiento acelerado de la población, así como del ingreso y de la urbanización influyó en que, a pesar del crecimiento en la producción agrícola, el país fuera cada vez más dependiente de las importaciones de alimentos.

En este contexto en el año 1989 se inicia la implantación del Programa de Estabilización y Ajuste Estructural y de Apertura Comercial, según el cual, la agricultura pasaría a depender solamente de las orientaciones del mercado. La experiencia reciente de los países desarrollados y del tercer mundo, avala la necesidad de una política agrícola que considere la participación oportuna del Estado, para restituir o mantener equilibrios indispensables.

Las condicionantes inherentes a la producción agropecuaria, de todos conocidas, las condiciones de pobreza en que se encuentran importantes núcleos de la población rural y la importancia de la actividad para los países en desarrollo, hacen esta participación necesaria.

Los altibajos que se producen en el marco macroeconómico, las alzas o depresiones de los precios, la dinámica misma en la administración del gasto público, son también condicionantes del sector agrícola.

En Venezuela, el petróleo, con todo el peso que detenta como sustento fundamental de su economía, hace ver al sector agropecuario con muy poca significación.

Por otro lado, la dinámica actual del comercio internacional, junto a los mecanismos de integración regional y acuerdos comerciales perfilan la nueva realidad. El proceso de globalización señala la necesidad de redefinir políticas económicas y en especial las agrícolas. En este último caso, las evidencias demuestran una gran debilidad de este sector en las negociaciones internacionales, toda vez que los países en vías de desarrollo no cuentan con suficientes recursos fiscales para proporcionar las mismas ayudas que ofrecen los países desarrollados; en tanto que se les impone formas legislativas de corte supranacional, que amenazan las legislaciones internas logradas a través de largas luchas sociales.

Venezuela ha estado inmersa en los últimos años en una grave crisis, de la cual todavía está sufriendo los efectos en lo económico, lo político, lo social y lo ético. En el área económica, comienza a transitar nuevamente por caminos de estabilidad y de crecimiento: este año la inflación será sensiblemente inferior a la del año pasado y el pronóstico es de que esta tendencia continuará; la paridad cambiaria continua estable, avalada por unas reservas internacionales en aumento; el producto interno bruto acusará este año un crecimiento importante, previéndose similar comportamiento en años venideros.

A nivel microeconómico también se está produciendo una mejora, que si bien no ocurre en forma tan rápida y amplia como sería deseable, debe mantenerse. Los ingresos de los trabajadores y el empleo comienzan a mejorar luego de un acuerdo de legislación laboral alcanzado entre trabajadores y patronos con la participación del Gobierno. El consumo de alimentos que había

bajado en años anteriores, comienza a recuperarse al aumentar el poder adquisitivo de la población. Aunque queda mucho por lograr, la atmósfera de pesimismo comienza a disiparse.

El sector agrícola venezolano a pesar de la condición tropical del país, no es uniforme; en él coexisten agriculturas adaptadas a diferentes condiciones climáticas, edáficas, topográficas y socio-políticas, lo que permite disponer de una gran flexibilidad en su potencial para la producción de alimentos. No obstante, el país es importador neto de alimentos, principalmente de los mercados de América del Norte, Europa, Oceanía y América del Sur. Las exportaciones agrícolas venezolanas están constituídas fundamentalmente por la pesca, café, cacao y plátano. La balanza comercial agrícola desde hace varios años, viene siendo marcadamente deficitaria, cerca de 900 millones de dólares para 1996.

Para compensar la disminución del consumo que afecta a la población y en particular a la más vulnerable, se han implementado durante los últimos años, programas alimentarios compensatorios, alcanzando en el presente año, una cifra aproximada de 800 millones de dólares. Existe ciertamente un esfuerzo sostenido por avanzar hacia mejores condiciones sociales y alimentarias de la población, recuperando y luego superando, niveles alcanzados en el pasado.

Recientemente, se ha introducido al Congreso Nacional, un proyecto de ley para el Desarrollo Agrícola y la Seguridad Alimentaria, elaborado con la asistencia de la FAO, el cual contempla una política de fomento a la producción agropecuaria y a la actividad agroindustrial, adecuada a las actuales condiciones de apertura a la economía y a la competitividad. Esta ley garantizará un nivel mínimo de abastecimiento de productos estratégicos, bajo el enfoque de circuitos agroalimentarios que involucra a todos los agentes de la cadena de cada rubro.

Señor Presidente, señores Delegados, el mundo de hoy se encuentra inmerso en un vertiginoso proceso de cambios, los cuales afectan esquemas y paradigmas vigentes por décadas. Al lado de manifestaciones de crisis y desconcierto, surgen oportunidades con amplios horizontes, que tenemos la enorme responsabilidad de aprovechar. Una de ellas, la de vencer el hambre y superar la pobreza en un marco de sostenibilidad, constituirá sin duda uno de los grandes retos para el siglo XXI.

Surya Nath UPADHYAY (Nepal)

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to have this opportunity to address such a distinguished gathering and to share the views of my delegation on various regional and global issues related to food, agriculture and forestry resources.

In the meantime, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you MrChairman on your unanimous election to chair this Conference. I am confident that under your stewardship this Conference will achieve meaningful results.

At the outset, allow me to express our high appreciation for the goodwill demonstrated by FAO through inviting His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev as a keynote speaker on the occasion of the Seventeenth World Food Day. The deliberations of His Majesty the King encompass interlocking issues of agricultural development, food production, hunger, malnutrition, poverty, environment and important factors relating to these such as roads, energy, education, research and extension. Such a broad spectrum of development challenges confronting the globe and the solution postulated for these challenges will truly provide a sound direction for the impending Twenty-first century.

We have been experiencing and foreseeing more and more complex challenges ahead to increase agricultural production and productivity and to ensure food security, especially to the poorer segments of society. Several million people in the developing world are deprived of basic necessities of human beings such as food. More than 800 million people in the world are malnourished and around 18 million die of hunger every year. Our Region, South Asia, has been bearing the major brunt of this predicament.

On the one hand the nations which are confronting the problems of hunger and poverty have meagre resources to tackle such problems and on the other, Official Development Assistance from the developed nations to them has been declining during the recent years when it is most needed. The commitment of 0.7 percent of Gross National Product for Official Development Assistance as peace dividend made by industrialized countries has remained unfulfilled by a large margin.

My delegation highly appreciates the concern expressed by the Director-General in his opening remarks regarding the priority of affluent countries for eradicating hunger and malnutrition from the world. We firmly believe that unless a fundamental attitudinal change occurs in this regard the question of food security remains an unsolved proposition in this world.

In order to fulfil broad national goals, Nepal has accorded utmost importance on implementing long-term sectoral perspective plans. In this connection the most recent initiative has been the implementation of the Agricultural Perspective Plan (APP). It is designed with a holistic approach which integrates the most essential ingredients of a successful agricultural and rural transformation.

In essence, the APP aims to accelerate the growth in agricultural output for enhanced food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable economic development. It is expected that the implementation of the Plan will significantly contribute towards raising productivity, alleviating poverty and maintaining environmental balance. In addition, we are in the process of revising the Master Plan for the forestry sector which was developed in line with FAO's Tropical Forestry Action Plan. Furthermore, the Biodiversity Action Plan for the Kingdom of Nepal is being prepared.

Along these lines, food grains and cash crops are being grown in the Terai flatland, and production of the high value fruits and vegetable crops are being encouraged in the hills and mountains. This is expected to help transfer the subsistence-oriented production into a viable commercial production system subsequently promoting inter-regional integration within the country. Our policy is to integrate the plains and the hills so that each can specialize in accordance with their respective comparative advantage. The forestry sector is also contributing to the overall economic development process through its community forestry, leasehold forestry and integrated sub-watershed management planning activities among others.

Allow me to mention here that FAO-funded projects have contributed remarkably in our development endeavours. Since Nepal became a member of FAO in 1951, several projects have been successfully implemented covering various aspects of agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry. Recently implemented Special Programme on Food Production in Support of Food Security (SPIN), has demonstrated the possibilities of increasing production of major cereal crops by using a package of technology that includes improved quality seeds in combination with judicious use of chemical fertilizers and plant protection measures-on-farm water management with proactive extension services. The Programme is being expanded with full participation of the farmers. We are happy to witness the success of this project and extend heartfelt thanks to Director-General, Dr Jacques Diouf for such firm initiatives in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCS).

Furthermore, in the forestry sector, community forestry, national parks and protected area system and watershed management are some of the successful programmes carried out with the technical assistance of FAO.

On the broader agenda of the Organization, we find the Programme of Work and Budget for 1998-99 to be in conformity with the broader goals of FAO. With my firm conviction that the Programme will be translated into action, I express Nepal's full support and cooperation.

I would like to assure you that Nepal is willing to play its role towards ensuring food security. As the Conference covers a wide range of topics, my delegation believes that it will be able to resolve the fundamental issues of the agenda.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Ned O'KEEFE (Ireland)

I am pleased and privileged to speak to you today on behalf of Ireland.

I would first like to associate Ireland with the statements to Conference made by the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union.

It is now 150 years since Ireland suffered the effects of a great famine, the last large-scale famine in Europe, in which one million people died and a further million were forced to leave the country. The historic memory of this famine sharpens our official and voluntary commitment to development and to food security.

The issue of how to achieve food security for all people is one of the greatest challenges facing the world as we enter the Twenty-first Century. Experience has shown us that food insecurity is a complex and multi-faceted problem. In order to make real progress, action is needed on many fronts:

- the core problem of poverty must be addressed, as it is the poor, both urban and rural, who are food insecure;
- an enabling political, social and economic environment must be created to provide a stable and positive framework for growth and poverty reduction;
- land, and other natural resources, must be managed in a way which is sustainable while food production is increased in order to improve food supply and alleviate rural poverty;
- international support for Low Income Food Deficit Countries must be enhanced and the effectiveness of this support improved;
- international trade policies must be shaped which are conducive to food security and encourage efficient food distribution.

The World Food Summit provided a forum for Heads of State and Government from around the world to put their political commitment behind urgent action on these and other issues in order to eradicate hunger and create world food security.

The Summit has been understandably criticized for setting a target which envisages that there will still be 400 million starving people in the world in 20 years' time. However, to achieve even this limited aim will require radical change from current trends, and therefore will need real and substantial action by the Governments and organizations which have committed themselves to this aim.

The Plan of Action adopted by the Summit correctly identifies Governments as having primary responsibility for assuring food security. The Irish Government is fully committed to playing its role in this regard.

One of the ways in which the Irish Government implements its commitment to food security is through the Irish Aid Programme. The total allocation for Irish Aid in 1997 is IR£122 million, which is equivalent to 0.31 percent of GNP. This is the highest level ever, both in money terms and as a percentage of GNP, and Ireland now has the fastest growing aid programme of any donor country. Furthermore, this growth will continue as the Government has firmly committed itself to increasing official development assistance to 0.45 percent of GNP by 2002, on the way to ultimately reaching the UN target of 0.7 percent of GNP.

Within this expanded aid programme, the Irish Government has identified support for agriculture and food security as a priority sector. In furtherance of this, Irish Aid has been working to increase the support it provides to the agricultural sector, and to other food security supports, in its bilateral projects. At the multilateral level, Ireland is continuing its support to member institutes of the CGIAR, to IFAD, to WFP and of course, to FAO. Ireland also contributes to the food aid and food security programmes of the European Union.

NGOs also play a very important role in Ireland's international development aid effort. Like Irish Aid, they too have a strong focus on poverty and food security. The Irish Government has pledged itself to work closely with NGOs in the follow up process to the World Food Summit.

The Food Summit Plan of Action also underlined the central role of the international community and the UN System - in particular FAO, WFP and IFAD - in contributing to the achievement of food security. At this Conference, it is this aspect of the task with which we are most concerned.

Ireland has traditionally had a strong commitment to the United Nations and this remains the case today. The building of a strong and effective UN continues to form a key objective of Irish foreign policy.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has courageously accepted the challenge to address the need for reform and revitalization of the UN System. He has presented us with a considered, balanced and substantial package for United Nations reform. Ireland welcomes in particular the proposals for a more concerted effort on the economic and social development sector. We believe that the Secretary-General's proposals have the capacity to significantly strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations programmes and activities in the field of development cooperation. It is essential that they be implemented in full.

Our objective in seeking reform must not be about cost-cutting or reducing the role of the United Nations. On the contrary, we must aim to enhance the role of the UN by making it a vigorous, effective and well-organized instrument of international cooperation.

As efforts continue to further improve the effectiveness of the wider UN System we, the member nations of FAO, must dedicate ourselves to ensuring that this Organization receives the support it needs to be fully effective.

For more than 50 years FAO has served the international agricultural community in a variety of ways. In that time the Organization has demonstrated its usefulness, and the highly-skilled and dedicated staff of this Organization can be proud of their many achievements. In that time too the world has changed greatly, and the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors have not been immune to these changes. As the world changes, so do the demands on FAO. For this reason we believe that it is right that FAO should now seek to reassess its role, in the light of the conclusions of the World Food Summit and other international conferences, and within the context of the broader process of UN reform.

Ireland therefore warmly welcomes the development of the new planning process in the Organization. We believe that the development of a Strategic Framework for the Organization provides an ideal opportunity for the Member Nations, the management and staff of FAO, and other stakeholders to review the role of the Organization in the light of today's needs and those that we foresee as we enter the Twenty-first Century. The role of the Member Nations in developing this Framework is especially important, for it is we, the Members, who must ultimately decide what we want the Organization to do on our behalf.

The development of the new planning process should also assist the Organization to achieve the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out its agreed tasks. I am convinced that it will contribute greatly to the impact of the work of the Organization and to FAO's accountability to its Members.

All of this can only strengthen the Organization and keep it at the forefront of international efforts within its mandate.

I wish to end today by assuring the Director-General and staff of FAO of Ireland's continuing strong support for the Organization. Ireland is a major exporter of agricultural products, but we also have a sharp and clear historic memory of famine. We have known both sides of the food equation, so we are in no doubt about the importance of the task of this Organization. We look forward confidently to the building of a stronger FAO as we enter the next century.

Avito José DA SILVA (Guinée-Bissau) (Langue originale portugais)

C'est un grand honneur et un immense plaisir pour moi de participer à la 29^{ème} session de la Conférence de la FAO et de conduire la délégation de Guinée-Bissau.

Permettez-moi tout d'abord d'adresser mes félicitations à Monsieur le Directeur général de la FAO et à ses collaborateurs, au nom du Président de la République, son Excellence Monsieur João Bernardo Vieira et à mon nom propre, tant pour l'organisation parfaite du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation que pour les grands succès enregistrés sur tous les plans, notamment l'adoption de la Déclaration de Rome sur la sécurité alimentaire et le plan d'action du Sommet.

Notre gouvernement suit avec intérêt les efforts importants que la FAO déploie en vue d'aider les pays à respecter les engagements pris à Rome par les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement. A ce propos, je voudrais simplement insister sur la qualité technique des informations et des documents mis à la disposition des Etats, le Programme spécial de sécurité alimentaire qui a démarré dans plusieurs pays avec l'appui technique et financier de la FAO, les contacts et protocoles de coopération initiés par le Directeur général avec les institutions et organisations internationales aux fins de réaliser divers projets, tels que le développement de la coopération Sud-Sud et le TeleFood qui vise à susciter une vaste prise de conscience et à mobiliser des ressources.

Le rapport de la Conférence sur la situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture souligne que, parmi les régions en développement, la performance de l'Afrique pour la production végétale et animale est encourageante. En effet, celle-ci a augmenté de 7 pour cent. Cependant, ce rapport mentionne qu'au premier semestre de 1997, près de 29 pays ont eu besoin d'aide alimentaire exceptionnelle ou d'urgence à cause de pénuries, dont plus de la moitié en Afrique subsaharienne, bien que la production ait remonté dans plusieurs d'entre eux en 1996. En outre, il existe des millions de victimes de catastrophes naturelles ou provoquées par l'action de l'homme qui exigent encore un volume considérable de secours d'urgence.

En ce qui concerne la situation décrite, je voudrais m'associer aux autres délégations qui m'ont précédé pour inviter nos partenaires du développement bilatéral et multilatéral à agir afin de renverser la tendance générale de réduction de l'aide extérieure au secteur agricole.

Le besoin de corriger le déséquilibre du développement de la Guinée-Bissau a conduit mon gouvernement à prendre des mesures d'ajustement structurel avec l'appui des institutions de Bretton Woods.

C'est dans ce cadre de réformes économiques et financières que le gouvernement a adopté une lettre de politique de développement agricole visant à garantir la sécurité alimentaire pour lutter contre la pauvreté rurale.

Je voudrais vous demander de donner votre appui à notre lettre de politique de développement agricole, élaborée à partir du dialogue auquel ont pris part l'ensemble de nos partenaires du développement ainsi que le PNUD et la FAO, et qui est conforme à la Déclaration de Rome sur la sécurité alimentaire et le plan d'action du Sommet.

Ainsi, pour atteindre l'objectif de croissance supérieur à 4 pour cent du PIB réel, le gouvernement a décidé de concentrer son action sur un développement rural diversifié sans toutefois négliger la contribution importante de la pêche et des forêts. Parallèlement aux réformes structurelles et financières en cours (accélération des programmes de privatisation, réduction des effectifs de la fonction publique, lutte contre l'inflation et réduction de l'inflation, assainissement des finances publiques, réduction de la dette extérieure), cette action gouvernementale visera quatre objectifs prioritaires:

- garantir la sécurité alimentaire;
- augmenter et diversifier les exportations;
- assurer la gestion rationnelle et la préservation des ressources sylvicoles, agricoles et pastorales;

- améliorer le cadre de vie des populations rurales.

Ces objectifs émanent d'un engagement de tous les acteurs du développement, l'Etat, le secteur privé, les ONG, la société civile, les partenaires du développement, les agriculteurs, et d'une plus grande responsabilisation et participation des communautés rurales dans les actions de développement intégré.

Le Gouvernement de Guinée-Bissau a le devoir de lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire et la pauvreté en s'appuyant sur l'effort national. Cependant compte tenu de l'état de son économie et de ses finances, un soutien financier et technique s'avère nécessaire et indispensable pour atteindre des résultats significatifs à moyen terme.

En effet, la Guinée-Bissau dispose d'importantes ressources humaines -bien que peu qualifiées- de potentialités agricoles, de bonnes terres et de ressources hydriques qui, si elles sont exploitées rationnellement et rentablement, permettront d'atteindre les objectifs que nous nous sommes fixés. Par ailleurs, en tant que membre de l'Union économique monétaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (UEMOA), la Guinée-Bissau pourra élargir son espace économique. Malgré tout, la condition sine qua non de la mise en exploitation rentable de ces potentialités reste le renforcement des investissements dans l'agriculture.

Il est clair que les facteurs de développement durable, en tant qu'investissement dans les ressources humaines, grâce à l'éducation, la formation et la santé, et dans le développement de l'agriculture et la préservation de l'environnement, seront sérieusement compromis si le spectre de la dette extérieure persiste.

La communauté internationale devrait faire preuve de compréhension pour soit annuler purement et simplement notre dette ou alors la ré-échelonner, condition fondamentale pour la démocratie, la paix et le bien-être social de nos populations.

Une aide internationale programmée pour mon pays en vue de l'acquisition de moyens matériels et financiers est nécessaire pour que nous arrivions au développement agricole durable.

Mon Gouvernement a demandé à la FAO de lui apporter un soutien technique et financier pour mettre en oeuvre un Programme spécial de sécurité alimentaire.

Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour remercier le Directeur général de la FAO de l'envoi d'une mission qui a séjourné du 23 septembre au 2 octobre 1997 dans mon pays, et je souhaiterais demander que les activités de ce programme constituent une priorité dans le cadre de la stratégie de la lettre de politique de développement agricole et que ces idées puissent voir le jour très prochainement.

La Guinée-Bissau, pour sa part, ne ménagera aucun effort pour assurer le développement durable de l'agriculture afin d'atteindre son objectif de sécurité et d'autonomie alimentaires.

Je saisis cette occasion pour informer et inviter Monsieur le Directeur général de la FAO et l'ensemble des partenaires de la Guinée-Bissau à participer à la Consultation sectorielle sur l'agriculture que mon pays organisera au début de l'année 1998 et qu'il fera précéder d'un atelier qui se tiendra ce mois-ci.

Permettez-moi avant de terminer de réaffirmer notre reconnaissance à la FAO, de même qu'aux autres partenaires du développement, pour leur importante contribution à la mise en oeuvre de la Déclaration de Rome et au Plan d'action du Sommet.

Je voudrais également exprimer mes hommages à M Jacques Diouf, Directeur général de la FAO, pour les efforts qu'il déploie à la tête de notre Organisation.

Je souhaite plein succès à la 29ème session de la Conférence.

Ms Halima MOHAMMED (Ethiopia)

I am greatly honoured to have this opportunity to address this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference on behalf of the Government and people of Ethiopia.

I hope you all share my view that mankind to survive on our planet spare little effort to meet his basic needs, of which securing food is the prime. Yet there has not been a time when all people, irrespective of their location in the globe, were food secure in the strict sense of the meaning of food security. To meet the common desire of eradicating hunger and malnutrition, governments continue to accord it high priority in their development plans, while members of relevant international organizations convene conferences and seminars and pass resolutions.

To implement the decisions resources were mobilized and assistance was given. If we take the 1974 Conference, certainly it had contributed to improving the life of the rural poor. Yet there are still more than 800 million people who are undernourished. It was against this background that the one year-old World Food Summit was convened. The objective of the Summit was to increase awareness at the highest level. Despite adequate global food production, poverty still causes food insecurity. Lack of sustainable supply, access and income also continue to hamper food insecurity, and this is very common in many parts of developing countries, especially in Africa, south of the Sahara.

It is to be recalled that many governments attended the Summit. The Summit was successful in achieving a consensus by Members to renew their political commitment. The Rome Declaration and the Plan of Action were adopted. The Plan set a medium-term objective of reducing by half the number of undernourished people by the year 2015.

The Summit has given the impetus for concerted action by all actors to work towards global food security. It is also a good sign that recently global production has increased. However, many Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries suffer from inadequate production and the capacity to import. In this connection it is worth noting that out of the 29 countries facing food shortages worldwide, half are in Africa. Therefore, this continent remains one of the most food-insecure regions, largely due to irregular weather conditions and man-made disasters.

These countries need emergency food assistance. This is an immediate concern, especially given the fact that global food stocks are below the minimum level to safeguard food security and external assistance to agriculture is on the decline. These constraints are also opportunities and encourage us to live up to our commitments to achieve food security.

We in Ethiopia are committed to food security and are aware that national governments have prime responsibilities in implementing the Plan of Action and have an active role in the follow-up to the Summit. However, it must be clear at the outset that only domestic efforts by national governments are not enough, and cooperation and collaboration from the international community in terms of technical and financial assistance is also desirable.

Ethiopia is predominantly an agricultural country; the smallholder constitutes the large majority of farmers, and my Government attaches great importance to this sector of the economy. Development strategy focuses on agricultural development-led industrialization. The Government has liberalized the economy and the policy environment is favourable for the smallholder and the private sector. Domestic food and agricultural production is encouraged with a view to eradicating hunger and malnutrition. Food self-sufficiency in the short run and ultimately household food security, are accorded the highest priority in the long run. An effective extension system is in place where farmers have access to productive inputs in a package.

Production has significantly increased and the economy has been growing at the rate of more than 7 percent per annum for the last five years. However, as Ethiopia's food production depends solely on traditional rainfed agriculture. The adequacy and timeliness of rain is a determining factor in the level of production. For instance, we had a bumper harvest in the 1995-96 crop season and this was largely due to good weather conditions. Short and long rains in 1997, however, were inadequate and irregular. The fall of short rains has significantly affected the production level, particularly for those farmers whose food source is from short rains. The

changing weather conditions triggered by *El Niño* has also affected the main agricultural production season for 1997, both at the growing and harvest period. Last week's untimely heavy rain flooded the south-eastern part of the country.

In this connection, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission, in cooperation with donors and United Nations agencies, is trying to contain the emergency situation. In this regard my Delegation extends sincere thanks to all donors and Agencies that extend their assistance and to those who have made their pledges.

Despite immense agricultural potential, Ethiopia has not so far attained sustainable food self-sufficiency, simply because rainfed Ethiopian agriculture under unreliable weather conditions results in varying production levels. It has become increasingly clear that precarious rainfed agriculture cannot support the food need of its growing population. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that the present production system be supplemented by small-scale irrigation.

Water as a critical element in increasing production and productivity is something that is advocated these days. In this spirit the need for water control and management is emphasized for sustainable food security by many proponents, of which the Director-General is one, and this perception is also close to the policy direction of my Government.

We appreciate the Director-General's efforts in initiating the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) in Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries, as well as EMPRES.

Under the SPFS, Ethiopia was one of the few countries selected for the pilot phase. A demonstration on rainfed agriculture in 1995 was successful. In this context, I am glad to report that yields in the demonstration area have more than doubled. The pilot phase is also being reoriented to the demonstration of improved small-scale irrigation techniques.

Increase in food production also needs intervention in the area of the conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity. In this context, Ethiopia as one of the centres of biodiversity wishes to see that the Leipzig Plan of Action be translated into deeds and that the negotiation of the International Undertaking be pursued.

We would also like to acknowledge the cooperation between the International Atomic Energy Agency and FAO in the eradication of trypanosomiasis, which affects production through its adverse effect on cattle and farmers. We wish the Programme to be strengthened to completely eliminate the disease.

In the face of increasing demand for the services of the Organization by Member Nations, and the task with which the Organization is charged, FAO needs an adequate resource base. I would therefore like to reiterate that the zero real growth option is the optimum level for FAO to effectively operate. In this regard, we strongly support the budget at this level.

Ethiopia has been closely following the restructuring, decentralization, efficiency and savings measures that FAO has been undertaking. While streamlining the Organization for efficiency and effectiveness is desirable in principle, it is important to be aware that the results of such measures should ensure benefit to the farmers in the field.

Last but not least, we congratulate Kazakhstan for joining the Organization.

Thank you for kind attention.

Algirdas ZEMAITIS (Lithuania)

I join all the other previous speakers in congratulations and compliments to all those concerned.

The term "Countries in Transition" was coined to apply to states evolving their structures from centralized to free market economies. I believe that for many of us this period, both economically and politically, is gradually coming to a close. Of course, like all countries and like FAO, all of us are in "transition" to adjust our structures to meet the needs not only of our own populations,

but also to improve the access to food for millions of people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and to stimulate incentives to increase food production.

Since restoration of independence in 1990, Lithuania has made substantial progress in adjusting its economic and political structures to European standards. However, notwithstanding rapid industrialization and development of service sectors, Lithuania remains an agricultural country. Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of our economy. Approximately 51 percent of Lithuania's total area is used for agricultural purposes. It provides some 24 percent of local employment and supports a relatively large food processing industry, where we continue to face many problems: increase of agricultural production through introduction of modern technology, development of export markets, etc. Our objective is the creation of cooperative farms, which for the most part will be from 30 to 150 hectares. These problems and objectives will be discussed in greater detail at the next FAO Regional Conference for Europe and other sub-regional forums.

The strategy of Lithuanian foreign policy is based upon the following elements: firstly, to maintain pragmatic and cordial bilateral relations in commerce and other fields with neighbouring and other states; secondly, to expand regional cooperation; thirdly, and most important, to join the European and transatlantic economic, political, security and defence structures. In recent years, we have settled border issues with our neighbours, eliminated minority problems, and have had strong and stable, democratically-elected governments. After all, without political stability it is difficult to achieve economic progress.

As mentioned before, our agriculture continues to face many difficulties, particularly in adjusting our legislation and standards to European requirements. In this area, FAO assistance has been invaluable and we will continue to rely on its support through advice and projects.

FAO has a wealth of data, knowledge, experience and a great reputation as a neutral world organization. Among its many tasks are the establishment of standards and providing advice and information for the solution of global and regional agricultural and food problems. However, in order to accomplish all these tasks, it must be given adequate financial means. With unselfish cooperation from the world community and FAO's assistance, we can hope to begin the Twenty-first Century, with hunger and malnutrition drastically reduced.

Aleke K. BANDA (Malawi)

I am very pleased to participate in this important Conference. As a newcomer to this forum, it has given me the opportunity to be acquainted with many distinguished delegates from every corner of the world. Mr Chairman, I also wish to convey to you best wishes from my President, His Excellency Dr. Elson Bakili Muluzi, who attaches great importance to this Organization because of the crucial role it plays with regard to the issues of food and agriculture. Mr Chairman, I wish to join my fellow delegates in congratulating you for being elected to the High Office of Chairman of this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference, and wish you all the success in guiding its deliberations.

Malawi was privileged and proud to play host to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, Dr. Diouf, when he visited Southern Africa earlier this year. This visit, coming so soon after the highly successful World Food Summit in November 1996, rekindled our commitment to reduce by half the number of people in Malawi suffering from hunger and malnutrition by the year 2015.

As you may be aware, Mr Chairman, agriculture is so vital to Malawi's economy that its growth is entirely dependent on increased crop and livestock production. For example, in 1995 and 1996, Malawi registered 10 percent and 7 percent growth rates, respectively, as a result of increased agricultural production. However, it is difficult to maintain steady growth rates because of the various problems which the agricultural sector faces such as dependency on unreliable rainfed agriculture, limited availability of farm inputs to farmers, pests and disease infestation of crops and livestock and poor agricultural infrastructure. In order to address these problems, the Government has adopted a comprehensive set of policy reforms.

As a result of these policy reforms as well as favourable climatic conditions, Malawi was able to produce all her staple food requirements in the 1995-96 season. However, in the 1996-97 season Malawi was only able to produce about 90 percent of its two million metric tons of staple food requirements due to the effects of drought in one part of the country, and excessive rains in the other. It is against this background that Malawi attaches great importance to the Rome Declaration and the World Food Summit Plan of Action endorsed by the Heads of State and Government in November 1996.

In this regard, Malawi is further pleased to inform you that the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) is being formulated and start-up actions will commence in the 1997-98 season. The philosophy of this Programme, which is to increase agricultural productivity, is in line with the policies of the Malawi Government. Activities under this Programme will include the intensification of irrigation, provision of diversified sources of farm inputs, such as fertilizers and seeds, and intensive campaigns by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the President, Members of Parliament, traditional leaders and other civic leaders to stimulate greater productivity throughout the country.

On the question of irrigation, Malawi is committed to irrigation development because the country has vast water resources in the form of lakes, rivers and underground reservoirs. We intend to develop the full potential of irrigation in order to lessen our dependence on rains. It is expected that, by the year 2004, about half of the country's potential irrigable land will have been developed for irrigation and the increased yields will reduce the current household food insecurity.

I wish to take this opportunity to ask our cooperating partners to assist us with both financial and technical assistance to enable us to achieve our goals of food security and poverty alleviation. In this regard, I wish to state that Malawi strongly believes in South-South cooperation in addition to the assistance we are getting from the developed nations. For example, some of our neighbours, such as Zimbabwe and South Africa, are more developed in irrigation methods and dam construction than we are. We would hope that we can look to them for assistance as well. Further North to us we know that there are countries where it hardly rains such as the Sudan, Egypt and Israel. We hope that we can learn from them how they survive in the midst of such conditions. We were very pleased to hear earlier today the statement from Malaysia where they mentioned that they were assisting one of our sister countries with their irrigation. Malawi looks to you, those of you who are from the South, but who have the expertise to give us that help.

Malawi has studied with great interest the FAO Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium, and has noted with concern that some activities will not be implemented if the budget is to be below the zero nominal growth level. This Conference should avoid adopting strategies that will impede the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. In this regard, and having considered the two budget options, Malawi wishes to inform you that it supports the zero real growth budget level.

I would like to congratulate the FAO Director-General for embarking on cost-cutting measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization. This will, in the end, release resources that can be used to promote the goals of the World Food Summit.

Malawi further commends the FAO Council and its several subsidiary bodies in their effort to standardize some aspects of food and agricultural production such as the Pest Surveillance and Export Certification System. The Committee of Experts on Phytosanitary Measures has done a commendable job in drafting two standards which this Conference is expected to approve. Compliance with these standards by all Member Nations at international, regional and sub-regional level will enhance agricultural development. These standards are particularly important for a country's liberalized economy like my country's and I would like to inform the Conference that Malawi will cooperate accordingly with all its partners in this endeavour.

The plight of countries that fall within the reach of migratory pests, such as locusts, is an issue of paramount importance to us. Malawi, as the current Chairman of the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa, would like to urge Member Nations of FAO to consider how the Region can best be supported to minimize the danger from these pests. Since dealing with migratory pests requires cooperation among neighbouring countries, coordinated control measures are more effective than individual national efforts. We hope that through FAO and this Conference, this can be strengthened.

Lastly, I would like to state that Malawi has high hopes for this Conference because of the role it will play in formulating a foundation for the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. This will help ensure that what our Heads of State endorsed last year comes to fruition. It is Malawi's hope, therefore, that this Conference speeds up the progress being made towards achieving the goals of the Summit. Malawi looks forward to contributing to the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action.

Paul Bandoma, Vice-Chairman of the Conference, took the chair

Paul Bandoma, Vice-Président de la Conférence, assume la présidence

Ocupa la presidencia Paul Bandoma, Vicepresidente de la Conferencia

LE PRESIDENT

Je profite de cette occasion pour remercier sincèrement tous les membres présents pour m'avoir élu à ce poste de vice-président.

Gilberto ARAYA SOTO (Costa Rica)

En la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, Costa Rica reafirmó el derecho de los seres humanos a tener acceso a alimentos sanos y nutritivos. A la vez apoyó la consagración de la voluntad política de los gobiernos al logro de la seguridad alimentaria de todos los pueblos del mundo, especialmente los que son castigados por los problemas del hambre y la desnutrición.

La seguridad alimentaria y el combate a la pobreza son elementos fundamentales del Plan Nacional de Acción que presentó nuestro país ante la Cumbre. Allí se expresan los compromisos que Costa Rica ha adquirido para garantizar el acceso permanente, estable y oportuno de su población, a los bienes alimentarios.

En Costa Rica, la pobreza es un fenómeno que afecta más a la población del área rural, donde se aloja poco más del 45 por ciento de la población total del país, y afecta alrededor de un 28 por ciento de sus familias. Para encarar esta situación, el actual Gobierno ha puesto en marcha, desde mediados de 1994, el Plan Nacional de Combate a la Pobreza, el Plan Nacional para la Igualdad de Oportunidades entre Hombres y Mujeres y el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Pesquero.

El Plan Nacional de Combate a la Pobreza desarrolla iniciativas orientadas hacia la generación e incremento de los ingresos de los sectores más pobres, y su acceso a la salud, educación y capacitación, con el fin de favorecer su inserción en el mercado laboral. Sobre todo, conjuga acciones del sector público y la sociedad civil para combatir los problemas de pobreza que guardan estrecha relación con la seguridad alimentaria de las familias del área rural, sobre todo de los sectores más vulnerables y en estado de exclusión social.

El Plan Nacional para la Igualdad de Oportunidades entre Hombres y Mujeres incorpora a las mujeres del área rural en condiciones de pobreza, sobre todo a las jefas de hogar, a proyectos productivos sostenibles, generadores de ingresos. Muchos de éstos se desarrollan, además, en el marco del concepto de equidad de género.

El Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Pesquero ha sido concebido y puesto en ejecución para mejorar las condiciones de vida de los pescadores y sus familias, procurándoles acceso al empleo y participación en la actividad rentable que además permite darle un aprovechamiento racional al recurso pesquero y a aumentar la disponibilidad de los productos marinos y de acuicultura.

Las instituciones del sector agropecuario han trabajado intensamente durante el período 1996-97 en programas y proyectos especiales de asistencia social, para extraer de la pobreza a los agricultores con ingresos por debajo del costo de la canasta básica alimentaria familiar. Con este propósito se ha realizado una alianza entre el sector agropecuario, el sector social y la sociedad civil, para que los proyectos de carácter asistencialista del sector social cumplan con los objetivos y que además, sean proyectos sostenibles que contribuyan a sacar de su condición de pobreza a las familias del área rural.

Los proyectos más importantes de esta estrategia, son el de apoyo específico en insumos agrícolas, semillas, herramientas y fertilizantes, y el económico para la compra de la canasta alimentaria básica. Y, dentro del Plan de Reconversión Productiva, en lo que respecta a la seguridad alimentaria, se impulsan los proyectos de: Procesamiento y Comercialización de Lácteos, Planta de Embutidos de Cerdos, Centro Mayorista Hortícola, Producción y Exportación del Plátano, Cooperativa Nacional de Suministros Agropecuarios, Centro de Acopio para la Cebolla, Agroindustria de Palma Aceitera, diversos proyectos en palmito, raíces, tubérculos, piña y cítricos y, el Proyecto de Desarrollo Rural y Proinfancia. Este último proyecto proporciona atención alimentaria a más de 3.000 niños que sufren algún grado de desnutrición y establece un modelo de vigilancia nutricional. Capacita en producción de alimentos a 77 organizaciones, a 200 agricultores en producción orgánica de alimentos y brinda atención médica a 12.000 familias.

A la vez, Costa Rica se ha comprometido con una estrategia de desarrollo en armonía con la naturaleza y ha elevado a rango constitucional el derecho a un ambiente sano. Nuestra estrategia de seguridad alimentaria pone énfasis en el pequeño productor agrícola para garantizar su acceso y el de sus familias a los bienes alimentarios que requiere el desarrollo propio y el del entorno en que vive. Nos satisfacen los resultados de la ejecución de nuestro Plan de Acción de la Seguridad Alimentaria, aunque nos mantenemos vigilantes de su impacto y de sus logros. Aún padecen carencias alimentarias algunos sectores de nuestra población. No descansaremos hasta llevarlas a su mínima expresión en el próximo decenio. Sólo colocando el logro de la seguridad alimentaria en el primer lugar de la voluntad de nuestros gobernantes podremos arrancar del hambre y la desnutrición a quienes padecen pobreza. La meta de la seguridad podrá ser alcanzada cuando se unan los esfuerzos de los países para combatirla en sus mismas estructuras.

Vidal CHONI BEKOBÁ (Guinea Ecuatorial)

Al tener el privilegio de tomar la palabra en este vigésimo noveno período de sesiones de la FAO en nombre del Gobierno de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial, de la delegación que me acompaña y en el mío propio, permítame expresar a Vuestra Excelencia, nuestras más sinceras y efusivas felicitaciones por la acertada elección y por la manera tan brillante con que están desarrollándose estos debates de esta Conferencia, ardua labor, en la que le auguramos plenos éxitos. Hago extensivas estas felicitaciones a los demás miembros de la Mesa y a la República de Kazajstán por su admisión en el seno de esta gran familia que conforma la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación.

Nuestras más profundas felicitaciones al señor Jacques Diouf, Director General, por la enorme labor y acertada política de reformas que está llevando a cabo al frente de la FAO para hacerla más eficaz y eficiente en su vasto programa de acciones encaminadas a paliar el espectro del hambre y la malnutrición todavía latentes en el mundo.

Señor Presidente, para nuestra delegación, este período de sesiones, el primero que se celebra después de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, reviste una importancia capital en cuanto que debe permitirnos vislumbrar una luz esperanzadora que concretice los compromisos asumidos entonces, para la concretización de la mayor concienciación sobre la necesidad de una mayor ayuda para aliviar la pobreza, el gran peso de la deuda, el hambre y la malnutrición en los países en vías de desarrollo en general y en los menos avanzados y con déficit alimentario en particular. Uno de los instrumentos para la consecución de los dos últimos objetivos antes mencionados cuales son el hambre y la malnutrición es dotando a la FAO de los medios

económicos y financieros necesarios que le permitan llevar a cabo las tareas que le asignamos; esto es, aprobando y adoptando el Proyecto de Presupuesto elaborado por la Organización y sometido a este período de sesiones.

Entre las mayores acciones que ha diseñado la FAO en el umbral del siglo XXI está el Programa Especial para la Seguridad Alimentaria. Al llamamiento hecho por el Director General durante su gira por varios países, entre ellos el nuestro, a comienzos de este año, el Gobierno de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial -además de haber hecho recientemente un gesto substancial en el pago de sus contribuciones- ha respondido a este llamamiento de implementación del Programa Especial para la Seguridad Alimentaria, emprendiendo en lo que va de este año, una serie de acciones para situarse en un marco adecuado que le permita hacer frente al desafío del desarrollo económico, a saber: la celebración de una Mesa Redonda, a comienzos de este año entre el gobierno y todos los partidos políticos legalizados en el país, para evaluar los Acuerdos del Pacto Nacional firmado en marzo de 1993, la organización y celebración en el pasado mes de septiembre de una Conferencia Nacional Económica con la participación del Gobierno, Parlamento, Poder Judicial, partidos políticos, confesiones religiosas, organizaciones no gubernamentales, sector empresarial privado y de participación del Estado, representantes de países donantes y de las organizaciones de cooperación multilateral, en la que los sectores agropecuario, pesca y forestal ocuparon un lugar privilegiado, dándose énfasis en la potenciación del Instituto Nacional de Promoción Agropecuaria, la formulación de los componentes del Programa Especial para la Seguridad Alimentaria, el manejo racional y ordenado de los recursos forestales para la conservación de sus ecosistemas y la necesidad de un mayor control de las actividades de la pesca para una explotación sostenible de sus recursos.

Todas estas acciones, Honorables señoras y señores delegados no podrían llevarse a cabo sin el concurso de la ayuda internacional bilateral y multilateral. Por eso, concluyo esta intervención, señor Presidente, agradeciendo al Director General de la FAO y a todo su equipo por el apoyo que nos ha brindado para el diseño de estos programas que ahora necesitan ser materializados y para lo cual seguimos y seguiremos necesitando la ayuda de la FAO y de las demás instituciones de ayuda bilateral y multilateral.

Agradecemos al Gobierno y al pueblo italiano por la excelente acogida y hospitalidad que se nos reserva en esta histórica y hermosa ciudad de Roma y animamos al señor Director General y a todo su personal de la FAO a seguir adelante con coraje en esta ardua labor.

Bakur GULUA (Georgia) (Original language Georgian)

On behalf of the Georgian Government, I would like to welcome the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and underscore with deep satisfaction the period from the last Conference, which was very fruitful for all of us. It is worth noting that during this period the relations between Georgia and FAO have entered a new phase and clear evidence of this is in the current position of Georgia within the Organization.

The election of Georgia as Chairman of the FAO European Region Group was a significant event in the relatively short history of relations between the two parties. On behalf of the Georgian Government, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the European Region countries for their kind trust and support. Presiding the European Region Group has been considered as a great responsibility and honour for our country, and it was substantially reflected in the Government's decision to increase the staff of the Permanent Representation of Georgia to FAO in order to facilitate the effective undertaking of this task.

It seems to me premature to evaluate the results of the chairmanship, but Georgia has made its modest contribution in the achievement of the consolidated position of the European Region on a number of pending issues. We hope that the ability of Georgia to implement common initiatives, as well to seek the most appropriate ways and means for realizing FAO's overall goals and objectives will be properly assessed and corresponding conclusions reached. With a view to contributing even more substantially to further facilitating FAO's work, Georgia decided to apply

for membership in the FAO Council. However, wishing to sustain the solidarity and atmosphere of harmony within the Region, Georgia now withdraws its candidature. Moreover, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all countries for supporting Georgia's candidacy for the Council.

As you are aware, the demise of the centralized economy in the former Soviet Union, as well as in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was a significant event. A number of these countries are at an early stage of transition, and are undergoing deep social and economic crises.

In this regard, Georgia is no exception. Nowadays Georgia is facing a critical problem of food insecurity, 800 000 people are below the poverty line, and the situation is aggravated because of 300 000 internally displaced persons who have to undertake a hard struggle for survival in their own country. For this reason, food self-sufficiency is considered as one of the highest priorities of Georgia's domestic policy.

It is clear that FAO has to play a critical role in solving these problems. Recently, Georgia has joined the list of 15 countries where the implementation of the Special Programme for Food Security is taking place. The National Programme Document has already been prepared with the significant involvement of FAO experts, and we hope that implementation of the Pilot Phase will start in the near future.

Additionally, I would like to draw the attention of the Conference to the fact that due to the lack of information on the problems of food security and food production in the former Soviet Union countries, particularly in the countries of the Caucasian Region, FAO is often unaware of their existence. Therefore, it seems crucial to establish the post of FAO Representative in order to strengthen our relations and to ensure effective implementation of FAO programmes and projects in the Region.

I would also like to extend to the Conference some views on FAO's Programme of Work and Budget for the coming biennium. While the World Food Summit was held midway during the implementation of the current Programme of Work and Budget, the next biennium should see FAO becoming fully active, together with a broad range of partners in assisting Member Nations to achieve the Summit's commitments. In the section "Programme Framework", the zero real growth proposals embody continuation of well-established priorities: in the first instance, in those areas where the Member Nations look to the normative impact or lead role of FAO; secondly, in other substantive areas of undisputed relevance to the Organization's mandate or to countries' requirements such as the early warning of food shortages, aquaculture expansion and forestry conservation and management; and finally, in the active involvement of FAO in country-level action in terms of policy advice, investment support and field operations. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned aspects, I would like to envisage an FAO budget that ensures the effective performance of the Organization in the indicated areas, and expands the Technical Cooperation Programmes to countries in transition.

In the context of my country, Georgia still needs considerable assistance to overcome its economic crisis in its efforts towards achieving democracy and prosperity. Georgia stands ready to expand and strengthen the bilateral, as well as multilateral relations with the above-mentioned parties.

I would like to mention with deep gratitude the projects implemented within the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation, signed on 15 May 1997 by the President of Georgia, Mr Eduard Shevardnadze, and the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, which covers the different sectors of agriculture.

Agriculture and food production should play a critical role in the process of overall recovery of the Georgian economy, as it acts as a catalyst for other sectors. The primary role of agriculture includes achievement of food security in the short term, which means eradicating hunger and ensuring equal access of all to nutritious and safe food. In the medium and long-term we consider

it important to promote the export of agricultural products, which will broadly contribute to the rapid macroeconomic stabilization of the country, by stimulating production and creating employment opportunities. There is no doubt that the relevant political and economic reforms being implemented in Georgia, as well as in other newly independent countries, will ensure effective utilization of internal resources, economic growth, employment and increased food security. According to FAO estimates, these countries could become major exporters of agricultural products by the year 2010. Our traditional products such as tea, citrus fruit, wine, other alcoholic beverages, fruit, vegetables and mineral waters, should find their place on the international markets.

The Georgian Government sincerely recognizes the importance of the achievement of food security that is directly linked to food protection and hygiene, as well as to adequate water supplies. Notwithstanding the sufficient quantity of drinking water existing in the world, many countries experience a deficit of water for human consumption due to its unequal distribution. It is widely known that nowadays there are more than 800 million undernourished people existing in the world, and approximately 2.5 billion people face the problem of thirst. In the period of 1995-96, diseases caused by the consumption of poor drinking water (cholera, dysentery etc.) affected approximately 2 billion people, and approximately 5 million children died. This situation is unacceptable. These problems have disastrous consequences for the developing countries. On the other hand, the scientific and technical progress currently taking place, and the overall growth in population and production will obviously increase the demand for water in the future. It is anticipated that in the Twenty-First Century, about fifty percent of the world's population will suffer from lack of drinking water.

We would like to stress that apart from the issues related to food security, which are being strongly addressed by FAO, the issues of so called "Water Security" need to be properly raised and considered. As a preliminary proposal we would envisage the following steps being taken: ensure sustainable development of the drinking water supply world-wide; promote increased investment in areas related to water distribution, quality management and control; provide support to the development of marketing and information systems and implement measures against existing monopolies in order to promote free trade policies for drinking water.

I would like to propose the creation of a specialised working group which would bring together all interested parties. Nowadays elimination of hunger throughout the world is a sound guarantee for peace.

Derek Andre HANEKOM (South Africa)

A year ago, my Government signed and committed itself to the World Food Summit Declaration. In particular, we welcomed the commitment to regard access to adequate food as a right, as we have already enshrined in our own new constitution. We fully endorse the obligation put upon national governments to implement a Plan of Action to give effect to the declaration of intent to eradicate world hunger.

Furthermore, we strongly support the consensus on food security reached by both governments and NGOs in Rome last year. This was that food insecurity is primarily a consequence of prevailing poverty and distributional inequalities, and that the root causes of such insecurity and vulnerability must be addressed alongside the technical challenges of producing more food.

In South Africa, we have food self-sufficiency at the national level, but between 11 and 17 million people throughout the country, both in urban and rural areas, have insecure access to food and inadequate calorie intake. We are a Middle-Income Country but, as a legacy of apartheid, we still have the nutritional and health statistics of a Low-Income Food-Deficit country. This must change.

We have begun the task by identifying much more precisely where poverty and food insecurity exists within South Africa and which groups of the population are most vulnerable. On the basis

of this information, we are designing a comprehensive approach to reducing and finally eradicating food insecurity. My Ministry, which is responsible for agriculture and land affairs, has been given specific responsibility for a National Food Security Policy, and we are preparing a draft document which we shall shortly distribute for wider consultation.

We are paying particular attention to policy measures which influence the level and reliability of income among poorer households. South Africa is unusual in that, among rural households, income for agricultural production and labour is often lower than income from remittances and social welfare payments and pensions. Raising incomes from agriculture is therefore a high priority for my Ministry so that we can fully support other Ministries (such as those responsible for Public Works, Health and Social Welfare) in working towards our goal of adequate, safe and nutritious food, accessible and affordable to all.

We are pursuing this food security objective in an environment of major policy reforms in the agricultural sector as a whole. These reforms are designed to increase the international competitiveness of our farmers, expand the number of farmers producing for the market (particularly among those previously discriminated against) and, overall, increase the contribution of agriculture to growth, employment and redistribution.

From a growth point of view, we are already seeing evidence of the success of our policies to remove market distortions and stimulate competitiveness. At the national level, we have ended state-supported marketing monopolies and signalled the end of financial subsidies which encouraged inefficient and inappropriate farm practices.

At the international level, we have been at the forefront of tariff reduction and subsidy removal. In our trade negotiations, we have consistently sought agreements to lower agricultural tariffs and quotas, and to access currently-protected markets. We have been critical, however, of disguised protectionism, through misuse of phyto- and zoo-sanitary measures for example, and we intend to be active in the World Trade Organization to ensure that our farmers do not suffer unfair discrimination.

Nonetheless, we have major challenges ahead. Our small-scale farm sector produces only 7 percent of recorded output, and it is urgent that we provide appropriate services and support to what we term the "emergent" in South Africa. Although land reform is a major programme of our Government, so far only a small percentage of agricultural land is currently in the process of being transferred to those previously excluded from ownership. Furthermore, we remain principally a semi-arid country, vulnerable to drought, with relatively limited further potential for irrigated agriculture.

But agriculture, outside the modern commercial sector, is starting from a low technological base without effective support structures or strong research backing. The potential contribution of the small-scale sector to growth and employment, and foreign exchange earnings for that matter, is substantial. Realizing this potential is a major objective of my Ministry.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Director-General in Pretoria recently when agreement was reached on the establishment of the FAO Country Office in South Africa for the first time. Over the past few years, we have had a steadily expanding relationship with the FAO and received valuable technical support in areas such as restructuring of parastatal institutions, rural finance, food security policy and water legislation.

We hope this relationship will expand further in the years ahead. South Africa attaches considerable importance to the contribution that the FAO can make to agriculture, and rural development generally, throughout Africa. If anything, the need for a strong and active FAO is greater than ever as the global challenges confronting the management of natural resources increases. My Government particularly values the work FAO has been undertaking over the past two years in important fields such as global information and early warning, in the conservation of plant genetic resources and in the responsible management of fish stocks.

It is because of the importance we attach to the work of FAO that my Government would like to see real terms growth in the financial resources available to the Organization. I recognize that a number of delegations have expressed some difficulty with this but I would hope that, at the meetings here in Rome on the 1998-99 Programme of Work and Budget, we can move speedily to accepting, at the very least, that the current budget - in real terms - should be maintained.

Anything less is bound to put in jeopardy the achievements of FAO over the recent years in both its internal organization and its external contribution to resolving the formidable environmental and technical problems confronting agriculture and, in particular, in the formidable challenge to those working in agriculture to reduce, and finally eradicate, widespread poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Such a position reflects a responsible, long-term approach to investing in food security.

I hereby once again confirm my Government's support to FAO. My delegation looks forward to working with our colleagues at this Conference to give guidance to FAO as it faces the enormous challenges which lie ahead.

Mrs A. ZWOLINSKA (Poland) (Original language Polish)

It gives me particular pleasure to address you on our national holiday. The Polish Government associates itself with the reforms and positive changes introduced in FAO's work in recent years. We express our appreciation to Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, for his valuable contribution to this process. We are convinced that this session of the Conference will further consolidate these achievements.

FAO should retain its important role for the international community. Despite remarkable progress made in world agriculture and food, the scale of global problems has not been reduced. Even now hundreds of millions of people still suffer from famine. FAO's first and foremost duty is to overcome this challenge of the present world. Thanks to the World Food Summit and its Plan of Action, a new impetus has been given to such strivings. Poland supports these noble activities. Within the framework of our development policy, we intend to step up efforts in this struggle against hunger and malnutrition in the world. We shall continue to give high priority to programmes and projects related to world food security, both in FAO and in national strategies.

Central and Eastern Europe as a whole is not threatened with hunger. However, political and economic transformations designed to create an open market-oriented economy entail numerous difficulties in the medium term. They include, *inter alia*, undernourishment and distortion in feeding habits of social groups in several countries, some of them being classified as Low Income Food Deficit Countries. To eliminate this, FAO cannot be indifferent to such developments. It should actively support the transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. This Region has great and increasing potential for the world's food security. By developing new agricultural systems and the food economy, it will contribute more to global food security, commensurate with the pace of reforms. We fully agree that the developing countries should be given top priority in FAO's Programme of Work and Budget. However, the issues of Central and Eastern Europe should also be reflected. While this would involve no extra cost for the Organization, positive feedback effects could be expected within a relatively short period of time. FAO can achieve much more by disseminating the experience of developed countries, as well as countries in transition. This is possibly the least costly form of FAO's activities.

Therefore, we appreciate very much the idea of FAO's Sub-regional office operations in Central and Eastern Europe. We hope that the building up of this office's potential will be accelerated so that its advisory and operational activities are fully developed soon. FAO can initiate new undertakings and cooperate with other international organizations active in this region, particularly in the framework of the European Union's programmes and in harmony with OECD activities.

Poland has given proof of its active support for such cooperation by recently organizing three important international meetings on the reform of the agricultural market system in which Ministers of Agriculture, other politicians, as well as experts dealing with agriculture, took part.

Reforms carried out in Poland affect the structure and technologies of production, focusing however on ownership structure, agrarian structures, as well as on the legal, economic and institutional system in agriculture and agricultural environment.

It should be pointed out that thanks to privatization, the effectiveness of the food economy has improved significantly and the conditions for healthy nutritional habits in society have improved. The agrarian structure is improving and the number of specialist farms is increasing. Food is being processed to a much larger extent, and the links of our economy with the world market are three times greater than earlier. Poland's trade with the developing countries is growing, and we would like to become an important trading partner with these countries.

There has been great interest in the results obtained in Poland, in particular in the countries that have introduced reforms later or are about to begin reforms. Poland adopted and reaffirms here the principle of sharing with others its achievements and experience relating to reforms, especially those introduced with the assistance of the European Union, OECD, international foundations, World Bank and particular countries.

Poland is in favour of a meaningful, well-balanced and targeted FAO Programme of Work, backed up by an adequate budget.

I should like to bring to your attention that Poland submitted its candidature for the FAO Council. We would greatly appreciate your support in the elections. If elected, we intend to make a constructive contribution to the decision-making process of the Organization, and participate actively in its future work.

Sra Vilma HERNANDEZ DE CALDERON (El Salvador)

Reciba usted, señor Presidente, la felicitación de mi delegación por su nombramiento para dirigir los trabajos de este período de sesiones de la Conferencia. Estamos convencidos de que su reconocida experiencia y habilidad, nos permitirán lograr los objetivos que nos hemos trazado.

Nos agrada expresar un cordial saludo del Gobierno salvadoreño al Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director General de la FAO. Le reiteramos nuestras felicitaciones por la excelente labor realizada y por el éxito de esta Organización, así como el apoyo a su gestión.

La delegación de El Salvador desea dar su más cordial bienvenida a esta Organización a un nuevo Estado Miembro, cuya presencia reforzará aún más el importante trabajo que la FAO desempeña.

Señor Presidente, en forma muy breve, permítame indicarle los esfuerzos que el Gobierno de El Salvador está realizando para alcanzar la seguridad alimentaria y elevar los niveles nutricionales de la población en general. A pesar de los importantes movimientos migratorios y del auge de la economía urbana, El Salvador continúa siendo un país rural. Según el último censo, la población rural es un poco menos de la mitad de la población nacional.

La participación de las zonas rurales en el producto nacional es significativa. El sector agropecuario representó en 1996 el 14 por ciento del PIB y su aporte en la balanza comercial es imprescindible. Las exportaciones agrícolas en este mismo año fueron el 51 por ciento de las exportaciones totales del país, aportando de esta forma el 16 por ciento de los ingresos necesarios para cubrir las importaciones totales. El sector agropecuario empleó en 1996, el 36 por ciento de la población económicamente activa, convirtiéndose en un fundamental proveedor de empleo.

Los principales productos de ingesta calórica en El Salvador son el maíz, el arroz y el frijol. Algunos alimentos, como el azúcar y los productos avícolas, suplen la demanda nacional con excedentes de exportación, mientras que en los granos básicos todavía se registran importaciones.

En El Salvador, una de las mayores amenazas contra la seguridad alimentaria radica en la fuerte inestabilidad del suministro de alimentos y en las grandes variaciones de los precios de los productos. Esto es debido, fundamentalmente, a factores climatológicos, baja inversión en infraestructura rural, fuerte concentración de los mercados y distorsiones en los precios de los mercados internacionales.

El bajo nivel de ingresos de muchos hogares, limita el acceso a los alimentos necesarios para cubrir sus necesidades nutricionales básicas. La pobreza rural relativa y extrema es de 16 por ciento y 27 por ciento, respectivamente. La pobreza no es geográficamente homogénea, la zona metropolitana es significativamente más rica que los demás departamentos, mientras que la zona norte del país es la más pobre, por haber sido mayormente afectada por el pasado conflicto armado.

Como producto del nuevo modelo de economía de mercado, los ingresos urbanos crecieron en un 16 por ciento, mientras que los ingresos rurales sólo aumentaron en un 3 por ciento. El Gobierno de El Salvador está poniendo énfasis en una estrategia de desarrollo rural que permita incrementar las oportunidades de empleo, tanto agrícolas como no agrícolas, en zonas rurales.

Nuestro Gobierno ha emprendido este importante esfuerzo, tendiente a revertir los sesgos antiagrícolas de las políticas nacionales y reactivar de manera duradera y sostenida el sector agropecuario.

A principios del año, se implementó un importante paquete de medidas puntuales tendientes a solucionar problemas concretos del sector, como son la seguridad jurídica y ciudadana, aumento de la competitividad y rentabilidad de las actividades agropecuarias con un enfoque sostenible. Lo anterior se ejecuta a través de un Programa de Investigación y Transferencia Tecnológica, un Sistema de Información Comercial, un Programa de Modernización de Entrega de Servicios y un Programa de Infraestructura Rural, Educación y Salud.

Simultáneamente, se está realizando un trabajo de definición de una estrategia de mediano y largo plazo para las zonas rurales, en concertación con las principales agencias bilaterales y multilaterales y con representantes de la sociedad civil. Esta estrategia tiene como punto focal el combate a la pobreza rural.

Para fortalecer la política de desarrollo rural, se está implementando un Programa de Generación de Empleo no Agrícola, con el fin de que nuestra población rural aumente la capacidad de acceso a los alimentos. La creación de empleo en zonas rurales, a través de incentivos a la creación y consolidación de clusters agroindustriales en ciudades de segundo y tercer rango, permitirán por un lado agregar mayor valor a la producción agropecuaria y potenciar otras actividades de servicio, por lo cual es importante focalizar la inversión pública, para que el impacto en el desarrollo rural sea tangible.

Permítame, señor Presidente, referirme brevemente a algunos de los principales temas que serán tratados durante esta importante Conferencia de la FAO: la realización de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, convocada por la FAO hace un año, representa un logro fundamental. Reiteramos nuestro total respaldo a la Declaración de Roma y al Plan de Acción de la Cumbre.

En El Salvador estamos seriamente empeñados en la aplicación de este Plan, el cual coadyuva los esfuerzos para lograr la seguridad alimentaria de nuestros pueblos. La asistencia de la FAO en este esfuerzo resulta indispensable.

La delegación de El Salvador comparte plenamente la posición del Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe con relación al Programa de Labores y Presupuesto para el bienio 1998-99. Respalamos la necesidad de que la FAO pueda contar con los instrumentos necesarios que le permitan continuar coordinando la política mundial contra el hambre y la malnutrición.

Como indicó el Director General en su declaración, la hipótesis de crecimiento real cero permitirá mantener la capacidad de la Organización en las esferas prioritarias, las cuales compartimos plenamente, en manera particular, en lo que a la aplicación del Plan de Acción de la Cumbre se refiere.

Reiteramos el apoyo del Gobierno de El Salvador al Programa de Cooperación Técnica de la FAO, instrumento que ha demostrado su utilidad y eficiencia para hacer frente a problemas de particular importancia para los países en desarrollo.

El reconocimiento y la labor que la FAO desempeña para lograr la toma de conciencia sobre la importante función de la mujer en la seguridad alimentaria, así como para implementar programas para la juventud rural, merecen todo nuestro apoyo. En El Salvador, estamos trabajando en este sentido a través del establecimiento de la flexibilidad de los contratos laborales rurales, lo cual permite a estos jóvenes no desatender su educación y poder contribuir a los ingresos de la familia rural. Asimismo apreciamos la asistencia que la FAO brinda a los programas de ciudades intermedias y agricultura de laderas.

Señor Presidente, nos preocupa la internalización de la economía y su globalización, la apertura más bien debe dar oportunidades de comercio a los países de menor desarrollo y no deteriorar los sectores agropecuarios. La visión mundial debe tener propósitos conjuntos, ser creativos e interdependientes. Todos los países deben contribuir al cambio estratégico, buscando confianza y equidad en los pueblos. En este camino la ayuda de la FAO será de incalculable valor para el adecuado desarrollo de las naciones y nuestros pueblos.

Moussa DOURAMANE (Niger)

Je voudrais, au nom de la délégation du Niger, vous adresser Monsieur le Président, mes chaleureuses félicitations pour votre élection à la présidence de cette 29^{ème} session de la Conférence générale de la FAO.

La présente session me donne également l'occasion d'exprimer toute notre satisfaction au Directeur général Monsieur Jacques Diouf et de lui renouveler notre soutien total pour l'action

digne d'éloges et les efforts incessants qu'il déploie pour redynamiser notre organisation et en améliorer l'efficacité.

Depuis le début des années 80, le Niger s'est engagé dans un processus de réformes économiques et institutionnelles pour mieux garantir les conditions d'une véritable relance de la croissance pour le pays.

A cet effet, dans le cadre spécifique du secteur rural, beaucoup de domaines ont été couverts par des réformes macro-économiques; cependant, si la plupart des objectifs de stabilisation ont été atteints, on notera tout de même que:

- ceux relatifs au système de production ne l'ont pas été;
- les progrès techniques ont peu évolué et les productions agro-pastorales sont toujours soumises aux aléas climatiques;
- le désengagement de l'Etat a été très significatif dans le secteur rural, mais sans vraiment préparer les producteurs privés à assurer la relève.

Le secteur rural constitue un élément important dans l'économie du Niger.

En 1960, la part du secteur rural était d'environ 70 pour cent du PIB. Aujourd'hui elle n'est que 37 pour cent du fait de la très grande dépendance de l'agriculture vis-à-vis des aléas climatiques qui sont par ailleurs de plus en plus prononcés. En francs constants, le PIB par habitant est passé de 15 000 FCFA en 1960 à 7 000 FCFA en 1996, ce qui dénote l'ampleur de la crise.

Cette agriculture emploie environ 87 pour cent de la population active du pays mais seulement pendant cinq à six mois de l'année.

Les éléments ci-dessous vous permettront d'apprécier les caractéristiques fondamentales de l'agriculture nigérienne:

- s'agissant de la production agricole proprement dite, elle se pratique aujourd'hui sur des exploitations familiales de plus en plus réduites avec souvent de très faibles rendements;
- les ressources naturelles quant à elles sont frappées de plein fouet par les conséquences néfastes des sécheresses répétées et de la pression démographique;
- l'élevage, de type extensif, évolue dans des conditions rendues particulièrement difficiles par la dégradation continue des parcours;
- les ressources en eau sont importantes, mais le faible niveau technique ne permet pas une exploitation optimale;
- par ailleurs, avec un taux de croissance démographique annuel de 3,3 pour cent, le Niger fait aujourd'hui partie des premiers pays à démographie galopante.

Vous comprendrez donc que ces quelques considérations relatives au secteur rural laissent transparaître déjà l'ampleur de la tâche qui nous incombe pour assurer la sécurité alimentaire du pays.

Cette situation se trouve d'autant plus compliquée que les cultures céréalières qui constituent la base de l'alimentation de la majeure partie de la population s'avèrent de plus en plus insuffisantes.

Ces productions qui étaient excédentaires au début des années 70 ne le sont plus aujourd'hui. Bien au contraire, elles plongent le Niger depuis bientôt une décennie dans une situation de déficit structurel.

Cette année encore le déficit n'a pas manqué à son inexorable rendez-vous. En effet, le bilan provisoire fait ressortir un déficit céréalier de 395 000 tonnes.

Aussi, près de 4 000 villages regroupant plus de 3 millions d'habitants, soit plus du tiers de la population totale, connaîtront des pénuries alimentaires particulièrement éprouvantes avec toutes leurs conséquences sur le plan social, moral, physique, sanitaire et économique.

Pour faire face à cette situation, le Niger, du fait de la rareté des ressources, ne peut que se tourner encore une fois de plus vers ses partenaires traditionnels et l'ensemble de la communauté internationale pour leur demander de l'aider à résorber ce déficit et à redonner confiance à cette frange de la population menacée. A cet effet, un appui et un soutien conséquents sont sollicités pour permettre au Niger de mener à bien son programme de sécurité alimentaire et de lutte contre la pauvreté.

L'un des volets importants de ce programme que le Niger envisage de mettre en oeuvre est la promotion de l'irrigation, domaine dans lequel il dispose d'énormes potentialités non encore exploitées.

Le développement de l'irrigation et la maîtrise de l'eau partout où cela est possible constituera un élément déterminant pour promouvoir l'intensification et la diversification des productions.

Permettez-moi de profiter de cette auguste assemblée pour exprimer au nom du Président de la République, son Excellence Monsieur Ibrahim Mainassara Baré, notre profonde gratitude à l'ensemble des partenaires bilatéraux et multilatéraux qui oeuvrent dans notre pays pour l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire et le développement des populations nigériennes.

C'est le lieu ici de saluer l'initiative prise par le Directeur général de la FAO d'éradiquer la faim dans le monde et d'assurer un meilleur devenir pour notre planète.

Vladimir GARKOUN (Observer for Belarus)

Permit me to join those who congratulated you, Chairman, on the occasion of your election. I am sure that you personally will contribute greatly to the work of this Session of the Conference. The Republic of Belarus, being a member of many international organizations, is not however a member of FAO. Nevertheless, beginning with 1993 Belarus has been following closely the activities of the Organization and values them highly. This is the second time that the Belarus Delegation has taken part in the Conference as an observer.

We have noted such important activities of the FAO as the struggle against hunger, environment, and rational use of natural resources. FAO establishes important goals and makes persistent efforts to achieve them. The Republic of Belarus supports the basic stipulations of the Rome Declaration and those of the Programme of Action adopted last year at the World Food Summit as well as the multiple programmes in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and in the harmonization of the use of natural resources. That is why I am glad to inform the distinguished delegates of the decision of Belarus to accede to membership of the Organization. The official application will be transmitted to the Secretariat in due course.

Historically agriculture and forestry play an important role in the economy of Belarus. The agriculture of the Republic of Belarus is one of the most developed among the republics of the former Soviet Union. Our country has sufficiently favourable soil and climate conditions for agricultural development. In addition we have created a related infrastructure comprising the education of personnel, a system of scientific research institutions, development of the agricultural machinery industry and production of fertilizers.

However, the Republic of Belarus is undergoing a rather difficult process of reforming its economy, from a centrally planned management to a market one. Therefore, information on world agriculture is very important for us. Moreover, production of ecologically-sound products, as well as the preservation of the environment, are of great importance for the Republic of Belarus. It goes without saying that FAO as an authoritative international organization has good possibilities and experience in these fields.

Belarus has to confront a whole host of problems related to the aftermath of the Chernobyl power plant disaster. The decrease in arable land and other limitations on land utilization caused by radiation contamination have a significant negative effect on the economy of the country. The direct losses for the period from 1986 to 2015 have been evaluated by experts at US\$15.32 billion, and the overall damage at US\$70 billion.

The Republic of Belarus cannot overcome the consequences of such a large-scale disaster which has done irreparable damage to the environment and to the health of the people. Therefore, it attaches great importance to analyzing the information on international agricultural system that the Organization may possess.

Belarus expresses its hopes for a mutually-advantageous cooperation and partnership in solving problems in the fields of agriculture, forestry, in preserving the very rare natural reserves situated in its territory, as well as in receiving assistance from the international community in searching for the very best possible use of the territories contaminated with the radionuclides and in working out a nutrition structure for those affected by irradiation as a result of the disaster.

In its turn, Belarus is ready to take part in scientific research on these problems, to make its own contribution to solving global problems, and to share its experience in the education of personnel and in the results of research work in the field of plant production, as well as in our other achievements.

Jean Claude SABIN (Observateur pour la Fédération internationale des producteurs agricoles)

C'est pour moi un grand honneur, en tant qu'agriculteur et représentant de la FIPA (Fédération internationale des producteurs agricoles) qui regroupe les associations agricoles de 70 pays tant développés qu'en développement, d'être présent à cette Conférence. Je voudrais tout d'abord vous dire que nous apprécions beaucoup les travaux de la FAO et que l'an passé nous avons suivi avec attention le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation car nous tenions en même temps nos réunions tout près d'ici. Des rencontres bilatérales ont par ailleurs eu lieu à ce moment là. Je voudrais à mon tour saluer les efforts personnels du Directeur général, Monsieur Diouf, dont nous apprécions tout particulièrement l'engagement.

La FIPA, quant à elle, est restée active puisque nous avons tenu cinq réunions régionales en Afrique, en Asie, au Caraïbes et en Amérique latine. Nous préparons actuellement notre sommet qui se tiendra au printemps prochain aux Philippines. Je voudrais vous faire part de quelques observations des responsables agricoles, notamment ceux des pays en développement, qui m'ont chargé de vous les transmettre. La première concerne ce qui se passe dans les pays actuellement, à savoir le désengagement des états et la libéralisation qui touche également l'agriculture. Tout en comprenant sa nécessité, nous devons constater que dans beaucoup de pays le secteur privé n'est pas à même de prendre le relais de l'action des États à l'égard des agriculteurs. C'est une difficulté que nous aimerions souligner et rappeler que le désengagement des états ne veut pas dire absence d'une politique agricole et surtout d'une politique agricole et rurale. Devant ce désengagement des États, nous aimerions faire une proposition: dans beaucoup de pays, la seule solution possible, tout au moins temporairement, est de miser sur les agriculteurs. Dans tous les pays, les agriculteurs ont l'esprit d'initiative, le sens de la responsabilité et ont su grâce aux efforts des États et des ONG, s'organiser.

Dans ce nouveau contexte, ils peuvent et doivent maintenant aller plus loin. Nous proposons que, là où ce n'est pas encore fait, à partir des organisations de base existantes on puisse aboutir à la création d'organisations professionnelles agricoles responsables au niveau des états, qui devraient jouer un double rôle. Elles devront d'une part être représentatives, ce qui est essentiel et dialoguer en partenariat avec les pouvoirs publics et, d'autre part prendre en main le développement.

Il nous apparaît également qu'il existe dans beaucoup de pays une recherche agronomique de qualité, mais la transmission des résultats de la recherche aux agriculteurs n'est pas suffisante. Nous demandons par conséquent aux organisations agricoles responsables d'aider les agriculteurs en renforçant le transfert de la technologie entre la recherche appliquée et le développement. Trois sujets seront mis en évidence au Congrès de Manille, entre autres, celui de la faim et de la pauvreté dans le monde rural que nous traiterons. En ce qui concerne les biotechnologies, deux grandes préoccupations sont à souligner: le problème de la biodiversité qui concerne tous les pays

et là le rôle de la la FAO est important et également celui des variétés plus résistantes, plus efficaces. Si l'on ne prend pas d'initiatives, nous craignons que ces agriculteurs ne puissent avoir accès à ces nouvelles technologies et que le fossé se creuse encore entre pays développés et pays en développement. Enfin, pour ce qui est de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce, nous aimerions mettre en garde un certain nombre de pays contre une libéralisation excessive de l'agriculture afin de ne pas trop contrarier et contrecarrer les efforts des agriculteurs en les confrontant trop tôt et trop vite à une compétition pour laquelle ils ne seraient pas préparés. Voilà en quelques mots, les quelques messages succincts que je me suis permis de présenter à cette Assemblée.

J'aimerais par ailleurs formuler une requête: étant donné que le Comité sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale devra se réunir l'an prochain en même temps que notre Sommet mondial à Manille, il faudrait se concerter pour éviter le chevauchement des dates de ces deux importantes réunions afin que nous puissions y participer. Les enjeux dont nous parlons ici sont de taille et je voudrais signaler que la Fédération internationale des producteurs agricoles est prête à apporter, selon ses moyens, sa contribution pour aider ses collègues agriculteurs dans tous les pays du monde et, en particulier, là où ils en ont le plus besoin.

LE PRESIDENT

Je voudrais vous informer que la délégation des Etats-Unis d'Amérique desire exercer son droit de réponse a la délégation de Cuba, et que sa déclaration devra donc être insérée dans le compte rendu.

RIGHT OF REPLY

DROIT DE REPOSE

DERECHO DE REPLICA

August SCHUMACHER Jr. (United States of America)

The Government of the United States categorically rejects the allegations made by the Representative of Cuba concerning introduction of the *thrips palmi* pest into Cuba. The Government of Cuba was unable to provide any proof of these allegations at a late August 1997 meeting of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Working Group in Geneva. This pest is endemic throughout the Region, occurring in Florida, Haiti and Jamaica, FAO's own experts have indicated that its appearance in Cuba is not surprising.

The United States seeks a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba, as evidenced by respect for human rights, free and fair elections, and an open economy. US policy is designed to deny legitimacy and resources to the regime through the economic embargo, to strengthen Cuban civil society through private humanitarian aid and increased contacts and communications, to mobilize a multilateral push for democracy, and to deter trafficking in property confiscated from US citizens.

The United States Government has facilitated travel for educational and humanitarian purposes, and has facilitated the licensing, under the terms of the embargo, of US non-governmental organizations to assist Cuban NGOs. Since 1992, over US\$227 million in medicine, food and humanitarian goods have been licensed for shipment to Cuba. The Libertad (Helms-Burton) Act, signed in March 1996, was a response to Cuba's shutdown of two unarmed US civilian aircraft. It codified the embargo and outlined sanctions for "traffickers" in US - claimed property in Cuba.²

LE PRESIDENT

² Statement inserted in the verbatim records on request

Veillez noter que la délégation de l'Iraq voudrait exercer son droit de réponse a la délégation des Etats-Unis. Leur déclaration devra être insérée dans le compte rendu.

RIGHT OF REPLY
DROIT DE REPONSE
DERECHO DE REPLICA

Abdullah NASAM ABDULLAH (Iraq)

In reply to the statement made by the USA delegation on the 10th of November 1997, the Iraqi Delegation would like to insert the following statement in the Conference Verbatim Record in accordance with the Right of Reply.

The World Food Summit held in Rome in November 1996 expressed its objection to using food as a weapon for political and economic pressure, and many speakers in our Conference stated their objection to use sanctions because of the humanitarian suffering it involves.

The stand of the Government of the USA toward Iraq represents a clear example of using sanctions and hunger as a weapon to achieve political targets which are not stated in the UN Security Council decisions and which are considered to be a violation to International Law and the UN Charter. It has prevented medicines and imposed hunger upon the Iraqi people for about seven years in order to achieve its real target i.e. change Iraqi leadership, that it declared on many occasions through its Senior Officials.

In contrast to the allegations of the US delegate that Iraq has impeded the implementation of Resolution 986, all parties know that it is the US government which tried and still tries (after Iraq's acceptance of this Resolution) to impede, through all kinds of excuses, the actual implementation of the Note of Understanding signed with the UN Secretariat in May 1996.

In the Sanctions Committee established by Resolution 661 in 1991, it rejected contracts signed in accordance with this Resolution to the effect that a great part of these signed contracts in various sectors had been interrupted at a time when the adopted purchase and distribution plan under Resolution 1111 entered into its Second Phase of implementation. This means that this Phase would also suffer from deliberate delays as the first one.

The allegations included in the statement of the US delegate that Iraq now spends its resources on the purchase of weapons are not true at all as Iraq is now under land, air and sea embargo and has no financial resources to spend on these purchases - not to mention the continuous surveillance of its military and industrial facilities by the UN.

As for the allegation of the US delegate that the continuity of the embargo is due to Iraq's aggression against its neighbours, all parties well know who is the most aggressive state against the peoples throughout the world. Many of the Representatives in our Conference here suffered and still suffer from the aggression of that state, so why shouldn't we impose an embargo upon it if we are defendants of the rights of neighbours and peoples'.³

The meeting rose at 17.40 hours.
La séance est levée à 17 h 40.
Se levanta la sesión a las 17.40 horas.

³ Statement inserted in the verbatim records on request

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite)

INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION (continuación)

6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

DEBAT GENERAL (suite)

DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

STATEMENTS BY HEAD OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATIONS (suite)

DECLARACIONES DE LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

Togo, Barbados, Libya, Indonesia, Suriname, Egypt, Zambia, Trinidad and Tobago, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Cap-Vert, Thailand, Argentina, Bénin

Kokou Daké Dominique DOGBE (Togo)

Au nom de la délégation togolaise et en mon nom personnel, je voudrais vous présenter mes vives et chaleureuses félicitations pour votre élection à la présidence de notre auguste assemblée.

Qu'il me soit permis aussi de saluer la présence parmi nous du Directeur général de notre Organisation commune, la FAO, et le féliciter pour la clairvoyance avec laquelle il dirige la FAO depuis qu'il a pris les rênes de l'Organisation.

Je voudrais également remercier, à travers vous, le gouvernement et le peuple ami d'Italie pour la qualité de l'accueil qui nous est réservé et pour toute l'attention dont nous sommes l'objet depuis notre arrivée à Rome.

Le Togo est heureux de répondre à ce rendez-vous important qu'est le suivi du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation et se félicite des actions engagées par la FAO pour résoudre les problèmes de la famine, de la malnutrition et de la pauvreté dans le monde.

Cette noble initiative de la FAO a permis, à l'issue du Sommet sanctionné par la Déclaration de Rome sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et un Plan d'action, de proposer de nombreuses solutions à la fois stratégiques, techniques, économiques, politiques, sociales et humanitaires à la crise de l'agriculture africaine. Ces actions témoignent à suffisance des efforts méritoires et dignes d'éloges que déploie l'Organisation pour atteindre les objectifs qu'elle s'est fixée.

Je tiens, à l'occasion de la 29^{ème} session, à rendre un hommage tout particulier à la FAO pour le rôle de premier plan qu'elle joue en sensibilisant la communauté internationale à la lutte contre la faim. Je voudrais par ailleurs exprimer à la FAO notre appréciation pour la rapidité avec laquelle, conformément aux recommandations du Sommet, elle a réagi en mettant en oeuvre le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire (PSSA) dont l'objectif est d'aider, aussi tôt que possible, les pays à faible revenu et à déficit vivrier, et à accroître et stabiliser durablement leur production et leur productivité.

Le Togo par ma voix réaffirme et confirme son adhésion aux principes sur lesquels se fonde l'Organisation et son soutien politique à l'Organisation dans l'accomplissement de sa mission,

qui est d'aider à construire un monde dans lequel toute la communauté internationale, y compris naturellement le tiers monde, pourra vivre avec dignité. C'est pourquoi le Gouvernement Togolais avait réservé un accueil chaleureux au consultant chargé de la mission exploratoire d'appui pour le démarrage du Programme spéciale pour la sécurité alimentaire.

Avant de poursuivre mon propos, je voudrais appeler l'attention de la communauté internationale sur les inquiétudes qui planent encore sur nos actions. Lors du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, toutes les délégations avaient reconnu que le continent africain reste aujourd'hui la région la plus pauvre du monde. Dans cette partie du monde, le degré de pénurie par rapport au seuil de pauvreté est le plus fort, 19,1 pour cent contre 2,8 pour cent en Asie. La famine y est extrêmement répandue et le nombre de gens souffrant de sous-alimentation avoisine 200 millions et peut atteindre 300 millions en l'an 2010 si rien n'est fait pour renverser la tendance. Les causes de cette situation alarmante sont bien connues et ont pour nom la pression démographique, la dégradation des terres et de l'environnement, les catastrophes naturelles, etc.

Aujourd'hui, force est de constater que de nouvelles difficultés s'ajoutent aux multiples causes qui annihilent les efforts qu'entreprennent les Etats africains pour assurer la sécurité alimentaire à leurs populations. Il s'agit bien sûr des guerres fratricides. En effet, les foyers de conflit et les troubles civils se généralisent et accentuent ainsi la dégradation des conditions de vie des populations. Par ailleurs, le renouveau démocratique d'inspiration populaire, amorcé depuis quelque temps, n'a pas encore trouvé son expression institutionnelle dans tous les pays africains. Ce processus irréversible, mais pour l'instant fragile, est sans cesse menacé de rupture et d'explosion du fait de la mauvaise compréhension de la démocratie. Il engendre une instabilité qui fait tort malheureusement à nos économies déjà éprouvées.

Au Togo, où le Président de la République, Son Excellence Gnassingbé Eyadéma, a toujours plaidé pour la paix dans le monde, le processus de démocratisation se poursuit par la mise en place progressive des institutions démocratiques prévues par la Constitution.

La paix, la sécurité et la stabilité politique retrouvées permettent d'entreprendre les réformes nécessaires pour le développement de l'agriculture. C'est ainsi qu'au lendemain du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, le Gouvernement togolais a organisé un séminaire national de relance de la production agricole. Sur la base du bilan des 30 ans de l'agriculture en 1990, des états généraux de l'agriculture et du foncier de 1992, de la revue du secteur rural sur la période 1985-1990 et des études et enquêtes d'ordre institutionnel et socio-économique, les grandes orientations pour le développement de l'agriculture ont été définies comme suit:

- le désengagement de l'Etat des secteurs de production pour son recentrage sur les fonctions d'orientation, d'élaboration et de contrôle de l'exécution des politiques et de leur évaluation;
- la mise en place d'un cadre institutionnel décentralisé et déconcentré associant les producteurs aux prises de décision;
- le développement d'un système de crédit consacré au financement des activités économiques en milieu rural;
- le renforcement des liens entre la recherche et la vulgarisation pour mieux répondre aux besoins réels des agriculteurs.

Le cadre institutionnel que le Gouvernement du Togo s'attache à mettre en place se veut cohérent et incitatif et devrait concourir à stimuler les investissements dans le secteur agricole en vue d'augmenter en quantité et en qualité la production agricole.

La stratégie agricole du Togo concorde avec les préoccupations de la FAO en matière de lutte contre le spectre de la faim et de la malnutrition. Elle se base sur l'intensification et la diversification de la production agricole, afin de renforcer la sécurité alimentaire, améliorer l'équilibre nutritionnel, permettre des substitutions aux importations, accroître les exportations en vue d'augmenter les revenus et les emplois et, enfin, promouvoir une croissance respectueuse de l'environnement.

Le pari que nous avons fait au Togo de triompher sur la faim, la malnutrition et la pauvreté, et de contribuer ainsi à réduire de la moitié le nombre de malnutris dans le monde d'ici à l'horizon 2015, sera gagné grâce à la détermination de tous les Togolais et à la solidarité de plus en plus active de nos partenaires du développement.

C'est pourquoi je réitère l'appel lancé par Son Excellence Gnassingbé Eyadéma, Président de la République togolaise, à l'endroit des partenaires du développement pour qu'ils nous apportent leur assistance au développement économique et social et renforcent leur aide dans les domaines des droits de l'homme et des libertés, afin que les peuples déshérités puissent éloigner d'eux le spectre de la guerre ethnique ou fratricide et consacrer leurs efforts et leurs maigres ressources à la lutte contre la faim et la malnutrition.

Pour terminer, mon pays rend hommage à l'entrée d'un nouveau Membre dont l'admission au sein de notre assemblée démontre encore l'intérêt accru manifesté à l'endroit des causes que soutient la FAO.

Rawle C. EASTMOND (Barbados)

I bring you greetings from the Government and People of Barbados. It gives me great pleasure to be back here in the eternal city of Rome, one year after the historic World Food Summit, to report on our progress in the mission of achieving food security for all. I must first thank our host country, Italy, for its usual hospitality and congratulate both you, Vice-Chairman and the Chairman, on your election to your offices. As you know, Barbados has had a long and cordial relationship with Italy and with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

With respect to the performance of agriculture in Barbados in 1996-97, I can report that our major export crops have done significantly better in 1996-97 than in 1995-96, with sugar cane recording a 13 percent increase on the 1995-96 production level and cotton trebling its production of 1995-96.

Barbados, along with the other signatories of the Rome Declaration, made a number of commitments that were designed to achieve food security for all and eradicate hunger in all countries. In fulfilment of these undertakings, my Government has implemented a national programme to eradicate poverty in our island and has set up a Special Fund to promote projects and activities towards this end. In addition, my Ministry recently adopted a new Mission Statement which states the goal of food security for all and we have started the process of restructuring our Ministry to enhance our capacity to adequately fulfil that mission.

Our Rural Development Programme has implemented a number of projects designed to improve the status of disadvantaged rural people with initial projects designed to improve the infrastructure of rural Barbados and the creation of rural enterprises through a Rural Enterprises Fund.

In addition, we are actively pursuing other policies and projects intended to fulfil our other World Food Summit commitments, including a continuing emphasis on diversification of production of crops and livestock. The diversification effort is now showing success in that non-sugar agriculture now surpasses sugar agriculture in its contribution to our GDP.

My Government, and indeed the majority of the governments of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), are signatories to the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements and have thereby accepted and commenced implementation of policies which were designed to foster competitiveness and food and nutrition security through a fair, market-oriented world trade system. The pursuit of this process poses an immediate challenge for all CARICOM Member States, the majority being Small-Island States which have traditionally enjoyed preferential access of their primary agricultural products to special metropolitan markets. The recent WTO rulings on the banana trade between the Windward Islands and the European Union, which seem destined to presage the demise of the banana industry in some of our CARICOM Member States, highlights the fact that our countries are now at a severe disadvantage in the new

global trading arrangements that are dominated by a few powerful nations and multinational corporations. There are likely to be negative repercussions for the food and nutrition status of our Small-Island States as a result of these recent developments. We therefore support the call by Mauritius for a thorough examination of this issue, perhaps through a Special Conference.

Barbados has recently been deemed a water-scarce country and our meteorologists are suggesting that we should prepare for a severe drought in Barbados in 1998-99 period because of the effects of *El Niño*. We have started to brief farmers to use our limited water resources more effectively and to adopt other measures to mitigate the effects of the expected drought. We will be approaching FAO for assistance in view of FAO's acknowledged expertise in this area.

Barbados has also begun implementing phytosanitary measures using the guidelines of FAO's International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM's). This will facilitate the resumption of trade with our regional trading partners following the introduction of the very dangerous Pink Mealy Bug pest in some of our neighbouring countries. We commend FAO for its development of these ISPM's and standards, and appreciate the importance of the IPPC in this regard. We have studied the proposed revision of the IPPC and consider that the text adequately covers the areas of relevance and needs no further amendments at this time. In this regard also, we support a recent proposal made by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) for strengthening and resuscitating the Caribbean Plant Protection Commission (CPPC), thereby allowing to more effectively support the increasing demands being placed on our Plant Protection Services in the Sub-region.

In closing, please allow me to place on record my sincere congratulations to the Director-General and his staff at FAO on the significant progress that has been made in reforming FAO. The Caribbean Sub-region has already benefited through the closer interaction and more timely responses from this Organization resulting from the location of the Sub-regional Office in Barbados, and the Government of Barbados is pleased to have been afforded the opportunity to host this office. We urge that the decentralization process be further refined to result in even more efficient uses of available resources. In this regard, we fully support the Director-General in his efforts.

Mohamed Ali Ben RAMADHAN (Libya) (Original language Arabic)

It gives me great pleasure on behalf of the Delegation of Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, to congratulate Lyle Vanclief, the Canadian Minister of Agriculture, Chairman of the Conference, as well as the Vice-Chairmen, on their election to preside over the deliberations of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference. We are convinced that we will adopt meaningful and positive decisions under their guidance. I would also like to warmly congratulate Kazakhstan on its membership of the Organization.

We have come here in spite of the air embargo so iniquitously imposed on our people. We came so as to participate in the discussions on the many important items on this Conference's agenda - the most important being the question of food security in accordance with the Rome Declaration. In this context I have had the opportunity, both here and in other international fora, to describe the tremendous efforts my country has exerted and is still exerting to achieve sustainable agricultural development, and through it self-reliance in food production. Amongst these efforts are human resource development, wider participation by women in development, as well as the conservation of natural resources which are limited because of our climatic conditions. My country is implementing the Great Manmade River Project which will provide additional arable land to ensure attainment of food security and the best utilization of resources.

The Great Jamahiriya, in its quest to benefit from its geographical position in the Mediterranean, with a coastline of some 2000 kilometres, has exerted considerable efforts to harness its marine resources with the target of diversifying food supplies by training fishermen, establishing a suitable fleet of fishing boats and developing aquaculture. We have received help from FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme to evaluate fisheries resources in a way compatible with optimal and sustainable utilization. We would like to warn you all about the dangers of pollution

which are threatening the fisheries resources in the Mediterranean, and we have to find a modality so that we can indeed conserve this valuable source of food.

In response to the decisions adopted at the World Food Summit, the Great Jamahiriya has established national committees to coordinate and implement them at the national level. We are currently in the process of adopting a strategy for agricultural development until the year 2010 in order to give added impetus to the agricultural sector and encourage investments therein.

My country is convinced that unilateral national efforts to combat desertification, transboundary plant and animal diseases and desert locusts, no matter how great, will still be lacking unless there is cooperation between all countries of the Region. We are exerting every effort to establish solid relationships with the countries of our Region with the goal of increasing their capacity for food production and of achieving the common goals of our people.

The implementation of economic and agricultural development plans in my country has faced, and is still facing, problems because of our inability to develop the areas where landmines were planted during the Second World War. This has caused great suffering, not only have many of our citizens been handicapped, but we have also lost a significant portion of our livestock. We would appeal through this Conference to all parties responsible for planting those mines to remove them, so that those same areas can become a source of food security and of stability in keeping with the dictums of all international conferences on the environment.

In spite of the suffering of our people as a result of an inclement embargo and unjustified economic pressures which are in complete contradiction to the simplest of humanitarian values and human rights, we have not given up our responsibilities towards the international community and we have given, in line with our capabilities, help and assistance to United Nations organizations and agencies, amongst which is the FAO. We have complete faith in the pivotal role of the FAO as a motor of agricultural development, and a channel for the transfer of technology to developing countries with the aim of improving world food security. We wish to reiterate the importance of its role and the comprehensiveness of its programmes. My country, by participating in the deliberations of different committees, will support all efforts aiming at the realization of sustainable agricultural development and food security in accordance with the Rome Declaration.

We wish to say that we welcome the Programme of Work and Budget, which has taken into consideration all the important programmes. We hope that this Conference is going to take all these matters into consideration when it looks into the PWB.

Finally, we wish to reiterate that we have every trust in the Organization's administration and are indeed gratified for the efforts exerted by Dr. Jacques Diouf, the Director-General, to enhance the mandate of the Organization, improve its levels of performance and re-entrench a solid basis of cooperation with other United Nations Agencies.

I would also like to express our thanks to the Independent Chairman of the Council for all the efforts he deployed during his Presidency.

Ibrahim HASAN (Indonesia)

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to address the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. On behalf of the Indonesian delegation I would like to convey our warm congratulations to Mr Lyle Vanclief on his election as Chairman of the Conference, and to the Vice-Chairmen, with a strong belief that under your chairmanship the Conference will achieve a fruitful output.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Kazakhstan on becoming a new full Member of FAO.

The Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference is an important meeting for the review of the progress and follow-up actions of the World Food Summit held in November 1996, especially its Plan of Action. The Heads of Government of FAO Member Nations committed themselves to

increase global food security, which aimed at reducing hunger and malnutrition for 800 million people in the world, so that by the year 2015 half of them would meet their nutritional requirements. In this regard, I would like to stress that the Indonesian delegation supports FAO's initiative of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) which will be addressed particularly to Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries. The developed countries, as well as multilateral organizations, are also requested to support FAO in implementing the Plan of Action in accordance with the Rome Declaration.

On South-South cooperation, during 1990-95 Indonesia has undertaken fifty projects with participants from twenty-three African countries. Indonesia has sent experts and experienced farmers to Africa, and has invited African farmers to Indonesia under the Apprenticeship Programme.

Regarding the SPFS, the Director-General of FAO during his visit to Indonesia in June 1997 discussed this matter with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Forestry. He requested Indonesia to undertake and participate in the Technical Assistance Programme by sending extension workers and agricultural experts to the recipient countries in the areas of water management, sustainable intensification of crops, fisheries and livestock production.

In response to the wish of the Director-General, the Indonesian Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, will support this Programme and consider providing assistance to the needy countries. This becomes one of the Indonesian contributions to the SPFS Programme in the framework of South-South cooperation.

With regard to the world food situation in 1996, although food and agricultural production increased by 2.6 percent, the overall world food production did not meet food demand in order to achieve world food security. Continuous efforts and hard work are still required to achieve sufficient food production, as well as equitable food distribution.

Allow me touch briefly on the food situation in Indonesia. In 1996 paddy production was 51 million tons, an increase of 2.73 percent compared to production in 1995. The paddy production in 1997 is estimated to decline to 49 million tons. This is due to a long dry season in Indonesia caused by *El Niño*. However, the Government is able to maintain sufficient reserves of 4 million tons of rice and to maintain stable rice prices. Thus, the Government believes that the food security level for 1997-98 can still be maintained.

Moreover, in order to increase the value of the agricultural sector, it is necessary to promote an environment conducive to investment and diversification, increase market networking, strengthen the role of human resources, and expand productivity. To support increasing food and agricultural productivity, it is also necessary to improve agricultural research and development, especially in developing appropriate and modern technologies, that can accommodate an increased domestic demand and exports.

Allow me to take this opportunity to inform this Conference of the efforts Indonesia has made in following up the World Food Summit Plan of Action, and to strengthen sustainable food security, particularly in maintaining the rice self-sufficiency achieved since 1984.

The Indonesian Government has consistently made concerted efforts to increase food production by conducting rice intensification Programmes in irrigated areas, extension projects of one million hectares of swamp areas in Kalimantan, and rice extension in upland areas including farmers' land, plantation and forests, in a sustainable manner.

Finally, another important issue for establishing national food security is the Special Development Programme to Eradicate Poverty launched this year. The Government decided to have a special Cabinet session once every three months to monitor progress on this poverty eradication programme.

Saimin REDJOSENTONO (Suriname)

MrChairman, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this

Conference. I am sure that we will have successful discussions under your skillful leadership.

The World Food Summit of last year was indeed very successful in increasing public awareness of the extent of hunger and malnutrition worldwide. I am pleased to observe that FAO has increased its activities, together with other international organizations, to assist countries - particularly the Low-Income, Food-Deficit Countries - to fulfil the Rome Declaration on World Food Security by the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. In this respect I am pleased to mention that at this moment, my country is executing a National Seed Programme with the technical assistance of FAO. This is a very important activity, because a good seed programme is the basis for a successful food security programme.

I take the opportunity at this time to thank the Director-General, Dr. Jacques Diouf, for the support that my country receives from FAO within the scope of sustainable agricultural development and food security for all in our country. I would like to draw your attention to the problems which countries with a small economy have to face as a result of the globalization of trade and the implementation of the WTO rules in the near future. These small countries very often depend, for large part of their economy, on the export of one or two agricultural products. Traditionally, these countries export their agricultural products to preferential markets. Putting an end to the preferential market system will mean that these small countries will meet severe problems as they have not implemented technological innovations; primarily because of the lack of financial resources. Production costs will therefore not be competitive on the international market. This will result in increasing poverty in these countries, and therefore access to food will diminish and food security will decrease.

I would therefore like to suggest that we create possibilities for these small countries to bring their production costs, through technological innovations, to a level that makes them competitive on the international market. At the same time we should also create opportunities to invest more in crop diversification. By doing so, we will spread the risks and can better assure sustainable development of agriculture in these countries.

In conclusion, I do hope that my suggestion will be taken into serious consideration, in order to enable small countries to survive the globalization of the world trade of agricultural commodities.

LE PRESIDENT

Merci, le Bureau a pris acte de votre déclaration. Mais avant que le chef de délégation égyptien ne parle, permettez-moi de faire une petite remarque à l'auguste assemblée.

Pendant les déclarations, certains honorables délégués se réunissent ici en sous-commissions. Nous souhaiterions que votre attention soit particulièrement concentrée sur ce qui se dit, sur ce qui se déclare, parce que ce sont précisément ces déclarations qui constitueront la matière première dans nos commissions.

Nehad Ibrahim ABDEL-LATIF (Egypt) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to express my sincere greetings to the Director-General and his staff and also to all the delegations of Member Nations. My country's delegation has the pleasure of sharing the interest that the Organization has with respect to combatting hunger and malnutrition and providing food security in developing countries with the international community represented at this Conference, in particular so that we can cope with demographic growth and make continuous use of our natural resources.

This Conference is held a year after the adoption of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security by the World Food Summit, which my country participated in. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture in Egypt did everything in his power to increase food production and thus try to achieve a measure of food security.

I would like to stress the fact that under the guidance of our political authorities we have participated with pleasure in the Programme designed to achieve food security. Dr. Jacques

Diouf, the Director-General of the Organization, was informed of this when he visited Egypt earlier this year. My country is taking part in a Technical Cooperation Programme amongst African countries, as part of South-South cooperation, and we send experts and technicians from Egypt to our neighbouring countries, our brother countries, to help them work towards food security.

As we approach a new century, my country has drawn up a new plan that looks into future developments of the agricultural sector, one of the main economic sectors of the country. Strategies for food development have been prepared for the next ten years. We are concentrating on the overall development of the southern valley and development of Sinai, the optimum use of natural, water and human resources in a sustainable manner, rural development, in particular the development of rural women, and on improving farmers' incomes and raising their standard of living.

I would also like to emphasize the role to be played by the private sector and the increasing investment in the agricultural sector. Finally, we must strive to maintain the ecological balance of our countries.

In order to complete the economic reform programmes, Egypt is in a position to welcome more investment from abroad in the various sectors in order to increase our economic development, improve the standard of living of our people and create free trade areas between Egypt and other countries.

My country's delegation has taken note of the Organization's Programme of Work and Budget for the 1998-99 biennium. We have also participated in the Hundred and Thirteenth Session of the Council, and thus we would like to reaffirm what we said at that time, and that is that we express support for the Programme of Work and Budget prepared by the Director-General of the Organization.

In conclusion, I would like to submit to the countries attending this Conference a number of questions which my country feels deserve particular attention. Safeguarding peace and stability, for example, constitutes an essential factor in order to ensure food security and development. Encouraging investments in order to develop human resources and create jobs, and thus cut back unemployment, is of vital importance. Finally, coordination and cooperation between the various sectors working in agriculture, for example, fisheries, forestry, is necessary to consolidate and widen the framework for cooperation in scientific research.

Kabeta MULEYA (Zambia)

It is my honour and privilege to address this body on behalf of the Zambian delegation. The Zambian delegation wishes to congratulate you, MrChairman, and your Bureau on your election to guide the proceedings of this Conference. May you rest assured of our delegation's support and cooperation.

This FAO Conference is convening a year after the World Food Summit. We therefore find it appropriate to begin this intervention by making special reference to the deliberations of our Heads of State and Government during the Summit. The Zambian Government fully endorses the seven commitments and the Plan of Action signed by the Heads of State and Government of various countries during the World Food Summit. We are pleased to inform you that Zambia is making good progress in follow-up action to the commitments and Plan of Action. Most activities being implemented under our Agricultural Sector Investment Programme are contributing towards the attainment of the commitments.

Zambia welcomes FAO's intended support to the special vulnerable groups, namely women and youth. Through the private sector and NGOs, the Zambian Government plans to include specific programmes for agriculture related-entrepreneurship. We look forward to increased collaboration with FAO in pursuance of this objective.

Zambia's liberalization of the agricultural sector is also offering a good environment for commercial, domestic and foreign investment.

May we now draw your attention to the progress Zambia is making in respect of the programmes and activities being implemented in collaboration with FAO. The Zambian Government deeply appreciates the support our country is receiving from FAO in the implementation of these projects and programmes.

Zambia has developed, in collaboration with FAO, a Strategic Action Plan for Sustainable Forestry Management and awaits implementation. It looks forward to further collaboration with FAO and other potential donors in the implementation of this Plan.

With regard to fisheries development, we are happy to state that FAO continues to facilitate sustainable development of fisheries, particularly for shared water bodies. The Zambian Government is also collaborating with FAO in the promotion of aquaculture. With the assistance of the FAO's expertise, the Zambian Government has successfully revised fisheries legislation.

Zambia's vulnerability to disasters, particularly drought, coupled with the prevailing market economy and consequent decline in public funding and investment in agriculture, has led to increased food insecurity. The predicted effect of *El Niño* in our Region during the forthcoming cropping season is of great concern to us and to neighbouring countries. We continue to alert farmers and other interested groups to prepare for possible drought. FAO's continued support for early warning, crop diversification, seed multiplication, and small-scale irrigation through the Special Programme for Food Security cannot therefore be overemphasized. Zambia is working with other countries in the Region and donors in developing measures to alleviate the impact of the expected drought, including control of livestock diseases and crop pests. May we take this opportunity to thank the donor community for its support in these efforts.

We wish to endorse the statements of our neighbours with regard to the Region's plight over locusts, particularly the Red and Brown Locusts. These pose real danger to the food security situation in almost all the countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. We therefore call on FAO to develop further programmes aimed at alleviating this problem.

During the 1996-97 farming season, the country produced 960 000 metric tons of maize compared to 1.4 million metric tons during the previous year, representing a reduction of 32 percent. The country's annual maize requirement is estimated at approximately 1.4 million metric tons. The reduction in maize production is a source of concern because it is the main staple food for the larger part of the population. In addition, during the last farming season, Zambia recorded significant reductions in most other food and cash crops such as sorghum, soyabeans, sunflower, paddy rice and beans. In the course of next year, it is expected that there may be a food deficit due to the predicted drought. Initiatives are therefore underway to mobilize both internal and external resources to make up for the likely deficit. Zambia might therefore require food aid.

Our delegation wishes to thank the Director-General, Dr. Jacques Diouf, and FAO most sincerely for the support in the projects and programmes being implemented in our country. His personal interest in the promotion of small-scale aquaculture development during his last visit to Zambia is greatly appreciated.

In conclusion, our delegation fully supports the Programme of Work and Budget proposed by the Director-General through the zero real growth option for the 1998-99 biennium. In our view this offers the best option for rationalizing the programmes and the activities of this Organization, without compromising the execution of our major priorities.

Our delegation fully endorses the Medium-Term Plan for the next six years as developed by the Director-General. We also welcome the initiative underway to decentralize the Organization. We believe that this will facilitate strengthening in regional offices and field programmes. We

sincerely believe that this move will enhance efficiency and the impact of FAO in Member Nations.

Vincent MOE (Trinidad and Tobago)

Mr Chairman, permit me, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to congratulate you and the Honourable Minister of Agriculture of Canada on your election as Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this important Conference, and to extend my country's sincere gratitude to the Director-General and staff of FAO for their relentless efforts and determination to eradicate hunger and poverty.

One year has elapsed since Member Nations of this Organization jointly pledged their political will and national commitment to achieving food security for all. From that historic moment to the present day, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has remained committed to the realization of the Declaration of Rome and the Global Plan of Action at the national level.

I wish to stress at the national level, because operational decisions have to be taken at the country level and it is only there that quantitative and qualitative changes can be made to move the indicators of food security forward. It is expected that these efforts will provide us with development options that will conserve the already over-exploited natural resources and guarantee social equity in the distribution of the fruits of agricultural growth.

The national Governments working *pari passu* with FAO and society in our respective countries must take the responsibility to build the appropriate and enabling environment for concrete action.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has taken several initiatives in this direction. We have instituted a wide range of policy, infrastructural and institutional reforms intended to transform and strengthen the performance of the agriculture, forestry and fishery sub-sectors. Measures have been implemented to rationalize public sector expenditure and to reform protectionist and other economic policies in order to increase international competitiveness. The results, so far, have been encouraging as we seek to promote improvements in agricultural, forestry and fisheries performance and enhance food and nutrition security.

Recognizing that poverty and hunger must be approached from a multi-sectoral - multi-dimensional perspective, my Government, through its Food and Nutrition Policy, has developed linkages between domestic food production and the National School Nutrition Programme, in which more than 76 500 school children are provided with free daily lunches, based on local food preferences.

In addition, monthly food baskets are provided to approximately 6 300 needy citizens, at a cost of US\$ 6 million annually. This Food and Nutrition Programme is administered jointly by the Government and NGOs. Simultaneously, a National Training and Economic Rehabilitation Programme for citizens, particularly targeting youths between 16-25 years, has been implemented in order to enhance their marketability for gainful employment and a life of dignity.

However, despite these accomplishments, my Government is of the opinion that small island economies like Trinidad and Tobago and its Caribbean Community neighbours, which are extremely vulnerable to external events, need the support and assistance of FAO to effectively address the complex problems of agricultural development, inclusive of food and nutrition security within the context of trade liberalization.

It is because of these circumstances, and as a Member of the Programme Committee of FAO, we feel that FAO must be given the opportunity to consolidate and build on the austerity measures which it has had to implement over the past biennium. We feel that this can only be accomplished through a zero real growth budget. A budget level below zero real growth will only result in further contraction and downsizing of the Organization, will lower staff morale and motivation, and detract from the effective delivery of the Organization's programmes.

FAO must be congratulated for its proposals on a Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan. The introduction of strategic planning and budgeting is critical to the Organization's relevance and effectiveness in today's liberalized trade environment and must be commended.

FAO must now be given the opportunity to re-examine its core competencies in relation to the opportunities and threats which lie ahead, review its mandate and formulate an appropriate Strategic Plan. It can no longer be a doer of all things. This Plan must involve the widest possible participation of its stakeholders and its internal and external clients.

In conclusion, it is my Government's sincerest belief that this is the only feasible option, by which this Organization of the United Nations, founded on the principles of human dignity and justice, can position itself to effectively assist Member Nations in addressing the vicissitudes and challenges which lie ahead and into the next millennium.

Kiro DOKUZOVSKI (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) (Original language Macedonian)

It is a great pleasure to take the floor here on behalf of my country, and to wish you every success in your work.

I come from a small country that acquired its independence only six years ago. For nearly five decades, we lived in a federation with five other republics, and we oriented our agricultural production towards the market of this association. The beginning of the Nineties meant the end of Former Yugoslavia and independence for our country.

We are passing through a period of large and important changes in our agriculture and the structure of its ownership, as well as ownership of enterprises. Only 20 percent of the agricultural land belongs to the State, and according to the new laws it will be given on concession or long-term leasing to the domestic, as well as foreign users. The agro-combinats that used to have this land have a right to continue, but the transition to private ownership should be finalized by the end of the year.

The big agricultural combinats, which possessed the largest share of the food industry, slowed down production by private farmers because for the last six years the food industry was not given access to foreign credit. It has not been able to purchase the market surplus from farmers.

The farmers organized themselves into cooperatives very slowly because credit conditions for investment were not convenient.

After independence, we found ourselves surrounded with closed borders, which meant losing our traditional markets. In order to find markets for our products, we had to use expensive ways to access them.

We are joining the market economy, and have already liberalized imports of agricultural products. We have also tried to stimulate exports through subsidies and such like. We try to ensure food supplies, except for grain, which we have to import in the amount of 30 percent to meet the needs of the population.

The stabilization of the situation on the Balkan Peninsula means we will be able to access our traditional markets. We have had successful results already in opening new markets for the distribution of our agricultural products.

We are currently reforming our regulations and trying to harmonize them with those in other countries, in particular according to the European Union standards.

During the last few months, after five or six years of preparation, many projects were approved and are now going to be financed by such international multilateral financial institutions as the World Bank and IFAD.

We are also working on systems of irrigation and drainage, trying to create the conditions for modern, stable and intensive agricultural production. There is also a project for credit to private

farms and another project which was being carried out with help from IFAD to create conditions for the revitalization of agriculture in villages in the more remote and mountainous areas of our country.

In our country, climatic and soil conditions permit the production of a whole range of agricultural products. We have been making investments in primary production; we are trying to encourage foreign investments and we hope to create new opportunities for the agricultural sector.

We are of the opinion that FAO, as an international organization, is extremely important. It is a Specialized Agency of the United Nations working with developing countries, as well as in countries in transition, and we are very pleased to work with FAO on many new projects.

José António PINTO MONTEIRO (Cap-Vert) (Langue originale portugais)

Je voudrais tout d'abord vous féliciter Monsieur le Président pour votre élection et je souhaite que, sous votre conduite éclairée, les travaux de la 29^{ème} Conférence de l'Organisation soient couronnés de succès. Je tiens également à féliciter les autres membres du Bureau.

Je tiens par ailleurs à saluer la République du Kazakhstan à qui je souhaite la bienvenue, et je saisis cette occasion pour dire que sa présence sera sans aucun doute un élément de poids pour améliorer l'efficacité de notre Organisation dans la réalisation de ses objectifs fondamentaux.

La Conférence de la FAO est une instance privilégiée qui nous permet d'analyser et de débattre de la situation de l'agriculture et de la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde, qui en ce moment abrite un contingent d'affamés constitué de 800 millions d'êtres humains.

La croissance de la production alimentaire mondiale au cours de l'année 1996 bien que modeste est tout de même un motif de satisfaction.

Toutefois, il faut souligner que le continent africain, malgré une augmentation de la production de 7,5 pour cent continue à avoir sur son sol des millions de victimes à cause de catastrophes d'origines diverses, qui exigent des ressources d'urgence alimentaire.

La diminution des investissements dans le secteur de l'agriculture et la réduction des contributions en céréales à la réserve alimentaire internationale d'urgence du PAM, ainsi que des contributions en denrées autres que les céréales, et de celles qui sont consacrées aux interventions d'urgence en faveur des réfugiés constituent un motif de préoccupation car nous savons que les perspectives de la production pour 1997 ne sont pas très encourageantes.

Le Cap-Vert souffre de contraintes géo-climatiques et n'arrive pas avec les technologies actuelles à produire tous les produits alimentaires pour couvrir les besoins de sa population répartie sur neuf îles habitées.

Dans les conditions d'une année normale, la production couvre à peine 10 pour cent de ses besoins en céréales. Nous avons eu une courte campagne agricole cette année, caractérisée par l'arrivée tardive des précipitations, la brièveté de la saison des pluies, l'intensité des précipitations et leur fin précoce, particulièrement si l'on observe l'état de l'avancement des cultures. On estime donc que la production totale du pays ne couvrira qu'un pour cent des besoins en céréales.

Avec un taux d'autosuffisance alimentaire très bas, le Cap-Vert dépend fortement des importations pour satisfaire les besoins fondamentaux de la population résidente. La couverture du déficit alimentaire chronique cette année a atteint 99 pour cent des besoins en céréales, base de l'alimentation de la population.

Les indicateurs du Cap-Vert, bien que plus favorables que ceux d'autres pays de notre sous-région, reflètent bien la situation socio-économique précaire que connaît une grande partie de la population.

La majorité de la population rurale ne peut assurer sa subsistance à partir des revenus tirés des activités agricoles et de l'élevage. La taille des parcelles cultivables est exiguë, 78 pour cent des

paysans disposent d'à peine deux hectares de terre. Par conséquent, cette population dépend de revenus complémentaires obtenus en grande partie sur les chantiers des travaux publics.

La pauvreté absolue affecte surtout la population féminine, analphabète et active. En effet, plus de la moitié des foyers qui vivent dans une situation de pauvreté extrême sont dirigés par des femmes. Les indicateurs de nutrition sont préoccupants.

En 1994, le taux de sous-alimentation chronique chez les enfants de deux à neuf ans était de 16 pour cent tandis que le taux de sous-alimentation aiguë atteignait 5,2 pour cent. Les carences nutritionnelles sont responsables de 6 pour cent de la mortalité infantile. En ce qui concerne les adultes, le taux de carence énergétique atteint 11 pour cent et est plus élevé chez les femmes que chez les hommes.

Le taux moyen de la consommation énergétique au Cap-Vert a été évalué à 2 700 calories et se situe donc dans les limites fixées par la FAO, c'est-à-dire entre 2 400 et 3 000 calories par jour. Toutefois, une partie importante des familles consomme moins de 1 800 calories par jour, chiffre qui pour 10 pour cent des familles s'établit à moins de 1 500 calories.

Pour remédier à la situation que je viens de décrire, le Gouvernement a défini une politique de sécurité alimentaire basée sur cinq objectifs principaux: assurer la disponibilité en denrées alimentaires et l'accès de tous les citoyens à ces denrées à des prix stables; améliorer la capacité nationale de production de denrées alimentaires; réorienter la production agricole vers des domaines complémentaires aux exportations; améliorer la qualité de l'alimentation; contrôler la qualité des denrées alimentaires importées, produites et/ou transformées sur place et assurer la qualité de l'eau destinée à la consommation.

Pour atteindre les objectifs cités, les programmes suivants sont en cours: éducation et information nutritionnelle, promotion de la qualité alimentaire, assistance aux groupes vulnérables, assistance aux cantines scolaires et approvisionnement en eau de bonne qualité.

Pour assurer le suivi, les politiques ci-après ont été élaborées: politique d'un minimum vital pour tous grâce à une stabilité des prix conforme à la croissance économique, lutte contre la pauvreté, développement de la production et transformation des denrées alimentaires.

Notre Gouvernement est fermement engagé dans un processus d'insertion du Cap-Vert dans l'économie mondiale, et pour ce faire, il développe toute une série d'actions, notamment pour soutenir l'initiative privée, attirer les investissements étrangers, et réformer l'administration publique, ainsi que réorganiser le secteur des entreprises d'Etat, ce qui implique la privatisation d'un nombre important d'entreprises publiques par des partenaires stratégiques choisis et une réforme du système financier. Une attention particulière a été accordée aux infrastructures de base dans les secteurs suivants: transport, logement, eau et assainissement, santé et éducation dans le but de créer dans le pays un environnement plus favorable à l'investissement extérieur.

Parmi les différents points inscrits à l'ordre du jour de nos travaux, j'aimerais me référer de façon plus particulière au Programme de travail et budget pour l'exercice 1998-99 qui est l'instrument grâce auquel l'Organisation joue son rôle.

Je tiens d'abord à féliciter le Directeur général pour la nouvelle présentation et pour tous les détails contenus dans les documents que je viens de citer. Le dynamisme donné par le Directeur général au processus de réforme de l'Organisation à l'aide d'une efficacité accrue mérite l'appui de notre pays.

Cependant, j'aimerais vous faire part d'une préoccupation qui est la nôtre. Il s'agit des restrictions budgétaires qui auront des effets immédiats sur le fonctionnement de l'Organisation et qui auront un impact négatif sur les pays bénéficiaires, en particulier les pays en développement.

La sécurité alimentaire constitue une priorité dans le cadre des actions mises en place par la FAO. Le Directeur général reconnaît ces priorités et a lancé, je m'en félicite, le Programme spécial de

sécurité alimentaire en faveur des pays à faible revenu et à déficit vivrier. C'est pourquoi il est difficile de comprendre la réduction des crédits pour les activités de formulation de projets des nouveaux pays participant au Programme, ainsi que pour les activités de programmes pilotes en cours. Il en va de même pour les activités de formation dans le cadre du grand Programme 2.3 des pêches avec les conséquences directes que cela implique.

Je me félicite également des contacts avec la Communauté des pays membres de langue portugaise, la CPLP. Je pense qu'ils serviront la cause de l'agriculture et de la sécurité alimentaire, et le Cap-Vert appuie toute initiative visant à renforcer les rapports et le partenariat entre la FAO et la CPLP.

Chao TIAN TONG (Thailand)

The position of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization is one of the most difficult in the United Nations System. Dr Jacques Diouf no doubt has shown his calibre in leading the Organization successfully in the past four years. I can assure him that Thailand will continue to work with him even closer in the years to come.

Before I go on with the Organization's business, please let me congratulate you, Mr Chairman, and your Vice-Chairmen upon being elected to the Bureau. I wish you every success in chairing this auspicious Conference.

I will now limit my comments to five topics:

First, World Food Security. As documented, 86 nations are defined as Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries in 1997. Thailand fully supports FAO in launching the Special Programme on Food Security in these 86 nations. However, we are of the opinion that the increase in food production alone cannot fully secure food for all, and the protection of post-harvest losses and wasted food is indeed needed.

Let me also briefly inform you that in 1997-98, Thailand will continue to be a reliable supplier of food for the world community. Thailand is willing to share its experience and works towards an international solution in supporting world food security.

The second topic is forestry. During 1990-1995, the annual rate of deforestation of natural forests in developing countries was 13.73 million hectares. Therefore, careful management of forestry resources is an urgent subject. Let me highlight the careful management of forestry resources: only two months ago there were forest fires on Indonesia's islands. According to the reports, around 300 000 hectares of natural forests were burnt. The forest fires have spewed pollutants across many Southeast Asian countries, sickening tens of thousands of people. After this incident, Thailand wishes to see the strengthening of FAO's role in helping Member Nations protect forests from fires. I think it is time for FAO to take a more active part in dealing with this problem. The FAO Committee on Forestry or other FAO relevant bodies may like to include forest fires in their discussion, Mr Chairman, and the sooner the better.

The third topic is fisheries. It is internationally recognized that global demand for fish, both for human consumption and as animal feeds, is increasing daily. The challenge for the future will be not only to meet the demand for fish, both from marine and inland resources, but also to encourage investments in monitoring and regulating fish stocks. It has been, and continues to be, the firm policy of my government to concentrate on fisheries conservation and management. Thailand is extremely concerned about the protection of fisheries from harmful sea and land-based activities.

My fourth point is the matter of the FAO Programme of Work and Budget for 1998-99. Member Nations must realize that FAO's activities are constantly growing to serve the Members, but the budget is declining. Thailand fully agrees with the reform of FAO which includes implementation of cost savings measures. To be realistic, it must be noted that a minimum budget level is required in order to maintain the efficiency of the Organization. Therefore,

Thailand urges all parties to work cooperatively and constructively to have a consensus budget. In short, we support a zero real growth budget for 1998-99.

Finally, it is not my intention to address this FAO Conference beyond the five-minute maximum allocated time. I realize that the Chairman and the delegates find it extremely difficult to apply this five-minute suggestion. Therefore, please allow me to propose that FAO consider other alternatives which will enable delegates to deliver their statements successfully, and that the merits of the statements be fully utilized.

Roberto VILLAMBROSA (Argentina)

Permítame en primer lugar, señor Bandoma, expresarle la satisfacción de mi delegación por verlo en la presidencia de esta 29a Conferencia de la FAO. Quiero felicitarlo a Ud. y transmitirle también al Señor Lyle Vanclief mis felicitaciones por su elección como Presidente de esta Conferencia. Quiero dejar también constancia de nuestro apoyo al Director General por los logros obtenidos durante su gestión, y por la permanente contribución que ha tenido para el desarrollo de la agricultura y la cooperación entre los países en desarrollo.

Es para mí un honor compartir con ustedes los puntos de vista argentinos en esta 29a Conferencia de la FAO que espero permitan un intercambio constructivo dado que todos nos encontramos frente a similares desafíos.

Hace tan sólo un año la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación nos permitió llamar la atención sobre las necesidades de más de 800 millones de personas en el mundo que se encuentran en niveles extremos de desnutrición. La Cumbre nos marcó una meta y creemos que, si se toman las medidas adecuadas, existen esperanzas sobre el futuro alimentario de la humanidad, pero para ello necesitamos una creciente cooperación internacional.

La situación de corto plazo demuestra hoy que gracias a las buenas cosechas del año pasado se ha reducido la volatilidad de los mercados. La producción agrícola ha aumentado y se esperan buenas perspectivas a pesar de los fenómenos climáticos y meteorológicos que afectan a las diferentes regiones del mundo, tales como el fenómeno de "El Niño" que todos ustedes bien conocen.

Las existencias mundiales de cereales se encuentran en alrededor de 290 millones de toneladas, el crecimiento de la economía mundial superará el 4,2 por ciento y el comercio internacional, así como el comercio agrícola, se siguen incrementando más rápidamente que la producción, circunstancia que ha sido normal en los últimos años. El mundo se halla integrado hoy más que nunca y los países dependen cada vez más de este comercio como fuente de ingresos y también de suministros.

La integración creciente y la interdependencia de la economía mundial forman parte de esa tendencia a la globalización. Para aumentar la seguridad alimentaria la clave está en profundizar ese proceso de interdependencia entre los países para que cada uno de ellos pueda hacer uso de sus ventajas comparativas.

El comercio de alimentos tiene una importancia vital para la seguridad alimentaria mundial. Mi país se halla firmemente comprometido con el proceso de liberalización comercial puesto que la variedad, la calidad y la seguridad de la alimentación de todos los países aumentará en la medida en que se eliminen las restricciones al comercio.

Debe tenerse presente que se ha pasado de un mercado de administración de excedentes a un mercado donde la demanda ha comenzado a ser dominante y determina en buena parte la estrategia de los países productores porque induce a cambios a lo largo de todo el complejo agroindustrial.

Para erradicar el hambre y lograr la seguridad alimentaria mundial es necesario que los países importadores promuevan una producción interna sostenible utilizando los recursos de producción

y combinándolos con importaciones y reservas para asegurar suministros estables, manteniendo una arancelización y medidas no tarifarias congruentes con esa situación.

Por su parte, los países exportadores, tal como el mío, tienen la responsabilidad de asegurar la oferta a sus socios comerciales.

Comprometido con los resultados y con el espíritu de la Ronda Uruguay, mi país aboga por una rápida implementación de la decisión relativa a las medidas en favor de los países menos adelantados y de los países en desarrollo importadores netos de alimentos. La asistencia financiera, la cooperación técnica y el apoyo para los países que se encuentran en el marco de dichas disposiciones es, a juicio de mi país, imperativa.

Señor Presidente, pese a los avances realizados en el sistema comercial multilateral, el proteccionismo agrícola constituye todavía una realidad generalizada. Nos preocupa que el proceso de arancelización de las restricciones para-arancelarias tuvo como resultante niveles de protección extremadamente altos, como así también las disciplinas en cuanto a acceso mínimo, que no permitieron un sustancial incremento de las oportunidades comerciales. Por otra parte, un alto nivel de escalonamiento arancelario está vigente en los productos manufacturados de origen agrícola y existen dificultades diversas observadas en la implementación de los accesos mínimos comprometidos.

Teniendo en cuenta este marco, la República Argentina apoya firmemente el reinicio de las negociaciones multilaterales sobre agricultura, en consonancia con el Artículo 20 del Acuerdo sobre la Agricultura de la Organización Mundial del Comercio.

Las palabras subsidios, apoyo interno y acceso son vitales en la negociación de una agricultura moderna. Todos los países deben tener presente que los obstáculos sanitarios y fitosanitarios relacionados con el comercio pueden constituirse en más importantes en la medida en que los mercados se liberalizan y tener presente que no se deben adoptar medidas que no son justificables de acuerdo al SPS (Acuerdo Sanitario y Fitosanitario de la Organización Mundial del Comercio). En este sentido, la acción de la FAO debe ser significativa en el marco de la cooperación y la asistencia técnica.

Todo el apoyo sobre el Codex Alimentarius y las negociaciones en este sentido para los países en vías de desarrollo son fundamentales.

Señor Presidente, en general, el crecimiento económico en el largo plazo tiene efectos positivos en términos de reducción de la pobreza, pero no es condición suficiente para disminuir las desigualdades que existen entre los diversos grupos sociales.

Es necesario eliminar cualquier tipo de posible contradicción entre crecimiento y pobreza. El crecimiento económico, al no garantizar por sí solo la disminución de la pobreza, debe estar acompañado de políticas activas en términos de provisión de servicios sociales básicos para que de esta manera el beneficio se distribuya en todos los miembros de la sociedad favoreciendo, en particular, a los más vulnerables. Las políticas de fomento del crecimiento deben garantizar un incremento en la demanda de los servicios de trabajo de los pobres ya que si esto no se da, ellos no se verán favorecidos por el desarrollo.

La ayuda a los grupos sociales que se encuentran en condiciones extremas debe ser inmediatamente implementada, ya que los problemas que se derivan del hambre no permiten que se difiera en el tiempo su solución.

Mi país no sólo desea teorizar sobre el deber-ser sino reseñar brevemente algunas acciones que hemos emprendido y los resultados alcanzados para contribuir a los objetivos señalados en el Plan de Acción de la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación.

En tal sentido, se continúa con la ejecución del Programa Federal para la Reconversión de las Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas Agropecuarias, llamado "Cambio Rural", destinado a fomentar

la reconversión productiva y diversificar la oferta agropecuaria de los pequeños y medianos productores rurales.

El Programa Social Agropecuario asimismo, se orienta a prestar asistencia técnico -financiera y capacitación a pequeños productores minifundistas rurales de todo el país que nuclean alrededor de 24.000 familias pobres para este solo Programa.

Por otra parte, el Programa de Servicios Agrícolas Provinciales (PROSAP) tiene como objetivo el aumento del valor de las exportaciones de los productos agropecuarios para mejorar su calidad y volúmenes de exportación.

Tenemos otro Proyecto de Iniciativas de Desarrollo Rural de Pequeños Productores que alcanza a poblaciones de bajos ingresos y que se dirige a 40.000 familias y comenzará a ejecutarse a partir del próximo año.

Con fondos provenientes del BID y del FIDA se está comenzando a ejecutar un proyecto para otorgar crédito a pequeños productores que incluye asistencia técnica.

Estos y otros proyectos que sería largo enumerar permitirán sostener en el largo plazo el aporte de la República Argentina al aumento de las existencias mundiales de alimentos.

En los últimos años hemos realizado grandes esfuerzos para contribuir a ese aumento. Prueba de ello es que durante el año 1996-97 Argentina alcanzó el récord histórico en cuanto al área sembrada hubicándose en 26 millones de hectáreas, un 15 por ciento superior al siglo anterior y un 27 por ciento respecto al promedio de la última década. Este récord logrado en el área sembrada al que se suma la utilización creciente de tecnología ha dado por resultado el récord de la obtención de la producción de granos, situándose en 53 millones de toneladas, que representa un 38 por ciento por encima del promedio de la última década.

Las exportaciones de granos en el año 1996 crecieron en un 92 por ciento respecto a las de 1990. Asimismo, las ventas de aceite y subproductos en un 43 por ciento y el incremento fue del 62 por ciento.

Señor Presidente, finalmente Argentina presenta muy buenas perspectivas en el comercio mundial de carnes. La reciente declaración de la Organización Internacional de Epizootias de país libre de aftosa con vacunación seguramente ayudará en tal sentido.

Quiero referirme además al sector pesquero donde se ha verificado un aumento del 167 por ciento en las capturas en los últimos diez años. Ese importante crecimiento ha sido acompañado por medidas para la sostenibilidad de los recursos de modo de ser congruentes con las disposiciones internacionales de pesca responsable establecidas por esta Organización.

No sólo nos guían políticas de orden interno sino que también participamos de un enfoque integracionista, prueba de ello es el éxito alcanzado con nuestros socios del MERCOSUR, que nos ha permitido aumentar las posibilidades de emprendimientos conjuntos.

Señor Presidente, la República Argentina es consciente de su responsabilidad y es por eso que mantiene una creciente actividad y cooperación con la FAO, apoya los objetivos del Programa Especial de Seguridad Alimentaria contribuye como donante, como país en desarrollo en otros organismos alimentarios y cuenta con un fondo para la cooperación horizontal que ha permitido numerosos proyectos Sur-Sur.

En cuanto a los aspectos institucionales, entendemos que se debe guardar un adecuado equilibrio entre las actividades normativas y operacionales.

Un presupuesto congruente con estas premisas a las que me he referido, nos va a permitir sustentar las prioridades que hemos establecido y será la mejor demostración que no se han olvidado los ecos cercanos de los compromisos asumidos en la Cumbre.

Por último señor Presidente quiero transmitirle una reflexión personal. Yo nací en el centro de la mayor zona de producción agrícola de la República Argentina, una tierra que contribuye a la

seguridad alimentaria desde hace mucho más de un siglo y medio, desde los albores de nuestra nacionalidad que ha recibido y que ha contribuido a la seguridad alimentaria muchas veces en este siglo cuando esta Europa, que hoy nos acoge, se encontraba en situaciones de penuria y devastada por los conflictos. Acogió en esa oportunidad a una emigración europea que contribuyó al crecimiento de la cultura y al engrandecimiento de nuestro país. Nuestro compromiso con la seguridad alimentaria es con todo el mundo. Ha comenzado desde el comienzo de nuestra nacionalidad y es por eso que lo demostramos, ahora inclusive, como donantes hacia los países en desarrollo.

Jérôme SACCA KINA (Bénin)

C'est pour moi un devoir de saisir la présente occasion d'exprimer, au nom de l'ensemble des populations rurales en lutte constante pour la survie et particulièrement au nom du Gouvernement et du peuple béninois, toute ma gratitude aux instances dirigeantes de la FAO, en l'occurrence à son Directeur général, Monsieur Jacques Diouf, pour les efforts louables et continus qu'il ne cesse de déployer en vue de libérer les populations les plus pauvres des risques permanents de l'insécurité alimentaire. En témoigne le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire lancé en septembre 1994.

En effet, les délégués à la Conférence mondiale de l'alimentation de 1974 avaient exprimé l'espoir que l'insécurité alimentaire, la faim et la sous-alimentation seraient éliminées dans les 10 ans à venir.

Près de 20 ans plus tard, à la Conférence internationale sur la nutrition tenue en 1992, il a été présenté des preuves concrètes que, dans de nombreuses parties du monde, cet espoir n'était pas encore réalisé. Malgré les progrès de l'agriculture, quelque 800 millions d'habitants du monde en développement sont encore trop sous-alimentés pour mener une vie saine et productive.

A l'échelle de la planète, la production de céréales a crû plus vite que la population humaine. La production est passée de 303 à 325 kilogrammes par personne entre 1970 et 1980 et de 325 à 327 kilogrammes seulement entre 1980 et 1990. L'Afrique, notamment subsaharienne, fait exception. La production y a accusé plutôt une baisse, passant de 135 kilogrammes par habitant en 1970 à 114 kilogrammes en 1980 et à 112 en 1990. De ce fait, les importations nettes de céréales de l'Afrique subsaharienne ont fortement augmenté, passant de 3 millions de tonnes en 1970 à 9 millions de tonnes en 1990.

Les causes fondamentales de l'insécurité alimentaire sont la faible productivité de l'agriculture, associée à l'irrégularité des approvisionnements et au faible niveau des revenus.

Pour parvenir à la sécurité alimentaire, un pays doit être autosuffisant en matière de production ou disposer de suffisamment de devises pour pouvoir importer. A cet effet, les gouvernements devront créer un climat politique, social et économique propice à la croissance de l'agriculture. Concrètement, il faudra assurer la paix sociale, adopter des politiques et réglementations appropriées, organiser les services de formation, de vulgarisation et d'information et investir dans la recherche, les routes et l'irrigation.

Il est particulièrement frappant de constater à quel point la production alimentaire a baissé dans les pays qui ont connu des guerres civiles ou d'autres conflits. Entre 1979 et 1981, elle a baissé à raison de 3,1 pour cent au Mozambique, de 1,8 pour cent au Rwanda, de 1,2 pour cent en Haïti, de 5,1 pour cent au Nicaragua, de 2,8 pour cent au Soudan.

En ce qui concerne mon pays, la République du Bénin, l'agriculture occupe une place prépondérante dans l'économie nationale. Elle occupe plus de 70 pour cent de la population active et contribue pour près de 40 pour cent au produit intérieur brut.

Avec une bonne pluviométrie, le Bénin est autosuffisant sur le plan alimentaire. Une abondante production agricole, notamment vivrière, devrait être obtenue au cours de la campagne 1997-98, si les pluies sont réparties de façon adéquate dans le temps et l'espace.

Faut-il le souligner, mon pays a organisé une vaste campagne de promotion agricole au cours de cette année en mettant l'accent sur trois thèmes de sensibilisation :

- la diversification agricole,
- l'intensification agricole;
- la protection de l'environnement à l'aide d'une approche participative.

Le message est bien passé et s'est traduit sur le terrain par un bon équilibre entre les superficies réservées aux cultures vivrières et celles destinées aux cultures de rente.

Dans la perspective d'une amélioration des conditions de vie des populations rurales, les domaines prioritaires de la politique de développement rural de mon pays qui vient d'être élaborée portent sur :

1. le renforcement du rôle de l'Etat dans ses missions et l'amélioration de l'efficacité de son intervention ;
2. la consolidation du rôle des autres acteurs du secteur rural que sont les organisations paysannes, les organisations non gouvernementales et les autres opérateurs privés dans leurs missions respectives ;
3. l'amélioration des services et des infrastructures auxquels les populations ont accès ;
4. l'accroissement des recettes d'exportation afin de compenser la faiblesse du marché intérieur par la diversification, l'amélioration de la productivité et la qualité de la production agricole ;
5. la lutte contre l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle par des actions spécifiques dans les zones et périodes les plus vulnérables ;
6. la garantie de la pérennité du patrimoine écologique national grâce à une gestion durable des ressources naturelles plus soucieuse de la protection de ce patrimoine ;
7. la promotion socio-économique des femmes et des jeunes ;
8. la maîtrise de l'eau ;
9. le financement de l'agriculture.

Pour la mise en oeuvre de cette politique agricole dont les objectifs sont d'élever le niveau de vie des populations et de renforcer la participation du secteur rural au développement socio-économique, le Gouvernement de mon pays s'attache à :

- poursuivre dans la voie de la démocratisation de la vie politique, en vue de la paix, de la stabilité et de la participation de toutes les couches de la population au développement de la nation ;
- poursuivre la réforme économique en cours qui destine une place importante au secteur privé ;
- mettre en oeuvre la décentralisation de l'administration territoriale, après le vote des différentes lois y afférentes par l'Assemblée nationale ;
- oeuvrer dans le sens de contribuer à l'intégration économique sous-régionale et régionale (Conseil de l'entente, Union économique et monétaire Ouest-africaine, Communauté économique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) ;
- intensifier le développement de la coopération sous-régionale et régionale.

Au plan des programmes réalisés ou en cours de réalisation, avec l'appui de nos partenaires au développement, il importe de citer :

- les projets de développement rural en exécution dans chacune des six régions du Bénin;
- le projet d'interventions locales pour la sécurité alimentaire (PILSA) qui couvre tout le territoire en ciblant les zones à déficit vivrier chronique ;
- le projet d'activités génératrices de revenus conçu à l'intention des femmes et des jeunes ruraux;
- la définition du plan directeur et l'élaboration en 1996 de la politique de recherche agricole ;
- la recherche sera régionalisée et réalisée sur la base d'un programme national élaboré avec la participation des utilisateurs ;

- la tenue récente d'un forum national sur la vulgarisation agricole qui a recommandé le développement de la synergie déjà existante entre la recherche, la vulgarisation et les paysans pour répondre aux besoins réels de ces derniers ;
- la lutte contre l'analphabétisme à travers l'institution d'une scolarisation obligatoire, assortie de conditions incitatives pour les filles en particulier ;
- le démarrage dans les tous prochains jours d'un programme d'hydraulique pastorale et agricole;
- le programme de diversification agricole pour augmenter la capacité d'exportation basé sur le renforcement du système national de transformation et de contrôle de la qualité ;
- l'étude des modalités de création d'un fonds de diversification pour faciliter l'accès des agriculteurs au petit crédit ;
- l'élaboration en cours d'une législation foncière.

Comme vous le constatez, mon pays s'est engagé à appliquer progressivement le plan d'action du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation de novembre 1996, avec l'aide de nos partenaires au développement.

C'est le lieu de leur adresser la reconnaissance du Gouvernement et du peuple béninois tout entier et de son Président, Monsieur Mathieu Kérékou.

Enfin, je ne saurais terminer mon intervention sans profiter de l'occasion que m'offre cette 29^{ème} session de la Conférence de la FAO pour informer solennellement tous les pays et organisations ici présents et l'opinion internationale qu'en Afrique de l'Ouest, tout comme en Côte d'Ivoire en 1996, le Bénin, mon pays, vient d'être atteint par la peste porcine africaine qui décime plus de 50 000 têtes de porcs par semaine, dans un pays qui n'en compte que 700 000.

Or s'agissant d'un élevage à cycle court, adapté aux petits éleveurs à faible revenu, ce sous-secteur de l'élevage vient d'être retenu par le Gouvernement parmi les secteurs prioritaires dans son programme d'action.

Un programme d'urgence de lutte contre la peste porcine africaine au Bénin a été élaboré, mais sa mise en oeuvre rapide se trouve entravée par l'insuffisance des moyens matériels et financiers nécessaires. Aussi profitons-nous de cette occasion pour lancer, au nom du Gouvernement et du peuple béninois, un appel à toutes les personnes de bonne volonté qui désirent apporter leur contribution à notre pays pour éradiquer aussi rapidement que possible cette épizootie qui menace déjà certains pays voisins du Bénin.

Je souhaite qu'aucun doute ne viendra entraver les actions que nous menons en faveur de la noble mission de libérer l'humanité de la faim et de l'insécurité alimentaire.

The meeting rose at 11.30 hours.

La séance est levée à 11 h 30.

Se levanta la sesión a las 11.30 horas.

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)

INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE (suite)

INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION (continuación)

6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)

DEBAT GENERAL (suite)

DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)

DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATIONS (suite)

DECLARACIONES DE LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

Paraguay, Uruguay, Slovakia, Nigeria, Cameroon, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, UN Development Programme.

LE PRESIDENT

La séance plénière de cet après-midi du 12 novembre est ouverte. Sont programmés pour prendre la parole les Chefs de mission ou délégués des pays ci-après: le Paraguay, l'Uruguay, la Slovaquie, le Nigéria, le Cameroun et le représentant de la Confédération internationale des syndicats libres ainsi que le représentant du Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement.

En effet, étant donné que la liste des orateurs pour cet après-midi est assez réduite, je propose de permettre au Secrétariat de nous montrer un vidéo qui a été préparé par les services d'information de la FAO. Le vidéo a une durée de 13 minutes et si vous n'avez pas d'objection je demanderai au Secrétariat de prendre les arrangements nécessaires, y a-t-il une objection? Non.

Video Projection

Projection vidéo

Proyección video

Oscar CABELLO SARUBBI (Paraguay)

Señor Presidente, señores Delegados, el programa de nuestro gobierno, en su visión estratégica, reconoce a la alimentación y a la agricultura como elementos fundamentales para el desarrollo y el logro del bienestar común. En el Paraguay, el 49 por ciento de la población del país vive y trabaja en el ámbito rural, la producción agraria es uno de los puntales de nuestra economía, por el suministro de alimentos y por su elevada contribución a las exportaciones, representando en 1996 el 88 por ciento del total exportado. Además, las actividades primarias y de transformación agraria ocupan el 35,4% de la población económicamente activa.

No obstante, el hecho que la población estimada, en 1997 ya supere los 5 millones de habitantes, con una elevada tasa histórica de crecimiento del 3,1 por ciento, la agricultura paraguaya produce suficiente alimentos como para satisfacer la demanda del consumo aparente de energía y actualmente la cantidad de materia prima disponible ya supera en un 20 por ciento los requerimientos nutricionales estimados en el año 1993.

El crecimiento de la oferta bruta de alimentos no se ha visto reflejado de una manera similar sin embargo en la demanda del consumo. La malnutrición es un problema importante en el Paraguay, siendo éste un claro indicador de pobreza. La fragilidad en la seguridad alimentaria, radica fundamentalmente en las oportunidades de trabajo y en la baja cobertura de la educación diferenciada.

El actual escenario paraguayo, a nivel rural, está representado por 250.000 unidades de pequeños productores agrícolas que destinan el fruto de sus esfuerzos tanto al autoconsumo como a la comercialización. Por otra parte, existe otra fracción importante de unas 130.000 familias de campesinos sin tierra y de aproximadamente 100.000 individuos pertenecientes a grupos étnicos nativos que exigen una urgente solución a sus demandas sociales.

El fuerte crecimiento demográfico, los problemas sociales y el notable deterioro de los recursos naturales, pronostican un futuro aún más difícil para las próximas generaciones. La comunidad nacional reconoce con creciente claridad los signos reveladores de este fenómeno reaccionando con una sensibilidad cada vez mayor. Por otra parte, paradójicamente, el éxito económico reposa sobre la continua abundancia de recursos naturales y la disponibilidad y calidad de estos recursos humanos.

La pobreza impone la aplicación de medidas urgentes para su mitigación en el corto plazo, con vista a su gradual solución, sobre todo para controlar y frenar el agravamiento de los indicadores sociales, posibilitando la mejor disposición de alimentos, de ser posible en igualdad de condiciones para todos.

La asistencia alimenticia, la generación de empleo, la atención sanitaria, la educación y la recreación son ingredientes importantes de los planes y proyectos que se vienen ejecutando en el Paraguay. Sin embargo, a pesar de estos esfuerzos, la pobreza rural se amplió y en vastos sectores sociales se profundizó. Según datos del año 1992, casi 7 de cada 10 habitantes vivían en hogares que registran al menos una necesidad básica insatisfecha, mientras que el Índice de Desarrollo Humano (IDH) de 1997 en el Paraguay es de 0,7 por ciento, ocupando la posición 94 entre 175 países del mundo y 24 en América Latina.

Por otro lado, al igual que muchos países, el Paraguay está en la corriente de la globalización económica y en la liberalización del mercado, con un gran potencial de demanda de alimentos de parte de los países que conforman el MERCOSUR.

En este sentido, es importante reconocer que la dinámica de la economía de mercado y la integración regional y global nos obligan a adecuaciones permanentes. Siendo un gran desafío, tanto para el Gobierno como para los actores sociales, la puesta en práctica de estrategias apropiadas para lograr la efectiva participación de los pequeños productores en la economía de mercado.

Por este motivo, el Gobierno Nacional, al diseñar su programa de acción contempla la vigencia plena de la economía de mercado, pero sin perder de vista las exigencias de la equidad y la sustentabilidad, previendo mecanismos de prevención y compensación para los sectores más carenciados y vulnerables de la sociedad.

La casualidad del agravamiento de los índices de pobreza con la instauración de regímenes democráticos, impone una conjunción de esfuerzos públicos y privados con creciente participación de los organismos internacionales, no sólo para controlar la pobreza sino tender a su erradicación. De ahí la plena vigencia de organismos como la FAO, que pueden servir de foros para la coordinación y orientación de la acción de todas las naciones y del Plan de Acción de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación del año pasado.

La seguridad alimentaria no debe ser considerada como un simple ejercicio de sentimentalismo humanitario, sino como una estrategia de fortalecimiento de nuestra estabilidad política y de consolidación de nuestras conquistas democráticas.

El Paraguay valora la ayuda alimentaria recibida en el marco del Programa Mundial de Alimentos, que ha posibilitado la realización de actividades de gran trascendencia social, siendo particularmente importante - por su impacto - el programa de la leche escolar y la recompensa de trabajo por alimentos. Esta última implementada en los asentamientos campesinos.

Las situaciones de crisis impuestas por las invasiones campesinas, provocadas por la necesidad de acceder a la tierra, han dejado una rica experiencia. En efecto, la aplicación del concepto de seguridad alimentaria ha sido uno de los factores decisivos para enfrentarlas positivamente. En este aspecto, es destacable mencionar la cooperativización para la provisión de alimentos, a través del mecanismo de autogestión y autoayuda, entre los campesinos de los nuevos asentamientos rurales, implementados en el Programa de Bienestar Rural del Gobierno.

A nivel de la población rural, en especial en los estratos de pequeños productores constituye una obsesión el arraigo hacia nuevas tierras, siendo éste un mecanismo de seguridad imprescindible para la producción de alimentos destinados al consumo familiar y a la generación de ingresos.

Los programas de acción del Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería prevén la implementación de mecanismos diferenciados para la agricultura empresarial y la agricultura campesina. En este sentido, se informa que un componente importante, dirigido a los más necesitados del sector, constituye la distribución de una gran variedad de semillas y de especies animales, para fomentar el cultivo y la cría de especies que garanticen el consumo familiar. Asimismo, la capacitación en materia de hábitos de consumo y técnicas productivas está siendo priorizada, para lograr el mejoramiento de la nutrición en las familias campesinas. La promoción de los mercados regionales y locales, de manera que se facilite a las comunidades el acceso a los productos agrarios de consumo básico, es otra acción positiva que realiza el Gobierno actualmente.

Valoramos muy especialmente, señor Presidente, la iniciativa que ha tenido el Director General de la FAO, de cooperar con el Paraguay en la formulación de un documento que permita alcanzar metas ambiciosas para el año 2010, entre ellas la de una dieta equilibrada y el aumento de la disponibilidad de alimentos por habitante en un 18 por ciento, esto sería factible de ser alcanzado en 20 años siempre y cuando las condiciones establecidas por los organismos de financiamiento y los grandes mercados de comercialización sean equitativas y no expropiativas.

Finalmente, señor Presidente, deseo aprovechar esta magnífica oportunidad para reiterar que la instalación de una oficina de la FAO en el Paraguay y la presencia de una Asesoría Permanente del Programa Mundial de Alimentos, posibilitarán la cooperación para la identificación y formulación de programas operativos que minimicen la pobreza en que vive un vasto grupo de personas de nuestro país.

Felipe H. PAOLILLO (Uruguay)

Señor Presidente, hace un año, en ocasión de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, el Ministro de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca del Uruguay, señor Carlos Enrique Gasparri, reafirmó el compromiso de nuestro país de participar activamente en el esfuerzo emprendido por la comunidad internacional para terminar con el hambre y la desnutrición en el mundo y, señaló que la forma en que los miembros de esta Organización habían de contribuir a la realización de dicho objetivo, estaba determinada por las particulares realidades económicas, sociales y ambientales de cada región y de cada país. De este modo, el señor Ministro estaba afirmando que, como ocurre en otras áreas de la cooperación internacional, también en la lucha para lograr la seguridad alimentaria para todos, rige el principio de la responsabilidad común, pero diferenciada, ya que cada Estado cumplirá con los compromisos de la Cumbre desde su propia perspectiva y de acuerdo con sus posibilidades reales.

En consonancia con este principio, Uruguay se ha plegado al combate contra el hambre y la desnutrición, comprometiéndose a hacer lo que mejor puede con los medios de que dispone, esto es, procurando aumentar y mejorar su producción agropecuaria, forestal y pesquera, así como las exportaciones de alimentos. Con ello, está cumpliendo un mandato expresamente formulado en la

Declaración de Roma, que prescribe la realización de esfuerzos para “conseguir una mayor producción de alimentos, incluidos los alimentos básicos”, como una de las formas de lograr la seguridad alimentaria mundial.

Con esta finalidad, Uruguay ha continuado y consolidado la política de apertura comercial y, desregulación económica iniciada hace algunos años, política que ha sido acompañada por medidas tendientes a captar inversiones para el sector agropecuario, a tecnificar el sector y a capacitar la población rural a los efectos de aumentar la productividad.

De este modo, el Uruguay intenta, a la vez, resolver los problemas de seguridad alimentaria, a nivel nacional, que se presentan en algunos sectores de la población rural, ya que el aumento de la producción agrícola dinamiza la actividad económica del sector, genera fuentes de trabajo y eleva el nivel de vida del trabajador rural. Además, para hacer frente a estos problemas, se han puesto en marcha varios programas de apoyo y de asistencia a grupos prioritarios dentro del medio rural, financiados, parcial o totalmente, con fondos nacionales, entre los que se pueden mencionar el Programa Nacional de Apoyo al Pequeño Productor Agropecuario, el Programa del Instituto Nacional de Alimentación, que provee servicios alimentarios gratuitos o subvencionados, el Programa para la Erradicación de la Vivienda Insalubre Rural, que ha tenido un éxito considerable en la construcción de viviendas y, el Programa de Alimentación Escolar, que abarca, aproximadamente, 90.000 escolares.

Los resultados de la política nacional de incremento de la producción agropecuaria han sido hasta ahora muy positivos, ya que últimamente se registran considerables aumentos en la mayor parte de los subsectores agropecuarios. Pero las posibilidades de lograr un desarrollo agropecuario estable y duradero dependen, en gran medida, de una serie de factores externos que pueden llegar a constituir serios límites al esfuerzo nacional de desarrollo.

Al respecto, señalamos que la libre comercialización internacional de productos agropecuarios, continúa enfrentando obstáculos debido a la subsistencia de subsidios, barreras no arancelarias y otras formas de proteccionismo. Las cifras que nos proporcionaba en una de las sesiones pasadas el señor Ministro de Nueva Zelanda, son por demás elocuentes: 333.000 millones de dólares EU, transferidos por los países de la OECD, en un solo año, a sus propios agricultores; o sea, 32 veces lo que los países desarrollados dieron en el mismo período a los países en desarrollo, por concepto de asistencia a la agricultura y, con un resultado negativo: el de producir graves distorsiones en el comercio internacional, que perjudican indefectiblemente, siempre, a los productores de los países en desarrollo.

Todo esfuerzo nacional de desarrollo agropecuario está condenado al fracaso si, paralelamente, no se hace lo necesario para asegurar la vigencia de un mercado internacional agropecuario libre, transparente y sin distorsiones. Por eso, el Uruguay espera que, en la nueva ronda de negociaciones agrícolas, programada para el año 1999, los países que recurren a estas prácticas proteccionistas adopten una posición que permita que, en un futuro, se pueda establecer un mercado mundial de productos agropecuarios abierto y competitivo.

Por otro lado, las políticas nacionales de desarrollo agrícola pueden quedar en meros proyectos sin posibilidades de ejecución si no son respaldadas por la disponibilidad de fondos. Aquí también los países desarrollados están llamados a cumplir con sus responsabilidades propias, contribuyendo a financiar el desarrollo, a través de los órganos internacionales competentes. Estas responsabilidades emanan claramente de los compromisos consagrados en la Cumbre. Por eso, preocupa la persistente tendencia hacia la baja de la sumas que destinan los países donantes a la asistencia exterior a la agricultura, según se informa en el documento sobre “Situación Actual de la Agricultura y la Alimentación”, lo cual contradice los objetivos del Plan Acción de “promover medidas encaminadas a acrecentar la afluencia y la eficacia de las inversiones en pro de la seguridad alimentaria”.

También resulta incongruente el hecho de que, poco después de la Cumbre, que asigna a FAO un papel fundamental en la consecución de sus objetivos, los mayores contribuyentes insistan en

rebajar su presupuesto a niveles que harán imposible la realización de una gestión eficaz. El Uruguay entiende que la FAO ha realizado hasta ahora una labor de asistencia, promoción y coordinación muy encomiable y que, ya ha adoptado medidas efectivas para aumentar su eficiencia y realizar economías. Pero esta gestión, esta acción de economizar, tiene un límite, más allá del cual, la capacidad de la Organización de cumplir con sus cometidos, se vería seriamente resentida. El racionalizar su organización y funcionamiento para adaptarlos a los requerimientos de los nuevos tiempos no puede lograrse por el mecanismo simplista y engañoso de reducir aún más su presupuesto. Confiamos en que esta Conferencia opte por la alternativa que limite en menor medida las posibilidades de FAO de seguir cumpliendo con sus fines como lo ha venido haciendo hasta ahora.

Por último, el problema del hambre es, como se sabe, un problema complejo que debe atacarse desde muchos frentes. Por eso, entendemos que debe prestarse especial atención a la elaboración y puesta en vigencia de un contexto jurídico apropiado que, facilite la realización del objetivo de seguridad alimentaria para todos. Varios instrumentos internacionales han sido elaborados en este foro, cuya entrada en vigor para el mayor número de estados constituiría un valioso aporte para la consecución de dicho objetivo. Al respecto, se señala la importancia de la adopción de un instrumento internacional obligatorio, para la Aplicación del Procedimiento de Información y Consentimiento Previos y, la aprobación de las enmiendas a la Convención sobre Protección Fitosanitaria, que, esperamos que esta Conferencia apruebe. Pero además, entendemos que se debe promover la adopción de un instrumento que defina y dé contenido al derecho de toda persona a no padecer hambre y a una alimentación apropiada, que ha sido lo primero que nuestros Gobiernos han reafirmado en la Declaración de Roma.

Lubomir MICEK (Slovakia)

Allow me to address you on behalf of the Slovak Republic, situated in the heart of Europe, and in the name of the Minister of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic, MrPeter Baco.

On this occasion I congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on being appointed as the Chairman of the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference.

We consider this Conference important in the history of the Organization, particularly from the point of view of decisions about the future direction of FAO and its financing.

In connection with the preparations for the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to Dr. Jacques Diouf and to all his collaborators.

The Slovak Republic highly appreciates the activities of the Director-General which have led to a redirection of the programmes of the Organization and have started a gradual implementation of the World Food Summit follow-up.

We would like to mention other positive factors achieved in the FAO Programme such as the specification of the financial discipline of the Member Nations in 1996-97, restructurization measures, as well as support of programmes directed towards maintaining sustainable agriculture, natural resources and rural development on our planet.

In this context, allow me to outline some ideas for the strategic work of FAO connected with the situation in agriculture and the food industry from the point of view of the Slovak Republic.

Developments in the field of agriculture in Slovakia, mainly in the last two years, have shown that with the implementation of Government measures and with the gradual orientation and adaptation of our farmers to the market economy, the impact of the crisis has been significantly slowed down, and the situation is now consolidating gradually. We succeeded in stopping the economic and reproductive decline in agriculture, and the elements of growth revitalization are now present in the development. Inputs to maximize the land's productive capabilities are increasing and the volume for investment to the recovery and modernization of technology and technological processes is gradually rising.

The Slovak Republic evaluates the cooperation and influence of the Food and Agriculture Organization in the last biennium in a positive manner. Provision of technical assistance within the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme and Intergovernmental Programme led to adoption of selected problems connected with the transformation of agriculture and integration efforts in the Slovak Republic. I assume that, like Slovak Republic, other countries in the Sub-region of Central and Eastern Europe, will appreciate FAO's orientation in providing technical assistance to solve the current problems of agriculture in the countries in transition to a market economy in its newly-outlined programme.

In this connection, the Government of the Slovak Republic has offered to the FAO Director-General, the use of its educational institutions and universities with an agricultural specialization for the development of human resources in developing countries. The Slovak Republic is also interested in continuing the tradition of acting as a Host Country for FAO activities.

I would like to express support to FAO for the creation of a forum for international consultations of strategists, technicians and scientists, whose wisdom I had an opportunity to avail myself of in the recent FAO European Commission on Agriculture in October 1997 held in Nitra, Slovak Republic.

In spite of the difficult financial situation, the Slovak Republic will support the adoption of such a budget that will ensure the mandate of FAO and its programme activities.

The Slovak Republic has already expressed its support for the budget level during the Eighty-eighth Session of the Finance Committee in September of this year. I conclude my presentation by expressing the hope that the negotiations on this topic will lead to a consensus.

Muhammadu A. GAMBO JIMETA (Nigeria)

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving me the floor. Let me join the previous speakers to congratulate you and the Vice-Chairmen on your well deserved election, and the manner in which you have been conducting this meeting so far. The Nigerian delegation is confident that under your able leadership, the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference will be one of the most successful sessions. May I also commend the Secretariat for the excellent and comprehensive documents made available to us. May I also commend the Director-General, Mr Jacques Diouf, for his foresight and various initiatives which include special programmes in support of food security, the historic World Food Summit and TeleFood - the first global television appeal to the general public to raise funds for food security projects and activities.

The Director-General has presented to us for consideration a most reasonable and comprehensive budget proposal for the 1998-99 biennium. One year after the historic Summit, the Organization has a lot to do in terms of follow-up activities and the technical support programmes, especially as regard less-developed Member Nations. The Nigerian delegation supports the Programme of Work and Budget, and the real growth proposals for the 1998-99 biennium at the level of US\$ 675.3 million, and endorses the 1998-2003 Medium-Term Plan. Nigeria also endorses in principle the revision of General Regulations of the World Food Programme (WFP).

The Nigerian delegation was delighted to read the impressive food production report for 1996 as contained in the State of Food and Agriculture for Africa, particularly that of Africa south of the Sahara. However, the 1997 prospects cast a gloomy shadow. Further, assistance to Africa and food aid flow have been on the decline, while no significant progress towards debt reduction and debt relief have been recorded. The globalization of the economy is not therefore compatible with the situation and trend in the developing countries. With such a situation, there is hardly any guarantee for peace, stability and economic development. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has been functioning for two and a half years, but the benefits to developing countries, which had been projected before now are hardly evident. We believe therefore that developing countries should move cautiously into trade liberalization, especially in agriculture. We call for multilateral negotiations on agricultural trade with a view to addressing the imbalance.

May I also briefly comment on some of the other items on the agenda before us. The establishment of a legally-binding instrument to guide implementation of the voluntary Prior Informed Consent is highly welcomed. The instrument, once decided upon should be able to arrest the indiscriminate trade of hazardous chemicals and pesticides between developing and developed countries. Nigeria therefore endorses the participation of the FAO Secretariat in the Interim Secretariat.

On the standards for plant quarantine harmonization, we have examined the document and found all issues raised therein satisfactory and in agreement with our comments already submitted to the Secretariat. However, developing countries may have resource constraints for the implementation of specific surveys and some of the other requirements. Therefore, FAO and other donor organizations should provide technical and financial assistance.

The rapid expansion of both rainfed and irrigation farming makes it possible for pests to abound all the year round, causing heavy losses to agriculture. The major pest of economic importance in West Africa is the quelea bird. The highly migratory nature of this pest puts it beyond the control capability of the ordinary farmer or individual governments in the developing countries. FAO should, as a matter of urgency, set up a sub-regional monitoring and control organization (similar to OCLALAV) to ensure a concerted action for its control.

My delegation wishes to comment on FAO's report carried in the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) for July/August 1997. Because of the complete deregulation of fertilizer market, including the complete withdrawal of subsidies and tax-free fertilizer imports, small farmers who produce the bulk of Nigeria's food crops will not have access to them. As a matter of fact, before the complete elimination of subsidies on fertilizers, the commodity had become currency with the middlemen enjoying the benefits of the subsidy. In the past, fertilizer sold at twice the value of its market price due to shortage and hoarding. Today, the farmer has the choice to buy fertilizer where and when he wishes. The Government has put in place alternative assistance mechanisms for the farmers. It is providing the financial requirements for the farmers to have access to all necessary inputs, including fertilizers. It must, however, be noted that for any major policy change there must be transitional difficulties to overcome.

Let me briefly highlight the efforts of Nigeria in attaining food security. The Government of Nigeria recently put in place a high-powered Committee to develop projections up to the year 2010. Food and agriculture as enunciated in the Vision 2010 agrees with both the World Food Security Declaration, and the Plan of Action aims at making Nigeria not only food-secure, but also an economically-and politically-stable and prosperous nation.

To harness the enormous surface and underground water resources, Nigeria is pursuing the development of water resources for the provision of potable water to improve health and the development of irrigation facilities to enhance dry season farming and to boost food output. The Fadama (flood plains) Development Programme which utilizes sub-surface water for irrigation through sinking of washbores is also receiving adequate attention, and the Programme is making a tremendous contribution to food production in the nation.

Furthermore, to improve the rural economy, the Government has put in place the Family Economic Advancement Programme targeted at both women and rural youth (FEAP). The Programme is facilitating the establishment up of productive cottage industries that will utilize the enormous labour and local resources and locally-fabricated simple tools and equipment available in the rural areas. It also results in enhanced household income to enable the people to have access to food, health, education, etc. The Programme provides generous cash loans, machinery and equipment to identified groups and rural economic activities.

As we move towards the end of the century, the international community should in the spirit of the World Food Summit declaration rededicate itself, build up the courage, and have a greater political and economic will to bring about equity in development and eventual food security for all humanity.

Michael TABONG KIMA (Cameroon)

On behalf of my delegation, let me first congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on your election. I also wish to congratulate the Director-General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf, the staff of FAO and the Government of Italy for all the arrangements made towards the organization of the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. My congratulations also go to Mr José Ramón López Portillo, Independent Chairman of the FAO Council who has diligently and successfully served our Organization, FAO, over the past years. We believe that, under your able Chairmanship and with the concerted efforts of the parties here present, the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference shall, in the end, give more strength to FAO in meeting the aspirations of the world's poor and hungry.

One year ago in November 1996 most of us present here today were on these very premises participating in the World Food Summit organized by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the conclusion of which was the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action. We all expressed concern at the staggering population of 800 million malnourished people, and so promised to halve this figure by the year 2015. One year is too early to appreciate how far we have individually as nations or collectively advanced in attaining this objective. The fact is that malnutrition and poverty still remain a threat to world peace and security.

Agriculture, in its broadest terms (crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry) is the mainstay of the economies of most developing countries, Cameroon included. Cameroon, with a population of well over 14 million people, is conscious of the fact that positive economic growth is inseparable from improved agricultural performance, both of which are essential ingredients towards poverty reduction and better nutrition. (continues in French)

Le développement de l'agriculture et l'amélioration des conditions de nutrition des populations constituent une priorité pour le gouvernement de mon pays. Le Président de la République, son Excellence, Monsieur Paul Biya, vient de le réaffirmer dans son programme d'action à la suite de sa récente réélection à la tête de l'Etat.

Le gouvernement de mon pays apprécie hautement le Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire, lancé par la FAO. Nous venons d'achever la phase de formulation du PSSA. (continue en anglais)

The reforms we, in developing countries, are making with concomitant sacrifices need to be strengthened by the timely interventions of FAO, because our economies are plagued with dwindling financial resources, while facing fierce competition on the global market. In an uneven playing field, sloping steeply from the Northern to the Southern hemisphere, while we in the South are liberalizing the agricultural sector and removing subsidies on inputs, certain partners in the North are still protective of their farming populations and, to worsen matters, dump their food surpluses on the South. (continues in French)

En effet, malgré les contraintes auxquelles nous sommes confrontés, à savoir l'insuffisance de la maîtrise de l'eau dans certaines régions, l'insuffisance des ressources financières et les fléaux naturels périodiques tels que les invasions des criquets, les inondations, la sécheresse, plusieurs actions sont entreprises en faveur des populations rurales en général pour un développement durable. Nous pouvons citer parmi celles-ci :

- un vaste programme national d'appui à la vulgarisation et la formation agricole (PNVFA),
- la mise en place d'un fonds d'investissement pour micro-réalisations agricoles communautaires ;
- un projet pilote de crédit rural décentralisé.

En outre, un projet d'appui aux stratégies paysannes dans le cadre de la professionnalisation de l'agriculture a été conçu et mis en place.

Nous espérons réaliser tous ces actes et initiatives par nos propres moyens et avec l'assistance de nos pays amis dont certains nous ont déjà apporté leur concours dans la recherche des solutions aux problèmes de la dette, conformément à l'engagement du plan d'action du Sommet mondial. Et à ceux-là, nous disons merci. (continue en Anglais)

In a global economy, improving agricultural economies of developing countries through the interventions of FAO is of paramount importance. FAO, however, needs the financial resources to fulfil its mandate. Therefore, any tendency towards further drastic budgetary cuts within FAO may result in compromising the hopes of the 400 million people and more, we promised last year to free from hunger and malnutrition by the year 2015. My delegation therefore affirms that the right to proper nutrition is a fundamental human right, and that the *raison d'être* of FAO since 1945 is still valid and should be sustained.

In concluding, while we deploy our material and scientific efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition in the world, allow me to prescribe a short prayer that I believe will continue to boost our bio-computers: whenever we sit down comfortably to enjoy a rich and nourishing meal: "Our Highest Power above, at this very moment, somewhere in your world, some people have abundant food but they have no appetite, while some have no food yet abundant appetite. Here I do have both and I thank you Father. Guide me, not to eat too much and to remember that there are many that have none or so much. Thank you my Highest Power".

Ms Teresa GUICCIARDI (Observer for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions)

The ICFTU and the IUF welcome the opportunity to address the the Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference. We want to use this opportunity to address two specific issues on the agenda of the Conference - the World Food Summit and its follow-up and the negotiations for a legally binding instrument on Prior Informed Consent (PIC).

As we said at the Summit and will repeat here, we believe that the issue of food security cannot be addressed without also addressing the needs of workers in agriculture who remain amongst the poorest of the poor. This is one of the greatest injustices - those who feed the world are least able to feed themselves.

For many agricultural workers the lack of food security is linked to the continuing denial of fundamental rights set out in International Labour Conventions. Freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, an end to forced labour, freedom from discrimination in employment and an end to child labour are an integral aspect of food security. Without the right to organize, farmworkers are unable to secure the working and living conditions which would allow them to feed themselves and their families. Nor are they able to effectively assist governments in formulating food policy.

It is crucial that in the follow-up to the Summit agricultural and food workers, through their national, regional and international trade union organizations, are involved in developing government policy. Their expertise and the contribution they can make to solving the problems of world hunger cannot be overestimated.

It is no coincidence that in an industry with such low wages, there is also a high incidence of child labour. Accurate statistics on child labour are elusive but International Labour Office estimates in a number of developing countries put the rate of economically-active children at 10 percent of the economically-active population. Seventy percent of these children are engaged in agriculture. These children work not just on family holdings, but also on large-scale commercial farms and plantations. They often do heavy dangerous work.

Last month's International Conference on Child Labour (Oslo, October 23-25) recognized that child labour is both a consequence and a cause of poverty, and that strategies for poverty reduction are needed to address the root cause of child labour. Increasing the incomes of

farmworkers and disadvantaged farmers would be a major step forward in the struggle against child labour.

Agriculture also remains one of the most dangerous industries to work in. Fatalities are high, dangerous pesticides are a constant threat to the health of workers and communities. The WHO estimates that there are between two and five million cases of pesticide poisoning each year, of which 40 000 are fatal.

It is therefore very timely that the FAO and other United Nations Agencies are working on upgrading the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedures to a Convention. PIC is a major instrument against the dumping in developing countries of pesticides banned in the developed world. But we have a number of concerns about the current negotiations: first, the PIC will be developed in such a way that the number of pesticides that it targets will be too limited. Secondly, trade considerations will override key areas of the Convention and thirdly, that the on-going role of NGOs in the PIC Convention is being threatened, as some governments wish to refuse NGOs the right to attend meetings of the subsidiary body as observers. On the positive side, we welcome the recognition that developing countries will need support in implementing PIC, and that countries exporting PIC chemicals will give notification of exports on an annual basis. Once a chemical is in the PIC procedure, importing governments will have the right to ask for annual notifications from all exporters.

On the general issues coming out of the World Food Summit we recommend that action be taken on four key issues: the implementation of minimum labour, social and environmental standards; implementation of an effective international regulatory regime for the activities of TNC; monitoring of the social and environmental impact of international trade and investment; and increased Official Development Assistance support to programmes aimed at improving the earning capacity of agricultural workers and small farmers.

For the international trade union movement, it is clear that fundamental human needs take precedence over economic "imperatives", as defined by transnational corporations and governments who ally themselves with such corporate interests. The goal of any sane and responsible player in the world economy must be to achieve, at a minimum, global food security and sustainable development, and a society where those who feed the world are able to afford to feed themselves and to work in conditions of dignity.

Evlogui BONEV (Observer for United Nations Development Programme)

I am addressing you on behalf of the Administrator of UNDP, Mr James Gustave Speth, who extends his best wishes for the success of your important tasks.

This is a year of change for the United Nations. The Secretary General's reform package "Track Two", launched in July, is far-reaching and impressive. UNDP strongly supports the measures proposed by the Secretary General, and looks forward to its role in making the United Nations more efficient and effective.

The Secretary General has often underlined that the United Nations operations at the country level are of paramount importance. In his meeting with members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) on 29 July 1997, the Secretary General made some points regarding the Group, which the Administrator shared with the UNDP Executive Board at its Third Regular Session in September 1997. He noted that for years Member Nations have impressed upon the United Nations the importance of ensuring greater coordination and coherence in development operations. The Secretary General stated that the United Nations would have a single representative at the country level, in the form of the Resident Coordinator. With its long-standing legislative mandate in that regard, UNDP would also continue to fund and manage the Resident Coordinator system.

The Secretary General cited a number of significant improvements in the functioning of the Resident Coordinator system in recent years. In this context, the Administrator of UNDP underscored his continuing commitment to ensuring that the system is made even more effective

and that it is supportive of the aspirations and objectives of the individual funds and programmes, as well as of the United Nations System as a whole.

While the General Assembly continues to discuss the reform measures proposed by the Secretary General, some measures have already been taken by the United Nations Development Group. Guidelines have been issued for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which will begin on a pilot basis in several countries. At the present time, the initial membership of UNDAF includes United Nations funds and programmes. Specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions are encouraged to join in the preparation of the UNDAF. Donor organizations, civil society, NGOs and professional groups can be invited to participate as appropriate. Government support and participation is vital. The Resident Coordinator is requested, in the guidelines, to ensure that the concerns of Agencies not represented in a country, or operating there without a team member, are properly reflected in the UNDAF preparation process. The Resident Coordinator is thus requested to inform all organizations of the intended process and invite their inputs, within certain time limits. Furthermore, the Administrator instructed all Resident Coordinators as follows: "At all times, give priority to the success and support of the United Nations System. As Resident Coordinator, represent all United Nations system partners fairly, equitably, and well, including those not present in the country. Keep your two main roles - UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator - clearly distinct".

Many countries support, and are moving towards, institutionalizing the "United Nations House". Plans for common premises have been accelerated and much effort has been devoted to strengthening the Resident Coordinator system. That includes improved procedures for the selection and the performance appraisal of Resident Coordinators and technical support to them.

I should like to say a few words about the internal process of change in UNDP. The Executive Board approved the change management process in UNDP in May 1997. The change process is aimed at improving the level and quality of services and the strengthening of the overall impact of development on programme activities undertaken by UNDP. Major facets of the process are decentralization of decision-making and responsibilities to the country level and enhanced accountability measures. Naturally, the change process in UNDP is undertaken within the ongoing process of wider United Nations reform. The legislation emphasizes the importance of core resources as the foundation of UNDP's resource base. With regard to decentralization, the Board supported the phased introduction of a small number of sub-regional resource facilities to provide technical expertise on a regional basis. The groundwork for establishment of the first round of the sub-regional resource facilities was completed in July. It is expected that the first new facilities will be in place in early 1998.

In the context of both United Nations reform and UNDP's internal reform, the aim is to provide better service to meet the needs of programme countries, and, in so doing to strengthen its partnership with the Specialized Agencies in pursuance of the same aims.

To conclude, UNDP and FAO have a long history of cooperation for the benefit of the developing countries. All of you are well aware of it, and I am not going to dwell on it.

We are now looking forward to our future important common tasks and we, from our side, will make every effort to further enhance our cooperation.

LE PRESIDENT

Voici une journée chargée qui prend fin en attendant demain à 9 h 30. Reposez-vous bien, vous l'avez mérité; il ne reste plus qu'à vous dire la formule traditionnelle "la séance est levée".

The meeting rose at 15.50 hours.

La séance est levée à 15 h 50.

Se levanta la sesión a las 15.50 horas.

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)**INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE** (suite)**INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION** (continuación)

6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)**DEBAT GENERAL** (suite)**DEBATE GENERAL** (continuación)**STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS** (continued)**DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION** (suite)**MANIFESTACIONES POR LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES** (continuación)

India, Sénégal, Perú, Tunisie, Arménia, Guatemala, Burundi, Roumanie, Panamá, Gambia, Eritrea, Israel

CHAIRMAN

I'd like to say that the delegation of Israel will submit its statement for insertion in the Verbatim Records. Turkey has also requested the Right of Reply at the end of this meeting.

Kamal PANDE (India)

On behalf of the Government of India I extend to you my warmest greetings. I feel confident that under your able Chairmanship, the deliberations of the Conference will be fruitful and rewarding. I offer to the Vice-Chairman my hearty felicitations on their election and also congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan on its admission as a Member of FAO and wish its people all success and prosperity.

We all recall that at the World Food Summit, organized by FAO in November 1996, we had pledged our will and national commitment to the continuing efforts for the eradication of hunger in all countries. Still today there are almost eight hundred million people suffering from under-nutrition. FAO has made commendable efforts towards addressing problems of food security and evolving a global strategy for ensuring food security for both present and future generations. I congratulate the Organization for raising the issues of food security at the highest level and bringing it to the forefront of the international agenda. I would like to assure you of our unfailing support for these endeavours.

Over the years, India has made significant advances in the field of agriculture. Our country has not only become self-sufficient in foodgrains and acquired the necessary resilience to withstand periods of difficulty, but has also been exporting surpluses. The total foodgrains production has quadrupled since the nineteen fifties and has now reached the level of nearly 200 million tons. We have also made significant progress in the horticultural and fisheries sectors. India has a vast potential for growing a large variety of horticultural crops, fruits, vegetables, flowers and spices. We are today the foremost in the production of fruits and have become the second largest producers of vegetables in the world. We have an extensive coastline and the production of fish has increased from 7.5 million tons to 50 million tons during the last five decades. Noteworthy

progress has similarly been recorded in the field of milk production, which has risen to approximately 69 million tons, making India the second largest producer of milk in the world.

Most of our advances have been rendered possible by the outstanding work carried out by the vast network of our agricultural research and extension institutions which were built over the last 50 years. Our efforts have been supported by the development of expertise in diverse areas of agriculture such as land analysis and use, irrigation, watershed management and the provision of critical inputs such as improved varieties of high-yielding seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, farm mechanization, access to credit and post-harvest management. Our farmers have shown a tremendous spirit of enterprise and a commendable ability to adopt the latest techniques in agricultural practices.

Irrigation is an important need of developing countries which have vast areas dependent on rainfall. A clear and definite strategy needs to be evolved by FAO to assist measures aimed at harvesting and conservation of water and efficient on-farm water management. What India requires right now is a second Green Revolution in order to extend the benefits that have enriched the 30 percent irrigated area to the remaining 70 percent. In India large tracts of potentially arable land are lying unutilized. Putting them to productive use must form an essential component of the strategy for increasing agricultural production. I request FAO to assist us in formulating suitable schemes. Fertilizer consumption in our country has increased to 15 million tons from merely 5 million tons in the 1950s. The per hectare fertilizer consumption has risen from just about half a kilogram to 75 kg. in the last 45 years. Financial assistance is being provided to farmers for acquiring agricultural implements, plant protection equipment, purchases of tractors and drip-irrigation systems. Our rural credit system is being restructured to double the flow of credit to agriculture and agro-industries, particularly to benefit small and marginal farmers. Agro-processing, marketing and value addition to agricultural produce are factors that have also contributed to increased incomes.

All these achievements notwithstanding, we still have many things to do and many issues to address. The major problem being faced by developing countries is the need to increase productivity, particularly in the context of the removal of quantitative restrictions. The developed countries should also assist in the creation of markets and must not merely exploit the existing ones. India is more than willing to do what it can to assist the cause of food security in less developed countries. It might not have financial resources, but has an abundance of human capital, talent, expertise and experience which it is willing to pool and share with countries in need.

Quantitative national level sufficiency is one aspect and food security for everyone is quite another. It is in this context that the cause of food security has to be taken up. Food security essentially means assuring to all human beings physical and economic access to all basic needs. This implies three different aspects, namely, physical availability of food items, stability in prices and, purchasing power in the hands of the people. It is economic access to food which is more relevant today for the vast majority of the population. Recognizing the fact that availability of foodgrains is an essential element but not a sufficient condition for food security, we are implementing several poverty alleviation and employment generation schemes. The Government of India is also implementing other schemes under which nutritional meals are provided to school children.

I take this opportunity to express our support to the Director General's laudable initiative for the expansion of the Special Programme for Food Security. We are contemplating the creation of an International Fund for Cooperation in Agriculture under which agricultural assistance would be provided to Low-Income, Food-Deficit Countries. India has already agreed to participate in this Programme by providing agricultural assistance to Eritrea. We accept that Governments alone cannot tackle the issue of food security and extra resources are required for the implementation of this Programme. We wish all success to the recently-launched "TeleFood" venture for inviting

contributions from countries, private individuals and business to help augment the efforts to overcome problems of poverty and food insecurity.

May I suggest that as part of the Organization's efforts for mobilizing funds, you could consider declaring a Flag Day for the FAO along the lines of the International Red Cross. This would help generate awareness of issues relating to food and agriculture and also encourage liberal contributions to schemes meant for the eradication of poverty.

Yours is an organization that has worked in close collaboration with the family of nations giving us valuable assistance in developing our technologies and establishing fruitful collaborative relationships. Under your able guidance the Organization has, in recent times, embarked on a number of initiatives designed to assist us in coming to terms with the rapid changes in the external environment caused by the phenomena of globalization and deregulation. In a market-driven world, dominated by a paradigm of intense competition new demands are being made on the agricultural sectors and the farmers dependent upon it, in various countries. Withdrawing of quantitative restrictions and other trade-related impositions have created a situation where the farming community, particularly the segment comprising small and marginal farmers, who are resource-poor, is facing an uncertain future. We look to you to be our advocate in other international fora and to protect us and the underprivileged sections of our farming communities from the onslaught of unbridled market forces. We have little doubt that with your assistance we shall be able to seek, and secure, the justice due to us.

Robert SAGNA (Sénégal)

C'est toujours avec beaucoup de plaisir que ma délégation et moi-même, au nom du Sénégal, prenons part aux assemblées générales de notre Organisation dont les nobles objectifs visent à améliorer la sécurité alimentaire et accroître la production dans le monde.

C'est précisément dans cette dynamique que ma délégation inscrit sa participation à cette Conférence, en vue notamment de partager ses expériences en matière d'agriculture et d'alimentation avec le reste du monde et contribuer ainsi efficacement à la réalisation des aspirations légitimes de nos populations respectives à la paix, au bonheur et à la sécurité.

Qu'il me soit tout d'abord permis, à l'instar des orateurs qui m'ont précédé, de vous féliciter pour votre élection à la présidence des travaux de notre assemblée. J'associe à ces félicitations tous les membres de votre Bureau. Vos hautes qualités d'homme d'Etat et votre longue expérience des questions agricoles contribueront, à n'en point douter, au succès de nos travaux. Qui plus est, votre grand pays, le Canada, est parmi les Etats les plus sensibles aux souffrances des populations des pays les plus pauvres. Aussi pourrez-vous compter, dans l'accomplissement de vos tâches, sur la collaboration totale de la délégation sénégalaise.

Je tiens également à féliciter le Président indépendant du Conseil, Son Excellence José Ramón López Portillo, pour avoir dirigé le Conseil avec une compétence et une sagesse largement reconnues. Nous savons que la FAO continuera toujours à bénéficier de son expérience et de ses compétences.

Notre Conférence se tient à un moment crucial de l'évolution du monde, marqué par d'importantes initiatives pour impulser les mutations nécessaires à l'entrée de l'humanité dans le 21ème siècle.

C'est ainsi que vont être prises pour les années à venir de grandes décisions et déjà nos chefs d'Etat, réunis à Libreville dans le cadre des échanges et relations ACP et Union européenne, ont scellé un pacte de solidarité avec l'Union européenne. Aujourd'hui, notre Conférence ne pouvait être mieux servie que par un hôte aussi remarquable et prestigieux que le Président, Son Excellence Monsieur El Hadji Omar Bongo dont le message de haute portée politique prononcé dans cette même salle, le 11 novembre 1997, lors de la traditionnelle Conférence McDougall, doit inspirer nos présentes délibérations. De même, il est très réconfortant que le Gouvernement

américain ait envisagé d'initier des aménagements de sa politique commerciale, en vue d'ouvrir son marché extérieur à l'Afrique.

C'est également dans le même esprit qu'il convient de comprendre la conclusion des processus importants qui ont constitué Sahel 21 et Coopération 21, en marge du dernier Sommet des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des pays membres du Comité inter-Etats de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel, et qui ont permis de conclure un pacte de solidarité entre le Sahel et les partenaires du Nord.

Enfin, il me plaît d'évoquer la tenue, il y a à peine un mois, ici même au siège de la FAO, de la première Conférence des Etats parties à la Convention sur la désertification, pour me féliciter des importantes décisions prises à cette occasion. Parmi celles-ci, je cite notamment le choix de la ville de Bonn pour abriter le Secrétariat permanent de ladite Convention, la désignation du FIDA pour accueillir, en étroite collaboration avec la Banque mondiale et le PNUD, le mécanisme global de financement créé à cet effet, et l'honneur fait à mon pays de recevoir la deuxième Conférence des Etats parties à cette Convention.

L'analyse de la situation mondiale de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture indique une légère augmentation dans les pays riches mais une décroissance notable dans beaucoup de pays en développement. L'Afrique va connaître, notamment dans les pays du Sahel, un déficit alimentaire important. Déjà, en 1997, sur 29 pays ayant besoin d'aide alimentaire exceptionnelle ou d'urgence, plus de la moitié sont situés en Afrique.

Ceci intervient au moment où les engagements des donateurs bilatéraux et multilatéraux en faveur de l'agriculture ont diminué légèrement.

Il s'y ajoute que la plupart des indicateurs de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale font apparaître un écart grandissant entre pays pauvres et pays riches.

C'est donc le lieu de rappeler l'engagement pris par tous les pays membres de notre Organisation ici même, en novembre 1996, de ramener d'ici l'an 2015 le nombre de ceux qui souffrent de la faim de 800 à 400 millions de personnes.

C'est également l'occasion pour moi d'exhorter les pays du monde à plus de solidarité, dans le cadre d'une coopération renforcée et dans un esprit de partenariat pour répondre aux aspirations légitimes des populations démunies.

C'est pour faire face à ces défis multiples et répondre au mieux à toutes ces sollicitations, que la FAO a engagé un processus de restructuration visant à améliorer la qualité des services rendus en décentralisant, rationalisant et en simplifiant ces méthodes et ces programmes. Ceci a permis de réaliser des économies substantielles.

Permettez-moi, à ce stade, de féliciter le Directeur général de la FAO, ainsi que tout le personnel de l'Organisation pour leur dévouement et les sacrifices énormes auxquels ils font face quotidiennement pour remplir leur mission.

Un tel processus de restructuration se heurte nécessairement aux limites qu'impose à l'Organisation la prise en charge entière d'un mandat que nous lui avons tous assigné.

Afin d'impulser la réalisation des engagements pris lors du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, la FAO, avec notre accord, a initié, en collaboration avec les pays, la mise en oeuvre du Programme spécial pour la sécurité alimentaire avec des programmes particuliers, notamment au niveau des pays les plus pauvres, pour réduire les déficits vivriers.

A ce propos, je voudrais rendre ici un hommage solennel aux Gouvernements vietnamien, italien et à la FAO pour la conduite d'un programme conjoint au niveau de mon pays le Sénégal.

Un des points importants inscrits à l'ordre du jour de notre Conférence porte sur l'examen du budget de notre Organisation pour le biennium 1998-99. Bien que ce point puisse être examiné par la Commission II, ma délégation souhaite qu'à défaut d'un accord formel sur un niveau de

budget conforme au schéma de croissance réelle, un consensus soit trouvé pour accepter la proposition de croissance réelle zéro, de manière à ne pas compromettre irrémédiablement les capacités de notre Organisation à assumer les missions que nous lui avons confiées.

Dans la brillante déclaration introductive, le Directeur général a invoqué des arguments pertinents qui justifient pleinement ce consensus auquel, j'en suis persuadé, les pays membres ne manqueront pas de s'associer.

A cet égard, nous devons tous méditer sur l'appel à la solidarité internationale accrue lancé par Sa Sainteté le Pape Jean-Paul II et les illustrations faites dans sa déclaration par le Directeur général de la FAO. Il s'agit de contribuer à sauver de la pauvreté, de la malnutrition et de la faim plusieurs centaines de millions d'hommes, de femmes et d'enfants.

Ce choix, mon pays, le Sénégal, l'a déjà fait et démontré aussitôt après le Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, car le Président Abdou Diouf a pris la décision de consacrer 1997 à la relance de l'agriculture au Sénégal, de manière à accroître la production alimentaire dans mon pays.

Ce programme vise à assurer aux paysans un meilleur accès aux facteurs de production, notamment aux semences, aux engrais et au matériel agricole.

Dans le même temps une mesure importante de défiscalisation du matériel agricole a été prise et mise en oeuvre.

Pour terminer, je souhaite que la FAO, notre Organisation commune, continue d'être un creuset de solidarité constamment renforcée entre pays pauvres et pays riches afin de contribuer de manière concrète à l'édification d'un monde de paix, de justice et de démocratie.

Paul PAREDES PORTELLA (Perú)

Señor Presidente, distinguidos delegados, constituyo para mí un honor dirigirme a ustedes a fin de exponer nuestros puntos de vista, siempre con un espíritu constructivo que busca asegurar a la FAO el lugar que le corresponde en el sistema multilateral, sobre todo ahora que nos encontramos en el momento histórico del denominado mundo aldea.

Felicito a usted, señor Lyle Vanclief, por su elección como Presidente de la Conferencia. Dejo constancia del reconocimiento del Perú a la labor desempeñada por el señor José Ramón López Portillo, Presidente del Consejo que termina su mandato. Señalo nuestro apoyo al señor Director General Jacques Diouf en su gestión en la FAO, así como a la Secretaría.

Señor Presidente, de manera liminar deseo invocar la atención de los señores delegados acerca de la situación de incertidumbre que trae consigo el fenómeno de "El Niño", el mismo que viene afectando al Perú y a una serie de países ribereños de la Cuenca del Océano Pacífico y cuyas connotaciones a nivel mundial tienen visos preocupantes.

El Gobierno del Presidente Alberto Fujimori -que ha fijado la meta de sembrar 100 millones de árboles este año-, está tomando drásticas medidas con el fin de contrarrestar los efectos negativos de "El Niño" que inciden en la agricultura. De momento tenemos serios cambios climatológicos, una situación de sequía en la sierra sur, mientras que las precipitaciones se han incrementado ostensiblemente, en especial, en la costa norte de nuestro país, afectando las características de la biomasa del mar peruano.

En razón de lo anterior, es que proponemos que, más allá de las investigaciones que viene efectuando a la FAO y que todos conocemos, se considere en el seno de la Organización la puesta en marcha de programas regionales destinados a contrarrestar los efectos negativos de "El Niño", así como para promover el desarrollo agropecuario de los diferentes países involucrados por este fenómeno.

Otro aspecto inicial, se refiere a las membresías en los órganos de la FAO. Aquí, debo dejar constancia que para mi delegación resulta muy positivo el hecho que luego de 52 años se haya alcanzado un consenso en el GRULAC. Ello muestra la voluntad política de nuestros gobiernos

por hacer prevalecer los intereses de la región y de la FAO en su conjunto, con la aplicación de principios rectores como la rotación y la distribución geográfica en la membresía de los puestos.

Dicho esto, mi delegación tratará tres temas de la Agenda de la Conferencia General.

En primer término deseo referirme al seguimiento de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación. En este sentido, creo que es necesario que de manera directa consideremos qué es lo que la Organización va a efectuar como seguimiento de la Cumbre.

Observamos con pesar que, de un lado, el tema seguridad alimentaria está priorizado en los programas y presupuesto de 1998-99, y que, de otro, se propone para el mismo período un presupuesto que no absuelve los requerimientos mínimos de la FAO para el cumplimiento de sus objetivos respecto de la cumbre.

Las orientaciones actuales hacia una reducción real del presupuesto, que trataremos más adelante, tienen graves implicaciones en este punto, toda vez que de aplicarse, éstas se traducirían en que el seguimiento del Plan de Acción resulte, con el tiempo, en un mero ejercicio retórico.

El objetivo inmediato de reducir antes del 2015 a la mitad el número de personas hambrientas, que en noviembre de 1996 eran 800 millones, no se conseguirá si no se cuenta con el trabajo conjunto y la solidaridad de los estados, organismos internacionales, organismos no gubernamentales, gobiernos locales, sociedad civil; en suma, todos nosotros que vemos en el derecho a la alimentación un aspecto substancial vinculado a la afirmación de la dignidad humana.

En este sentido, proponemos que se cuantifique el seguimiento del Plan de Acción de la Cumbre, de forma tal que en los exámenes periódicos acerca de su ejecución, en los informes nacionales y a nivel de la Organización y del sistema multilateral, se constaten cómo estos compromisos están siendo cumplidos. Así se vería si el citado objetivo inmediato y la seguridad alimentaria se van concretando o no en cada período.

De momento llamo a la atención de los señores delegados aquí presentes que desde la Cumbre de noviembre de 1996 a la fecha, han nacido más de 50 millones de seres humanos, los cuales en su inmensa mayoría están en los países y las regiones más pobres del orbe y se añaden al número calculado de 800 millones de personas que, en noviembre de 1996, padecían de hambre y desnutrición crónicas. En pocas palabras, afirmo que no obstante los compromisos de la Cumbre, ese número no cesa de aumentar. Sólo esta constatación nos obliga a respuestas inmediatas.

Señor Presidente, al referirme al Programa de Cooperación Técnica de la FAO, considero que deberían favorecerse las actividades operacionales sobre aquéllas de carácter normativo y hacerse el seguimiento y evaluación de las mismas, a efectos de observar su impacto en el desarrollo agropecuario de los países involucrados en proyectos FAO.

En este contexto, dado su carácter dinámico y flexible, propongo que se conceda el debido redimensionamiento de los Programas de Cooperación Técnica, toda vez que el financiamiento tipo que esa área ofrece, de alrededor de 500,000 de dólares EU por proyecto, puede muy bien ser considerado como capital semilla, o capital de base, para atraer mayores flujos a proyectos en curso, de forma tal que éstos puedan ser reformulados con mayores montos financiados, entre otros, con fuentes de fideicomiso.

Señor Presidente, respecto del tema presupuesto, mi delegación lamenta profundamente que el debate se haya centrado en la discusión de una cifra. Cuán lejos estamos nosotros de examinar los temas esenciales de la FAO, sus prioridades, sus orientaciones a largo plazo en el escenario multilateral. Creemos que este tipo de experiencia no se debe repetir porque distrae la atención de lo esencial y ésta se orienta a lo numérico.

Ello, les puedo asegurar, va en desmedro de la credibilidad y la buena imagen de la Organización.

Ya que tratamos de este asunto, creo que por una vez debemos también dejar de lado los eufemismos. No veo por qué hablar de crecimiento real cero, crecimiento nominal cero, etc., pero

siempre crecimiento, cuando lo que ocurre en la realidad es que el presupuesto afronta un decrecimiento real. No nos expresemos de manera velada, digamos las cosas como son.

Recordemos que el presupuesto para el bienio 1994-95 fue de 673 millones de dólares EU, el mismo que fue reducido a 650 millones de dólares EU para el bienio 1996-97. Ahora bien, si estuviéramos constreñidos a aprobar esta misma cifra para el bienio 1998-99 seguiríamos hablando de un decrecimiento real. Porqué? Simplemente porque los 650 millones de dólares EU del bienio pasado, esto sólo teniendo en cuenta la incidencia de la inflación mundial en dicha cifra.

El Perú considera necesario para el normal desenvolvimiento de los trabajos de la FAO aprobar un presupuesto que cubra de manera adecuada los programas en curso, proyectos de desarrollo y operaciones de emergencia; y, que asimismo, solvente las nuevas obligaciones de la FAO, resultantes del Plan de Acción de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación. Nosotros creemos que un presupuesto de 700 millones de dólares EU se acerca a las necesidades en estas dos vertientes.

Sobre este mismo punto creo que es conveniente que observemos cómo la canalización de los flujos para el financiamiento de los proyectos vienen decayendo. Así, en 1992-93 estos gastos significaban 700 millones de dólares EU, mientras que para el bienio siguiente, 1994-95, estos flujos se reducían a 544 millones de dólares. Más aún, para el bienio 1996-97, los gastos por este concepto se deprimen todavía hasta 514 millones de dólares EU.

Estas reducciones, que resultan de enfoques restrictivos, por la fuerza misma de las cosas, afectan a los países y regiones más pobres, especialmente a las áreas rurales.

Otro aspecto a retener es que los déficit que viene arrastrando la Organización, para 1996-97 de 133.6 millones de dólares se debe exclusivamente a la falta del pago puntual de las contribuciones. Esto necesariamente incide en el flujo de caja del organismo y lo condiciona a comprometerse financieramente para hacer frente a sus requerimientos. En la práctica ello acarrea limitaciones a los trabajos de la FAO.

De ahí que todos los países, incluyendo el mío, debemos hacer todo tipo de esfuerzos conducentes al pago a tiempo de las cuotas. A juicio de mi delegación, la situación que vive actualmente el organismo se debe a la falta del pago puntual de las cuotas.

La delegación del Perú ha escuchado numerosas voces que se orientan hacia un consenso cifrado en los 650 millones de dólares EU, para el presupuesto en el próximo bienio, monto que a nuestro juicio es modesto en vista de los requerimientos mínimos de la Organización y sólo lo contemplaríamos en caso de una aceptación de carácter consensual.

Señor Presidente, hago una invocación para que cada uno de nosotros luchemos con nuestro mejor esfuerzo a fin de que, con renovada decisión política, aseguremos a la FAO su vigencia, así como el rol que le corresponde en el sistema de las Naciones Unidas, en tanto que Organismo Especializado en la promoción del desarrollo agrícola de nuestros países.

Sadok RABAH (Tunisie) (Langue originale arabe)

Permettez-moi, Monsieur le Président, de vous féliciter tout d'abord pour votre élection à la présidence de la Conférence de la FAO. Je voudrais également remercier son Excellence, Monsieur Jacques Diouf, Directeur général de l'Organisation, et lui exprimer ainsi qu'à l'ensemble de ses collaborateurs toute notre considération pour les efforts inestimables qu'il déploie en vue de promouvoir la production des aliments et d'en assurer la disponibilité pour tous. Une telle tâche constitue, en effet, un immense défi qui requiert une action d'une ampleur considérable. Pour atteindre ce noble objectif que nous appelons tous de nos vœux, notre Organisation doit, en cette ère marquée par de profondes mutations tant sur le plan international que régional, persévérer dans ses efforts, voire les intensifier afin d'aider les Etats Membres à assurer un développement durable et de faire prévaloir les idéaux de paix et de justice dans le monde entier.

La question de la production alimentaire occupe désormais une place de choix parmi les préoccupations des gouvernements des différents pays du monde, qui se montrent soucieux de mettre en oeuvre des plans de développement durable ayant pour objectif de relever les niveaux de production tout en assurant une gestion rationnelle des ressources naturelles nécessaires à cette production. Ainsi le secteur agricole joue un rôle doublement important dans la mesure où il permet de subvenir aux besoins alimentaires de la population tout en contribuant à l'essor des autres secteurs.

Je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour rendre hommage aux efforts que la FAO ne cesse de déployer pour aider à la satisfaction des besoins alimentaires dans les pays les plus démunis. C'est ainsi qu'elle met un soin particulier à étoffer ses programmes d'assistance technique et d'aide alimentaire, notamment au profit des pays les plus défavorisés. Ces programmes ont gagné en importance à la faveur des engagements pris par 186 Etats lors du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation tenu ici à Rome en novembre 1996, en vue d'oeuvrer pour l'éradication de la faim.

Pour soutenir ces efforts, les États Membres ont pour devoir d'apporter leur appui à l'Organisation en la dotant des moyens financiers et techniques nécessaires afin qu'elle puisse dispenser son aide aux pays qui en ont besoin dans les domaines du développement agricole et rural, du transfert de la technologie, de la conservation des ressources naturelles et du développement des ressources humaines.

A ce titre, nous appuyons les propositions présentées par le Directeur général dans le cadre du Programme de travail et budget pour la période 1998-99 et souscrivons au scénario basé sur une croissance réelle zéro.

Mon pays a accompli de notables progrès en matière de sécurité alimentaire grâce à la politique économique, sociale et agricole mise en oeuvre sous l'impulsion du Président Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Cette politique a pour objectif d'amorcer un développement économique et durable qui touche tous les secteurs et d'instaurer un climat de stabilité sociale au profit de toutes les couches de notre société et ce de manière à leur garantir des sources de revenus adéquates et à améliorer par là leurs conditions de vie. Un intérêt particulier a été accordé aux populations à faible revenu par le biais de mécanismes tels que le Fonds de solidarité nationale, ayant pour objectif d'éliminer les dernières poches de pauvreté en l'an 2001, et la Banque nationale de solidarité qui doit offrir des crédits aux petits exploitants agricoles dans les zones rurales. Grâce à cette politique, le taux de couverture des besoins alimentaires par la production agricole a atteint 83 pour cent en Tunisie au cours de la décennie écoulée. La production agricole a augmenté de 35 pour cent au cours de la même période. Il convient de noter que le taux de croissance démographique annuel en Tunisie ne dépasse pas 1,7 pour cent.

Notre politique agricole future est en harmonie avec nos choix nationaux essentiels qui consistent à accélérer le rythme de croissance de manière à permettre à ce secteur de contribuer pleinement à l'effort national de développement en subvenant, d'une part, aux besoins alimentaires croissants de notre population et en assurant, d'autre part, l'intégration de notre pays dans l'économie mondiale, lui permettant ainsi de relever les défis inhérents à l'adhésion de la Tunisie à l'Organisation mondiale du commerce et à la conclusion d'un accord d'association avec l'Union européenne.

De ce fait, notre stratégie de développement agricole a pour principaux axes:

- la poursuite de la mise en oeuvre des programmes relatifs aux ressources naturelles qui portent sur l'exploitation rationnelle des ressources hydriques, l'extension des périmètres irrigués, le reboisement, le développement des pâturages, la lutte contre la désertification et la préservation de ces deux ressources essentielles que sont l'eau et la terre;
- la mise à niveau des exploitations agricoles et des unités de pêche en développant les méthodes de travail et les modes de production et en relevant la rentabilité et la qualité de la production de sorte de la rendre compétitive face à la concurrence extérieure tant au milieu du marché national que mondial;

- l'ancrage de la formation et de la recherche scientifique dans la réalité du monde agricole, l'adoption de méthodes de vulgarisation adéquates et la promotion des micro-cultures;
- le renforcement du rôle dévolu aux professionnels au moyen d'un meilleur encadrement et de l'intensification et de la coordination des interventions de leurs structures représentatives;
- la promotion du milieu rural en assurant l'amélioration des conditions de vie et l'accès aux avantages de la vie moderne tels que l'eau potable, l'électricité, l'infrastructure routière et les services sociaux tout en assurant une place privilégiée aux femmes dans les programmes de développement rural.

Outre cette stratégie, des plans sectoriels ont été élaborés en vue d'intensifier la production, notamment pour les produits de base considérés comme stratégiques tels que les céréales, les viandes rouges, les produits laitiers, les produits de grande consommation comme les pommes de terre et les tomates, ainsi que les produits destinés à l'exportation tels que l'huile d'olive, les agrumes, les dattes et les produits de la mer.

Compte tenu de l'importance de l'investissement comme moteur du développement notamment par sa contribution au relèvement de la productivité du secteur agricole et à la promotion du milieu rural, l'Etat a pris un certain nombre de mesures destinées à relancer l'investissement dans le secteur agricole à travers le code de l'incitation à l'investissement.

Cette stratégie devrait nous permettre, avec l'aide de Dieu, d'atteindre l'autosuffisance alimentaire au cours de la décennie à venir.

Nous sommes convaincus que la FAO dispose des compétences et de l'expertise nécessaires en matière de planification, de conception de projets et d'exécution qui la rendent à même d'atteindre les objectifs qui nous tiennent à coeur.

Alors, oeuvrons ensemble à prendre les mesures concrètes requises pour soutenir cette Organisation qui est la nôtre pour qu'elle puisse prendre une part plus importante à la réalisation de la sécurité alimentaire pour tous les peuples du monde.

Ishkan MARTIROSSIAN (Armenia)

First of all I would like to congratulate you for your election and I hope that this Twenty-ninth Session of the FAO Conference will achieve its objectives to overcome the problems of hunger and malnutrition in the world.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Director-General, Dr. Jacques Diouf, for his efforts to help my country in many projects either through investment projects and technical assistance.

I would like to congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan for its admission to FAO.

I would like to inform you that, with the cooperation of the UNDP Yerevan office, TeleFood day in Armenia was very successful. Armenia's TV, radio and newspapers conveyed the importance of this day which aimed at eliminating hunger in the world and satisfying the nutritional needs of the world population.

Please allow me to provide a brief summary of the agricultural development and reform in my country following its independence in 1991.

After regaining independence in 1991, Armenia stepped into a triple transition period. Because of the restructuring of the political and economic system, which was compounded by political tensions in the whole Region, Armenians have faced many problems. These conditions led to a catastrophic decline in output. During the years 1992 to 1994 the food insecurity level was at its highest because of the unavailability of food for the whole population.

Following the introduction of a national currency (the dram) at the end of 1993, government policies were successful in stabilizing the economy. The comprehensive reform programme introduced in 1994 included tight financial policies, price liberalization, privatization, tax reform and liberalization of the exchange and trade system. Privatization of land had already been achieved, Armenia was the first Republic in the Former Soviet Union to embark on land privatization in 1991 and by 1994, more than 90 percent of the land was in private hands.

The implementation of reforms led to a remarkable stabilization of production in agriculture and a tendency to increase somewhat. At the same time, as a result of the slowness of reforms and the absence of favourable conditions for the effective use of rural production potential, the small size of farms and the low marketability of products, the ineffective organization for provisions and services, as well as the permanent blockade of the Republic, the expected results of privatization and denationalization are far from being satisfactory.

The present level of agricultural production is secured, not as a result of the implementation of coordinated intensive activities, but due to other factors such as structural changes of sown areas and increase in the number of livestock.

The inter-branch structural changes in foodstuffs and the processing industry resulted in a situation where the greater part of the enterprises of the branches are not functioning and others are working with minimum production capacity.

In this situation, it is necessary to continue consecutively the process of privatization, taking specific measures to correct the mistakes, creating and developing the necessary substructures for increasing the effectiveness in foodstuffs' production, livestock-breeding and improving agriculture.

The strategic priority for the coming years will comprise the increase of food security levels using local production capacities, improvement of citizens' needs for better foodstuffs, and achievement of overall food security in the Republic.

To solve the above problems, it is necessary to implement a complex programme of social and economic reforms for increased effectiveness of the foodstuffs and processing sectors.

Notwithstanding this, the reform policy, selected as a strategic tool, was not strengthened by tactical and operational activities. The substructures potential, which was necessary to secure the effectiveness of rural production, had not been formed in parallel to the privatization process. The problems connected to the organization of material and technical provisions and services of agriculture, agricultural raw product processing and sales and credits and insurance systems in this area have not been solved.

In the present situation it is necessary to work out and implement detailed Programmes which would improve the situation in the agriculture and foodstuffs sector of the Republic.

The basic goal of the present Programme is to assist the development and strengthening of economic reforms in the agriculture and food production sector, solve the different problems accumulated in the system, improve farming activities and create enterprises to facilitate the implementation of complex activities.

The implementation of the Programme will provide an opportunity to increase the food security level of the Republic, satisfy the demands of citizens for farm products thus making them available to international markets and thus increasing the level of self-security of the Republic in grains and cattle products.

The Programme covers tendencies and peculiarities of the development of the Republic's agriculture and food production system and offers a detailed description of the objectives of reforms and the direction and activities which would increase the processing industry and farming production.

The Programme is designed to address the following matters:

- continuation of improvements of the reform and privatization process;
- structural improvement of administrative bodies and the implementation of state economic policy, which stimulate the system's development;
- activities directed towards increasing the effectiveness of land plot use and farming production;
- directions and activities to increase the effectiveness of farming production sales, foodstuffs and the processing industry;
- activities to improve the material and technical provision and service of farms and collective farms and other enterprises, rendering specific and consultative services;
- directions to improve the situation in the mountainous and fertile residential areas, the demographic situation in the rural areas, the social development or rural communities; and finally,
- the adoption of the necessary legislative and sub-legislative deeds, norms, and the implementation of the corresponding mechanisms to secure the functioning of the above.

Ismael PENEDO SOLE (Guatemala)

Señor Presidente, señor Director General, señor Secretario General, señores delegados, distinguidos Observadores, señoras y señores, hace un año, al celebrarse la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, el señor Vicepresidente de Guatemala, al concluir su intervención pedía que se diera un apoyo decidido a la histórica Declaración de Roma y de su Plan de Acción. Un mes más tarde se firmaba en Guatemala el Acuerdo de Paz con el cual se puso fin a 36 años de conflicto armado interno.

Hoy, con la perspectiva de un año podemos hacer una nueva evaluación del estado mundial de la agricultura y de la alimentación, pero más allá de los datos estadísticos que son el resultado de las acciones emprendidas, debemos examinar los programas que se han puesto en marcha para cumplir con lo estipulado en el Plan de Acción .

Los compromisos firmados en Guatemala en diciembre de 1996, dentro del proceso de paz, establecen los parámetros que el Gobierno y la sociedad civil deberán de cumplir para erradicar el hambre y la desnutrición, la construcción de la nueva sociedad tienen que transitar por la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición.

Buscamos un modelo de desarrollo que permita elevar el nivel de vida de la familia guatemalteca, única forma de satisfacer la necesidad básica más importante del ser humano que es la alimentación.

Recientemente, los Ministerios de Gobierno, a partir del Gabinete Social, han integrado el Gabinete de Seguridad Alimentaria, que coordina la ejecución de acciones prioritarias en un programa bienal de alto impacto. Se ha puesto en marcha un Programa Interinstitucional de Seguridad Alimentaria Nutricional, con acciones de atención en salud y educación nutricional a la población vulnerable, alimentación escolar en establecimientos públicos con cobertura total, rehabilitación y construcción de infraestructuras para riego y miniriego en zonas estratégicas, reducción de pérdidas poscosecha, creación de microindustrias rurales y finalmente apoyo a la generación de microempresas en manos de la población marginada.

De la misma manera Guatemala creó una Comisión Institucional para el Desarrollo y Fortalecimiento de la Propiedad de la Tierra, como respuesta a la prioridad que el Estado asigna a esta materia estructurándola con algunos componentes básicos: el Fondo de Tierras, el Programa de Inversiones Rurales, el Programa de Inversiones Productivas y Desarrollo de Mercados Financieros Rurales, el Programa de Impuesto Unico sobre Inmuebles, el Registro de Catastro de Tierras y el Sistema de Información Geográfica, la Dependencia Presidencial de Asistencia Legal y Resolución de Conflictos sobre la Tierra.

Guatemala se complace en confirmar que ha iniciado, con la asistencia de la FAO, un proyecto de apoyo a la Cooperación Técnica para el Instituto Nacional de Bosques y está en proceso de

formalización de otros proyectos de comunicación para el desarrollo, una evaluación preliminar para la explotación global del sector pesquero, identificación de grupos vulnerables a la inseguridad alimentaria y la ejecución del censo agropecuario. Actualmente se encuentra entre 44 países que están en proceso de formalizar su acceso al PESA. Con esta fórmula se busca que conjuntamente con la oferta alimentaria, aumenten las oportunidades de empleo en el campo y la agricultura pueda encadenarse con otros sectores generadores de empleo e ingreso rural, principalmente a través de la micro industria rural.

Deseo, a nombre de mi país, patentizar el agradecimiento y la confianza en la cooperación internacional tanto en el plano multilateral como bilateral, grandes coadyuvantes del desarrollo de los países. Es precisamente dentro de este marco, que quiero reconocer los méritos y la labor que la FAO lleva a cabo en cumplimiento de su mandato.

Guatemala, como país eminentemente agrícola, sigue con atención el futuro de la “nueva FAO” y condivide todos sus esfuerzos. A este respecto, se deja claro nuestro apoyo a las acciones tomadas por el Director General para lograr economías por eficiencia en el seno de la Organización, advirtiendo que las mismas deberán ser hechas con cautela atendiendo la capacidad de la Organización misma de absorberlas en forma positiva. Hago notar que, para que la FAO pueda responder a las expectativas de sus miembros y a las cada vez más extensas necesidades de los países, es indispensable un crecimiento real para el bienio 1998-99. Sin embargo, el país que represento ratifica la propuesta del Director General de la FAO de crecimiento real cero como el mínimo que puede ser aceptado para cumplir con el Programa de Labores.

En esta oportunidad, a nombre de mi país, tengo el alto honor de anunciar, que con gran esfuerzo y dentro de las posibilidades se ha buscado cumplir con las obligaciones que le corresponden como parte integrante de la comunidad de las naciones y ha saldado a la FAO, casi la totalidad de sus contribuciones. Esto me lleva a invitar a los países donantes para que en forma permanente y solidaria apoyen el desarrollo de aquellos menos favorecidos, para que no claudiquen en su lucha contra la pobreza y el hambre, pues es la única vía para la convivencia digna de todos los seres humanos sin distinción.

Se acordó durante la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación que para el año 2015 la cifra de 800 millones de personas que padecen hambre se reduciría a la mitad. Guatemala está poniendo a disposición de ustedes su contribución a esta cruzada. A la luz de esta realidad invito a los países aventajados que en cambio de reducir sus contribuciones, reconsideren su posición para poder mejor cumplir con los compromisos adquiridos. Con este espíritu concluyo reiterando el apoyo decidido a la Declaración de Roma y su Plan de Acción.

Ferdinand NYABENDA (Burundi)

Au nom du Ministre de l'agriculture et de l'élevage, qui n'a pu participer personnellement comme à l'accoutumée à la Conférence, permettez-moi de vous adresser Monsieur le Président, au nom de la délégation du Burundi, mes chaleureuses félicitations pour votre accession à la présidence de la 29ème Conférence de la FAO. Votre expérience et votre sagesse sont une garantie de la qualité du résultat final des présentes assises. Je voudrais féliciter le Bureau pour le savoir-faire et l'engagement avec lesquels il dirige la Conférence. Mes félicitations vont également à Monsieur Jacques Diouf qui dirige cette importante Organisation avec un charisme et un grand sens de vision. Ma délégation rend hommage au Directeur général pour l'action dynamique qu'il mène à la tête de la FAO.

C'est au crédit de cette action qu'il faudrait sans doute inscrire ses initiatives si louables. Je citerai, à titre d'exemple, l'éradication de la faim et de la malnutrition et la lutte contre la pauvreté dans le monde, sans oublier le TéléFood qui a mobilisé des moyens importants et permis de dialoguer directement avec des millions de populations bénéficiaires et donatrices à travers une stratégie de communication de masse bien réussie.

Le chemin qui mène aux nobles idéaux que prônent la FAO et son Directeur général ne manque pas d'embûches. Dans son allocution fort remarquable lors du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, Sa Sainteté le Pape Jean-Paul II avait reconnu que : "les populations soumises à des conditions d'insécurité alimentaire y sont souvent contraintes par des situations politiques qui les empêchent de travailler et de produire normalement". Il avait souligné "les conflits armés et l'urgence alimentaire qui persistent et qui se renforcent mutuellement dans bien des cas" et, avait cité aussi entre autres cas "les populations victimes d'embargo imposé sans discernement suffisant". C'est le cas du blocus illégal et injuste imposé depuis plus d'une année au Burundi par les pays de la région, et qui nie ainsi au peuple burundais l'accès aux moyens de production alimentaire, je veux dire notamment les engrais et les semences. Le Burundi, naguère un pays des plus verdoyants d'Afrique, qui connaissait l'autosuffisance alimentaire, est aujourd'hui aux prises avec les pénuries alimentaires les plus aiguës.

Le Burundi fait place à des difficultés et des divergences sérieuses dans ses rapports avec ceux qui prétendent l'aider à recouvrer la paix par une approche erronée basée sur des sanctions économiques, parmi les plus sévères imposées à un pays qui n'est pas coupable d'avoir agressé un autre. Cette approche n'est pas porteuse de paix mais de guerre. En effet, le blocus, qui affame des populations et qui les tue silencieusement, en les faisant succomber petit à petit à toutes sortes de pénuries et de privations au niveau des services et des produits de base, ne peut pas être présenté comme une contribution positive à leur bien-être.

Le blocus imposé au Burundi est une manifestation de l'arbitraire pur et dur et de l'iniquité évidente de l'approche "deux poids deux mesures" qui devient une sorte d'avatar de plus en plus fréquent dans les relations internationales de cette fin de siècle. Ce blocus ne répond à aucune norme légale, il reflète une contrainte exercée très arbitrairement par certains pays sur le Burundi, en avançant des arguments qui peuvent être repris et retournés à charge de bien d'autres pays notamment de notre région. Il n'est pourtant pas envisagé d'appliquer les mêmes contraintes à ces pays pour les aider, comme nous, à restaurer eux aussi la paix, la légalité et la démocratie.

Il y a une immense hypocrisie collective dans le mutisme de la communauté internationale, qui observe sans rien dire ni rien faire et qui affiche un silence complice ou complaisant traduisant une attitude coupable.

La Communauté internationale, si elle veut être un village communautaire, doit être solidaire avec le Burundi et l'épauler au lieu de laisser faire ou soutenir ceux qui préconise l'isolement et le boycottage. Nous tenons à signaler que s'il y a un partenaire qu'on ne peut accuser d'indifférence à l'égard des difficultés qu'a traversées le Burundi, c'est bien la FAO, son Directeur général et tout le personnel du Siège et du terrain. Puisse Dieu le Tout-Puissant protéger cette institution, la doter toujours de dirigeants animés, à tous les niveaux, d'un humanisme sans tache et la préserver de toute attitude sectaire.

Je ne puis conclure cette intervention sans exprimer notre plein appui à la proposition de bien d'autres délégations d'accroître le budget de l'Organisation pour qu'elle puisse réaliser le programme et les actions qu'elle ambitionne. Nous avons la conviction que, tôt ou tard, ces actions auront des retombées favorables pour tous. J'en profite pour annoncer que le Gouvernement du Burundi vient de décider, malgré l'état économique qui l'asphyxie, d'apurer toutes ses dettes envers l'Organisation avec les premières recettes de l'année prochaine. Une communication ad hoc a été transmise aux services techniques.

Aurel PANA (Roumanie)

Monsieur le Président, je tiens à vous adresser mes chaleureuses félicitations pour votre élection en tant que Président de la 29ème session de la Conférence de la FAO et à vous assurer que la délégation de mon pays fera de son mieux pour garantir le plein succès de cette Conférence.

Comme représentant d'un nouveau gouvernement issu d'une alternance démocratique au pouvoir, c'est un grand honneur et plaisir pour moi de vous faire part de l'attachement de la Roumanie aux buts de notre Organisation. Nous sommes déterminés à travailler de concert avec les pays intéressés pour assurer le plein succès des programmes de la FAO visant l'amélioration du niveau de nutrition et des conditions de vie des populations, l'augmentation du rendement de la production agricole et l'amélioration de la répartition des produits alimentaires et agricoles.

Nous sommes appelés à examiner des thèmes de grande portée inscrits à l'ordre du jour.

Une année s'est écoulée depuis que les dirigeants du monde entier se sont réunis à Rome pour convenir des mesures à prendre afin de réaliser la sécurité alimentaire pour tous, objectif d'une importance majeure à la veille du troisième millénaire, lorsque la faim sévit encore, malheureusement, dans certaines régions du monde.

Les progrès réalisés dans le domaine de l'accroissement de la production agricole depuis la Conférence mondiale de l'alimentation de 1974 prouvent que l'être humain est à même de produire les denrées alimentaires nécessaires à sa vie. Mais, la sécurité alimentaire, qui signifie l'accès de tous, à tout moment, à l'alimentation nécessaire, se heurte aux pressions démographiques et aux modes de consommation et de production qui prévalent aujourd'hui.

Comme nous l'avons affirmé à l'occasion du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation, à chaque pays incombe la responsabilité primordiale d'assurer un niveau décent d'alimentation à ses citoyens, et des mesures sont indispensables pour mettre en valeur les ressources matérielles et humaines au niveau national. Mais les efforts nationaux doivent s'associer à un engagement accru de la part de la communauté internationale.

Nous saluons l'initiative prise par la FAO d'encourager la préparation de stratégies nationales de développement agricole pour les pays en développement et pour ceux en transition et la décision du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (CSA) concernant l'établissement de rapports nationaux sur la mise en oeuvre du Plan d'action.

En ce qui concerne mon pays, l'agriculture représente un domaine important en raison des ressources naturelles et de la main-d'oeuvre disponibles et qui peuvent contribuer de façon décisive à l'amélioration du niveau de vie de la population. L'agriculture est le principal secteur de l'économie rurale et se doit de contribuer à la sécurité alimentaire nationale, de fournir des emplois et de préserver les ressources.

Par ailleurs, nous sommes d'avis que la recherche joue un rôle d'une importance extrême dans le progrès de l'agriculture vers la hausse de la productivité, la qualité des denrées alimentaires et le maintien des facteurs naturels à des niveaux appropriés. En outre, la recherche qui appuie les objectifs liés à l'agriculture est utile tant aux producteurs agricoles qu'aux consommateurs.

Pour toutes ces raisons, le nouveau gouvernement a décidé de prendre des mesures fermes dans la direction de l'établissement d'une nouvelle politique agricole afin de réaliser une réforme structurelle du système agricole. L'objectif principal de la nouvelle politique dans ce domaine vise le développement d'une agriculture efficace et compétitive, en mesure de faire face au marché international où la concurrence va en s'accroissant.

En ce qui concerne le commerce extérieur, nous avons décidé la libéralisation des exportations pour tous les produits agro-alimentaires tandis qu'à l'importation les taux douaniers ont diminué de plus de 80 pour cent environ à quelque 40 pour cent à la fin de cette année, en prévision de l'application d'un nouveau système douanier qui va permettre d'atteindre une moyenne de 22 pour cent.

La politique d'ajustement systémique et structurelle de l'agriculture a pour principal objet l'appui à l'établissement et au développement de fermes agricoles familiales compétitives, l'amélioration du milieu économique par la privatisation, la restructuration ou la liquidation des entreprises d'Etat, et des incitations à concentrer le capital dans des exploitations privées viables.

Cette année un important processus de privatisation des complexes pour l'élevage des volailles et des porcins a été mis en oeuvre et, d'ici la fin de 1998, les fermes agricoles d'Etat seront complètement privatisées.

La privatisation de l'industrie alimentaire est aussi en cours de réalisation.

La loi foncière, en cours de modification, va permettre la réalisation et le fonctionnement d'un marché foncier réel.

La promotion et le développement d'un système bancaire compétitif, capable de répondre aux besoins de la population rurale, permettra de renforcer le rôle des coopératives de crédit dans le cadre du futur système de notre politique financière qui a comme objectif l'appui des agriculteurs privés. Les mesures qui ont été prises et celles envisagées prouvent l'importance que le Gouvernement accorde à l'amélioration du secteur agricole.

La Roumanie a bénéficié pendant ces dernières années de plusieurs projets d'assistance technique dans divers domaines. Le soutien fourni par la FAO est particulièrement important dans cette période de transition que mon pays traverse depuis 1990. Je voudrais exprimer mes sincères remerciements pour le soutien que la FAO a donné au secteur agricole privé, touché par les calamités naturelles qui ont affecté certaines régions de mon pays pendant l'été dernier.

Nous sommes intéressés à poursuivre notre collaboration avec la FAO, basée sur des projets d'assistance technique qui peuvent contribuer au développement du secteur agro-alimentaire. Nous considérons également que la FAO doit soutenir plus activement les pays en transition à mettre en oeuvre la réforme de leur secteur agricole et s'engager davantage dans le transfert technologique en faveur des pays moins développés.

Cette année, mon pays a été hôte de la Réunion des Ministres de l'agriculture des pays de l'Europe centrale et orientale, événement d'une importance particulière pour les pays de cette Région de l'Europe. L'organisation de la réunion susmentionnée prouve aussi l'importance que les autorités de mon pays attachent aux activités de l'Organisation.

A notre avis, le prochain exercice biennal (1998-99) devrait voir notre Organisation s'employer plus activement à aider les Etats Membres à s'acquitter des engagements pris au Sommet mondial de l'alimentation. Nous considérons que le suivi du Sommet devrait bénéficier des ressources supplémentaires allouées au Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale, afin que soit renforcé son rôle de mécanisme de contrôle intergouvernemental tant de l'exécution du Plan d'action que des activités d'analyse des obstacles s'opposant à la réalisation des engagements.

Un meilleur équilibre entre les activités normatives et opérationnelles s'impose à l'avenir, activités qui devraient être conformes au mandat de la FAO et refléter les priorités exprimées par les Etats Membres, tout en tenant pleinement compte des besoins particuliers de certaines Régions et Sous-régions. L'un des éléments d'une importance particulière pour l'Organisation est représenté par la mise en oeuvre d'actions ayant un rapport coût-efficacité favorable et l'élimination de duplications vis-à-vis des activités d'autres institutions internationales.

En guise de conclusion, je voudrais souligner que la Roumanie se prononce en faveur d'une Organisation puissante, à même de s'acquitter des tâches complexes qui lui incombent à l'aube du XXIème siècle. L'importance de notre Conférence et des activités menées par la FAO est d'autant plus grande que les bénéficiaires de celles-ci sont les populations en difficulté de maints pays; la solidarité représente à mon avis le plus beau fleuron de notre Organisation. C'est pourquoi je crois bien que les mots de Jean Monnet: "Nous n'unissons pas seulement des Etats, nous unissons des hommes" sont de grande actualité.

Ismael BERNAL MAURE (Panamá)

Señor Presidente de la Conferencia, Excelencias, señores Ministros, señores Embajadores, señores Delegados:

Sean mis primeras palabras para expresar, en nombre del Gobierno panameño, de la delegación que me honro en presidir y en el mío propio, a su Excelencia Lyle Vanclief, de Canadá, nuestra más sincera complacencia por su elección como Presidente del Vigésimonoveno período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO. Estamos convencidos, que su experiencia y don de equidad son una garantía para el buen éxito de nuestros debates. Deseamos asimismo, por conducto del señor Presidente, hacer extensivos nuestros sentimientos de satisfacción a los señores Vicepresidentes, señor Liu Jiang, de China, Paul Bandoma, de la República Democrática del Congo y Beglar Tavartkiladze, de Georgia, que le acompañan en tan delicadas funciones.

Panamá, tiene una superficie de 75.517 km², una población estimada en 2.750.000 habitantes. El sector agropecuario representa alrededor del 11 por ciento del Producto Interior Bruto. La pequeña producción y la producción campesina, se caracterizan por producir bienes de consumo como granos y verduras y pequeños excedentes para el mercado en diversos productos.

El estado panameño reconoce la propiedad privada y mantiene un esquema legal e institucional, tendiente a legalizar la propiedad agraria. Las estrategias de política y las políticas de desarrollo agropecuario, apuntan a aumentar la productividad, el empleo, los ingresos de las familias rurales, para mejorar sus condiciones de vida y reducir la pobreza, integrar al sector en el mercado internacional y aumentar su participación en el mercado interno, compatibilizar el desarrollo con el uso sostenible de los recursos naturales y redefinir el rol del Estado, incluyendo la participación del sector privado. En el marco de estas políticas, el Gobierno prioriza la problemática de la pobreza rural y, en consecuencia, el desarrollo campesino que busca resolver mediante diversas acciones de política pública, tales como: la desgravación paulatina de los aranceles, en aras de una mayor competitividad de la producción local, la readecuación del proceso de generación y transferencia de tecnologías con proyectos en negociación, o ya financiados por instituciones financieras como el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, el Banco Mundial y el Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola.

Hace menos de dos años, el Excelentísimo señor Presidente de la República, Dr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares, en esta misma Sede, lanzaba un apelo en favor de la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación. Estaba convencido sobre la necesidad de esta Cumbre y hoy, a un año de ese magno evento, se puede ratificar que la Cumbre fue oportuna y exitosa.

Paralelamente a las actividades que en ese momento ejecutaba el señor Presidente, su señora esposa, la Honorable Primera Dama de la República, se reunía con las Direcciones Técnicas de la Organización, para captar el apoyo de la Institución, en la ejecución de Planes, Programas y Proyectos, sobre el tema de combates a la pobreza y la malnutrición. Estas solicitudes fueron captadas por la FAO y producto de esta inter-relación, los resultados de cooperación solicitados, están plasmados y se concretizan en el campo, en el medio rural.

Como resultado de lo antes mencionado, es preciso reconocer la significativa ayuda aportada a nuestro país por la FAO en el campo de la asistencia técnica y en la capacitación del personal técnico y de los agricultores. Al respecto, considero un deber evidenciar todo nuestro apoyo al Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT), el cual quisiéramos ver reforzado cada día más.

Deseo poner de manifiesto el éxito de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación y expresar nuestra complacencia sobre los resultados alcanzados en la aplicación del Plan de Acción de la misma. Al respecto, y sólo por citar algunos, es de gran importancia recordar iniciativas tales como: la elaboración de las Estrategias Nacionales para la Agricultura y la Seguridad Alimentaria hacia el año 2010, el inicio del desarrollo del Sistema de Información y Cartografía sobre la Inseguridad y Vulnerabilidad Alimentaria, las reuniones de expertos sobre la materia, el Programa de Lucha contra las Plagas y las Enfermedades Transfronterizas. Sin embargo, más allá de reconocer la importancia antes citada, es mi propósito el de enfatizar que, para lograr el objetivo principal de la Cumbre, es decir, la reducción a la mitad de las personas cuyo acceso a la nutrición en la actualidad es insuficiente, son necesarias acciones de impacto y de un efecto más inmediato, como sin lugar a dudas, es el Programa Especial de Seguridad Alimentaria (PESA). Nuestra delegación desea expresar su pleno apoyo a ese Programa, que el mismo

Director General, en su Declaración Inaugural, definió como “la punta de lanza de la acción concreta a nivel de las comunidades rurales de los países pobres”.

En este contexto deseo resaltar además, que la FAO ha mantenido y fortalecido su apoyo a los Estados Miembros en la aplicación de los acuerdos de Marrakech, a nivel normativo y operacional, por lo que instamos a incrementar su aplicación en los países que así lo soliciten. De la misma manera, considero indispensable exponer nuestro decidido apoyo a la cooperación entre países en desarrollo, en especial, en el ámbito de la Cooperación Técnica para Países en Desarrollo y Cooperación Económica entre Países en Desarrollo.

Quisiera ahora referirme a la operación “TeleFood”, en el marco de la celebración anual del Día Mundial de la Alimentación, respondiendo así a una de las directrices de la Cumbre. En nuestra opinión, la misma fue todo un éxito y alcanzó el doble propósito de movilizar fondos para apoyar proyectos a favor de comunidades rurales pobres de países en desarrollo y sobre todo, el de concientizar a millones de telespectadores de más de 70 países sobre el problema del hambre y la malnutrición.

Hago propicia la ocasión para manifestar el aprecio de mi país, tal como lo indicara la delegación de Panamá, hablando a nombre del GRULAC en la Comisión II, por los enormes esfuerzos que ha logrado la Organización durante los cuatro años en las economías por eficiencia. Al respecto, expresar nuestra convicción de que no deben tratar de conseguir reducciones a toda costa y a cualquier costo.

A nombre de mi país deseo manifestar también, nuestra complacencia por el establecimiento de una Oficina de la FAO en Panamá, concurrente con la República de Costa Rica e instamos al señor Director General de fortalecer y aumentar las representaciones de la Organización y, en especial, a la creación de una futura Oficina Sub-regional para Centro América.

Estimo imprescindible hacer referencia al Programa de Labores y Presupuestos para 1998-99 y, en este contexto, manifestar nuestro más decidido apoyo a la opción de Crecimiento Real Cero, ya que lo consideramos lo más viable y el mínimo aceptable para el normal funcionamiento de la FAO.

Sambou KINTEH (Gambia)

Allow me, first and foremost, to pay tribute to FAO's epoch-making initiatives during the last twelve months in its pursuit of a hunger and malnutrition-free world under the leadership of Dr. Jacques Diouf. The historic World Food Summit, its noble Declaration and Action Plan and the follow-up actions to implement the Summit Action Plan - the Special Programme for Food Security for Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries and TeleFood - are all pace-setting initiatives that posterity will recall with gratitude.

Please allow me to congratulate you for your election to the Chair of this Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference. For a farmer to chair the proceedings of this Conference is a sufficient guarantee that decisions, including the budget of the Organization, to be taken by this session of the Conference will truly contribute to the achievement of the noble World Food Summit objective of reducing by half the 800 million hungry and malnourished people in the world by the year 2015.

Since the World Food Summit, the Government of the Republic of the Gambia, under the leadership of His Excellency, President Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, has commenced to realign its agricultural policy regime, programme and project structures, sector investment portfolio and institutional support services to, not only the requirements of our World Food Summit commitments, but also to making agriculture and food production the driving force of our socio-economic development process.

At the policy level, we embarked on an Agriculture and Natural Resource Sector Review process with the financial and technical assistance of UNDP and FAO in February this year. The process,

which evolved through a National Workshop dominated by farmers generally, and small-scale women farmers in particular, is in its penultimate stage of policy formulation and strategy planning. We are hopeful that the final stage of this process, sector investment programming, will culminate in the elaboration of a medium-term investment plan as the framework for the coordination of public, private sector and donor actions in the sector.

At the programme and project levels, we have successfully negotiated a Lowlands Agricultural Development Programme under the co-financing arrangements of IFAD and ADB which is due for launching in early December 1997. This programme will, *inter alia*, formulate a lowland development strategy. This is of particular importance in our strive for food security because production activities by women farmers are primarily in the five agro-ecologies of the lowlands. Similarly, under the UNDP-spearheaded multidonor Poverty Alleviation Programme, we are implementing a Household Food Security Pilot Project. In an effort to deepen and expand this pilot initiative, The Gambia has formally applied to participate in the FAO Special Programme for Food Security. With regard to FAO's TeleFood Programme, I wish to report here that, modest though may be the realizations in our National TeleFood Chapter, the responses to our plea for donations have been most encouraging.

At the institutional support services level, we have concluded the planning process of a long-term Agricultural Research Master Plan with the technical assistance of FAO and are just about starting to put together the medium-term aspect of the Plan. We have also redefined the responsibilities of our National Food Security Committee to include the monitoring of the implementation of our World Food Summit Commitments. The Committee, which is chaired by the Secretary of State for Agriculture, reports to a Cabinet Sub-Committee chaired by His Excellency, the President, on a monthly basis.

In spite of our renewed efforts to make the pursuit of household food security the cornerstone of our national reconstruction and development strategy, the prospects for our national food security status in the year ahead is not bright. The current agricultural season has been characterized by climatic disruptions throughout the Sahel.

In the Gambia, the euphoria for the rains starting early in May and associated promise of a good harvest were soon greeted by prolonged drought spells. Except for isolated patches in the eastern part, the country recorded good planting rains in June. However, by the first decade of July, a prolonged drought set in, resulting in the permanent wilting of about 65 percent of the cereal crop. The moisture situation picked up again towards the end of July into the first week of August, allowing for replanting of some short duration varieties. Most unfortunately, the situation deteriorated again right into the second decade of August, but normalized in the third decade up to the first decade of October in most parts of the country. In terms of total rainfall, the country recorded an average 734 mm, representing about 98 percent of the long-term average and 108 percent of the previous season. The distribution across the country ranged from a high of 964 mm to a low of 532 mm.

The failure of early rains to sustain a good seedbed and nursery establishment and/or desiccation of established crops compounded by poor seed quality and lack of fertilizer have resulted in severe crop losses and low yields. Thus, preliminary estimates of total cereal production is placed at 87 750 tons, which is some 24 percent drop from the previous year's 111 580 tons, despite a significant 4 percent rise in cultivated areas over the previous year.

The impact of the erratic and uneven distribution pattern of the rains on pastoral and cash crop production systems has been equally devastating. The poor range stand and low nutritive value and associated stress factor resulted in low milk yields and higher incidence of diseases. The intermittent drought created favourable conditions for the rapid build-up of gregarious pests like blister beetles and army worms on the early millet crop and aphids on the groundnut crop.

Although the overall projected cereal balance sheet to 31 October 1998 shows a deficit of only 44 000 tons of grain equivalent, 50 percent of the balance sheet is made up of commercial

imports. Access to these imports by the majority of rural households through coping strategies will entail extensive de-saving which will seriously weaken rural production asset stock and compromise long-term productive capacity of these households.

With the foregoing scenario of the agriculture and food situation in The Gambia, which is relatively better than in most of our Sahelian sister countries, I wish to conclude by underlining the fact that our plight is not just a "food to eat today but also a capacity to produce food tomorrow".

AREFAINE BERHE (Eritrea)

Mr Chairman, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to address this review of FAO achievements during the last twelve months. With the World Food Summit only a year behind us, it is important to assess progress towards its goals.

As most people are aware, Eritrea is not yet a food self-sufficient country. This is due to various factors which include highly erratic rainfall, widespread use of traditional farming practices, inadequate infrastructure and market dislocation.

The Eritrean Government has always recognised that food security and resource conservation are the two primary goals in national development. Additionally, human resource development is seen as critical as this resource is one of the major advantages Eritrea possesses. Investment in human resources now, should improve conditions in the future. The main foci in the agricultural sector are thus food security and resource conservation, underpinned by human resource development.

Our efforts towards solving the food security issue include the development and expansion of small-scale horticultural production to minimise the effects of seasonal variability and improve farmer income and the development of integrated farm packages which help farmers to increase food production in a sustainable fashion.

FAO has been active in Eritrea since 1993 when the Agricultural Sector Review was conducted where priority projects were identified to address food security and environmental protection. Support has been obtained for some of the more important projects, in some cases as FAO TCP projects, in others from other funding bodies. The Eritrean Government has funded projects which it saw as critical but which did not attract outside funding - this includes a small scale horticulture project to improve semi-subsistence farmers' income.

The projects focused on food security and human resource development supported by FAO include Assistance for the National Food Information System, Strengthening Agricultural Research and Extension, EMPRES (Locust Control) and the Special Programme for Food Security.

The National Food Information System, or NFIS, started in February 1997 and aims to further develop the information system set-up under the Early Warning System, but with a broader focus. The information collected includes all major items related to food security and production and allows decision makers sufficient time to make strategic rather than merely tactical decisions. The NFIS has been very successful in bringing together what information exists from all over the agricultural sector, which is a challenging task, considering its patchiness. In addition to integrating national food security information, the project links to the IGAD sub-regional system, improving the food security monitoring system in the Horn of Africa. The project continues until the end of 1998, at which time the foundations of the National Food Information System will be well established.

The EMPRES (Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal Pests and Diseases) project focuses on Rinderpest and desert locusts, two major threats to agricultural production in the country.

The Special Project on Food Security is a further example of FAO involvement in food security in Eritrea. In 1998 the SPFS will be further strengthened through a South-South Co-operation

Project between Eritrea and India. This agreement, in common with others of its kind, will allow both countries to benefit through skill-sharing and capacity-building. The Project will allow Eritrea to fill the identified gaps in the agricultural human resource - firstly with Indian professionals, but increasingly with local staff who benefit from the on-job skill transfer. This should further increase the impact of the Special Programme on national food security. The first year of SPFS project was the 1996 harvest with very promising results from participating areas even during a poor season. This year the project expanded with similarly promising results - again sadly under challenging seasonal conditions. We look forward to seeing how well the system produces under a good or average year.

As part of the national ethos of self-reliance, Eritrea plans to be able to carry out these and similar activities using her own resources. There thus needs to be a highly skilled and trained workforce in place in the appropriate institutions to provide the guidance and support needed. A further FAO funded project, Strengthening Agricultural Research and Extension, addresses this issue. The skills and knowledge gained under this project will be invaluable in generating and disseminating relevant technology and recommendations to farmers.

Having quickly sketched what FAO is doing in Eritrea now, I would like to move on to how we feel FAO's role in the future. This is not a comprehensive list of possible activities, more an overview of the more important areas that we see FAO as having a special role to play, based on past experience.

While the current NFIS project will go a long way towards establishing a national food information system, there will remain a great deal of work to be done before this is as comprehensive as decision makers need. I mentioned previously the patchiness of agricultural data - this will only diminish with time, as the data series are established.

FAO is, we feel, ideally placed to assist us in the further development of the NFIS and associated databases to create more reliable data systems for use in planning for food security and thus improving responses to situations as they develop. The national Agricultural Information System, AIS, is at its initial stages and will be well placed to feed information to NFIS. Additional support, particularly in the form of computer management expertise and training would ensure it is fully functional. The AIS also provides data for planning purposes to the Ministry of Agriculture, improving the quality of decisions made.

We are convinced that by working together in the areas I have highlighted, FAO and the Government of Eritrea will go a long way towards reducing, and ultimately eliminating food insecurity in Eritrea. We ask to be shown how to fish, not to be given fish caught by someone else - if I may paraphrase the commonly used phrase.⁴

Rafael MORAV (Israel)

Israel congratulates the Chairman-Elect and wishes him success in his distinguished position.

Israel places the efforts to reduce hunger and poverty and to prevent the destruction of natural resources at the top of its priorities in the field of international cooperation. These efforts are a result of fifty years of work, experience, research and extension. During this period, Israel has gone from agriculture for mere subsistence to a diversified and sophisticated agriculture. During this time, we have gone from austerity to surplus and from production for our own consumption to production for export.

Israeli agriculture has made remarkable achievements due to investments in research and development, its extension service and skilled farmers. Based on know-how developed in Israel, it is possible to irrigate and cultivate the desert. About 40 percent of the farming land is desert,

⁴ Statement inserted in the verbatim record on request

sand dunes, red loam and loess soil, which in the past was considered untillable and 12 percent is rocky soil from which the stones were removed and prepared for cultivation.

Israeli agriculture has gained international acclaim in diverse areas such as milk yield per cow, wheat crops, cotton crops, etc.

These achievements are expressed in a steady growth in productivity and a reduction in the number of those engaged in agriculture.

Israel boasts unique achievements in the utilisation of its water resources. One unit of agricultural produce requires today only about 40 percent of the amount of water needed in the past to produce the same unit.

As we enter the Twenty-first Century, it is becoming unquestionably clear that the formulation of a world strategy for solving problems of hunger must include strengthening agricultural production.

Allow me to emphasise Israel's commitment to actively contribute the full potential of its accumulated agricultural experience and know-how to these efforts. We are expanding our training of experts within the framework of dozens of courses which are held every year in Israel and developing countries.

Israel is ready and willing to make available to developing countries the extensive know-how that it has acquired in the fields of agriculture, and in particular in the development of arid regions which is living proof of its aspirations for achieving peace in our Region.

The war against desertification is interrelated with the shortage of water which severely hinders agricultural and economic development. Israel has made significant achievements in tapping its water potential, but the efforts must also be expanded to increasing water sources primarily by means of desalination. Israel calls upon the developed countries with considerable economic potential to act to set up sea water desalination plants for agricultural and household use. Such an effort has an economic, social and political impact since increasing the water supply will lead to a growth in income, reduce hunger and promote peace and economic development.

It is noteworthy that as a result of a number of seminars that have been held in Israel, a new concept has developed both in Israel and in developing countries of the need for a more vigorously integrated private enterprise in the production system in order to free governments of the need to manage the national agriculture themselves. Such activity is particularly noteworthy in countries in Central Asia, India, several countries in southern Africa and in Latin American countries. One way to achieve this is to organise cooperatives of small farmers.

Interesting patterns have emerged in creating a satellite farming system and Israel can also contribute its experience in this area. This agriculture is based on setting up a commercial farm with the task of not only producing for profit, but also providing services to small farmers in the same region, particularly the transfer of know-how, supplying inputs and marketing.

We are full partners in the aspiration to solve the problem of food shortage and hunger prevailing in various countries around the world.

These problems are closely connected with the level of income of the rural population. Undoubtedly, agriculture alone in this era cannot supply sufficient income to further the rural areas. Israel is making extensive efforts to develop supplemental employment in addition to agriculture. The experience gained in diversifying sources of employment in rural areas is especially noticeable in the development of industry and tourism.

Within the framework of FAO, Israel is ready and willing to contribute its experience and know-how to all countries interested in this type of development.⁵

⁵ Statement inserted in the verbatim record on request

RIGHT OF REPLY
DROIT DE REPONSE
DERECHO DE REPLICIA

Erdil K. AKAY (Turkey)

The Turkish Delegation using its Right of Reply would like to make the following written observation and would like to request the Chair that it be reproduced in the Verbatim Records of the Conference.

“The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey, with a view to clarifying its position and putting the record straight, wishes to bring to the attention of the Conference, that it refrained itself from making a verbal statement when on November 10th one delegation made a statement on international waters and, another one made on November 11th an unnamed reference to Turkey.

“On the first case, this delegation would like to state that Turkey maintains its position vis-à-vis transboundary waters and that it has always been open for negotiations on an equitable use of such waters. It nevertheless believes that the FAO is not the appropriate forum for such negotiations.

“On the second case, this delegation would like to state that Turkey believes that the FAO is not the appropriate forum for discussing this most complex political issue which is dealt with at the UN. And it is mainly for this reason that it refrained itself from entering into a discussion of it in the Conference.”

I avail myself of this opportunity to express, to Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.⁶

CHAIRMAN

That concludes the statements for this morning. I would ask everyone that the Plenary Session will reconvene at 14.30 hrs today, at which time we will have further statements as well. Your have already received in your pigeon holes the second report of the Credentials Committee and if the fourth report of the General Committee has been distributed to your pigeon holes prior to the Plenary session we will deal with it as well this afternoon. I thank you for your attention and attendance this morning. The 11th meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.30 hours.

La séance est levée à 11 h 30.

Se levanta la sesión a las 11.30 horas.

⁶ Statement inserted in the verbatim record on request

**INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE OF
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE** (continued)
**INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION
DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE** (suite)
**INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO
MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION** (continuación)

- 6. Review of the State of Food and Agriculture** (continued) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)
6. Examen de la situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/2; C 97/2-Sup.1)
6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/2;
C 97/2-Sup.1)

GENERAL DISCUSSION (continued)
DEBAT GENERAL (suite)
DEBATE GENERAL (continuación)

STATEMENTS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS (continued)
DECLARATIONS DES CHEFS DE DELEGATION (suite)
DECLARACIONES POR LOS JEFES DE LAS DELEGACIONES (continuación)

Unión Interparlamentaria

Miguel Angel MARTINEZ (Observador de la Unión Interparlamentaria)

Señoras y señores es para mí un honor, pero así mismo una singular alegría, hacer uso de la palabra en esta Conferencia General. Permítanme que inicie mi intervención saludándolos cordialmente a todos ustedes en nombre de la Unión Interparlamentaria cuyo Consejo presido desde hace apenas unas semanas. Traigo ante ustedes los planteamientos de los Parlamentos del mundo que se agrupan en nuestra Unión y acaso lo primero sea darles las gracias a la FAO y a su Director General señor Jacques Diouf por haber facilitado el camino y hecho realidad el Acuerdo suscrito en este mismo año entre nuestras dos instituciones; acuerdo que nos permite hoy seguir vuestros trabajos, asociarnos a los mismos y compartir con ustedes preocupaciones y compromisos de futuro.

Tengan ustedes presente que los Parlamentos son, dentro de una elemental perspectiva democrática, la más legítima expresión de la sociedad civil en las estructuras del Estado. Esto equivale a decir que mediante el acuerdo firmado con nuestra Unión Interparlamentaria, la FAO se enriquece con las opiniones y se asegura la cooperación de la más autorizada representación de los pueblos y de la sociedad. Este diálogo se produce por lo demás en momentos en que todos estamos profundizando en la reflexión sobre la reforma de la ONU y de su universo. Y cuando la civilización aparece más y más marcada por dos rasgos que la definen en este final de siglo: la democratización y la mundialización.

La democratización es un proceso arrollador que hace que sean cada día más los millones de hombres y mujeres que viven dentro del marco del estado de derecho y más y más aún los que aspiran a vivir por fin dentro de dicho marco identificando en él sus justas reivindicaciones de libertad, de estabilidad y de prosperidad.

Hoy hay en el mundo más y mejor democracia que en cualquier pasado anterior, pero acaso lo más importante sea que prácticamente nadie se atreva a defender como mejor a ningún otro sistema autoritario o totalitario.

Queridos amigos, la democracia hoy afortunadamente no tiene alternativa. Es dentro de ella donde se ubican las aspiraciones de igualdad y de dignidad de los pueblos y el rechazo de un

mundo unipolar y monopolístico en el que predominara la hegemonía de unos pocos ricos sobre los más, condenados a la marginación y a la pobreza.

Este proceso de democratización se proyecta, no de forma exclusiva, pero sí muy significativamente en el mejor funcionamiento y mayor responsabilidad de los Parlamentos. Teniendo en cuenta que resulta ya imprescindible superar como anacrónico el pensamiento que iguala Estado y Gobierno. Eso era antes, hoy ya y en cualquier planteamiento de progreso, el Estado es más que el solo Gobierno, es por lo menos Gobierno y Parlamento en plano de igualdad y de respeto mutuo.

La mundialización es otra característica de la sociedad en que vivimos, ningún problema acaba en el territorio o en el colectivo que lo sufre, todo tiene causas y efectos que alcanzan más allá de las fronteras cada vez más etéreas. Si los problemas tienen una identidad transnacional, es claro que cualquier solución a los mismos, que cualquier proyecto creíble deberá contemplar también dicha dimensión transnacional.

En la conjunción de democratización y mundialización, dos cosas parecen evidentes: una, que los Parlamentos han de tener notable responsabilidad en cualquier asunto de ámbito internacional y eso es lo que ha llegado a acuñarse como el concepto de la diplomacia parlamentaria; y dos, que el estado de derecho no puede concebirse recluido dentro de los lindes de tal o cual territorio, por el contrario, para que el progreso democrático florezca aún en una determinada colectividad deberemos esforzarnos porque la democratización alcance al escenario internacional, al mundo, en definitiva de las relaciones internacionales.

Esto supone, según nuestro modo de ver, conferir a la ONU y a su sistema un papel mucho mayor como plataforma en la que dichas relaciones puedan articularse y resolverse los conflictos racional y pacíficamente. Significa, a su vez, que para ello la propia ONU y sus agencias deberán asumir como presupuesto de la reforma en curso su propia democratización, parte de la cual ha de ser insertar en su identidad misma, una dimensión parlamentaria que permita a los representantes directos de los pueblos que son los Parlamentos a actuar en este escenario de forma coordinada con sus gobiernos respectivos.

Esa es la reflexión que nos hacemos en esta hora y lugar en la Unión Interparlamentaria. Estamos disponibles y dispuestos, queremos desempeñar el papel que nos corresponde dentro del complejo de las Naciones Unidas pero como parte del mismo y no como un mero interlocutor exterior. Es decir que los Parlamentos quieren ser interlocutores pero desde dentro, interlocutores de los Gobiernos y de la Administración del sistema unidos todos en la vocación y responsabilidad de mejor avanzar.

La acción que les estoy apuntando y que hemos presentado en la Conferencia General de la Unesco hace unas semanas y al propio Secretario General de la ONU Kofi Annan, hace apenas unos días, es una movilización en favor de la democratización y el imperio de la ley en el ámbito internacional y por lo mismo en favor del progreso y es, también, un impulso para salvar y elevar a la altura que merece y que necesitamos a las Naciones Unidas y a su universo.

Con esta perspectiva nos felicitamos de que la FAO haya creído oportuno pronunciarse a favor de la cooperación con la Unión Interparlamentaria en un proceso que se puso en marcha con ocasión de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación y que pudo concretarse el 12 de agosto de este mismo año con la firma solemne en Roma del Acuerdo entre nuestras dos organizaciones.

No cabe duda de que los esfuerzos de unos y otros, que aspiraban a dar una dimensión parlamentaria a la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, permitieron a la Unión Interparlamentaria y a la FAO, ir consolidando unas buenas bases para un nuevo capítulo de nuestro trabajo en común. Como recordarán muchos de ustedes la UIP organizó una “Jornada de Parlamentarios” integrada directamente en el programa de la Cumbre. En ella participaron alrededor de 200 parlamentarios de 73 países y el Presidente del Consejo de la Unión, mi antecesor, rindió el correspondiente informe cuando tomó la palabra en el último plenario de la Cumbre.

Los participantes en dicha jornada adoptaron por consenso una Declaración cuyo contenido fue aprobado después por los órganos de dirección de la UIP. En ese documento se precisa el compromiso de los Parlamentos en dar continuidad a lo tratado en la Cumbre. Al suscribir el texto de esta Declaración, los Parlamentos miembros de la Unión Interparlamentaria se comprometieron a propiciar la puesta en práctica del Plan de Acción de la Cumbre en sus países respectivos. En particular, asumieron el compromiso de apoyar el que sectores esenciales para la seguridad alimentaria y más precisamente el sector agrario disfruten de una mayor prioridad en la obtención de recursos públicos, beneficiándose también de las ayudas públicas al desarrollo.

Los Parlamentos tomaron así consciencia de la necesidad de establecer un marco legislativo que apoye la actividad agrícola compatible con el respeto al medio ambiente. Afirmaron además su convicción que el mayor reto que debían asumir era precisamente presionar a sus Gobiernos para que éstos lleven adelante políticas económicas y sociales en línea con los principios y valores sustentados por la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación. Esta importante tarea sigue siendo hoy una de las prioridades de nuestros Parlamentos tras la Cumbre. Porque nos preocupa realmente que se alcancen resultados concretos, la Unión Interparlamentaria ha establecido un mecanismo de evaluación del seguimiento que se dé, a nivel parlamentario, a los compromisos contraídos en Roma. Contamos mucho con la estrecha cooperación de la FAO en este tema y esperamos que el Acuerdo entre nuestras dos organizaciones contribuya ampliamente al éxito de la iniciativa.

En la reunión que celebramos en El Cairo, el pasado mes de septiembre, la Unión Interparlamentaria confirmó su apoyo a los esfuerzos de la FAO en favor de la seguridad alimentaria y del progreso del desarrollo rural y agrícola gracias al “Programa especial para la seguridad alimentaria en los países de renta baja y de déficit en alimentos” y en el marco de la campaña de “Alimentos para todos”. Aprovecho la ocasión para felicitar a la FAO por el éxito de su reciente campaña TeleFood que también mereció el apoyo de la Unión Interparlamentaria en nuestra Conferencia de El Cairo.

Pero si nos alegramos de los resultados tangibles ya alcanzados en la cooperación entre la UIP y la FAO, nuestra preocupación es seguir avanzando de cara al futuro. Pienso en particular en el proyecto de organizar dentro de un año una Conferencia Interparlamentaria especializada sobre el tema de una producción agrícola que permita alcanzar los objetivos de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, compatible con el respeto al medio ambiente. Esta ambiciosa reunión será la primera que organicemos conjuntamente la UIP y la FAO en el marco del Acuerdo de cooperación al que antes me he referido.

Albergada por el Parlamento italiano, la Conferencia se celebrará en Roma queriendo así simbolizar el lazo directo que se da con la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, de la que se considera una de las consecuencias y una de las prolongaciones. Celebrando esta Conferencia en forma conjunta la Unión Interparlamentaria y la FAO dejarán claro que la realización de los grandes compromisos políticos y económicos de los Estados, como los contraídos en la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, pasan por la acción concertada entre Gobiernos y Parlamentos de los distintos países. Además de conferencias especializadas de este tipo, la cooperación entre nuestras dos organizaciones podrá adoptar otras formas que iremos descubriendo juntos para llenar de contenido el acuerdo firmado por la FAO y la Unión Interparlamentaria. Queremos traducirlos en iniciativas concretas que hagan a los Parlamentos y a nuestros colegas parlamentarios, corresponsables del devenir de esta Organización. Queremos contribuir a que la conozcan y a que la lleguen a sentir como cosa propia y que la sientan, porque en verdad incluso orgánicamente los Parlamentos estén integrados en ella. Y así también sabrán los parlamentarios que son suyos vuestros programas y vuestras obligaciones, también las meramente presupuestarias que no lo olvidemos, son siempre competencia de los aparatos legislativos.

Señoras y señores, hemos venido a Roma y ante ustedes precisamente con este doble propósito: hablar claro y ofrecerles nuestra absoluta disponibilidad para llevar adelante todas las iniciativas sobre las que nos pongamos de acuerdo y que supongan el apoyo y el reconocimiento de parte de

los parlamentos del mundo hacia la labor admirable y eficaz, aunque casi siempre insuficientemente divulgada y conocida, que llevan a cabo ustedes en la FAO.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much. Not seeing the other country that is to speak, we will move on. I have an announcement to make before we proceed with the other business before us this afternoon. I would like to communicate to you some information regarding the appointment of the Independent Chairman of the Council. The Chairman of the Africa Group has advised me to inform the Conference that MrDotte from the Central African Republic and MrMalecela from Tanzania have withdrawn their candidature in favour of MrCamara from Guinea. Therefore, the names of MrDotte and MrMalecela will not be on the ballot papers tomorrow.

Second Report of the Credentials Committee (C 97/LIM/41)

Deuxième rapport de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs (C 97/LIM/41)

Segundo Informe del Comité de Credenciales (C 97/LIM/41)

CHAIRMAN

We will now move to the Second Report of the Credentials Committee. I will turn over the microphone to the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, who has some comments to make.

Mme Suze PERCY (Présidente, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)

Au nom de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs, je vais vous présenter le second rapport de cette Commission et vous signaler quelques petits changements de la dernière heure.

Depuis la dernière réunion du Comité, la Commission a reçu les pouvoirs de deux délégations. Il s'agit de la Jamaïque et de la Bulgarie.

La Commission a également reçu une correspondance annonçant la participation de Sainte-Lucie aux travaux de la Conférence. Il faut donc biffer le numéro 21 au paragraphe 3 et le remplacer par 20. Je vous prie également de biffer le chiffre 6 à la première ligne du paragraphe 4 et de biffer aussi les noms de la Jamaïque et de Sainte-Lucie parmi les pays qui ont annoncé qu'ils ne participeraient pas à la Conférence.

Au paragraphe 4, il faut mettre le chiffre 4 et le paragraphe 4 se lira comme suit: "Il est rappelé que quatre pays ont annoncé qu'ils ne participeraient pas à la Conférence, il s'agit des suivants: Bahamas, Cambodge, Iles Cook et Saint-Kitts-et-Nevis".

De plus, à l'Appendice B, page 6 du document C 97/LIM/41, il faut biffer aussi le nom de la Bulgarie.

La validité des pouvoirs de la Jamaïque et de la Bulgarie sera examinée et la plénière sera informée à ce sujet demain matin, à l'ouverture des travaux.

En ce qui concerne les pouvoirs de Saint-Lucie, on attend l'original de ses pouvoirs.

CHAIRMAN

I again thank the Credentials Committee for their work on behalf of us here at the Conference. We will now go to the adoption of the Second Report of the Credentials Committee as it has been modified right before, and we will do it paragraph by paragraph. You have all received a copy of it. I am not going to read each paragraph as everyone has received a copy.

Are there any comments on paragraph 1? Seeing no indication I will declare paragraph 1 adopted.

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 2, are there any comments? Seeing no indication I declare paragraph 2 adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 3, seeing no indication I declare paragraph 3 adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 4, as with the changes that the Chairperson of the Committee just informed us of. Seeing no indication to the contrary, I declare paragraph 4 adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 5. Are there any comments? Seeing no indication as such, I declare paragraph 5 adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 6 Are there any comments? Seeing no indication I declare paragraph 6 adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

We will now go to Appendix A. Are there any comments on the list of countries in Appendix A? Seeing no indication of anyone who wishes to comment, I declare Appendix A adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Go to Appendix B on page 6 of the Report. That has been modified in that Bulgaria has been removed from the list. Are there any comments on Appendix B? Seeing no indication of anyone who wishes to comment, Appendix B is adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Therefore the Second Report of the Credentials Committee is adopted in full and I would again thank the Chairperson and the Committee for their good work.

Fourth Report of the General Committee (C 97/LIM/40)

Quatrième rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/40)

Cuarto Informe del Comité General (C 97/LIM/40)

CHAIRMAN

We have one further report before us this afternoon and that is the Fourth Report of the General Committee which you have all received. We will take it paragraph by paragraph. The document I am referring to is C 97/LIM/40.

We will begin with paragraph 1. Are there any comments in reference to paragraph 1? Seeing no indication of anyone who wishes to comment, I will declare paragraph 1 adopted.

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 2 - anyone wishes to comment on paragraph 2? Seeing no indication, paragraph 2 is adopted.

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 3 are there any comments on paragraph 3? Seeing no indication, paragraph 3 is adopted.

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 4 - are there any comments on paragraph 4? Seeing no indication we will adopt paragraph 4

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 5 - are there any comments from anyone on paragraph 5? Seeing no indication, we will adopt paragraph 5.

Adopted

Adopte

Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 6 are there any comments on paragraph 6? Seeing no indication of anyone who wishes to comment, we will adopt paragraph 6.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

CHAIRMAN

Paragraph 7 - are there any comments on paragraph 7? United States of America.

Mrs Vonda Kimble DELAWIE (United States of America)

Thank you Mr Chairman. With regard to the Fourth Report of the General Committee, I would like to inform you that the United States will be submitting, for the record, a written statement which reflects our position on paragraph 7 of the Report.

CHAIRMAN

I thank you. The text that will be recorded when it is received, in the verbatim for this meeting. Are there any further comments on paragraph 7? Seeing none, paragraph 7 is adopted.

Adopted
Adopte
Aprobado

Mrs Vonda Kimble DELAWIE (United States of America)

The United States wishes to ensure that the record of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference reflect a lack of consensus on the issue of which Member Nations should have voting rights restored in accordance with the recommendations of the Hundred and Seventh Session of the Council, as specified in paragraph 6 of the Fourth Report of the General Committee.

The Fourth Report does not note that several Members of the General Committee objected to including Iraq in a list of countries seeking restoration of voting rights. These Members, including the United States of America, pointed out that the circumstances cited by Iraq as leading to insufficient payment of contributions, the “economic embargo” and freezing of Iraqi assets abroad, were not beyond its control. It is very clear that full, immediate and unconditional compliance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, which must precede the lifting of economic sanctions, are actions well within Iraq’s control. Some Members also noted the incongruity in a UN-associated body (the FAO) accepting, as an excuse for non-payment of assessed contributions, the requirements imposed by another UN Body (the Security Council). Following debate on these points, a vote was held and the report was approved for submission to the Conference.⁷

CHAIRMAN

The other Member Nation that had indicated their wish to make a statement has not yet appeared and in my view was aware that we recessed earlier this morning. They have not yet arrived and we have now completed the statements of the Member Nations, the Member Organization and the observer groups. I will therefore declare the 12th Meeting of the Plenary adjourned.

The meeting rose at 15.05 hours.
La séance est levée à 15 h 05.
Se levanta la sesión a las 15.05 horas.

⁷ Statement inserted in the verbatim records on request.

Fourth Report of the General Committee (C 97/LIM/40) (continued)**Quatrième rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/40) (suite)****Cuarto Informe del Comité General (C 97/LIM/40) (continuación)****J. B. PIETERS (Netherlands)**

I would like, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, to come back to the Plenary Session of yesterday. Yesterday a decision was adopted through which voting rights were restored to Iraq. I have some questions to ask.

First of all, we are wondering whether a quorum was available in this room?

Second, was the debate open for discussion and decision in spite of the fact that it was not presented in the Order of the Day, not even an afternoon session was foreseen. As far as the quorum is concerned, I would like to ask the Legal Counsel whether this quorum was indeed a fact. If that is not the case, Mr Chairman, we are of the opinion that this agenda item should be reopened.

Third question, only 15 minutes before the meeting and before discussion on this item, the report of the General Committee was put into the pigeon holes and several delegates have not had the report at their disposal. So please, Mr Chairman, I would like an answer to the questions I have just raised.

CHAIRMAN

I will make a comment before going to the Legal Counsel on a couple of those matters at least. Before the closing of yesterday morning's Plenary Session, I made it very clear -- this is in the verbatim from yesterday morning's session, and I will quote: "You have already received in your pigeon holes the Third Report of the Credentials Committee and if the Fourth Report of the General Committee has been distributed to your pigeon holes prior to the Plenary Session this afternoon, we will deal with it as well this afternoon." So the Plenary was given full announcement and full warning, if I said that it could be an agenda item for the afternoon, and I said so shortly after 11.00 hrs. yesterday morning. As far as there not being a notice in the Order of the Day for a Plenary Session yesterday afternoon, it is my understanding that is not always necessary to do so, because we did not know we would need one. In addition, shortly after 11.00 hrs., when the morning session was adjourned, we stated very clearly there was one Member Nation and one Observer organization that had not spoken and that we would call the Plenary Session at 14.30 hrs. yesterday afternoon to hear from them. We started the afternoon yesterday with the view that there was a quorum present. There was no Point of Order raised at that time, claiming that there was not a quorum present and, furthermore, in reference to your statement that the European Union was not aware of this, there were at least two Members of the European Union present in the room at that time. So with those comments, I will also ask the Legal Counsel to comment.

LEGAL COUNSEL

The quorum for decisions to be taken by the Conference is set out in Rule XII, paragraph 2, which provides that a majority of the Member Nations in the Conference constitutes a quorum. It is my assumption that there was a quorum yesterday before business started. If there is not a quorum, or if there is any challenge to there not being a quorum, this challenge is normally taken up at that particular time through a Point of Order.

On the question of whether it is legally required that the reports of Credentials Committees and reports of the General Committee, etc. should be on the Order of the Day, the answer is that it is not legally required that they be on the Order of the Day, and indeed it is common practice during the Conference that such reports are not on the Order of the Day.

J. B. PIETERS (Netherlands)

I have heard the replies, Mr Chairman, from you as well as from the Legal Counsel.

Since it is the case that the debate cannot be reopened, please allow me, Mr Chairman, to deliver a very brief statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States on this issue.

A Member Nation in arrears of assessed contribution can, in accordance with the recommendations of the Hundred and Seventh Session of the Council, have its voting rights restored only in exceptional circumstances and on the basis of conditions beyond its control. Mr Chairman, the Government of Iraq has requested restoration of voting rights with the argument that it has failed in settling its contributions to the budget of FAO for reasons beyond its control, referring to the economic embargo and the freezing of Iraq's assets abroad. The European Community and its Member States are of the firm view that full immediate and unconditional compliance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, which must precede the lifting of its economic sanctions, are actions within Iraq's control. Based on the view that EC Member States who are Members of the General Committee voted yesterday in the General Committee against restoring the voting rights to Iraq, the EC and its Member States are of the firm opinion that voting rights should not be restored to Iraq.

Mr Chairman, I wish to conclude by saying that the decision of the Plenary Session of the FAO Conference yesterday, by accepting the arguments put forward by Iraq, implies that the Resolutions of the UN Security Council on economic sanctions against Iraq are based on matters beyond the control of Iraq. It infers that Iraq may not comply with the Resolutions of the Security Council, because action is supposed to be beyond its control. In this way, the important Resolutions of the UN Security Council on economic sanctions against Iraq are being undermined, in our opinion, by a decision of the Governing Body of a United Nations Agency. Mr Chairman, against this background, the EC and its Member States, deeply deplore the decision taken in the Plenary Session yesterday to restore the voting rights to Iraq.

RIGHT OF REPLY***DROIT DE REPOSE******DERECHO DE REPLICIA*****Abdullah NAJAM ABDULLAH (Iraq) (Original language Arabic)**

Mr Chairman, my delegation would like to submit the following reply to what has just been stated by the distinguished delegate of the Netherlands, and this is in accordance with Article 29 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference and is related to the Right of Reply.

First, Mr Chairman, my delegation, the delegation of Iraq, has in the past and before the convening of this session of the FAO Conference, submitted an official request to the Director-General of FAO. In this letter, we explained the reasons why we were unable to pay our assessed contributions to FAO. These reasons are beyond our control, beyond the control of Iraq. This is a result of the unfair economic sanctions imposed on our people since 1990. This embargo makes it impossible for us to export our commodities and, in addition to the freezing of our assets and the forfeiture of our assets, our banking assets are being frozen in all countries. This makes it impossible for us to make use of our own assets. On this basis, at present Iraq is unable to pay its assessed contributions for reasons which are beyond our control. We are under enforced measure conditions, and this is in accordance with the relevant paragraph of Article III of the Constitution of FAO, the Article which deals with this issue in a very clear manner.

Second, sir, the General Committee of the FAO Conference in its Fourth Report submitted yesterday, recommended that eighth Member Nations would be allowed to recover their right to vote in the Conference, including Iraq. These recommendations were submitted in paragraph 7 of the document C 97/LIM/40.

Our third observation is the following. What has just been stated by the distinguished delegate of the Netherlands concerning the idea of not permitting Iraq the right to vote is in contradiction of what has been stated in the afore-mentioned paragraph. This call reflects an unacceptable political treatment of a country, which is one of the founding members of FAO, and it should not be raised in this international gathering of an international organization dealing with the issues of agriculture, famine and the necessary steps to provide food to the hungry people in the world. If there is an objection, it should be applied as a principle to all countries, and not single out one country, for reasons you are well aware of, because such a position would mean the use of different principles with different people. This is a political stand, whereas we know that the treatment of countries should be without any discrimination.

Fourth, Iraq stands ready to pay its assessed contributions to the Organization when the embargo is lifted -- as soon as the measures imposed on our assets abroad are lifted - just as we used to pay our contributions before the imposition of the sanctions and the embargo on Iraq.

On the basis of what has been just stated, sir, I should like to make an appeal to your august gathering. Namely that you would adopt the Report of the General Committee as it is and support what is contained in paragraph 7, namely the authorization of the eight countries concerned with the right to vote as stated here. Such a decision was made yesterday, and I hope that such a position will be upheld today as well.

CHAIRMAN

Delegates, that agenda item was dealt with yesterday, and will stand as dealt with yesterday. The comments of both the Netherlands and Iraq will be recorded in the verbatim records of this meeting.

Inge NORDANG (Norway)

The Norwegian delegation wants to associate itself with the statement that has just been delivered by the Netherlands on behalf of the EC and its Member States.

Mansur Mabrouk AL SEGHAHER (Libya) (Original language Arabic)

Thank you again, Mr Chairman. I believe that the Conference of FAO will be changed into a Security Council! It will be transformed into a Security Council, and if this is the case, we would welcome such a change. However, I am dismayed; yesterday the General Committee dealt exhaustively with this issue, and dealt with it in a clear-cut fashion. We referred to the suffering of the Iraqi people, we referred to the unjust treatment of the Iraqi people because of the unfair embargo and sanctions imposed on Iraq. In order not to take too much of your time, sir, I would like simply to support what has just been stated by my colleague from Iraq, and I call upon this Plenary to adopt the Report submitted by the General Committee.

CHAIRMAN

As I said, the Fourth Report of the General Committee has already been adopted. The United States of America made a statement that was reported in yesterday's verbatim record. Does the United States of America wish to make a very brief comment?

Ms Deborah MALAC (United States of America)

Yes, I would like to remind the Conference that we have, in fact, submitted a statement for the record on this issue but, nonetheless, we would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the European representative.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you. We will continue with the Second Report of the Credentials Committee.

Second Report of the Credentials Committee (C 97/LIM/41)**Deuxième rapport de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs (C 97/LIM/41)****Segundo Informe del Comité de Credenciales (C 97/LIM/41)****Mme Suze PERCY (Présidente, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)**

En supplément au document approuvé hier par la Conférence, à savoir le document C 97/LIM/41 relatif au second rapport de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs, la Commission a examiné les pouvoirs de la Bulgarie, de la Jamaïque et du Belize qui sont arrivés après sa troisième séance. Les pouvoirs présentés par ces trois États sont jugés valides. En conséquence, le document C 97/LIM/41 doit être amendé comme suit: au paragraphe 2 lire à la troisième ligne: "151 membres de la FAO" au lieu de "148". Au paragraphe 4 pas de changements. Il y a toujours 4 pays qui ont annoncé qu'ils ne participeraient pas à la Conférence. A l'Appendice A ajouter à la liste les noms de Belize, Bulgarie, Jamaïque. A l'Appendice B biffer le nom de Belize et ajouter Sainte-Lucie. En conclusion, je vous prie de noter qu'en ce moment où je m'adresse à la Conférence 151 Pays membres ont présenté des pouvoirs valides, 20 n'ont rien présenté et 4 ne participent pas à la Conférence.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any questions or comments on the further changes to the Second Report of the Credentials Committee? It is important. It is a change in numbers and a change of the names of the countries that are now on different lists.

Mohammed Aslam KHAMOSH (Afghanistan)

On this one, they have not mentioned anything about Afghanistan. Afghanistan was left out - whether this was because their credential was not valid, or what. Could you clarify this?

CHAIRMAN

I believe that it was in the previous report but the Chairperson can confirm that. Please go ahead.

Mme Suze PERCY (Présidente, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)

Dans le rapport qui a été fait hier à la Plénière nous avons indiqué que le cas de l'Afghanistan serait rediscuté lundi parce que, jusqu'à présent, nous n'avons pas eu de pièce originale de l'Afghanistan.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any further questions or comments? We will now take those corrections to the Second Report of the Credentials Committee as adopted.

Fifth Report of the General Committee (C 97/LIM/42)**Cinquième rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/42)****Quinto Informe del Comité General (C 97/LIM/42)****CHAIRMAN**

We will now move to the Fifth Report of the General Committee, document C 97/LIM/42. I will just read it then I think we can adopt it or discuss it as one whole report. First paragraph: "The General Committee had a further meeting following the issuance of its report on voting rights, document C 97/LIM/40. It was informed that one Member Nation, Seychelles, had made a payment to regularize its voting right position". Third paragraph: "The General Committee, after

considering requests from the Member Nations concerned, recommends to the Conference that the following Member Nations be authorized to vote at the Conference: Armenia, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Are there any questions or comments on the Fifth Report of the General Committee? Seeing none, we will adopt the Fifth Report of the General Committee.

IV. APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS (continued)

IV. NOMINATIONS ET ELECTIONS (suite)

IV . NOMBRAMIENTOS Y ELECCIONES (continuación)

29. Election of Council Members (C 97/LIM/18)

29. Election des Membres du Conseil (C 97/LIM/18)

29. Elección de Miembros del Consejo (C 97/LIM/18)

CHAIRMAN

We now pass to Agenda Item 29, The Election of Council Members. Document C 97/LIM/18, the General Committee Report which we approved earlier this week, lists the names of the nominations received for election to the Council. I would now like to ask the Secretary-General to explain the procedure for these elections.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The first phase of the elections will comprise an election to fill the vacancy in Africa for the remainder of the term, November 1997 to 31 December 1998 and elections for the period November 1997 to 31 December 2000 in order to choose three Member Nations for Africa, six for Asia, three for Europe, three for Latin America and the Caribbean, and one for the Near East. For two regions, North America and the Southwest Pacific, there are no vacancies during this period. We will conduct as many ballots as are necessary.

Once this first phase is completed, we shall proceed with the second phase, that is the election for the period 1 January 1999 to November 2001. We will again conduct as many ballots as are necessary.

In accordance with Rule XII, paragraph 9(a) of the General Rules of the Organization, election of Council Members shall be decided by secret ballot. This applies even when there are not more candidates than vacancies. In order to vote, each delegation will receive ballot papers for each of the individual regions for which seats are to be filled. Each ballot paper must be filled in accordance with the instructions contained thereon. The majority required is specified in paragraphs 3(a) and 3(b) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization. I should like to remind you that the number of vacancies varies from region to region, and in order to validate the ballot paper a cross should be placed in the box against each one of the countries you wish to elect to the vacant seat.

In accordance with Rule XII, paragraph 11(a) of the General Rules of the Organization, each elector, unless he wholly abstains, shall cast one vote for each elective place to be filled. Any ballot paper which is not in conformity with these requirements shall be declared defective. In accordance with Rule XII, paragraph 4(c) of the General Rules of the Organization, any ballot paper left blank will be recorded as an abstention. In accordance with paragraph 4(d) of this same Rule XII, ballot papers must carry no other notation or mark than those required for the purpose of indicating the vote. Any ballot paper carrying votes for more countries than there are vacancies to be filled shall be considered defective. Similarly, any ballot paper carrying votes for fewer countries than there are vacancies shall also be considered defective. This means that for a ballot paper to be valid, it shall carry the same number of crosses as there are vacancies.

I take the liberty of reminding you that in accordance with paragraph 9(f) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, any delegate who makes an error in completing his or her

ballot paper may request a clean one from the Elections Officer. In this first phase of the election we will have as many ballots as are necessary.

CHAIRMAN

We shall now vote to fill the Council seat vacated by Gabon for the period November 1997 to 31 December 1998 and for the seats to be filled for the period November 1997 to 31 December 2000.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have just been informed that Benin has withdrawn from the election of Council Members for the African region for the period November 1997 to December 1998. This leaves, therefore, only Gabon in the African region as a candidate for that seat.

CHAIRMAN

I would like to remind the delegates that Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization lays down that the quorum for these elections is the majority of the Member Nations and that is 88. I am told that at least 109 delegations are in the room at the present time. Before we proceed to vote, are there any other questions? If not, I would like to appoint four tellers to assist the Secretariat in the election process. I am going to ask the delegations of Australia, Croatia, Italy and Zambia to serve as tellers. If there are no further comments, the Secretary-General will now commence the voting procedures, but I want to draw your attention to paragraph 14 of Rule XII which specifies that once voting has commenced, no delegate or representative may interrupt the voting except to raise a Point of Order in connection with the voting. Mr Secretary-General, please call the vote.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRMAN

Delegates, the voting is now completed. I have a couple of other comments. Please take your seats, delegates. I will ask the Secretary-General to make an announcement just before we proceed.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

May I draw to the attention of the Plenary that we have issued a revision of document C 97/DJ/7 in the Spanish version only. This is because, unfortunately, on page 4 of that document, where the names and countries of the remaining candidates for election to the position of Independent Chairman of the Council are listed, a mistake was made, showing Mr Per Wramner as coming from a country other than his own. Mr Wramner is from Sweden and the Spanish version of the Journal C 97/DJ/7, has now been issued in a revised form to indicate that Mr Per Wramner is from Sweden and is one of the candidates for the position of Independent Chairman of the Council. We, in the Secretariat, would like to apologize for this error and for any inconveniences that it might have caused.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much, Mr Secretary-General, for informing us of that correction in the Spanish version only. Before I make one other announcement, I would ask all the delegations with more than one person present, during the recess while the votes are counted, to send one person to Commission III in the Green Room. That would provide a quorum for Commission III, so that they can proceed with their work, while the votes are being counted. But I stress, please make sure that, at the resumption of the Plenary, after the votes have been counted, you have a delegate here as well. So having asked you to help provide a quorum in Commission III, in the Green

Room, for the resumption of their work, we will now suspend this Session of the Plenary while the votes are being counted. When the voting is complete, we will ring the bells and call everyone back to the Plenary.

The meeting was suspended from 11.00 to 12.10 hours.

La séance est suspendue de 11 h 00 à 12 h 10.

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.00 horas a las 12.10 horas

CHAIRMAN

I will now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I shall now read out the report for election to the Council of the seat vacated by Gabon for the Period November 1997 to December 1998 and for the seats to be filled for the Period November 1997 to 31 December 2000.

C 97/RS/2

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: AFRICA REGION ELECTION DES MEMBERS DU CONSEIL: 11.97-12.98 REGION AFRIQUE ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION AFRICA
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	0
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	3

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	139
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	1
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	139

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	70
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Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos	
GABON	139		

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature

Firma

Ms Z. Penic Ivanko, Croatia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature

Firma

A.K. Pearson, Australia

D. Debilde

.....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

CL 97/RS/3

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: AFRICA REGION ELECTION DES MEMBERS DU CONSEIL: 11.1997-12.2000 REGION AFRIQUE ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION AFRICA
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	12
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	7

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	123
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	3
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	369

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	93
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Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
CAMEROON	123				
ERITREA	123				
NAMIBIA	123				

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature

Firma

Ms Z. Penic Ivanko, Croatia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature

Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

D. Debilde

.....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/4

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: ASIA REGION ELECTION DES MEMBERS DU CONSEIL: 11.1997-12.2000 REGION ASIE ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION ASIA
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	15
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	4

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	123
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	6
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	738

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	106
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Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
BANGLADESH	123				
CHINA	123				
INDONESIA	123				
JAPAN	123				
KOREA, REP. OF	123				
THAILAND	123				

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature

Firma

A.K. Pearson, Australia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature

Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

B. Linley

.....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/5

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: EUROPE REGION ELECTION DES MEMBERS DU CONSEIL: 11.1997-12.2000 REGION EUROPE ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION EUROPA
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	11
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	9

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	122
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	3
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	366

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	92
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Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos	
GERMANY	122		
GREECE	122		
POLAND	122		

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature

Firma

Ms Z. Penic, Ivanko, Croatia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature

Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

D. Debilde

.....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/6

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION ELECTION DES MEMBERS DU CONSEIL: 11.1997-12.2000 REGION AMERIQUE LATINE ET CARAIBES ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION AMERICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	10
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	10

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	122
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	3
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	366

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	92
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos	
ARGENTINA	122		
CHILE	122		
VENEZUELA	122		

Tellers/Scruteurs/Escrutadores

Signature

Firma

A.K. Pearson, Australia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature

Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

B. Linley

.....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/7

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: NEAR EAST REGION ELECTION DES MEMBERS DU CONSEIL: 11.1997-12.2000 REGION PROCHE ORIENT ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION CERCANO ORIENTE
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	0
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	17

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	125
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	1
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	125

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	63
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
IRAN, ISLAMIC REP. OF	125				

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature

Firma

A.K. Pearson, Australia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature

Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

B. Linley

.....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRMAN

We now have to fill the seats for the period of 1 January 1999 to November 2001 and we will follow the same procedure as we did this morning. The seats to be filled this time are: five Member Nations from Africa, three from Europe, five from Latin America and the Caribbean, two from the Near East and two from North America. There are no vacancies for this period in the regions of Asia and the Southwest Pacific. If the tellers, who are the same tellers as previously, are at their stations I will invite the Assistant Secretary-General to commence the voting process. Thank you.

Vote

Vote

Votación

The meeting rose at 12.40 hours.

La séance est levée à 12 h 40.

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.40 horas.

IV. APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS (continued)**IV. NOMINATIONS ET ELECTIONS** (suite)**IV . NOMBRAMIENTOS Y ELECCIONES** (continuación)**29. Election Of Council Members** (continued) (C 97/LIM/18)**29. Election Des Membres Du Conseil** (suite) (C 97/LIM/18)**29. Elección De Miembros Del Consejo** (continuación) (C 97/LIM/18)**CHAIRMAN**

I will now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Thank you, Mr Chairman, I shall now read out the report of ballots for the Election of Council Members for the Period 1 January 1999 to November 2001.

C 97/RS/8

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: AFRICA REGION ELECTION DES MEMBRES DU CONSEIL: 1.1999-11.2001 REGION AFRIQUE ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION AFRICA
---	---	---

1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	134
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	10
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	1

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	123
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	5
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	615

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	103
------------------------------------	-----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos	
CONGO, DEM. REP. OF	123		
GABON	123		
MADAGASCAR	123		
MOROCCO	123		
NIGERIA	123		

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature .(signed).....

Firma

A.K. Pearson, Australia

Signature .(signed).....

Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

D. Debilde

..(signed).....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/9

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: EUROPE REGION ELECTION DES MEMBRES DU CONSEIL: 1.1999-11.2001 REGION EUROPE ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION EUROPA
---	---	--

1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	134
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	7
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	1

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	126
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	3
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	378

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	95
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
AUSTRIA	126				
HUNGARY	126				
SPAIN	126				

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature ... (signed.....)
Firma

Ms Z. Penic Ivanko, Croatia

14.11.97
.....
Date
Fecha

Signature ... (signed.....)
Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

B. Linley
..... (signed.....)
Elections Officer
Fonctionnaire électoral
El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/10

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION ELECTION DES MEMBRES DU CONSEIL: 1.1999-11.2001 REGION AMERIQUE LATINE ET CARAIBES ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION AMERICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	134
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	9
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	4

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	121
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	5
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	605

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	101
------------------------------------	-----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
BARBADOS	121				
BRAZIL	121				
CUBA	121				
MEXICO	121				
PARAGUAY	121				

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature (signed.....)

Firma

Ms Z. Penic Ivanko, Croatia

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature (signed.....)

Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

B. Linley

..... (signed.....)

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/11

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: NEAR EAST REGION ELECTION DES MEMBRES DU CONSEIL: 1.1999-11.2001 REGION PROCHE ORIENT ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: REGION CERCANO ORIENTE
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	134
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	4
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	7

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	123
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	2
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	246

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	83
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
KUWAIT	123				
QATAR	123				

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature (signed.....
Firma

A.K. Pearson, Australia

14.11.97
.....
Date
Fecha

Signature ... (signed.....
Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

B. Linley
..(signed.....
Elections Officer
Fonctionnaire électoral
El oficial de elecciones

C 97/RS/12

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	1	ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: NORTH AMERICA ELECTION DES MEMBRES DU CONSEIL: 1.1999-11.2001 AMERIQUE DU NORD ELECCION DE LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONSEJO: AMERICA DEL NORTE
---	---	---

1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	134
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	6
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	11

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	117
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	2
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	234

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	79
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
CANADA	117				
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	117				

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature ... (signed.....
Firma

Ms Z. Penic Ivanko, Croatia

14.11.97
.....
Date
Fecha

Signature .. (signed.....
Firma

R.M. Mulele, Zambia

D. Debilde
.. (signed.....
Elections Officer
Fonctionnaire électoral
El oficial de elecciones

30. Appointments**30. Nominations****30. Nombramientos**

30.1 Appointment of the Independent Chairman of the Council

30.1 Nomination du Président indépendant du Conseil

30.1 Nombramiento del Presidente Independiente del Consejo

CHAIRMAN

Ladies and gentlemen, delegates, we proceed into the voting for the Independent Chair of the Council. Under article V paragraph 2, of the Constitution, the Conference appoints the Independent Chairman of the Council.

As I announced yesterday in the Plenary Session, two of the candidates that had been on the list, originally, have withdrawn. There are now five candidates for the post. The appointment will be made by secret ballot, as specified in paragraph 9(a) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization.

I will ask the Secretary-General to read aloud the names of the candidates and the Member Nations and to give us the relevant instructions so that we can quickly move into that balloting this afternoon. As we do ballot, I again ask you to be as prompt and as quick as you possibly can. We want to move this along because this is an important ballot and election. I am not understating that, but we do have other important work to do later this afternoon. I will now turn the floor over to the Secretary-General for those relevant instructions.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The candidates for the post of Independent Chairman of the Council are as follows: Pedro Alfonso Medrano Rojas of Chile; Jean S. Camara of Guinea; Sjarifudin Baharsjah of Indonesia; Gian Tommaso Scarascia Mugnozza of Italy; Per Wramner of Sweden. Delegates will be called one at a time to go to the voting area where they will receive a ballot paper indicating the names of the candidates. Each elector, unless he or she wholly abstains, shall cast one vote. In accordance with Rule XII, paragraph 4(c) of the General Rules of the Organization any ballot paper left blank will be recorded as an abstention. In accordance with paragraph 4(d) of the same Rule XII, ballot papers must carry no other notation or mark than those required for the purpose of indicating the vote. Any ballot paper carrying votes for more than one candidate shall be declared defective.

I take the liberty of reminding you that in accordance with paragraph 9(f) of the Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, any delegate who makes an error in completing the ballot paper may request a clean one from the elections officer. The election will have as many ballots as are necessary.

CHAIRMAN

The voting will now commence. A quorum for elections is a majority of Member Nations and as we know that is 88. At the present time, there are at least 95 delegations present.

I will now invite the delegates of the United States of America and New Zealand to act as tellers, and to proceed to the voting area. Afterwards the Secretary-General will begin to call the countries.

Finally, I want to draw your attention again to paragraph 14 of Rule XII which specifies that once the voting has commenced, no delegate or representative, may interrupt the voting except to raise a Point of Order in connection with the voting.

I now turn it over to the Assistant Secretary-General to call the countries.

Vote

Vote

Votación

SECRETARY-GENERAL

We now have the report of the first ballot for the election of the Independent Chairman of the Council.

C 97/RS/13

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	No. 1	ELECTION OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL ELECTION DU PRESIDENT INDEPENDANT DU CONSEIL ELECCION DEL PRESIDENTE INDEPENDIENTE DEL CONSEJO
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	0
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	0

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	142
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	1
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	142

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	72
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos	Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
	Jean Syrogianis CAMARA	36	Per WRAMNER	14
	Pedro Alfonso MEDRANO ROJAS	34		
	Sjarifudin BAHARSJAH	33		
	Gian Tommaso SCARASCIA MUGNOZZA	25		

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature .(signed).....

Firma

Ms Deborah Malac, U.S.A.

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature ..(signed).....

Firma

Jeremy Palmer, New Zealand

B. Linley

... (signed).....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRMAN

Delegates, since no candidate has achieved the required votes we must proceed to the second ballot. As decided by the Conference last Friday, the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated from the list of this ballot.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRMAN

We now have the results of the second round. I will ask the Secretary-General to read them.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The report of the second ballot for the election of the Independent Chairman of the Council is as follows:

C 97/RS/13/A

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	No. 2	ELECTION OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL: ELECTION DU PRESIDENT INDEPENDANT DU CONSEIL: ELECCION DEL PRESIDENTE INDEPENDIENTE DEL CONSEJO:
---	----------	--

1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	0
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	2

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	140
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	1
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	140

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	71
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
		Pedro Alfonso MEDRANO ROJAS	41	Gian Tommaso SCARASCIA	27
		Jean Syrogianis CAMARA	37	MUGNOZZA	
		Sjarifudin BAHARSJAH	35		

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature ... (signed).....
Firma

Ms Deborah Malac, U.S.A.

14.11.97
.....
Date
Fecha

Signature ... (signed).....
Firma

Jeremy Palmer, New Zealand

D. Debilde
.... (signed).....
Elections Officer
Fonctionnaire électoral
El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRMAN

Since no candidate has achieved the required votes, we must proceed to a third ballot.

As decided by the Conference last Friday, the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated from the list of this ballot.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRMAN

We now have the results of the third round of voting, and I will ask the Secretary-General to read those results please.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The report of the third ballot for the election of the Independent Chairman of the Council is as follows:

C 97/RS/13/B

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	No. 3	ELECTION OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL: ELECTION DU PRESIDENT INDEPENDANT DU CONSEIL: ELECCION DEL PRESIDENTE INDEPENDIENTE DEL CONSEJO:
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1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	143
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	0
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	2

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	141
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	1
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	141

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	71
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
		Pedro Alfonso MEDRANO ROJAS	66	Jean Syragianes CAMARA	32
		Sjarifudin BAHARSJAH	43		

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature ... (signed).....

Firma

Ms Deborah Malac, U.S.A.

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature .. (signed).....

Firma

Jeremy Palmer, New Zealand

D. Debilde

.. (signed).....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRMAN

Since no candidate has achieved the required votes, we must now proceed to the fourth ballot, as we decided last Friday. I will ask the Secretary-General to read the names, so that we may be clear about the two candidates left to be voted for.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The two remaining candidates are: Pedro Alfonso Medrano Rojas, Chile and Sjarifudin Baharsjah, Indonesia.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRMAN

We now have the results of the fourth round, and I will ask the Secretary-General to read them.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The report of the fourth ballot for the election of the Independent Chairman of the Council is as follows:

C 97/RS/13/C

REPORT OF BALLOT RESULTAT DU SCRUTIN RESULTADO DE LA VOTACION	No. 4	ELECTION OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL: ELECTION DU PRESIDENT INDEPENDANT DU CONSEIL: ELECCION DEL PRESIDENTE INDEPENDIENTE DEL CONSEJO:
---	----------	--

1. Ballot papers deposited Bulletins déposés Papeletas depositadas	142
2. Defective ballots Bulletins nuls Papeletas defectuosas	0
3. Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	0

4. Valid ballots Bulletins valables Papeletas válidas	142
5. Seats to be filled Sièges à pourvoir Puestos que hay que cubrir	1
6. Votes cast Suffrages exprimés Votos emitidos	142

7. Majority Majorité Mayoría	72
------------------------------------	----

Elected - Elus - Eligidos		Not Elected - Pas Elus - No Elegidos			
Sjarifudin BAHARSJAH	74	Pedro Alfonso MEDRANO ROJAS	68		

Tellers/Scrutateurs/Escrutadores

Signature .. (signed).....

Firma

Ms Deborah Malac, U.S.A.

14.11.97

.....

Date

Fecha

Signature .. (signed).....

Firma

Jeremy Palmer, New Zealand

D. Debilde

... (signed).....

Elections Officer

Fonctionnaire électoral

El oficial de elecciones

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

May I be the first to congratulate our newly-elected Independent Chairman of the Council, and I call upon the Director-General to say a few words.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I would like first to congratulate His Excellency Sjarifudin Baharsjah on his election as the Independent Chairman of the Council. This position is very important for the work of the Organization. As I mentioned when I was thanking the outgoing Chairman, the part he played in conducting the business of this Organization, in particular the part he played in the World Food Summit, and in bringing all different parts of this Organization together, has made my work much easier.

I therefore look forward to working with Mr Sjarifudin Baharsjah who will surely conduct the affairs of this Organization in a spirit of consensus and understanding, and also defend the principles and ideals upon which this Organization is rooted. I do not need to go through the very eloquent *Curriculum Vitae* of Mr Sjarifudin Baharsjah, who has long experience in agriculture, having been Director, since 1975, of the Institute of Agriculture of Bogor, Director of the Research Centre and Development in Agro-economy in the Ministry of Agriculture, Secretary-General of the Ministry in 1992, Deputy-Minister in 1988, and since 1993 full Minister for Agriculture, and having close involvement with the FAO and other international institutions.

I am convinced that with his experience and wisdom, he will be an excellent Chairman and I pledge to provide him, on the part of the Organization, and on behalf of all the staff of the Organization, all our support.

I would like also to take the opportunity to thank all the candidates for the post of Independent Chairman of the Council. We have had really one of the best list of candidates we could have dreamed of for this election. We have had persons of experience, persons of competence, persons of devotion and persons of commitment to this Organization and who, in their different activities, have helped this Organization arrive at where it is today.

I therefore would like to express my appreciation to all the candidates who kindly accepted to be considered for this position to help the Organization - Mr Medrano Rojas, Mr Camara, Mr Scarascia Mugnozza and Mr Per Wramner - to whom I wish again to express my gratitude and also indicate to them that I will count on them and rely on them to continue to cooperate with me in different activities and in different areas of responsibility of this Organization. Again, thank you very much for your kind attention.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

It is now my pleasure to call upon our newly-elected Independent Chairman of the Council to say a few words to the Conference.

Sjarifudin BAHARSJAH (Independent Chairman of the Council)

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a pleasure and honour for me to have been elected as Independent Chairman of the Council for the coming biennium 1997 to 1999. Allow me to thank you all for the confidence

and trust given to me to lead the Council, particularly in implementing Conference decisions as well as in preparing for the Thirtieth Session of the Conference.

Let me use this opportunity also to pay my respects to Ambassador López Portillo of Mexico, the outgoing Independent Chairman, who was very dedicated and full of persuasion in conducting the business of the Council, and whom I know for quite some time during my attendance in FAO meetings since 1982. His leadership and patience in enriching the discussion on every agenda item has given him an admiration from all Council Members. Allow me, on my behalf and of all Council Members, to wish him good luck and a better future in the career of serving the Government of his country.

Let me also use this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General, Jacques Diouf, and all of the Secretariat staff for their excellent and hard work in preparing this Session. I have the honour to know Dr Diouf personally as a hard-working professional and one very dedicated to the work which he and myself deeply share, that is the effort to advance agriculture for the benefit of all human beings.

One year has already passed since the World Food Summit of November 1996, yet many countries still face difficulties, especially the developing countries. Globally, the increase of food and agriculture production is still very slow. In developing countries the increase of production in 1996 was reported as only 2.9 percent, compared to 5.2 percent in 1995, while the increase in the developed countries was estimated at 2.4 percent compared to 1.9 percent in 1995. The prospect for 1997 is also not encouraging, especially in the tropical countries due to the *El Niño* phenomenon. This situation clearly indicated that overall world food production will still not be on a par with the demand in order to achieve world food security. Therefore, continuous efforts in joint cooperation are still required to monitor and overcome the situation. On this matter we need to strengthen the role of FAO. With the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action, we have to applaud FAO for having brought the issue of hunger and malnutrition back into focus. We need to strengthen FAO to enable it to function as a catalyst for action at the global level and, at the same time, serve the needy members of developing countries at national levels, to translate the objectives of the Summit into concrete action.

I feel very honoured. This is a very important and honoured position, but the honour is not mine alone, nor is it Indonesia's alone, the honour is FAO's. We have conducted the voting for and the appointment for the position of Independent Chairman through a process which is, at the same time, very serious and yet in an atmosphere of collegiality and friendship.

I will do my best not to disappoint the trust given me to fill this very honourable Chair. I will work very closely with the Director-General and his staff but, above all, I will seek cooperation from all Member Nations so that the Council will be a functioning Council and, through it, FAO will really deliver its function in the world. Again, I thank you very much and I will promise to work hard to do my utmost.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

Again, congratulations from the Chair. Thank you very much for those inspiring remarks.

Chile wishes to make a comment. Go ahead please.

Pedro Alfonso MEDRANO ROJAS (Chile)

Quisiera en primer lugar felicitar muy sinceramente al señor Ministro de Agricultura de Indonesia por su elección al cargo de Presidente Independiente del Consejo. Podemos asegurarle nuestra mejor disposición para trabajar por los objetivos de esta Organización, y muy en particular por el logro de los objetivos de la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación. Quisiera del mismo modo

agradecer muy sinceramente a las personas que nos han acompañado en esta postulación, a las cuales voyan mis más sinceros agradecimientos. Deseo asegurarles que, como siempre lo hemos hecho en el pasado con honestidad y con transparencia, vamos a seguir trabajando por los objetivos de esta Organización. Los problemas que enfrentamos son ciertamente globales, y el nuevo milenio colocará justamente el mayor desafío en esta Organización para resolver los problemas del hambre y de la malnutrición de las poblaciones rurales pobres de este mundo.

Aprendí de un filósofo Daisako Ikeda, gran humanista de este siglo, que muchas veces no tenemos conciencia de nuestras capacidades para enfrentar los problemas. Yo estoy convencido que tenemos esa capacidad, pero tenemos al mismo tiempo que tener la determinación para que los objetivos que nos planteamos en la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación, sean cumplidos antes de la fecha que nos habíamos propuesto.

Para todos ustedes, a todos los que nos apoyaron y confiaron en nosotros deso expresarle más profundo reconocimiento. Particularmente, si ustedes me lo permiten, quisiera agradecerle a nuestra querida Presidenta del GRULAC, la Embajadora de la República Dominicana, Angela Benjamin, que creyó en nuestras posibilidades y en este sueño, por el infatigable apoyo prestado a nuestra candidatura. Le puedo asegurar que continuaremos adelante persiguiéndolo, porque en definitiva son éstas y no otras consideraciones las que mueven el destino de la humanidad. Muchas gracias.

CHAIRMAN

Delegates, in order to ensure that everyone has the proper documentation available to them so that we can continue the rest of the important work that we have to deal with today, I am going to suspend the Plenary Session half an hour so that those documents can be put in your pigeon holes. When we come back we will deal first with the Report from Commission III and then a Report from Commission II. So, I would ask you to please be prepared to return to the Plenary Conference Hall in an half hour.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Just to make sure that all delegations will have the necessary documentation for when the Plenary reconvenes, may I draw your attention to the fact that we are here talking about two documents; they will be distributed in your pigeon holes but also here in the Plenary. The first document is a draft Resolution on the Scale of Contributions 1998-99, and the second document is the section of the Commission II Report dealing with the Programme of Work and Budget. These are the two documents which you should have read, and have in your hands when we reconvene in half an hour.

The meeting was suspended from 18.35 to 19.30 hours.

La séance est suspendue de 18 h 35 à 19 h 30.

Se suspende la sesión de las 18.55 horas a las 19.30 horas.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you for reconvening delegates. I am sorry it took so long but we wanted to make sure that everyone had the documents circulated to you before we reconvened so we did not start again until that happened. I would ask the Assistant Secretary-General to read a correction in the Spanish version of the Scale of Contributions 1998-99 before we begin the Agenda.

SECRETARIO GENERAL ADJUNTO

Se trata de una corrección que se aplica sólo a la versión del Proyecto de Resolución en lengua española, me refiero al Proyecto de Resolución para la Conferencia de la FAO, Escala de Cuotas para 1998-1999. Último párrafo, numeral 2; éste queda corregido de la manera que voy a decir ahora: "...decide que, si la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas..."; la siguiente frase: "...en su cincuenta y dos período de sesiones..." hay que borrarla, es necesario tachar esa frase;

“...adopta una nueva Escala de Cuotas de las Naciones Unidas para los años 1997-2000 antes del 31 de diciembre de...” debería de ser 1998, no 1997. Espero que todos los hispanohablantes hayan podido tomar estas correcciones. Voy a leer esta primera parte hasta esa coma, repito numeral 2, léase: “... decide que, si la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas en su cincuenta y dos período de sesiones...” queda borrado, por lo tanto la frase es: “...si la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas adopta una nueva Escala de Cuotas de las Naciones Unidas para los años 1998-2000 antes del 31 de diciembre de 1998...”, el texto ahora dice 1997; el Director General prepare una Escala de Cuotas modificada para, el texto dice: “... los años 1998 y 1999...”, hay que modificar esta frase y decir: “... El Director General prepare una Escala de Cuotas modificada para el año 1999...”, hay que borrar 1998. Repito, estamos en la quinta línea que empieza por la palabra modificada, tiene que decir: “... modificada para el año 1999...”, borrando “los” y “1998”, que refleje la Escala de Cuotas establecida por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas para “ese” año, no para “esos” años, aplicando los principios establecidos, etc.” El resto de la frase es exactamente como está en el texto.

Espero, señor Presidente, que esta corrección esté clara, de todas maneras la Secretaría ha preparado una revisión de este documento que se distribuirá lo antes posible.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much for making that clarification to the convention. I will now ask the Chairman of Commission III for his Report.

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART IX (from Commission III) (C 97/REP/9)
PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - NEUVIEME PARTIE (soumis par la Commission III) (C 97/REP/9)
PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE IX (de la Comisión III) (C 97/REP/9)

24. Scale Of Contributions 1998-99
24. Barème Des contributions 1998-99
24. Escala De Cuotas Para 1998-99

Bob Francis JALANG'O (Chairman, Commission III)

Commission III of the Conference, which deals with constitutional, legal, administrative and financial matters, completed its deliberations today and adopted its Report. However, there were reservations on Agenda Items No. 18 and No. 24.

While the entire Report of the Commission will be tabled on Tuesday next week, I will only introduce Agenda Item No. 24 as requested by the Chairman.

This Agenda item deals with the Organization's Scale of Contributions for the year 1998-99 and a draft Resolution presented by the United States of America, which is now before you, should be adopted as it is closely interlinked with the Programme of Work and Budget 1998-99 which is currently under debate by Commission II. The draft Resolution states the procedure for handling the Scale of Contributions, particularly for 1999.

CHAIRMAN

Delegates you have before you the draft Resolution on the Scale of Contributions for 1998-99. Are there any comments on the Resolution before you?

Beglar TAVARTKILADZE (Georgia)

As it is known, the procedure to adopt a new Scale of Assessments is quite a difficult process, namely, it is difficult to be sure that the Fifty-Second Session of the United Nations General Assembly will undoubtedly adopt the new Scale of Assessments. On the other hand, we already have a new document already adopted in December 1994 which could be applied for the 1998-99 biennium. It is our proposal.

CHAIRMAN

I will ask the Legal Counsel to comment on that.

LEGAL COUNSEL

In fact the Scale that you have before you, and which is referred to in paragraph 1 of the draft Resolution, is the Scale which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1994 and applied to the period 1995 to 1997. You will note in operative paragraph 1 of the Resolution it says "adopts for use in 1998 and 1999 the Scale as set out in the Appendix... of this Report, derived directly from United Nations Scale of Assessments in force during 1997". It then goes on to the second operative paragraph, but the first operative paragraph, adopts the Scale which was in force in 1997 and was adopted in December 1994 by the United Nations General Assembly.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments on the Scale of Contributions draft Resolution before the Conference? If not, I will deem it is adopted by the Conference.

Draft Report of Plenary - Part IX (from Commission III) - including Resolution, was adopted. Projet de rapport de la Pleniére - neuvieme partie (soumis par la Commission III), y compris la Resolution, est adopté.

Proyecto de Informe de la Plenaria - Parte IX (de la Comisión III) - incluida la Resolución, es aprobado.

XU NANSHAN (China) (Original language Chinese)

Still on the meeting of Commission III, we understand that there should be a vote on the draft Resolution, rather than simply examining the draft.

CHAIRMAN

I will clarify that with Legal Counsel, but it is my understanding there does not have to be a vote on the Report of Commission III. There will have to be a vote on the Budget, but there does not have to be a vote on the Report of Commission III. I ask Legal Counsel to clarify.

LEGAL COUNSEL

You are entirely correct. There needs to be a vote on the level of the Budget. There does not need to be a vote on the Scale of Contributions.

XU NANSHAN (China) (Original language Chinese)

The Chinese delegation, on this draft Resolution, has reservations for the following reasons.

- First, this Resolution is counter to the practice in our Organization.
- It is also counter to the provisions laid down in paragraph 2 of Article XVIII of the Basic Texts and in paragraph 1 of Rule 5 of the Financial Regulations of FAO.
- The Resolution on the Scale of Contributions is neither complete nor specific. Nothing like this has ever been seen in the history of FAO, and it sets a very bad precedent.

- Fourthly, we are not in a position to undertake any commitment whatsoever on a Scale of Contributions which has not yet been decided.
- Fifthly, as to the question of knowing whether the Scale of UN Assessments which will be agreed in the future suits our Organization or not, this would have to be examined and discussed by the Conference.

CHAIRMAN

Your comments will be recorded in the Verbatim Records of the Conference but the draft Report has been accepted by the Conference.

I will now adjourn the Plenary to go to a Commission II Session, at the completion of which, we will reconvene the Plenary for the continuation of business of the Plenary.

The meeting was suspended from 19.45 to 20.35 hours.

La séance est suspendue de 19 h 45 à 20 h 35.

Se suspende la sesión de las 19.45 horas a las 20.35 horas.

CHAIRMAN

May I request the cooperation of the delegates in order to move the Agenda and the business of the Conference along.

Delegates, we will now move to the adoption of the draft Report of Commission II, Part IV. We all have it before us and I think we can deal with the first thirteen paragraphs *en bloc*.

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART I - (C 97/REP/4-Rev. 1)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - PREMIERE PARTIE -

(C 97/REP/4-Rev. 1)

PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE I - (C 97/REP/4-Rev. 1)

15. Programme of Work And Budget 1998-99 (paras 1-13)

15. Programme de travail et budget 1998-99 (par 1-13)

15. Programa de Labores Y Presupuesto para 1998-99 (párrs 1-13)

Paragraphs 1 to 13 adopted.

Les paragraphes 1 à 13 sont adoptés.

Los párrafos 1 a 13 adoptados.

CHAIRMAN

We will now go to the vote on paragraph 14, which is the Resolution for Adoption by the Conference of the Budgetary Appropriations for 1998-99.

Paragraph 14, including Resolution.

Paragraph 14, y compris la résolution.

Párrafo 14, incluida la Resolución.

Gerd MASSMANN (Germany)

I should like to make a short statement concerning our position on this draft Resolution. I should like to emphasize, in case there was a vote, we would abstain for the following reasons: the extra-budgetary authorization of US\$ 12 million for the purpose of meeting redeployment and separation costs is, in our view, not in accordance with the rules of budget and is not an example of budget transparency, which should be aimed at in this connection. Our abstaining is, therefore, not a sign of lacking confidence in FAO, but an encouragement for transparency in budgetary matters.

CHAIRMAN

Your comments will be duly recorded.

While we are doing the count to make sure we have a quorum, since we have completed the adoption of the Report, we now have to vote on the Resolution before us. Are there any comments on the Resolution before we proceed to the vote?

I will now ask the Secretary-General to explain the modalities of the vote which we are about to take.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

In accordance with Article XVIII.5 of the Constitution, decisions on the level of the budget shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

According to Rule XII-7(a) of the General Rules of the Organization, a vote by roll-call shall be taken if a majority of two-thirds is required by the Constitution.

According to Rule XII-3(c) of the General Rules of the Organization, when a two-thirds majority of the votes cast is required by the Constitution for a decision to be taken by the Conference, the total number of affirmative and negative votes cast shall be more than one-half of the Member Nations of the Organization. The number of votes cast, for or against then, should be at least 88.

As I said, I am advised that there are at least 104 delegations present in the hall.

According to Rule XII-7(a) of the General Rules of the Organization, voting by roll-call shall be conducted by calling, in English alphabetical order, the names of all Member Nations entitled to vote.

The name of the first Nation to be called shall be designated by lot, drawn by the Chairman.

Vote

Vote

Votación

RESULT SHEET / RESULTATS / RESULTADOS**ROLL CALL VOTING
APPEL NOMINAL
VOTACION NOMINAL**

1st **BUDGETARY APPROPRIATIONS 1998-99**
 Vote on
 Vote sur
 Votación para

Votes for Voix pour Votos favorables	103
Votes against Voix contre Votos en contra	0
Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	1
No reply Aucune réponse Ninguna respuesta	56

Number of votes cast Nombre de suffrages exprimés Número de votos emitidos	103
--	-----

Majority required Majorité requise Mayoría requerida	69
--	----

**ADOPTED
ADOPTÉE
ACEPTADA**

Date 14/11/97
Fecha

Elections Officer ...B. Linley (signed)..
Fonctionnaire électoral
El oficial de elecciones

RULE XII - 13(a) GRO

If a vote is equally divided on a matter other than an election, a second vote shall be taken at a subsequent meeting to be held not less than one hour after the conclusion of the meeting at which the equally divided vote occurred. If the second vote is also equally divided the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

En cas de partage égal de voix lors d'un vote ne portant pas sur une élection, on procède un deuxième vote en cours d'une séance ultérieure, qui ne peut avoir lieu moins d'une heure après la fin de celle à laquelle s'est produit le partage égal des voix. Si les voix restent également partagées lors de ce second vote, la proposition est considérée comme repoussée.

Si hubiera empate en un asunto que no sea una elección, se repetirá la votación en una sesión subsiguiente la cual no deberá celebrarse hasta que haya transcurrido una hora, por lo menos, desde la conclusión de aquella en que se produjo el empate. Si en la segunda votación hubiera también empate se considerará rechazada la propuesta.

29th Session of the Conference
29ème Session de la Conférence
20o Período de la Conferencia

ROLL CALL VOTING AND ISSUE OF BALLOT PAPER REPORT
APPEL NOMINAL ET DISTRIBUTION DE BULLETINS
VOTACIÓN NOMINAL Y DISTRIBUCIÓN DE PAPELETAS

1st **BUDGETARY APPROPRIATIONS 1998-99**
Vote on
Vote sur
Votación para

MEMBERS	YES	NO	ABS	NR
AFGHANISTAN	X			
ALBANIA				X
ALGERIA	X			
ANGOLA	X			
ARGENTINA	X			
ARMENIA				X
AUSTRALIA	X			
AUSTRIA	X			
AZERBAIJAN				X
BAHAMAS				X
BAHRAIN				X
BANGLADESH	X			
BARBADOS	X			
BELGIUM	X			
BELIZE				X
BENIN	X			
BHUTAN				X
BOLIVIA				X
BOTSWANA	X			
BRAZIL	X			
BULGARIA	X			
BURKINA FASO	X			
BURUNDI	X			
CAMBODIA				X
CAMEROON	X			
CANADA	X			
CAPE VERDE	X			
CHAD	X			
CHILE	X			
CHINA	X			

MEMBERS	YES	NO	ABS	NR
COLOMBIA				X
CONGO, DEM. REP. OF				X
CONGO, REP. OF				X
COSTA RICA	X			
COTE D'IVOIRE	X			
CROATIA	X			
CUBA				X
CYPRUS	X			
CZECH REPUBLIC	X			
D.P. REP. OF KOREA				X
DENMARK	X			
DOMINICA	X			
ECUADOR				X
EGYPT	X			
EL SALVADOR	X			
EQUAT. GUINEA	X			
ERITREA	X			
ESTONIA				X
ETHIOPIA	X			
FIJI				X
FINLAND	X			
FRANCE	X			
GABON	X			
GAMBIA	X			
GEORGIA	X			
GERMANY			X	
GHANA				X
GREECE	X			

MEMBERS	YES	NO	ABS	NR
GRENADA	X			
GUATEMALA	X			
GUINEA				X
GUINEA-BISSAU				X
GUYANA				X
HAITI	X			
HONDURAS	X			
HUNGARY	X			
ICELAND				X
INDIA	X			
INDONESIA	X			
IRAN, ISLAMIC REP. OF				X
IRAQ				X
IRELAND				X
ISRAEL	X			
ITALY	X			
JAMAICA	X			
JAPAN	X			
JORDAN				X
KAZAKHSTAN	X			
KENYA	X			
KOREA, REP. OF	X			
KUWAIT				X
LAOS				X
LEBANON				X
LESOTHO				X
LIBERIA	X			
LIBYA	X			
LITHUANIA	X			
LUXEMBOURG	X			
MADAGASCAR	X			
MALAWI	X			
MALAYSIA	X			
MALDIVES				X
MALI				X
MALTA	X			
MAURITANIA				X
MAURITIUS	X			
MEXICO	X			
MOLDOVA, REP. OF				X
MONGOLIA	X			
MOROCCO	X			

MEMBERS	YES	NO	ABS	NR
MOZAMBIQUE	X			
MYANMAR				X
NAMIBIA	X			
NEPAL	X			
NETHERLANDS	X			
NEW ZEALAND	X			
NICARAGUA				X
NIGER	X			
NIGERIA	X			
NORWAY	X			
OMAN	X			
PAKISTAN	X			
PANAMA	X			
PAPUA NEW GUINEA				X
PARAGUAY				X
PERU	X			
PHILIPPINES	X			
POLAND	X			
PORTUGAL	X			
QATAR				X
ROMANIA	X			
RWANDA	X			
ST. KITTS & NEVIS				X
SAINT LUCIA				X
ST. VINCENT & GRENADINES				X
SAMOA				X
SAUDI ARABIA, KINGDOM OF	X			
SENEGAL	X			
SEYCHELLES				X
SLOVAKIA				X
SLOVENIA	X			
SOUTH AFRICA	X			
SPAIN	X			
SRI LANKA				X
SUDAN	X			
SURINAME	X			
SWAZILAND	X			
SWEDEN	X			
SWITZERLAND	X			

MEMBERS	YES	NO	ABS	NR
SYRIA				X
TAJKISTAN				X
TANZANIA, UNITED REP. OF	X			
THAILAND				X
THE F.Y. REP. OF MACEDONIA				X
TONGA				X
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	X			
TUNISIA	X			
TURKEY	X			
TURKMENISTAN				X
UGANDA	X			
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES				X
UNITED KINGDOM	X			
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	X			
URUGUAY	X			
VANUATU				X
VENEZUELA	X			
VIET NAM				X
YEMEN				X
ZAMBIA	X			
ZIMBABWE	X			

*15. Programme Of Work And Budget 1998-99 (Para 14), Including Resolution, Adopted.
15. Programme De Travail Et Budget 1998-99 (Par. 14), y compris la Résolution, adopté.
15. Programa De Labores Y Presupuesto Para 1998-99 (Párr 14), incluida la Resolución, aprobado.*

CHAIRMAN

You have heard the results of the vote on the Resolution for Budgetary Appropriations. That completes that item of the Agenda. I will now call upon the Director-General to take the floor.

LE DIRECTEUR GENERAL

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais vous remercier, honorables délégués. A une heure aussi tardive, la sagesse incite à être très bref. Je voulais cependant vous remercier pour le travail extrêmement sérieux, long, difficile, pour les mois que vous avez passés au sein des différentes instances, comme le Comité de l'agriculture, le Comité des pêches, le Comité des forêts, le Comité des produits qui nous ont d'abord donné les éléments de base du Programme, puis le Comité du Programme et le Comité financier qui ont fait une synthèse et qui ont analysé les implications financières, et enfin le Conseil et la Conférence. Je voudrais vous remercier tous pour les efforts que vous avez déployés pour améliorer le contenu du programme de cette Organisation et pour en augmenter l'efficacité.

Je suis convaincu que vous tous étiez animés du souci de permettre à notre Organisation de pouvoir remplir son mandat dans les meilleures conditions d'utilisation des ressources de nos Etats Membres. Je voudrais donc vous rendre hommage pour nous avoir orientés, pour nous avoir guidés par vos conseils, vos avis, et pour nous avoir donné les ressources nécessaires pour continuer à lutter contre la faim dans le monde.

Encore une fois, je voudrais, en mon nom personnel et au nom de l'ensemble du personnel de l'Organisation, vous exprimer ma profonde gratitude. Je vous remercie.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

As I will be leaving the Conference tonight and returning to Canada tomorrow, I want to thank the Conference again very much for the honour and privilege that they have given to Canada to chair this Conference this week. I also want to thank the Director-General and the Secretariat and all of the staff who have worked so hard to put this Conference together, the lead up to it and for the duration of this Conference and the work that they continue on our behalf after we leave here, either this week or next week, knowing that our Permanent Representatives are here working on our behalf all the time.

I remind all of us that, as I said in my presentation from Canada in the Canadian statement the other day, the challenge to all of us is to leave here and walk the walk after we have talked the talk.

I want to thank the Vice-Chairmen who have ably filled in and I thank Ambassador Tavartkiladze, who I believe will be filling in the Chair next week for the conclusion of the Conference. I want to thank the Commission Chairmen as well as all the delegates for the cooperation that you have given to all of the Chairmen to date, and I know that that will continue throughout the rest of the Conference. Last but not least, I want to thank the interpreters for the tremendous job that they do so that we can all have a meaningful Conference here again this year.

So thanks again for the honour to Canada and to myself to be the Chairman of this Conference. I wish the conclusion of the Conference well next week.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

The meeting rose at 21.10 hours.
La séance est levée à 21 h 10.
Se levanta la sesión a las 21.10 horas.

INTRODUCTION - PROCEDURE OF THE SESSION AND REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (continued)**INTRODUCTION - QUESTIONS DE PROCEDURE ET EXAMEN DE LA SITUATION DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DE L'AGRICULTURE** (suite)**INTRODUCCION - CUESTIONES DE PROCEDIMIENTO Y EXAMEN DEL ESTADO MUNDIAL DE LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION** (continuación)

6. Review of The State of Food and Agriculture (continued) (C 97/LIM/37)

6. Examen de la Situation de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture (suite) (C 97/LIM/37)

6. Examen del Estado mundial de la agricultura y la alimentación (continuación) (C 97/LIM/37)

Draft Resolution: Agricultural Biological Diversity

Project de Resolution: Diversité Biologique Agricole

Proyecto de Resolucion: Biodiversidad agrícola

CHAIRMAN

Let us continue our meeting with new energy. I call the 15th Plenary Meeting to order. We will now once again consider Item 6, Review of the State of Food and Agriculture. The reference document is C 97/LIM/37. It is a draft Resolution on agricultural biological diversity that was examined by the Resolutions Committee at its first meeting on 12 November, so I suggest the Resolution be adopted *en bloc*.

Ms Laurie J. TRACY (United States of America)

First of all, the United States attaches great importance to FAO's very important work in agricultural genetic resources. We want to move forward on revising the undertaking, giving all due consideration to the important issues addressed in this international accord, and we look forward to working closely with other countries to this end, particularly during the meeting of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to be held from 1 to 5 December. We should point out that, in our view, issues as important as those in the Resolution merit more in-depth treatment than we have been able to grant them during this Conference. For example, it is my understanding that this Resolution has not been discussed in any of the three Commissions. We are therefore uncertain as to the necessity for the Resolution, particularly in view of the fact that, in three weeks, we will all be meeting here for an entire week on this topic. We do not need an incentive, such as presented by and embodied in the Resolution, to urge us to meet, because we are already committed to doing so. If other Members strongly recommend moving forward today on this Resolution, we can probably agree to that, on the assumption that we can address a number of specific concerns.

Andrew Keith PEARSON (Australia)

The fact that the Resolutions Committee looked at the form of this Resolution has nothing to do with its substance. Australia is also concerned about this Resolution from two basic aspects.

The first, as mentioned by the United States, is that this Resolution has had no opportunity for consideration in any of the Commissions and therefore its contents have not had a chance to be discussed by the Members.

Our second point is that there are a number of issues in this Resolution, particularly in relation to the interaction between FAO and the Secretariat of CBD, which do require considerable discussion, and we feel that the Plenary does not provide what is needed for such a discussion -- that is a fairly technical basis drawing upon the expertise of people who are not here and recognition of the fact this is an area that needs to be addressed by the Committee on Genetic

Resources for Food and Agriculture. There does need to be further consideration of particularly paragraph 3, and we feel that, on the whole:

1. This draft Resolution lacks a basis for adoption at this Plenary because it has not had sufficient interactive discussion. This should have taken place in the lead-up to the Conference, then as a minimum in one of the Commissions or other, but certainly not here on the floor of the Plenary, where the numbers are greatly reduced from even what they were last week.
2. There are some significant technical issues which are being raised here, which we believe should, in fact, be discussed by CGRFA.
3. The other points which are being raised are again reiterations of discussions in the last CGRFA, in the last discussions and negotiations of the International Undertaking and of the last discussions by the Council. It is again inappropriate to use this Conference and this Plenary simply to repeat these discussions, and we would like to suggest that this Resolution should probably be withdrawn. If it is not to be withdrawn then, at a minimum, some sort of group should be organized to have a look at the technical aspects. But a debate on the Plenary floor is not going to give the opportunity for the interaction that is really needed when dealing with these sorts of issues.

J. P. HOOGEVEEN (Netherlands)

As sponsor of this Resolution on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, I would like to make some comments about this Resolution, and also try to respond to the remarks of United States and Australia.

First of all, the European Community and its Member States would like to stress the importance of the issue of agricultural biological diversity. We think it is also an issue which is crucial for the future of this Organization, the future of FAO, especially within the implementation of Agenda 21. The issue is becoming more and more important and getting more and more attention from several organizations, not only FAO.

In the Resolution, we stress the need of an active involvement of FAO and the need of priority-setting within the programme of FAO in relation to this issue, and I think that is very important because we think FAO should stay and should remain the most important Organization for this issue. Of course, in this Resolution, we do not only ask for a meeting of the Committee on Genetic Resources, we also urge all the involved parties to finalize the negotiations on the International Undertaking because negotiations have been going on for several years and I think, especially in relation to the Conference on Biological Diversity, it is important that we try to find a way to finalize the negotiations.

I think it is possible to discuss and adopt this Resolution *en bloc* in this Plenary. I think that the Resolution is not controversial and I do not see that there are any technical problems in this Resolution. I see much similarity with the Right to Food and, although the Netherlands submitted this Resolution under the agenda item on the Programme of Work and Budget, I think it was the decision of the Secretary-General of the Conference, or the Secretariat, to discuss this issue under this agenda item. But I really do not see the argument of Australia that we cannot discuss it here. If Australia is of the opinion that it should be discussed in one of the Commissions, then Australia could have made a Point of Order in Commissions I, II or III to discuss it. So Mr Chairman, I hope with this explanation, we can adopt this Resolution *en bloc*.

Before closing my statement, during the last days of last week we had some informal consultations with some groups and to speed up the adoption of this Resolution, I would like to propose one extra operative paragraph which I think is also very important, and I will read out now that new paragraph 7:

The new operative paragraph 7 will read as follows:

We commence: “that FAO explores partnerships on specific projects with the three present GEF implementation agencies, UNDP, World Bank and UNEP, in order to assist developing countries.”

Fernando José MARRONI de ABREU (Brasil)

Igualmente que Australia, tenemos dificultades en cuanto al párrafo interactivo 3. Creo que no está bien clara la relación con el Secretariado de la Convención de Biodiversidad, como también los términos de diversidad biológica para la agricultura, éste no es el mandato de la Comisión. Por eso, si vamos a discutir esta Resolución, nuestra delegación prefiere que se hagan con tiempo consultas amplias con todas las delegaciones interesadas en una de las comisiones, y después se regrese a la Plenaria para una eventual aprobación.

En cuanto al párrafo se pide que las negociaciones se finalicen antes de la próxima Conferencia, por lo cual nosotros estamos de acuerdo, aunque si creemos que es poco realista hacer comparaciones debido al limitado progreso que hubo en las innumerables reuniones de la Comisión para la negociación del Compromiso. Pero demostrando buena voluntad estaríamos de acuerdo con este párrafo tentativo, repito, estaríamos de acuerdo con que se discuta eso en una de las Comisiones, y después se regrese a la Plenaria.

Roberto VILLAMBROSA (Argentina)

Mi delegación, tanto como la delegación del Brasil, y muchas otras delegaciones aquí presentes, fue un activo participante en las consultas sobre recursos genéticos en la Comisión de esta misma y en el Compromiso Internacional de negociaciones. Quiero dejar en claro que mi delegación no fue consultada tampoco sobre el texto de este Proyecto de Resolución, en consecuencia, no sabría decir cuáles fueron las delegaciones consultadas de mi propio grupo. Esto no ocurrió solamente con este Proyecto sino también con otros, donde otras delegaciones no fueron consultadas. Estos Proyectos que se presentan no tienen una canalización adecuada a través de los Grupos regionales. En consecuencia no existe una discusión apropiada, y cuando nos encontramos en la Plenaria con los distintos Proyectos de Resolución, encontramos que hay una serie de delegaciones que tienen inconvenientes con los textos, con los párrafos, como ya nos ocurrió también en el marco de la Comisión II, que hubo un Proyecto que se presentó directamente en la Plenaria sin la canalización adecuada. Este es otro ejemplo de lo que significa una inadecuada canalización de los Proyectos.

Nosotros tenemos la mejor buena voluntad de discutir todo proyecto que se presente, de discutirlo de manera adecuada y transparente. Por lo tanto tenemos las mismas dudas y los mismos inconvenientes que las delegaciones de Australia, Estados Unidos y del Brasil con este proyecto, sin embargo no nos oponemos a que se siga discutiendo. Tanto como Australia y Estados Unidos, preferiríamos que este Proyecto quizás fuera remitido a la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos. Volvemos a reiterar que estos temas de procedimiento son los que perturban la buena marcha de una serie de Proyectos que, si fueran discutidos como corresponden, tendrían sus méritos.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénegal)

Je vais donner quelques exemples. Aussi bien dans le paragraphe du préambule que du dispositif, il s'agit de choses qui sont déjà établies, tant au niveau de la Commission sur les ressources génétiques dont on parle, qu'au niveau du Conseil, et même au niveau du Sommet mondial de l'alimentation. Donc, si je vois quelques exemples pour illustrer ce que je dis, est-ce que l'on peut effectivement, au troisième paragraphe avant la fin du préambule, contester que le Conseil de la FAO et la Conférence des Etats parties à la Convention sur la diversité, ou demander que soit rapidement menée à bien la révision de l'engagement. Cela est un point. Est-ce que l'on peut aussi contester aujourd'hui qu'on a souvent demandé une collaboration et une coordination entre toutes les agences intéressées, et je parle des trois qui posent le même problème, au moment où

l'on essaye même d'encourager la FAO à se mettre au travail avec toutes les institutions concernées, jusqu'aux ONG.

J'en arrive même au paragraphe 4 où l'on incite les Etats Membres à poursuivre ce qui est déjà fait, dans un esprit constructif de compromis, pour arriver à une chose qui nous tient tous à coeur: je veux dire la révision de cet engagement et sa mise en oeuvre même.

Et, pour terminer, je pense que dans le nouveau paragraphe qui est proposé, le 7 nouveau que nous accueillons avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme, car ce qui manquait c'est justement l'exploration du partenariat sur les projets spécifiques, mais dans la traduction française que nous avons entendue, il y a quelque chose qui n'a pas été dit: c'est qu'il s'agit des agences actuelles de mise en oeuvre du GEF. Je crois que dans la traduction nous ne l'avons pas entendu et cela est important pour les pays en développement.

Cette Résolution est donc simplement une Résolution que la Conférence doit prendre pour confirmer des décisions ou des souhaits qui ont été exprimés et étudiés profondément dans d'autres instances. Je crois qu'en réalité il ne s'agit pas, peut-être pour des questions de principe que nous respectons, de tenter de bloquer une initiative qui n'est qu'un appui très important politiquement parlant, sur une matière qui est tout à fait importante, surtout pour la mise en oeuvre du cérémonial dont le Plan d'action a largement fait écho et d'une manière très significative. Nous pensons que le temps ne nous permet même plus d'aller en Commission - peut-être nous pourrions le faire en Commission, mais il est certain que, même en Commission, il sera difficile pour une Résolution aussi inoffensive de retarder son adoption, qui ne devrait pas poser de problèmes.

J.P. HOOGEVEEN (Netherlands)

Sorry to take the floor again but I would like to stress to my colleagues here in this room that the European Community and its Member States would have preferred to discuss this Resolution in one of the Commissions. It was not our decision that it was brought forward straight to this Conference and Plenary Meeting; but now it is in this Plenary. I would like to make it clear that we hope we can finalize discussions here and that we can adopt this Resolution.

I do not think it is necessary that, for the Resolution, we have to go to one of the technical meetings. I think the Conference is a Governing Body which should give political signals -- and again I would like to make a similarity with the Resolution about the Right to Food. That Resolution was brought forward directly to the Resolutions Committee and then into Commission I. The Committee on World Food Security did not deal with this Resolution, it was brought forward straight to the Resolutions Committee. I do not think it was necessary because with that Resolution we want to give a very important political signal about the importance of the Right to Food. So if we think that biological diversity is also a very important issue for the future of this Organization, I think we could deal with this Resolution in the same way and adopt it *en bloc*.

Ronald ROSE (Canada)

I have a particular concern about the new paragraph 7 that has just been introduced, because I recall very well that this was discussed in the Committee on Agriculture in the spring and that there was a specific wording that was adopted at that point. Because of that concern and a number of concerns that have been raised, and because of the statement by the Netherlands on behalf of the Members of the European Community, I would have preferred this to be discussed in a more technical Commission. I would like to support the proposal that a small Working Group or a group of interested parties be formed to review this Resolution in somewhat greater detail, taking advantage of the background which is available in other documents, and would be happy to volunteer to serve on that Working Group. Thank you very much.

Andrew Keith PEARSON (Australia)

I am concerned that we break down some of the myths that have been reported to apply to this Resolution, particularly the one that it does not raise anything really new. In a number of paragraphs that is quite correct, but also involved in this Resolution are some very new issues which may be overlooked unless there is considerable discussion of the technical implications, and I would like to highlight one of these for my colleagues. This is related to ensuring that the Resolution does not preempt or duplicate activities under the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity's work programme on agricultural biological diversity, which is raised in operative paragraph 3. Australia feels that there is the potential to duplicate and preempt decisions of COP. Of concern is the fact that operative provisions preempt any decision by COP on its work programme and priorities, and the role of organizations such as FAO. COP has yet to decide any significant allocation of work under its programme, although, and we quite agree, there is recognition of the need for cooperation with FAO in developing its work programme.

The only clearly identified areas of work relevant to FAO, to date, are in respect of genetic resources. Key features of the agricultural biological diversity decision of the development of the programme are its focus on gaps in international activities as part of this process. Hence, we feel it is premature to incorporate this as a priority into the FAO activities at this stage before at least the main meeting in Bratislava of COP 4. Actions are requested of both parties to CBD, as well as other instruments, as part of this process - this also is not clearly recognized in the draft Resolution. Countries are also required to submit case studies which would also inform the development of the CBD work programme. Many of these case studies are not very advanced so we still have an element which has yet to be brought into the CBD-COP work. Also, some broad thematic areas have been identified, but there has been no agreement to date as to which of these is to be tackled first. The CBD of COP will meet next year to review its future work programme, and one would assume that further decisions relevant to agricultural biological diversity will be taken at that time and not in the Plenary here in such a way as may in fact limit or cause duplication for the work of COP at its next meeting.

That is just one example I would like to highlight, Chairman, which to Australia, at least, does indicate that there is more than apparently meets the eye with some elements of this Resolution as it stands at the moment.

Mallam Issah SEIDU (Ghana)

Owing to the importance we attach to agricultural biological diversity, my delegation agrees with the views expressed by Senegal and the EC. The Resolution, as it stands now with the additional paragraph 7, is only to emphasize points that are specifically important to the development and conservation of agricultural biological diversity. We, therefore, support the adoption of the Resolution.

CHAIRMAN

So, we have three proposals - one to adopt *en bloc* and two proposals against this statement. The first thing to do is to discuss this very important draft from Commission I or to organize a contact Group on this issue. The only way for Commission I to finish its work is to organize a contact Group to discuss the drafting of this Resolution.

So what is your opinion about the organization of a Contact Group?

Ms Laurie J. TRACY (United States of America)

I find that a very constructive proposal, and we would be very happy to have Canada represent North America.

CHAIRMAN

Well, the United States of America accepts the proposal of Australia and Canada - any other countries? Japan?

Etsuo KITAHARA (Japan)

If a small Contact Group is going to be established, then Japan would like to volunteer to join such Contact Group.

Fernando José MARRONI de ABREU (Brazil)

We too would like to volunteer for this Contact Group. We would also recommend that at least two countries from each Region be represented, if possible, and we think this would be a good representation.

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

Barbados is not volunteering for the Contact Group, but we agree that the idea of a Contact Group would be an excellent one, particularly if it can complete its work by tomorrow and come back to the Plenary. We are thinking about a short-term Contact Group just to examine the Resolution in the way that it would perhaps be examined in a Commission, but to work quickly and come back to us so that the Resolution can be adopted at this Session.

Andrew Keith PEARSON (Australia)

Australia would, as we have already indicated, be happy to work with a Contact Group. My concern is now that we are in the back end of the Conference we cannot support a Contact Group which would meet in parallel with Plenary and Commissions. We feel that this is too an important technical issue to have running at the same time as the other discussions; this is a very late arrival on the scene. It creates difficulties certainly for smaller delegations, such as ours, but we will be happy to have a Contact Group perhaps at lunch time but I think that it is unreasonable at this late stage to suggest that you would have a Contact Group working in parallel with the Plenary Session. There are too many other important issues which are also happening which I think need the attention of delegations as well, and to ask to split resources at this late stage is not appropriate.

Khairuddin Md. TAHIR (Malaysia)

If a Contact Group is to be established, Malaysia will be happy to participate in that group.

J.P. HOOGVEEN (Netherlands)

When I look at the remarks made by some delegations regarding this Resolution, I think there were only a few on the substance which relate to operative paragraph 3, but I still believe that during this Plenary meeting we can finalize the text if those delegations could bring forward their amendments. However, if you decide to establish a small Contact Group, then of course Netherlands, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, would like to attend that Contact Group. I still think though if delegations can propose concrete amendments to this Resolution we could finalize it this morning and then there would be no need to have a separate Contact Group.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Si réellement il doit y avoir un Groupe de contact, ce qui n'est pas convaincant pour ma délégation, mais enfin nous avons l'ouverture d'esprit pour des négociations, nous pouvons peut-être l'accepter. Mais à ce moment-là il faudrait quand-même le faire d'une manière rationnelle. Ce n'est pas que des drapeaux se lèvent par-ci par-là pour en faire partie. Il suffit simplement que chaque région soit représentée par deux délégations, et que peut-être l'on tienne compte de la taille des délégations et que l'on aménage les réunions de manière à ce qu'elles ne chevauchent pas les réunions importantes de la Commission ou de la Conférence. Car autrement on risque de

tourner en rond, perdre du temps et devenir dissident et dilatoire, et dire qu'on n'a pas eu le temps, qu'on n'a pas pu le faire et que l'on n'adopte rien. Ce serait très malheureux.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I just want to intervene to make a point of clarification. Well, two points. First of all, it was not the Secretariat that suggested that this draft Resolution come to Plenary. This was a decision taken, I am reliably informed, by the Resolutions Committee itself. Second, if I understand correctly, the proposal of a Contact Group is that each Regional Chairman would provide us with the names of at least two delegates from each Region. It would be very helpful if these two names could be provided to the Chairman during the course of this morning's session, before 12:30, so that the Chairman could make the announcement before this session closes. These were my only two points, Mr Chairman.

J.P. HOOGEVEEN (Netherlands)

To respond to the last remarks, by the Secretary-General. I was a member of the Resolutions Committee, and I don't recall any decision by the Resolutions Committee to submit this directly to Plenary. I spoke to the Secretariat many times last week, and the only answer I got when it was dealt with in the Resolutions Committee is that the Resolution was lost between the Resolutions Committee and one of the Committees or the Plenary. Finally, on Thursday we saw that it was submitted directly to Plenary, but it was not a decision, as I recall, from the Resolutions Committee.

CHAIRMAN

Therefore we are waiting for two candidates from each region for this Contact Group this morning.

APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS (continued)

NOMINATIONS ET ELECTIONS (suite)

NOMBRAMIENTOS Y ELECCIONES (continuación)

30.2 Appointment of Representatives of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee (C 97/14)

30.2 Nomination des Représentants de la Conférence de la FAO au Comité de la Caisse des pensions du personnel (C 97/14)

30.2 Nombramiento de Representantes de la Conferencia de la FAO en el Comité de Pensiones del Personal (C 97/14)

CHAIRMAN

Now we will move on to Item 30.2: Appointment of Representatives of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee. The document is C 97/14 which gives the background and in paragraph 7 specifies the action required of Conference. We must appoint the Staff for three terms. One Member to serve until 31 December 1999 to take the place vacated by Mrs Gabriella Vassallo-Consoli of Peru. The second: one Member and one Alternate for a term of three years from 1 January 1998. The outgoing member and alternate being Mrs Korsieporn of Thailand and Mr Redai of Ethiopia, respectively. And the third, one Member and one Alternate for a term of three years from 1 January 1999, in this instance, the outgoing Member and Alternate are Mr Brouwers, Netherlands and Mr Soukkar of Syria.

Khalid MEHBOOB (Assistant Director-General, Administrative and Finance Department)

The document C 97/14 seems self-explanatory and, with your introductory remarks, I just have to give the names of the candidates for the positions in this Committee. The Member recommended until 31 December 1999, is Ms Suze Percy, Alternate Permanent Representative of Haiti to FAO. For the period 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000, the candidate for Member is Mr Ould Mohamed Ahid Tourad, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. The Alternate Member for the same period is Mr Humberto Molina Reyes, Alternate Permanent Representative of Chile to FAO. For the period of 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2001, the candidate for Member is Mr Jiri Novák, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to FAO, and the candidate for Alternate Member is Mr Mohamed Khalifa, Agricultural Counsellor, Embassy of Egypt. Mr Chairman, these are the names for the consideration of the Conference for membership and alternate membership of the Pension Committee.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much. You have heard the five proposals, we have five names to fill the five vacancies. Can I take it that the Conference agrees to these appointments? We have no objections. These five persons are duly appointed.

It was so decided.

Il en est ainsi décidé.

Así as deciso.

31. Date and Place of the Thirtieth Conference Session**31. Date et lieu de la trentième session de la Conférence****31. Fecha y lugar del 30º período de sesiones de la Conferencia****CHAIRMAN**

We move on to Item 31, the Date and Place of the Thirtieth Session of the Conference. We must kindly ask the Secretary-General what is the proposal from the Secretariat? May I ask you about the next Conference, date and place?

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The dates proposed for the next Conference are 12 to 23 November 1999. The place would be FAO Headquarters in Rome.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you. Does the Conference agree? No objections. The Thirtieth Session will convene during 12 to 23 November 1999.

It was so decided.

Il en est ainsi décidé.

Así as deciso.

V. OTHER MATTERS
V. QUESTIONS DIVERSES
V. OTROS ASUNTOS

32. Any Other Matters
32. Autres questions
32. Otros asuntos

Report on the XI World Forestry Congress 1997 (C 97/INF/19)
Rapport du onzième Congrès forestier mondial, 1997 (C 97/INF/19)
Informe del 11º Congreso Forestal Mundial de 1997 (C 97/INF/19)

CHAIRMAN

We come to the last item of our agenda: item 32: Any Other Matters. I would like to give the floor to Mr David Harcharik.

David A. HARCHARIK (Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department)

I would simply like to call to the attention of Conference the document C 97/INF/19, which presents to you a Report on the XI World Forestry Congress which was convened at the kind invitation of the Government of Turkey in Antalya, this past October. These Congresses are held every six years. The theme of the Congress this year was Forestry for Sustainable Development. I think that, if you recall the tremendous work of the UN Conference on Environment and Development to develop the concept of sustainable development, you would understand that this Congress was indeed a very important one. It was an opportunity for the world forestry community to come together and to exchange information of a technical nature, on how forestry can contribute to sustainable development. The paper that you have available to you summarizes many of the accomplishments of this Congress. Rather than repeat that, I would like simply to express, on the behalf of FAO and the World Forestry Community, our deep appreciation to the Government of Turkey and, in particular, to its Ministry of Forestry, for organizing this highly successful and very, very large undertaking. The President of the country himself, personally participated and supported this Congress, as did the Prime Minister and the Minister of Forestry, etc. It was indeed a very successful technical event thanks to the very, very good work of the Turkish Government. I would like to express publicly, on behalf of FAO and the forestry community, our appreciation. Thank you.

Erdil K. AKAY (Turkey)

I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of my Government, the remarks so kindly stated and directed to my country and my Government. I have a very short, factual statement on the World Forestry Congress held in Antalya. I am completely in your hands and in the hands of the Plenary, that is to say, I would like to ask if you would like me to make that statement now, which will take only a few minutes? Or, would you rather, with a view to gaining time, prefer that I submit this statement for inclusion in the Report to the Secretariat?

CHAIRMAN

Now shall we consider any other matters? You have the floor for a short statement, Turkey.

Erdil K. AKAY (Turkey)

The XI World Forestry Congress was held in Antalya from 13 to 22. October 1997, with the Forestry Ministry acting, on behalf of the Republic of Turkey, as host. The main theme of the Congress was the Role of Forestry in Sustainable Development towards the Twenty-first Century. In addition to sessions and meetings of a rather technical nature, a series of social events were

also organized within, or parallel to, the Congress. A wide range of participants, from students, academics, representatives of national, foreign and international institutions, NGOs, ministers responsible for forestry, in total, some 4 400 participants from 145 countries attended the Congress, thus breaking a record in participation for World Forestry Congresses.

The preparations for the Congress lasted for two years, and were carried out by five intergovernmental committees working under the guidance of the Congress Organization Committee which was set up solely for this purpose in the Ministry of Forestry. We would like to express our deep appreciation for the support extended to Turkey in this respect by FAO.

The President of the Republic made the Inaugural Speech. The Prime Minister addressed the Inauguration Meeting. Other speakers, who also made speeches during the Inauguration Meeting, underlined the role of forestry in the protection of the environment and the development of agriculture, and of the contribution of World Forestry Congresses to this effect.

Fifty Ministers or Vice-Ministers responsible for forestry participated actively in the Congress. On 13 October 1997, an unofficial Ministerial Meeting was arranged, at which 28 Ministers, 18 Vice-Ministers and 18 high-ranking officials representing Ministers participated.

During the Congress, 43 technical sessions on eight main themes and 38 subjects were held in parallel in four separate meeting rooms. A great number of participants presented their papers summarizing forestry activities undertaken in all the fields of forestry and, in the works carried out in their respective countries on sustainable forestry development.

Ninety-two posters were made available to the participants who were free to take as many copies as they wished.

Three important satellite meetings were organized from 10 to 12 October on major issues affecting world forestry today.

Twenty-eight analogous meetings were organized with a view to providing an opportunity for national and international forestry institutions to present their respective work outlines and results achieved. These meetings enabled the participants to be better acquainted with the institutions in question and their achievements.

During a special session, held in the context of the Youth in Forestry Item of the agenda, prizes were distributed to ten students-winners of various competitions organized on this occasion. Furthermore, in this session, efforts were made to focus the attention of younger generations on the role of forestry in sustainable development. Various speakers presented papers urging the younger generations to contribute to forestry development. Important messages were delivered to the youth and to the students by the Former President of the International Forestry Student Association, IFSA, and one of its student members.

During a Special Session on Women and Forestry, held on 20 October, information was provided on the activities in this context. Prizes were presented to seven winners of competitions that were organized for this occasion. The Session was chaired by the Minister of Forestry, and the Minister of Environment also attended the meeting.

At the International Exhibition on Forestry and Forest Products, organized on the occasion of the Congress, 150 Turkish and 20 foreign companies had the opportunity to display their products to the participants.

Sightseeing tours to places of interest in and around Antalya and other social activities were organized for the participants of the Congress. In this context, 984 people participated in 32 day tours and 148 people joined eight social activities. Furthermore, all participants were invited to an Anatolian night, organized at the historic Aspendos Theatre, where examples of Turkish folklore and culture were presented.

A special General Session was organized for an exchange of views on the present level of various stages of sustainable forestry development. During this General Session, nine well-known experts

presented their papers, thus enabling all participants to have a clear picture of the current level in the eight stages of sustainable forestry development.

The Antalya Declaration, reflecting all information gathered in all meetings, was discussed in related committees several times, and was finally adopted on 22 October at the General Session as the final document of the Congress. This Antalya Declaration, consisting of 17 articles, summarizes the actions to be taken in underlying the importance of forestry in sustainable development and in achieving sustainable forestry development. Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

FAO Compliance Agreement

Accord FAO Visant a Favoriser le Respect des Mesures Internationales de Conservation et de Gestion

Acuerdo de La FAO sobre Cumplimiento

Gian Paolo PAPA (European Community)

With reference to the document on the status of FAO agreements, the European Community and its Member States urge all Members of FAO and eligible non-Members who have not already done so, to accept the FAO Compliance Agreement. We also urge all Members of FAO to ratify the 1995 Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Stragglng Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, as soon as possible.

Resolution: Margarita Lizárraga Medal

Résolution: Médaille Margarita Lizárraga

Resolución: Medalla Margarita Lizárraga

CHAIRMAN

You have before you document C 97/LIM/38, the Resolution on the Margarita Lizárraga Medal. If there are no objections, I suggest we adopt this resolution *en bloc*.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

In Memoriam

CHAIRMAN

We now come to our customary item, *In Memoriam*, where the Conference pays tribute to those staff members who have died while in service since the preceding Conference Session.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Since the last Conference session the following staff members died while in service:
Mr G. Crescimanno, Ms L. De Santis, Mr M. François, Mr D. Jolin, Ms A. Joris-Vinci,
Mr M. Kamara, Ms E. Kirwan, Ms M. Lizárraga, Mr Ma Qingyong, Mr M. Malefula,
Ms G. Maliniak, Mr M. Medrano Estrada, Mr V. Parwongphol, Mr J. Rumisho, Mr G. Saeed,
Ms I Sofan, Mr S. Traore, Mr L. Vermerein, and Mr J. Ward.

CHAIRMAN

May I kindly request the assembly to stand for one minute in silent tribute to their memory.

One Minute of Silence.

Une minute de silence.

Un minuto de silencio.

CHAIRMAN

We will continue with Agenda Item 32. We have the list of documents, Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Director-General (C 97/INF/17), Fifth Progress Report on the Implementation of the Plan of Action for Women in Development (C 97/INF/18) and FAO Cooperation with UN System Organizations, Bretton Woods Institutions, Regional Banks, the CGIAR, In Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance and in Follow-Up to the World Food Summit (C 97/INF/20). Do you have any comments on these information documents? These documents are therefore noted.

The meeting was suspended from 11.15 to 11.35 hours.

La séance est suspendue de 11 h 15 à 11 h 35.

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.15 horas a las 11.35 horas

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART II (from Commission I) (C 97/REP/2)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - DEUXIEME PARTIE

(soumis par la Commission I) (C 97/REP/2)

PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE II (de la Comisión I)

(C 97/REP/2)

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART III (from Commission I) (C 97/REP/3)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - TROISIEME PARTIE

(soumis par la Commission I) (C 97/REP/3)

PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE III (de la Comisión I)

(C 97/REP/3)

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART IV (from Commission I) (C 97/REP/4)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - QUATRIEME PARTIE

(soumis par la Commission I) (C 97/REP/4)

PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE IV (de la Comisión I)

(C 97/REP/4)

CHAIRMAN

We now turn to the Adoption of the Report of Commission I. I would like to ask the Chairman of Commission I, Mr Nouri-Naeeni to introduce the reports.

Mohammed Saeed NOURI-NAEENI (Chairman, Commission I)

Let me start by thanking the two Vice-Chairmen of the Commission, Ambassador Dominici from France and Mr Atul Sinha from India, who helped me a lot during the debates of the Commission. I should also like to extend my thanks to the Secretariat for its valuable help and to the Chairman and the members of the Drafting Committee for their excellent work. Of course, my special thanks go to the members of Commission I for the very constructive and fruitful debates on the items before this Commission.

We had six Agenda items before us in Commission I - Items 7 to 12. During the course of the debates, two additional resolutions were tabled, one on TeleFood by the distinguished representative of Angola, and one on the Right to Food by the distinguished representative of Chile. This meant that we had to add two more meetings to our already planned four meetings, so

during the six meetings we dealt with all Agenda Items and additional Items in front of us. Now the result is presented here as mentioned by the Secretary-General in three reports, C 97/REP/2, C 97/REP/3 and C 97/REP/4. Everything is included here. I just have to make one comment on C 97/REP/4 which includes the Resolution on the Right to Food on page 5. In this Resolution, you see that some of the sentences and words have been crossed out. These are the items which should not appear in the Reports, and because of an administrative omission they are still in the report. In the Resolution, it was the firm decision of Commission I that the words and phrases which have been crossed out should be cut out of the Resolution. So, please, consider them out. With this explanation, I submit the reports of Commission I to you for consideration.

CHAIRMAN

I propose that, given the excellent work carried out by the Commission, we adopt the reports *en bloc*.

Draft Reports II, III, and IV of Plenary, from Commission I, were adopted.

Projets de Rapport de la plénière, deuxième, troisième et quatrième parties, soumis par la Commission I, sont adoptés.

Proyectos de Informe II, III Y IV de la Plenaria, de la Comisión I, son adoptados.

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

Since this is the last opportunity to see this report, I would like to refer to page 2 of the first Resolution, document C 97/REP/2, paragraph 3 on page 2, “to convene a pledging Conference for this purpose at Headquarters as appropriate”. It is not clear what is the force of that “as appropriate”. Headquarters “as appropriate”, or Conference “as appropriate”. In English it is not clear exactly what that “as appropriate” refers to. I think it might be useful to pick up any minor points like those along the way rather than go *en bloc*.

Mohammed Saeed NOURI-NAEENI (Chairman, Commission I)

I would like to ask the Secretary of the Commission to comment on the points raised by the distinguished delegate of Barbados.

Allan RANDELL (SECRETARY, Commission I)

The words in question that have been highlighted by the distinguished representative of Barbados were included by Commission I when it found that the proposed date for the Pledging Conference was unclear and that the date would have to be settled in the future between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of FAO. So, the “as appropriate” refers to the scheduling of this proposed Pledging Conference.

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

The fact that this has to be explained means that there is a difficulty and, certainly, there is no reference to a date -- “convened at an appropriate date” or something like that -- but “as appropriate” (certainly as it stands) would not be clear to a reader who was not present at the meetings at which these things were discussed. So I am not sure whether it is possible to propose a change at this time. If so it would be “at a date”, “at an appropriate date” or “at a date to be proposed”, and that would make it clear that you were talking about the date rather than the Headquarters as appropriate.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

There is another factor underlining the use of imprecise terminology. At the last Pledging Conference just recently held at the United Nations, there was a question raised if it was appropriate to hold such Pledging Conferences at the UN. That matter was not decided but the question was raised. So the “as appropriate” not only applies to uncertainty over the date but, in fact, also refers to the possibility that the Pledging Conference itself may not take place at the

United Nations. Therefore, I would ask if the Plenary could live with this imprecise language, recognizing that there are uncertainties both with respect to the location and the date of the next Pledging Conference?

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

I understand what has been said, and I understand the reason for the lack of clarity, but to somebody who has not been present and who does not understand that it is a date and a locational matter in question or even the appropriateness of having a Conference at all, and these matters would not be clear if you simply left it like that. I understand what has been said and I understand the idea of an “appropriate imprecision”, but perhaps “at a date and location as appropriate” -- something that would make it clear what it is that you are not too clear about. But at the moment, it would not be clear to a reader exactly what were the issues involved here.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Ce n'est pas que nous ayions des objections, mais j'ai demandé la parole avant que vous ne preniez votre marteau. Dans ce paragraphe, également en français, que signifie “dans les délais prévus”? C'est tellement imprécis et incompréhensible que l'on ne comprend pas. Quels sont ces délais? Je demande au Secrétaire général de l'ONU, en collaboration avec le Directeur général de la FAO, de réunir à cet effet une conférence des contributions au Siège des Nations Unies dans les délais prévus.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I am also a little bit reluctant to be commenting on this, a WFP matter. But in view of the comments which have been made now both from Barbados and from Senegal, would it be acceptable to place a period after “purpose”. In other words, simply to say “requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations in cooperation with the Director-General of FAO to convene a Pledging Conference for this purpose”.

Fabian A. REDHEAD (Grenada)

I asked for the floor to clarify whether in fact the approval of the Resolution was with the amendment proposed by Barbados, which amendment I certainly support. I certainly have no difficulty with the new amendment proposed by the Deputy Director-General, it will suit our purposes just as well.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Je pense que la solution proposée est effectivement une bonne solution mais je la trouve aussi trop simple. Je pense que lorsqu'on a voulu parler des délais sans préciser, il y a quand même un objectif qui est visé, c'est que cette Conférence soit convoquée le plus rapidement possible. Donc on aurait dû dire, “dans les meilleurs délais possibles” ou “le plus rapidement possible”, quelque chose de ce genre. D'autre part, on ne peut pas simplement convoquer une Conférence sans donner d'indications; cela peut être renvoyé à je ne sais quelle date. On peut convoquer cette Conférence, mais si on ne peut pas en fixer les dates, du moins qu'on indique “dans les délais les plus raisonnables” ou “dans les meilleurs délais possibles”.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

We are moving backwards now. I first took the floor to point out that it was not only a question of the date but there had also been a question raised of the appropriateness of holding the Pledging Conference at the United Nations' Headquarters. I should also add in response to the latest comment, the Pledging Conference has just recently been held, the next one will be held almost a year from now. So it is not a matter of holding it as soon as possible, therefore again I would plead to see if one cannot just simply put the period after purpose “to convene a Pledging Conference for this purpose” and let it be. It is a matter that needs to be considered by the

Secretary-General and the Director-General. This Conference cannot decide; what it is doing is requesting the Secretary-General and the Director-General to convene the Pledging Conference. I think it is better just to leave it with the period after purpose, if you could.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you. Other comments? So we will leave it as we have it. Thank you very much.

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART VII (from Commission III) (C 97/REP/7)
PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - SEPTIEME PARTIE (soumis par la Commission III) (C 97/REP/7)
PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE VII (de la Comisión III) (C 97/REP/7)

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART VIII (from Commission III) (C 97/REP/8)
PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - HUITIEME PARTIE (soumis par la Commission III) (C 97/REP/8)
PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE VIII (de la Comisión III) (C 97/REP/8)

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART IX (from Commission III) (C 97/REP/9)
PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - NEUVIEME PARTIE (soumis par la Commission III) (C 97/REP/9)
PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE IX (de la Comisión III) (C 97/REP/9)

CHAIRMAN

We now proceed to the report of Commission III and I would like to invite the Chairman, Mr Jalang'o of Kenya, to introduce the Commission's reports.

Bob Francis JALANG'O (Chairman, Commission III)

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates, I am pleased to submit to Plenary the Report of Commission III for your approval in Plenary. Commission III, as you all know, deals with the constitutional, legal, administrative and financial matters. We are looking at C 97/REP/7, C 97/REP/8 and C 97/REP/9. The Commission reviewed and endorsed for approval by the Conference a number of changes to the Basic Texts of the Organization. These are covered by Agenda Items 16.1, 16.2 and 16.3. In addition, three Cooperation Agreements, Agenda Items 19, 20 and 21, and the revised General Regulations of the WFP, Agenda Item 17, were recommended for approval by the Conference. Lastly, with regard to constitutional and legal matters, the Commission reviewed the amendments to the International Plant Protection Convention, that is Agenda Item 18. On this point, Mr Chairman, I would like to draw your attention to paragraph 9 of the draft report before you, which is C 97/REP/8, the text of which is bracketed as we were unable in Commission III to come to a conclusion on the proposal to adopt the indicated explanatory notes. You may wish at an appropriate time, Mr Chairman, to ask the Conference whether consensus has now been obtained.

With regard to administrative and financial matters, Commission III took note of the financial position of the Organization, including the status of contributions, that is Agenda Item 26, as well as the concerns of the staff of the Organization as presented in the address by the Staff Representative. The Commission also endorsed two Resolutions on Audited Accounts for 1995 and on Approval of Commissary Accounts for Approval in Plenary. As you know, Agenda Item 24 deals with the Scale of Contributions, and that was dealt with in Plenary last Friday evening.

Lastly, with regard to Item 27.2 on the Incentive Scheme to Encourage Prompt Payment of Contributions, again Commission III was unable to come to any agreement on the Secretariat's

proposed modification to the Scheme, and referred this matter back to the Conference for decision.

I would like the Conference to note that Agenda Items 16.1, 16.2, 16.3 and Agenda Item 18 will require approval by a two-thirds majority. The others will require a simple majority.

Lastly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank my two Vice-Chairmen: Madam Mariann Kovacs of Hungary and Mr Mansour Al Seghayer of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and also the Secretariat and our "Rapporteur" who all worked tirelessly to make the work of the Commission come to a fruitful end. I thank you, Mr Chairman, and I now submit our report to the Conference.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much. Now we must vote on a number of Resolutions so I would like to give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Mr Chairman with your permission, I would like to ask the Legal Counsel to explain to the Conference a proposal on adopting a number of these Resolutions which are contained in the report of Commission III.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Thank you Mr Secretary-General and Mr Chairman. I should point out that for four of the Resolutions, three of them dealing with the amendments to the Basic Texts and one dealing with the approval of the amendments to the IPPC, we require to have a two-thirds majority of the votes cast and we also require to have a total number of affirmative and negative votes cast from more than one-half of the Member Nations of the Organization, that is 88 countries. So I urge people not to leave the room if they can avoid it at this moment, otherwise you will give me a heart attack. Historically, we always have difficulty in getting the required number of people to stay in the room during the whole voting process. I would suggest, if I may, that we deal with the IPPC amendments first and then I would suggest that we bunch together the amendments to the Basic Texts, which are amendments to the General Rules of the Organization and Financial Regulations. This is a little bit of a short-cut, but if you are in agreement and we bunch them together into one roll call vote (and we require a roll call vote on all of these items) then we can get away with having two votes, if that is agreeable to you and the Conference.

Resolution: Amendments to the International Plant Protection Convention

Résolution: Amendements à la Convention internationale pour la protection des végétaux

Resolución: Enmiendas a la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria

CHAIRMAN

I am assuming that the proposal put forward by the Legal Counsel met your acceptance, so we are beginning first with a roll-call vote to adopt the revision of the International Plant Protection Convention. The name you have selected is Namibia, we can start the voting with Namibia.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRMAN

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Thank you, the results of the vote are as follows:

RESULT SHEET / RESULTATS / RESULTADOS

ROLL CALL VOTING APPEL NOMINAL VOTACION NOMINAL

1st **REVISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION**
 Vote on **CONVENTION**
 Vote sur **REVISION DE LA CONVENTION INTERNATIONALE POUR LA**
 Votación para **PROTECTION DES VEGETAUX**
REVISION DE LA CONVENCION INTERNACIONALE DE
PROTECCION FITOSANITARIA

Votes for Voix pour Votos favorables	108
Votes against Voix contre Votos en contra	0
Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	0
No reply Aucune réponse Ninguna respuesta	52

Number of votes cast Nombre de suffrages exprimés Número de votos emitidos	108
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Majority required Majorité requise Mayoría requerida	72
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ADOPTED ADOPTÉE ACEPTADA

Date17/11/97..... Elections Officer ..B. Linley (signed)..
 Fecha . Fonctionnaire électoral
 El oficial de elecciones

RULE XII - 13(a) GRO

If a vote is equally divided on a matter other than an election, a second vote shall be taken at a subsequent meeting to be held not less than one hour after the conclusion of the meeting at which the equally divided vote occurred. If the second vote is also equally divided the proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

En cas de partage égal de voix lors d'un vote ne portant pas sur une élection, on procède à un deuxième vote au cours d'une séance ultérieure, qui ne peut avoir lieu moins d'une heure après la fin de celle à laquelle s'est produit le partage égal des voix. Si les voix restent également partagées lors de ce second vote, la proposition est considérée comme repoussée.

Si hubiera empate en un asunto que no sea una elección, se repetirá la votación en una sesión subsiguiente la cual no deberá celebrarse hasta que haya transcurrido una hora, por lo menos, desde la conclusión de aquella en que se produjo el empate. Si en la segunda votación hubiera también empate se considerará rechazada la propuesta.

MEMBERS	YES	NO	ABS	NR
SYRIA	X			
TAJKISTAN				X
TANZANIA, UNITED REP. OF	X			
THAILAND	X			
THE F.Y. REP. OF MACEDONIA				X
TONGA				X
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	X			
TUNISIA	X			
TURKEY	X			
TURKMENISTAN				X
UGANDA				X
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES				X
UNITED KINGDOM	X			
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	X			
URUGUAY				X
VANUATU				X
VENEZUELA	X			
VIET NAM	X			
YEMEN	X			
ZAMBIA	X			
ZIMBABWE	X			

Ms Laurie J. TRACY (United States of America)

With respect to the International Plant Protection Convention we would like to thank the Secretariat and the membership of FAO for their help and cooperation in clarifying the intent of the revised text to the IPPC. The United States has supported the work of the FAO Conference on the amended text of the International Plant Protection Convention. Representatives of IPPC member countries have worked over many months to try to update the IPPC. The revised IPPC is designed to clarify how the IPPC parties will develop international phytosanitary standards as called for in the World Trade Organization Agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures, the SPS Agreement.

At the same time, we also recognise the complimentary role of other international organizations, in particular the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the International Office of Epizootics, with respect to sanitary standards. We agree with the clarification of the Secretariat as well as the general understanding of the parties to the Convention that, consistent with the current IPPC, nothing in the revised Convention shall be interpreted as restricting, the ability of contracting parties to take sanitary or phytosanitary measures against any pest, protect human, animal or plant life or health or the environment. Accordingly, the United States will continue to regulate for these purposes consistent with the requirements of US law. In addition, we are reassured that all Conference participants approved in connection with the adoption of the revised IPPC and explanatory statement that underscores that the amended IPPC is to be interpreted in a manner consistent with, it does not alter the terms of effect of the SPS Agreement. Accordingly, in implementing the amended Convention, the United States will be guided by the SPS Agreement and in particular will interpret Articles 6 and 7 of the revised IPPC in a manner that is consistent with the SPS Agreement including Article 5 thereof. The United States believes that the international community is already witnessing the benefits of the more liberalized trade regime established with the completion of the Uruguay Round. The United States has a broad set of concerns including human health and environment. This should be part of future international standards setting activities. The standards that we will establish in the IPPC process, and in other similar processes, will help lay the foundation for unparalleled global prosperity. To ensure this however, we must inform our work with scientific principles and develop consensus on enduring principles of plant protection that will not only protect species and human health in the environment but also promote harmonised standards for exporters.

We look forward to working with all parties to the IPPC on this vital endeavour.

Lastly, the United States notes, that the Conference Report contains a conclusion reflected in the resolution concerning adoption of the amended IPPC. That the amended Convention would not involve new obligations for contracting purposes for Article 13 of the existing Convention which governs the amendment process. We can accept this conclusion on the basis of the foregoing understanding regarding how the Convention is to be interpreted.

CHAIRMAN

Any other comments?

We will now consider this paragraph first.

Julio C. GOMES dos SANTOS (Brasil)

El Brasil ha participado activamente en todas las etapas de la revisión de la Convención y la aceptó para no objetar al consenso respecto de la inclusión del texto referente a los derechos y obligaciones de la Convención con relación a las MSF. Entendemos, sin embargo, que el texto de la CIPF no contradice lo dispuesto en el Acuerdo sobre la Aplicación de Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias de la OMC, y que aun después de la ratificación de la Convención todos los principios consagrados en el Acuerdo sobre MSF de la OMC seguirán siendo válidos, es decir,

soberanía, justificación científica, mínimo impacto, riesgo mínimo, coherencia, no discriminación y tratamiento nacional, equivalencia, transparencia, regionalización y armonización.

SECRETARY GENERAL

I have an announcement to make. I would like to read out the composition of the Contact Group to discuss the Resolution on Agricultural Biological Diversity presented by the Netherlands: the Africa Group, Algeria and Zambia; the Asia Group, Malaysia and Japan; Europe, Netherlands and Germany; Latin America and the Caribbean, Argentina and Brazil; Near East, so far we have only had one name, that is the name of Syria. We are still waiting for another country to be designated. Southwest Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. North America, Canada and the United States. It is proposed that this Contract Group meet at 13.30 hours in the Mexico Room.

May I make a special appeal to delegates not to leave because we shall be proceeding to the second vote. It is very important that we have sufficient numbers to approve the next three Resolutions, which as I understand it, you have accepted the Legal Counsel's proposal to vote together. That is to vote for the three Resolutions, the first one Amendments to Rule XXXIII of the General Rules of the Organization, Committee on World Food Security. The second Resolution is Amendments to the Basic Text Abolition of the Outline Programme Work and Budget and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees early in the second year of the biennium. The third Resolution is Amendment to Financial Regulation 6.9 and 7.1, Publication Revolving Funds.

Resolution: Amendments to Rule XXXIII GRO (Committee on World Food Security)

Résolution: Amendements à l'Article XXXIII du RGO (Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale)

Resolución: Enmiendas al Artículo XXXIII del RGO (Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial)

Resolution: Amendments to the General Rules of the Organization and Financial Regulations on the Programme Budget Process

Résolution: Amendements au Règlement général de l'Organisation et au Règlement financier relatif au processus d'établissement du budget-programme

Resolución: Enmiendas al Reglamento General de la Organización y al Reglamento Financiero sobre la presupuestación por programas

Amendments to Financial Regulations 6.9 and 7.1

Amendements aux articles 6.9 et 7.1 du Règlement financier

Enmiendas a los Artículos 6.9 y 7.1 del Reglamento Financiero

Vote

Vote

Votación

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Mr Chairman, we have the results of the roll call voting on the three resolutions, the first being the amendments to Rule XXXIII, the General Rules of the Organization on the Committee on World Food Security, the second one, the Amendments to the General Rules of the Organization and Financial Regulations on the Programme Budget Process, and the third one on the Amendments to Financial Regulations 6.9 and 7.1.

RESULT SHEET / RESULTATS / RESULTADOS

ROLL CALL VOTING APPEL NOMINAL VOTACION NOMINAL

1st (a) AMENDMENTS TO RULE XXXIII GRO (CFS) - (b) AMENDMENT
 Vote on TO GRO AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS ON THE PROGRAMME
 Vote sur BUDGET PROCESS (c) AMENDMENTS TO FINANCIAL
 Votación para REGULATIONS 6.9 AND 7.1

Votes for Voix pour Votos favorables	109
Votes against Voix contre Votos en contra	0
Abstentions Abstentions Abstenciones	-
No reply Aucune réponse Ninguna respuesta	51

Number of votes cast Nombre de suffrages exprimés Número de votos emitidos	109
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Majority required Majorité requise Mayoría requerida	73
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ADOPTED ADOPTEE ACEPTADA

Date17/11/97..... Elections Officer ..S..Dowd (signed)..
 Fecha . Fonctionnaire électoral
 El oficial de elecciones

RULE XII - 13(a) GRO

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En cas de partage égal de voix lors d'un vote ne portant pas sur une élection, on procède à un deuxième vote au cours d'une séance ultérieure, qui ne peut avoir lieu moins d'une heure après la fin de celle à laquelle s'est produit le partage égal des voix. Si les voix restent également partagées lors de ce second vote, la proposition est considérée comme repoussée.

Si hubiera empate en un asunto que no sea una elección, se repetirá la votación en una sesión subsiguiente la cual no deberá celebrarse hasta que haya transcurrido una hora, por lo menos, desde la conclusión de aquella en que se produjo el empate. Si en la segunda votación hubiera también empate se considerará rechazada la propuesta.

MEMBERS	YES	NO	ABS	NR
SYRIA	X			
TAJIKISTAN				X
TANZANIA, UNITED REP. OF	X			
THAILAND	X			
THE F.Y. REP. OF MACEDONIA				X
TONGA				X
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	X			
TUNISIA	X			
TURKEY	X			
TURKMENISTAN				X
UGANDA				X
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES				X
UNITED KINGDOM	X			
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	X			
URUGUAY				X
VANUATU				X
VENEZUELA	X			
VIET NAM	X			
YEMEN	X			
ZAMBIA	X			
ZIMBABWE	X			

CHAIRMAN

Now we continue to adopt the Report of the Commission III. Taking into consideration that in the document C 97/REP/8 paragraph 9, the brackets were removed, and except for the document C 97/REP/9, page 4, Item 27.2, Incentive Scheme to Encourage the Prompt Payment of Contributions.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

J'attendais que vous soyez prêt à m'écouter pour vous poser la question. Nous commencerons par le REP/8. Est-ce que ce sera ce que j'ai bien compris? Le Président de la Commission III, que je tiens à féliciter ainsi que tous les membres et les délégués qui ont activement participé aux travaux de cette Commission, a déjà signalé le paragraphe 9 qui est entre crochets. Ce paragraphe 9 avait initialement posé beaucoup de difficultés à la délégation sénégalaise et au groupe africain en général, parceque tout simplement nous étions pris de court de devoir plus au moins nous livrer à un exercice sans pouvoir compter sur l'appui de nos experts. C'est pour cela que nous avons cru devoir par prudence essayer de solliciter des directives de nos capitales respectives et même de certains experts africains qui ont participé aux travaux et qui ont conduit à l'élaboration de ce texte. En tant que Président du groupe africain, j'ai pu observer que nous avons recueilli des avis très avisés de la part d'experts africains, dont un a eu même à présider ces travaux et nous avons pu nous rendre compte qu'effectivement cet article 9 pouvait être acceptable sans entraîner des conséquences techniques particulières. Je voudrais donc dire qu'en ce qui nous concerne il est possible que nous puissions quand même accepter que les crochets de ce paragraphe 9 soient supprimés avec la modification suivante: à la 3ème ligne par le bas on a dit: "qu'en limitant les droits ou affectant les obligations", mais dans le texte anglais il est bien écrit "comme limitant les droits ou les obligations". Le mot "affectant" doit donc disparaître du texte pour être conforme à la version anglaise. Cela étant dit, je pense il n'y a pas d'opposition, ce que j'espère étant donné que c'est nous qui avons pris le temps de vérifier techniquement les conséquences de ce rajout. J'ai pu vous dire que nous sommes tout à fait disponibles pour que ces crochets soient enlevés avec l'amendement que j'ai demandé, qui n'est qu'une harmonisation des textes français et anglais.

TANG ZHENGPING (China) (Original language Chinese)

Regarding Item 24, Scale Assessments for 1998-99, our delegation stated its position at the Plenary last Friday afternoon. Here we would like to reiterate our position on this Agenda Item. We ask it to be put on the record.

CHAIRMAN

Now the floor is open to discuss Item 27.2.

Bob Francis JALANG'O (Chairman, Commission III)

Regarding the Incentive Scheme to Encourage the Prompt Payment of Contributions, only one Member Nation, speaking on behalf of 15 others, was not happy with the proposal by the Secretariat. But, in view of consultations which have taken place since then and up to now, it looks like the Secretariat's proposal is acceptable and, from the silence that I have noticed, I think this proposal should be acceptable by Conference.

E.J.N. BROUWERS (Netherlands)

On behalf of the European Union, the European Union sticks to its position. However, if the Conference is prepared to adopt the proposals by consensus, the European Union will not block the consensus.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much for your collaboration. So we can adopt this Item with the exceptions.

Thank you very much, it was adopted.

I would like to express our gratitude to Commission III for its excellent work.

***Draft Reports VII, VIII and IX of Plenary, from Commission III, as amended, were adopted.
Projets de Rapport VII, VIII et IX de la Plénière, soumis par la commission iii, ainsi
amendées, sont adoptés.***

***Proyectos de Informe VII, VIII y IX de la Plenaria, de la Comisión III, así enmendados, son
adoptados.***

CHAIRMAN

I would like to thank all of you for the cooperation that enabled us to adopt the reports of Commission I and Commission III in such a satisfactory manner.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have now received the other name from the Near East Group and, with your permission, I should like to read out once again the composition of the Contact Group to discuss the Resolution on Agricultural Biological Diversity presented by the Netherlands.

For the Africa Group, the representatives are: Algeria and Zambia; for Asia: Malaysia and Japan; for Europe: Netherlands and Germany; for Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina and Brazil; for the Near East: Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran; for the Southwest Pacific: Australia and New Zealand; for North America: Canada and the United States. And you are reminded that this Contact Group will be meeting at 13.30 hours in the Mexico Room.

The meeting rose at 13.00 hours.

La séance est levée à 13 h 00.

Se levanta la sesión a las 13.00 horas.

CHAIRMAN

I kindly invite all delegates to ensure that they have before them the following reports, which the Conference is called upon to adopt: the Report of Commission II, set out in documents C 97/REP/5, C 97/REP/6 and C 97/REP/11; the Sixth and Seventh Reports of the General Committee, which can be found in documents C 97/LIM/43 and C 97/LIM/44, respectively.

I would like to kindly ask you to check if you have received these documents.

The Third Report of the Credentials Committee, in document C 97/LIM/45, was distributed this morning.

We shall conclude this meeting by adoption of the Reports on items taken in Plenary, as set out in C 97/REP/10, C 97/REP/12, C 97/REP/13 and C 97/REP/14. It is also indicated in the Order of the Day. I should like to remind delegates to obtain the documents.

I will draw your attention, in particular, to the Draft Report of Item 6, Review of the State of Food and Agriculture, in document C 97/REP/14, which contains the Resolution of the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which was considered by the Contact Group established during the morning session yesterday.

Erdil K. AKAY (Turkey)

I would like to make a remark, which refers to document C 97/DJ/9, which is the Order of the Day of today. On the second page, it contains a summary of our meetings of yesterday. Under Item 32, which covers Any Other Matters, the four items that we dealt with yesterday are included, but the Eleventh World Forestry Congress has been forgotten. I would appreciate it very much if, under Any Other Matters, the reference to the World Forestry Congress would also be made.

CHAIRMAN

It will be added.

We will begin with the Report of Commission II, the first part of which we adopted on Friday. The remaining parts of the Report are documents C 97/REP/5, C 97/REP/6 and C 97/REP/11.

I would like to ask Mr Beattie, from the United Kingdom, who chaired Commission II, to introduce the Reports.

ADOPTION OF REPORT (continued)

ADOPTION DU RAPPORT (suite)

APROBACION DEL INFORME (continuación)

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART V (from Commission II) (C 97/REP/5)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - CINQUIEME PARTIE (soumis par la Commission II) - (C 97/REP/5)

PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE V (de la Comisión II) (C 97/REP/5)

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART VI (from Commission II) (C 97/REP/6)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - SIXIEME PARTIE (soumis par la Commission II) (C 97/REP/6)

PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE VI (de la Comisión II) (C 97/REP/6)

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART XI (from Commission II) (C 97/REP/11)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA CONFERENCE - ONZIEME PARTIE (soumis par la Commission II) (C 97/REP/11)
PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE XI (de la Comisión II) (C 97/REP/11)

Anthony BEATTIE (Chairman, Commission II)

I am honoured to present the remainder of the Report of Commission II.

Our work fell into four parts. We were required to deal with the Programme Evaluation Report, with the Medium-Term Plan, with the Programme of Work and Budget, and we were also asked to deal with the Review of FAO Statutory Bodies, which was reassigned to Commission II from Commission III.

As you will recall, and as the Chairman has already mentioned, our Report on the Programme of Work and Budget, including the Budget Resolution, was adopted in this room by Commission II last Friday evening, and subsequently in this room by the Conference. That outcome was based on no less than 55 interventions in Commission II.

Today, we are presenting to the Conference the remainder of our Report, that is to say, what is contained in documents C 97/REP/5, C 97/REP/6 and C 97/REP/11. C 97/REP/5 deals with the Review of Statutory Bodies and those deliberations were based on 23 interventions in the Commission. C 97/REP/6 is the Programme Evaluation Report, on which there were 27 interventions. C 97/REP/11 deals with the Medium-Term Plan 1998-2003, and there were 45 interventions.

I should draw your attention to the fact that the Report on the Medium-Term Plan, C 97/REP/11, includes a Resolution, what has now become known as the "FAO 2000 Project", and that appears in paragraph 13 of the Report.

The three parts of the Report which are before us today were adopted *en bloc* by Commission II and I commend them as such to the Conference. In presenting them to you, I should like to repeat and reaffirm my thanks to all of those who made the work of the Commission so smooth and constructive, to the delegations who came to the Commission, to my two Vice-Chairs, Mr Paul Paredes Portella and Mr Igor Marincek, to those who took part in the Friends of the Chair process.

I would like to say a special word about the Drafting Committee. Serving on Drafting Committees is a vital but, in some senses, a thankless task. The job of Drafting Committees starts when the rest of us go home, and serving on them calls for stamina and skill, and for chairmanship of a very high order. Commission II was extremely well served by its Drafting Committee. The members were Australia, Canada, China, Egypt, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Madagascar, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Switzerland. The Chair was in the very capable hands of Mr Roberto Villambrosa, of Argentina.

It is, as I said yesterday, and as I make no apology for repeating today, a tribute to the work of the Committee and to Mr Villambrosa's Chairmanship that the Commission was able to adopt their draft texts *en bloc*. I hope and trust that the Conference will take the same view.

I should say, finally, how very well served the Commission was by its Secretariat. We owe a special debt of thanks to Mr Wade, sitting on my left, who set new standards for lucidity, patience and stamina. Among other things, he has become a practised and eloquent exponent of the significance and process of strategic planning, a subject to which all of us, I am sure, look forward to returning during 1998.

Chairman, that concludes my introduction.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much for your excellent work, done by Commission II.

I propose that we adopt the Reports *en bloc*. Are there any objections?

J.B. PIETERS (Netherlands)

I speak on behalf of the European Community and its Member States.

We do support the acceptance of the Report *en bloc*. However, we would like to refer to C 97/REP/11, paragraph 5.

Yesterday, in Commission II, we agreed to delete the last sentence of this paragraph, because of consensus. The European Community accepted the deletion and we will not question it now, however, our acceptance does not imply that we do not attach great importance to the development of a Strategic Plan for FAO's forestry activities. On the contrary, I would say, and we are looking forward to this Strategic Plan.

Anthony BEATTIE (Chairman, Commission II)

As Netherlands has pointed out, this is an issue that was debated in Commission II yesterday. The agreement in the Commission was that the sentence which has just been referred to should be omitted and, as I understand it, the Netherlands is drawing attention for the record to the importance it attaches to the issue.

Harald HILDEBRAND (Germany)

My first remark refers to document C 97/REP/5, paragraph 5, first page.

My delegation, when dealing with this subject in Commission II, had already observed that the name of the Body mentioned in paragraph 5 should be corrected. The exact name is "Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training", according to the list of Statutory Bodies.

I think, for the sake of correctness, we should consider this.

CHAIRMAN

Any other comments?

I think, there being no comments, the Report is adopted.

Draft Reports Of Plenary - Parts V, VI and XI from Commission II, were adopted.

Les Projets de Rapport de la Plénière - Parties V, VI et XI, soumis par La Commission II, sont approuvés.

Los proyectos de Informe, VI, y XI De La Comisión II, son aprobados.

CHAIRMAN

I wish to thank the Chairman of Commission II for his kind assistance. Thank you very much, Mr Beattie.

Sixth Report of the General Committee (C 97/LIM/43)

Sixième rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/43)

Sexto Informe del Comité General (C 97/LIM/43)

Seventh Report of the General Committee (C 97/LIM/44)

Septième rapport du Bureau (C 97/LIM/44)

Septimo Informe del Comité General (C 97/LIM/44)

CHAIRMAN

I think that you have now the Sixth and Seventh Reports of the General Committee, contained in documents C 97/LIM/43 and C 97/LIM/44. Can I ask the Conference to adopt these two Reports together?

Adopted

Adoptes

Aprobados

Third Report of the Credentials Committee (C 97/LIM/45)

Troisième rapport de la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs (C 97/LIM/45)

Tercer Informe del Comité de Credenciales (C 97/LIM/45)

CHAIRMAN

Now I would like to call upon the Chairman of the Credentials Committee to report on their Third Report.

Mme Suze PERCY (Président, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)

Merci, Monsieur le Président. A sa quatrième session, le lundi 17 novembre 1997, la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs a examiné les pouvoirs déposés par quatre délégations pour la vingt-neuvième session de la Conférence et auparavant, la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs avait reconnu valides les pouvoirs de 148 pays, et maintenant les 152 Pays membres de la FAO qui ont déposé des pouvoirs valides sont énumérés dans la liste jointe en appendice. La Commission a été d'avis que, lors des prochaines sessions de la Conférence, seules les délégations des membres de la FAO dont les pouvoirs auront été reconnus valides par la Conférence, devraient être autorisées à prendre la parole et à participer au vote. Voilà, c'est tout, Monsieur le Président.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments?

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais reconnaître le travail remarquable accompli par la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs. Concrètement, comment sera appliqué le troisième paragraphe? Jusqu'au vote, je peux comprendre, mais pour prendre la parole, je peux supposer que, peut-être, cela peut présenter des difficultés. Devra-t-on attendre que cette Commission-là se réunisse, délibère sur tous les pouvoirs, pour après qu'on se mette à établir les listes pour les délégations qui vont prendre la parole ou non? Je crois qu'il faudrait relativiser ce paragraphe, parce que, concrètement, il n'est pas, à mon avis, très réaliste ni possible de faire de telles propositions. J'ai exclu le vote parce que, souvent, le vote peut attendre, mais enfin, même le vote, parce que on ne sait pas à quel moment on peut voter. On peut voter déjà sur des pouvoirs. Donc je crois que là, il suffit simplement de lancer un appel et de prendre une autre proposition, mais cette proposition ne me paraît pas réaliste. Je vous remercie.

LEGAL COUNSEL

First of all, I would like to note that the third paragraph of the Report of the Credentials Committee is in the form of “express the opinion that”, etc.

I would also like to point out that we do, in fact, have a Rule III, paragraph 5 of the General Rules of the Organization, which deals with this matter. I think if you were going to implement this opinion of the Credentials Committee, it would necessitate a change to the General Rules of the Organization. This is the Provisional Seating Rule and I will read it to you. It says: “Any delegation or representative to whose admission a Member Nation has made objection shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other delegations or representatives, until the Credentials Committee has reported and the Conference has given its decision”. This is, in fact, to allow provisional seating of delegates until the Credentials Committee finishes its work and makes its Report.

I think a similar rule is to be found in the United Nations and every other organization of the UN System I know of. It is necessary to have a provision dealing with provisional seating of delegations until the Credentials Committee finishes its work. We particularly have a difficulty in FAO because on the first day of the Conference usually there are a number of matters that need to be discussed and decided, and we usually operate under this Provisional Seating Rule.

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

Barbados also would like to commend the Chairman of the Credentials Committee and her team.

I would just like to make one comment with a view to improvements in the future, a general comment on the work of the Credentials Committee.

This year Barbados had some anxious moments to the effect that the credentials had not been received. They had been handed in three days earlier to one of the FAO offices. It seems to me that in future the credentials, as received, should be referred immediately to the Credentials Committee, or at least on a daily basis, because, I repeat, three days after having handed them in we got a note that Barbados did not have proper credentials. Indeed, I think, it went into the record as well. That is very unfortunate. When I went to the room the credentials were all there, stacked up. I think that is really something which has to be corrected in the future and it should not recur in an Organization like this.

Mohammed Aslam KHAMOSH (Afghanistan)

I would like to know, on what basis Afghanistan’s name is not included in this list and why my credential was not valid, on the basis of what?

Mme Suze PERCY (Président, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)

Merci, Monsieur le Président. Nous avons étudié le cas de l’Afghanistan, nous avons attendu jusqu’à hier, où nous avons tenu notre dernière réunion, pour statuer sur le cas de l’Afghanistan, et nous n’avons jamais reçu de document original de l’Afghanistan. Sur ce, la Commission n’a pas pu prendre de décision et c’est pour cela que le nom de l’Afghanistan ne figure pas dans la liste des pays qui ont remis des pouvoirs valides, en respectant les règles de la Commission.

Mohammed Aslam KHAMOSH (Afghanistan)

I am not satisfied. What do they mean by “original document”? The document that I brought was signed by the President of the State. What originality do they want? Their English was there, and it was seconded and then it was supported by the Government, by our representatives from New York and all of those. What do they want by that?

Mme Suze PERCY (Président, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)

Merci, Monsieur le Président. Les documents déposés par l'Afghanistan ont été révisés par tous les membres de la Commission. Nous avons regardé minutieusement le texte, la signature, et les membres ont convenu que le document qui a été remis par l'Afghanistan n'est pas un document original. La traduction de la lettre, qui a été présentée par le Gouvernement de l'Afghanistan, est un texte original mais le document qui devrait être le document, si vous voulez, le document officiel, n'est pas un original.

Mohammed Aslam KHAMOSH (Afghanistan)

They confess that the translation in English is original. If the English translation is original, how could it be that the Persian letter is not original? Could they tell me, is this a magical something, that from one source one letter is original and the other is photocopied?

Mme Suze PERCY (Président, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)

Cela nous a paru aussi étrange, comme vient de le mentionner le délégué de l'Afghanistan. Pourquoi le document officiel n'est-il pas un original? Nous ne sommes pas en train d'accuser le délégué de l'Afghanistan, mais nous avons seulement essayé de respecter les règles de la Commission. Nous n'avons pas reçu de documents originaux, donc nous n'avons pas pu statuer sur le cas de l'Afghanistan, donc, nous avons décidé de ne pas mettre le nom de l'Afghanistan dans la liste des pays qui ont déposé des pièces valides.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Monsieur le Président, vous voyez pourquoi le paragraphe 3 est très dangereux, parce qu'il est même contre les règles provisoires et n'est pas réaliste, parce que jusqu'à aujourd'hui, la Conférence en réalité, doit maintenant statuer sur le cas de l'Afghanistan. Parce que autrement, je ne sais pas comment vous allez vous tirer d'affaire. L'Afghanistan soutient que leurs pouvoirs sont valables, alors que la Commission nous parle d'un avis contraire. Il faut que la Conférence tranche. Parce que l'Afghanistan a tout à fait raison de demander qu'on lui rende justice.

Luigi FONTANA-GIUSTI (Italy)

On the line of the Senegal declaration, I would like to ask the Chair how they reconcile the fact that the credentials have not been admitted and, at the same time, allow Afghanistan to vote? What does it mean? I recall very well that Afghanistan voted.

LEGAL COUNSEL

I would like to refer again to the Basic Texts of the Organization. General Rule III-5 indicates that "until such time as the Credentials Committee has reported on particular credentials, that delegation remains seated with the same rights as other delegations and representatives."

I understand that the Credentials Committee has not reported to say that the credentials of the delegation of Afghanistan are invalid. It has merely postponed the decision on the credentials of the delegation of Afghanistan. If you look at the previous report of the Credentials Committee, that is precisely what it said. It postponed its consideration of the credentials of the delegation of Afghanistan. In the meantime, the delegation of Afghanistan continued to be provisionally seated and to exercise the same rights as other delegations, in accordance with our Basic Texts.

I should also point out, as a matter of interest, that this is exactly the situation in the United Nations.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Maintenant, quelle est la conséquence des décisions auxquelles l'Afghanistan a participé? Si la décision est que ses pouvoirs ne sont pas valides. Est-ce qu'on doit reprendre le décompte des votes qui ont eu lieu? Ou les considérer comme nuls et non avenue. Il faudrait qu'on nous explique.

Mohammed Aslam KHAMOSH (Afghanistan)

With great respect, I would like to draw the attention of everybody to this. They confess that the English translation is original and the Dary or Persian copy of this is a photocopy. It means, if it is a photocopy, that the original is somewhere. Half of the letter is valid and half of it is not valid. If worse comes to worse, I propose that the matter should be deferred until I send the original one after the Conference. It is impossible to give another original to them right now. They know that the English translation is valid. On the basis of the validity of the English version of this, I will sit -- and I will sit until the end of Conference. They should make it a provision that, as soon as Conference is over, I will go back and send them the original, with the signature of the President.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Perhaps I should repeat again that, under the General Rules of the Organization, as they stand at the moment, a delegation is seated provisionally, with the same rights as other delegations, that means the same rights of speaking and of voting, until such time as the Credentials Committee submits a final report finding, either valid or invalid, of its credentials.

In the case of Afghanistan, there has been no report finding invalid the credentials of Afghanistan. Therefore, Afghanistan has been seated provisionally and has exercised its rights in accordance with the General Rules of the Organization. There is nothing wrong with the procedure. That is the correct procedure. The votes were completely valid.

I should also repeat, as I did before, that this is the same situation in the United Nations. In the United Nations, Afghanistan is seated provisionally under the same rule as I have just quoted for FAO, and no decision has been taken in the Credentials Committee on the credentials of Afghanistan. The matter has been postponed *sine die*.

Therefore, we are completely in line with what is done in the United Nations.

Mme Suze PERCY (Président, Commission de vérification des pouvoirs)

Merci, Monsieur le Président. Je voulais seulement ajouter quelque chose pour la délégation de l'Afghanistan. Là, nous avons sous les yeux encore les documents qui ont été déposés: la traduction qui a été faite du texte qu'on considère qu'il n'est pas un original, cette traduction n'est pas signée. Il n'y a pas de sceau, absolument rien. Donc, nous sommes là, la Conférence n'a pas encore terminé ses travaux. Si l'Afghanistan nous cautionne des documents signés et originaux, nous sommes là. Nous allons prendre une décision et l'Afghanistan sera introduit dans la liste des pays qui ont présenté des pouvoirs en règle.

Igor MARINCEK (Switzerland)

My delegation did not serve on the Credentials Committee so, therefore, we are not in a position to have an opinion on the case of Afghanistan. However, I would like to remind the Conference that, first of all, we must respect the Basic Texts. Credentials are a necessary instrument in order to control the legitimacy of different delegations.

The purpose of this exercise must, therefore, be what we have to look at. We find it a little bit astonishing that we have the Credentials Committee coming with its conclusions only at the very end of the Conference. I believe that we should try in future to have conclusions on the credentials a little bit earlier, so that they really have bearing on the business of the Conference.

Clearly, this provisional clause is important but, certainly, there should be an attempt made to speed up this exercise a little bit. I think if this were done in future Conferences, we would have fewer of these kinds of problems.

Miguel CARBO BENITES (Ecuador)

Yo quisiera hacer dos observaciones: se ha dado el caso de países que han presentado fotocopias de las credenciales y la Secretaría o el Comité de Credenciales ha decidido de firmar un documento por el Jefe de Delegación que ha sido aceptado como válido. No sé porqué no se ha procedido en este caso con Afganistán.

Segundo, sí resulta preocupante que en un momento que estamos tratando de modernizar la Organización, presentamos el correo electrónico y aceptamos fax, exijamos documentos con la firma original y con el sello, cuando hay países que por cuestiones de correo o distancia difícilmente pueden hacer llegar a tiempo estos documentos.

Francis MONTANARO MIFSUD (Malta)

I do not wish to go into the actual substance of the question, I think the position has been made very clear by the Chairman of the Credentials Committee.

I merely wish to refer to the aspect of procedure which has also been referred to by the distinguished representative of Italy. It has been stated that the Credentials Committee left the matter to the last minute, and did not report to the Conference on this situation. This is not correct, I have before me the Verbatim Record of Friday, 14 November. I will quote on this, the statement made by the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, though I see that in the Record instead of the name of the Chairman, the name of the Secretary of the Committee, has been shown. It reads as follows:

“Dans le Rapport qui a été fait hier à la Plénière, nous avons indiqué que le cas de l’Afghanistan sera discuté lundi, parce que jusqu’à présent, nous n’avons pas eu les pièces originales de l’Afghanistan”.

This was the situation and it was reported to the Conference.

CHAIRMAN

The question of validity is the competence of the Credentials Committee. We have no doubt that this Committee did qualified work, so I would like to ask you to adopt this document.

Mohammad Saeed NOURI-NAEENI (Iran, Islamic Republic of)

I would like to add my voice to that of the distinguished delegate of Ecuador and say that, considering the difficulties existing in Afghanistan, and the fact that the Legal Counsel says that in the United Nations, Afghanistan is still considered a Member, whether or not credentials are considered invalid or valid, the matter is postponed. I propose that we do the same thing, here and postpone the decision until the next general session or whenever appropriate.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Monsieur le Président, toutes les explications qui nous ont été données sont très valables et ont éclairci les débats. Je crois que si l’Afghanistan a un Représentant permanent ici il peut en réalité confirmer la validité, sur instruction de son Gouvernement, de ses pouvoirs; ça c’est une chose. Mais cela aurait pu se faire avant le rapport de la Commission. Cela dit, pour l’adoption du rapport, nous sommes tout à fait d’accord sauf pour le troisième paragraphe. Nous insistons parce que ce à quoi nous avons assisté nous montre que ce n’est pas réaliste et n’est pas applicable. Donc, je voudrais qu’on modifie ce troisième paragraphe en disant simplement que la Commission a été d’avis que, lors des prochaines sessions de la Conférence, les délégations des membres de la FAO devront impérativement respecter les délais fixés pour le dépôt en bonne et due forme des pleins pouvoirs de leur délégation. Je pense que c’est ça qui est tout à fait

responsable et réaliste parce qu'on ne peut pas changer les textes d'une organisation comme ça du jour au lendemain par un paragraphe de cette nature. Vous voyez qu'on n'aurait jamais pu interdire à l'Afghanistan de prendre la parole ni de prendre part au vote parce que tout simplement la procédure est tout autre dans toutes les organisations internationales. C'est tout, je vous remercie.

CHAIRMAN

It is necessary to know that it is only an opinion.

Atul SINHA (India)

I have heard with attention the debate on this particular subject. I do find the views expressed by my distinguished colleagues from Ecuador, and subsequently by the distinguished representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and of Senegal on this issue particularly relating to paragraph 3.

I think paragraph 3 would create many difficulties. First of all, we would have to go in for amendment of Basic Texts which is, again, a very major exercise. Secondly, we are not very convinced about the need for such a provision. We do respect the recommendation of the Committee and do see the kind of difficulties they would have to face but, at the same time, we have to go on the line of pragmatism and know about the procedures and practices being followed in international bodies.

What I would, therefore, recommend is that the paragraph 3, as it is presented here, need not be adopted. Instead, we may adopt the language used in the United Nations for allowing Afghanistan to participate in various activities, and this is exactly what we have done here effectively. Therefore, all that we need to do is, with the assistance of the Legal Counsel, to have a formulation which would reflect the legal position as is pertaining in the United Nations in New York. I think that would be fine.

Secondly, coming to the excellent suggestion made by Ecuador, I think it is time that we brought our Basic Texts in line with the modern means of communications available. I do also know, with respect to many countries, that it takes a lot of time to transmit these credentials. We may start considering whether faxes or e-mails, or some other system, could be permitted in addition to the signed copy, because I think that distances and transmission do take a lot of time indeed. I think some thought could be given so that by the next Conference, we have some more methods, in addition, to the normal procedure which has been there for many years.

Suharyo HUSEN (Indonesia)

The Indonesian delegation would like to join other speakers. We support the statement made by our friends from Senegal, Ecuador, the Islamic Republic of Iran and India. Since we have the Rules and Procedures of the Organization for the voting rights, we support the deletion of paragraph 3 in the Draft Report. Then, we can adopt the report.

Luigi FONTANA-GIUSTI (Italie)

Merci, Monsieur le Président. Je ne vais pas faire du formalisme juridique mais quand même on ne peut pas approuver un document dont l'annexe ne mentionne pas l'Afghanistan, tandis que, dans le document des votations qui ont eu lieu, l'Afghanistan figure comme premier pays. Alors il faut que les deux documents soient pareils. Je propose naturellement sur la ligne de la majorité qu'on ajoute l'Afghanistan à la liste ou bien qu'on modifie le système de votation, mais on ne peut pas approuver deux documents qui sont évidemment contradictoires.

Yohannes TENSUE (Eritrea)

I have a different opinion from all the previous speakers. They have come to the conclusion that delegates who come here are from the legitimate governments. I have not mentioned any country, although the subject of discussion has been Afghanistan. Suppose, just for the sake of giving an

example, there is a conflict in a country and the government is not recognized by the United Nations, then you have two delegates representing two conflicting governments. If they have been sent here, how are you going to handle this.

The need for the original document for the credentials should be maintained. As to the use of modern technology or facilities to accelerate communications, through e-mail or whatever, should not be considered valid because different parties can exercise them to their advantage. To avoid such problems, the need for the original document from the legitimate government should be retained.

LEGAL COUNSEL

I have noted the suggestion made by the distinguished delegate of Italy. I should, merely, point out that it is my understanding that the Second Report of the Credentials Committee indicated that the Credentials Committee had postponed any decision on the credentials of the delegation of Afghanistan.

I understand from the Chairman's presentation of this Third Report of the Credentials Committee, that that situation continued, that they were unable to reach a decision on it and they had postponed, again, the discussion of the credentials.

In order to be consistent, if you wish, maybe it would be appropriate to say that the Conference noted that the Credentials Committee had postponed the consideration of the credentials of Afghanistan. Either to say nothing because that was in the Second Report, or to put a paragraph to that effect, if you find it to be inconsistent to have nothing in the Report.

Then, as I noted before, the third paragraph of the Report is the opinion of the Credentials Committee which have been submitted to you. It is now up to the Conference to decide whether it accepts that opinion. It is not a recommendation, it is an opinion. From what I can understand, the Conference has decided that it should stay with the normal rules of the Organization regarding provisional seating. I think that Mr Hjort has a suggestion on this.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

In view of all of this and particularly the last point, paragraph 3 is a paragraph in a Report of the Credentials Committee. I do not believe the Conference should be seeking to amend that, but the Conference, it is clear, wishes to express a view. Could the Conference agree to include in its Report a statement along the following lines:

"The Conference, in reference to paragraph 3 of the Third Report of the Credentials Committee, noting that its opinion was inconsistent with the Basic Texts of the Organization, concluded that at future Conference sessions, delegations should submit their credentials in advance of the session."

I am hoping that captures the views here.

Shahid RASHID (Pakistan)

I had asked for the floor before the intervention of the Legal Counsel and the Deputy Director-General. At this stage, I will just limit myself to two points.

One, this latest suggestion in respect of the existing paragraph 3 presented by the Deputy Director-General, I think is acceptable as it does reflect the opinion of this Plenary of the Conference.

As regards the earlier discussion of the credentials of Afghanistan, as has been noted by a number of delegations and also from the podium and clarified by Mr Moore, Afghanistan has participated in this Conference on a provisional basis, pending final determination of its credentials. I would like to suggest that this fact, this decision regarding the provisional attendance or participation of

Afghanistan, should be reflected in the Report of the Conference, on the basis of the United Nations procedure.

Erdil K. AKAY (Turkey)

I would not like to enter into the legalities of the matter, but I have a proposal which I hope would enable us to adopt the Report, and I am making the proposal only for practical reasons.

I see all the difficulties involved. On the one hand, we have the opinion of the Credentials Committee which is valid because it is in line with our Basic Texts. On the other hand, we have the difficulty which is a practical difficulty of the delegation of Afghanistan. Could we not, in light of this fact, adopt the report of the Credentials Committee with an understanding that we have taken note of the Credentials Committee's opinion, which we find in line with the Basic Texts, but that the possibilities of using forms, other than the original, should be considered in future.

Also with a view to finding a valid reply to the remark made by my distinguished colleague from Italy I believe, mention should be made of the delegation of Afghanistan in our documents. That is, to say that the name of Afghanistan should appear in the basic documents of the Conference until such date in which the delegation of Afghanistan will provide the Secretariat of the Organization with valid credentials. Can this be done?

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

I want to make one or two points. One, although it is just an opinion, if we accept the Report without a comment we would tacitly be agreeing with an opinion. The opinion is in conflict with the Basic Texts.

It seems to me that there are one or two points. One, there is the need for delegates to meet the deadlines for presentation of the credentials, a simple way for which often is to bring the credentials along to the Conference. The question of sending them in advance, very often, is a difficulty. I have found that bringing them along to the Session is very useful.

The second or third thing is that the Credentials Committee should try to finalize its Report well in advance of the actual voting. For example, we voted on Friday and that was a week after the Conference started. I think a week should be adequate for the Credentials Committee. I am not criticizing their work, but I am saying that their work should be concluded in time so that the actual voting can take place.

The comments of the Credentials Committee imply an early look at the Basic Texts with a view to perhaps making amendments. Although it is quite fair to let people participate until you have clarified certain issues, it is not a good thing to have a week go by and have the whole Conference concluded before such issues are clarified.

One of the distinguished delegates also mentioned the List of Delegates which is attached to the Credentials Committee Report. The list says "List of Members whose delegations have presented valid credentials," and that is quite different from the fact that the country has voted. The country has voted in accordance with the Basic Texts of the Organization, but that is not the same thing as saying that it is a country that has presented valid credentials.

I myself do not agree with the question of the faxes and the e-mail although we have to look at the modern means. These things can very easily be forged, with all due respect, by the countries. I am not saying that we would do that, but there are people who could actually, even on a photocopy, insert a name of somebody else and send it on even with a copy of this person's signature.

I think the insistence of the original is that you have the actual seal of the Organization with the actual original signature of a person who you can identify as the person in charge. If not, we will

reach a situation where two different delegations may, in fact, present photocopies or faxes from what purports to be the authority in the country.

I think these are very important issues here that we need to clarify.

LEGAL COUNSEL

I would like to make three points if I may.

First, FAO is a technical Organization, and we normally follow the practice of the United Nations on matters of a political nature.

Secondly, we have in fact followed the practice of the United Nations with respect to the delegation of Afghanistan. In other words, the credentials have not been passed upon one way or the other, they have been deferred. I would suggest, if I may, that the Report include a statement to that effect, that the Credentials Committee and the Conference deferred consideration of the credentials of Afghanistan and that the Afghanistan delegation was seated provisionally, in accordance with Rule III-5 of the General Rules of the Organization. Because this is exactly what is done in the United Nations, I want to say that once more.

Thirdly, the Report of the Conference could urge all delegates to submit their credentials in due time so that they can be considered by the Credentials Committee at the beginning of the Conference, or something to that effect.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Monsieur le Président, je pense qu'on pourrait quand même mettre un terme à ce débat en demandant, premièrement la suppression du paragraphe 3 et, deuxièmement, en complétant le paragraphe 2 de la manière suivante. On pourrait après "appendice" mettre "virgule" et dire "la Commission ayant finalement considéré que les pouvoirs de l'Afghanistan n'ont pas été soumis sous la forme requise". On en termine ainsi pour satisfaire ceux qui pensent qu'on ne devrait pas occulter la décision finale concernant les pouvoirs de l'Afghanistan qui ont été annoncés dans le rapport précédent. Mais le paragraphe 3 doit disparaître, il y a des textes qu'on respecte. Lors des invitations du Directeur général à assister à la Conférence, on donne un délai de presque un an aux délégations en leur rappelant qu'elles doivent déposer leurs pouvoirs. Il y a des difficultés, certes, mais il y a des textes qu'il faut respecter; on les a respectés jusqu'au bout. Toutes les questions posées étaient destinées à faire le tour de la question et dire combien il n'était pas bon d'adopter cet avis, parce que, si nous l'adoptons, il devient le nôtre; or, ce n'est pas notre avis, c'est l'avis de la Commission que nous ne partageons pas. Je vous remercie. Il faut supprimer ce paragraphe, vraiment, qui ne devrait pas nous retenir ici. Nous n'en voulons pas. Je vous remercie.

CHAIRMAN

I agree that we can delete paragraph number 3, and add the text of Senegal.

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

The text of the Deputy Director-General is alright except "in advance of the Session". That would preclude persons from actually taking part, even in the opening function. It seems to me, instead of "in advance of", it might well be "at the beginning of", that these things should be presented "by the beginning of", "or" at the beginning of, "or" "no later than" and give a little fluidity there. If not, unless people presented their credentials in advance of the Session, then they would not be able to participate. I do not think that is what is intended. I would propose that we change "in advance of the Session" to "by the beginning of the Session", or some words that would allow persons to come in a day and get things presented. "Upon arrival at the Session" or "by the beginning of the Session" would give a little flexibility too because the beginning may well run into a day or two, but not a week.

Ould Mohamed AHID TOURAD (Mauritanie)

Merci Monsieur le Président. Je prends la parole pour soutenir la décision de notre collègue du Sénégal. Je crois qu'on n'est pas venu à la Conférence pour remettre en cause les textes régissant l'Organisation. Nous avons des textes qui sont très clairs, nous n'avons pas besoin de ce paragraphe 3 qui nous retient pendant une heure et demie sur une modification des normes des textes de l'Organisation. On n'est pas là pour ça. Je crois donc qu'il vaut mieux supprimer ce texte tout simplement et rester dans les normes qui ont régi l'Organisation ces quarante dernières années. Je crois que c'est tout.

Atul SINHA (India)

In fact the point has been made, and I think the Basic Texts which are available today are quite sufficient to deal with the kind of situation that has been discussed. I think we can just refer to the Basic Texts and the point made by Italy that there is no reference to Afghanistan here and yet their vote can be taken care of, by simply referring to the Basic Texts here and putting words to the effect that they have been provisionally allowed in the light of Basic Texts rule number such and such. That will indicate why you have brought in Afghanistan. That will cover the point very ably made by Italy that you must say something - you cannot just postpone the decision and yet allow them to participate. By making a specific reference to the Basic Texts, you are solving that problem and also, keeping the Basic Texts in mind, you do not need this paragraph. I agree with Senegal that we just do not need this paragraph here. However, a small line which just refers to the Basic Texts, which is what is done in the United Nations, I think should be good enough for us and that will solve all this problem.

Igor MARINCEK (Switzerland)

Two points. First of all, we deal here with the Report of the Credentials Committee, C 97/LIM/45. On the other hand, we have here to approve C 97/REP/10. So let us approve C 97/REP/10 as it is and let us leave the Credentials Committee to have its own Report. This is not part of the Conference Report so we should not change the Report of the Credentials Committee which has made its Report. We should look at what we adopt in the Conference Report and there we have paragraphs 17 and 18 regarding Verification of Credentials. So we should not go beyond this. This is my first proposal. Let us, unless the Legal Counsel tells me we have also to approve C 97/LIM/45, not have a useless debate here.

Second point, the Legal Counsel has reminded us that we have a provisional authorization to attend the Conference. Clearly, my understanding of provisional, and I think Barbados has also expressed this before, certainly is not the whole duration of the Conference. Provisional means probably some days. So, in practice, I believe it would be good if, in future, this interpretation of provisional should be put back on its real purpose and not be utilized in a way that we really have it for the whole duration of the Conference. If we have, for example, the main decisions of this Conference one week after the beginning of the Conference, I believe it would certainly be in the line of a normal interpretation of the word provisional to take the decision the day before such votes, as we had last Friday, to determine which delegations are admitted to this vote. The delegations could have then assisted for one week already provisionally, but at some point you must obviously make some decisions, otherwise all these rules regarding credentials in the Basic Texts sort of become senseless. This is just a comment which I make for further consideration of this issue at future Conferences.

With regard to our Report here I would like to ask the question, do we really -- I am of the opinion we do not -- need to approve and to amend therefore the Report of the Credentials Committee? We have to approve our own Report and, therefore, let us move away from this document which we just take note of but this is not the business of this Plenary.

CHAIRMAN

Now, I would like to ask you to adopt this Report, to delete paragraph number 3, and add the reason why Afghanistan was deleted.

Point of Order

Point d'ordre

Punto de Orden

Igor MARINCEK (Switzerland)

Could I have the advice of the Legal Counsel to my question just raised before?

LEGAL COUNSEL

The distinguished delegate of Switzerland is, of course, perfectly correct. This is a Report of the Credentials Committee. You have heard the Report of the Credentials Committee. You have heard the opinion of the Credentials Committee expressed in paragraph 3. It appears that the Conference, this Plenary Session, is not in agreement with that opinion and therefore it does not, as I understand it, adopt that opinion. Consequently, you should now turn to the Report, the text of the Report of the Plenary, and express the opinion of the Plenary in that Report. As I understand it, the opinion so far emerging from the Plenary is, first of all, that we should note that the delegation of Afghanistan was seated provisionally in accordance with Rule III.5 of the General Rules of the Organization. That is one point. And that secondly there is a feeling in the Plenary that the credentials of delegations should be deposited as soon as possible, at the beginning of the Conference, and I think that is all that you need to say there. You have covered all the points and you need not think anything further about the Report of the Credentials Committee. You have already dealt with it in taking this decision, in amending the Report of your Plenary on the question of credentials.

Shahid RASHID (Pakistan)

I think the explanation given by the Legal Counsel at this stage is quite clear. The Report of the Credentials Committee is obviously before us, but the Plenary cannot amend or delete it because it is the Report of the Credentials Committee and not the Report of the Plenary, but two points need to be put on record by this Plenary.

One, of course, is this question of the participation of Afghanistan. As I had also mentioned in my previous intervention, and was also stated by Italy and India, the factual position in respect of the provisional participation of Afghanistan in this Conference, in line with the Basic Texts and United Nations practice, should be reported duly in the Plenary proceedings, and should form part of the Report so that we all are clear regarding the status of Afghanistan's participation. So, I believe, the Plenary Report should include a specific mention regarding the status of the participation of Afghanistan.

Secondly, with regard to paragraph 3 of the Third Report of the Credentials Committee, the Conference has expressed its opinion and that opinion should be placed on record, or as summarized by the Legal Counsel. Earlier, the Deputy Director-General also suggested a text which I think it may be useful to look at. If it can be repeated, it might be helpful. These two points can be covered in the Report of Plenary without tampering with the Report of the Credentials Committee.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

Monsieur le Président, si l'avis qu'on vient d'exprimer est bon, et j'ose le croire puisque cela sort de la bouche du Conseil juridique, je me demande pourquoi on a perdu autant de temps pour un rapport qui ne doit être ni adopté ni amendé par la Conférence. Mon avis était jusqu'à présent que la Commission de vérification des pouvoirs était une commission comme les Commissions I, II, III dont nous avons étudié les rapports et modifié les contenus. Je crois que, quand même, il ne faudrait pas qu'on ouvre ici des débats inutiles parce que ce n'est pas la première séance à laquelle nous avons examiné et adopté le rapport de cette Commission.

La vérité est que, quelle qu'en soit la forme, nous ne voulons pas de cet avis d'une commission qu'on a mise en place pour nous étudier une question. La forme que vous voudriez vous pouvez la trouver, mais la Conférence rejette cet avis ici. Du point de vue de ma délégation, nous ne pouvons pas nous associer à un tel avis qui est contraire, nous l'avons dit et indiqué clairement, aux Textes fondamentaux.

Donc, je crois que nous allons encore ouvrir ici un débat inutile. On perd du temps pour un document qu'on ne doit ni amender ni étudier. Cette Commission n'a qu'à garder ses rapports et nous les distribuer. Que son Président ne vienne pas ici nous présenter son rapport. A quoi cela sert-il? Je vous remercie.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Let me try again and see if we can move forward with all the additional explanations that have been given. When we come to C 97/REP/10, as has been noted by the delegation from Switzerland, the Plenary is addressing the Verification of Credentials. It would seem to me that when you get to paragraph 17, you definitely should add one sentence and I think it would be preferable to add two. The one sentence would say: "The Conference noted that the Afghanistan delegation was seated provisionally in accord with Rule III-5." That, I think, is all that needs to be said, but that does then put the matter on record.

With respect to paragraph 3 of the Report of the Credentials Committee, it seems to me that it is clear that the Plenary wishes to react to paragraph 3. It should not seek to amend the Report of the Committee but it should, it seems to me, make a statement in adopting this Report. I tried earlier, I now have a modified version for consideration. You could add in paragraph 17 of C 97/REP/10 "In adopting the Third Report of the Credentials Committee, the Conference noted that the opinion expressed in paragraph 3 was not in accord with the Basic Texts of the Organization and concluded that, at future Conference Sessions, delegations should submit their credentials at the beginning of the Session".

CHAIRMAN

Can we adopt the Report of the Credentials Committee, taking into consideration the amendment proposed by the Deputy Director-General for paragraph 17 in C 97/REP/10? Can we adopt this Report of the Credentials Committee?

Andrew Keith PEARSON (Australia)

It is just unfortunate that we only have half of paragraph 18 also there. It is not directly related to this, but could I just point that out to the Secretariat that while we are around this area, we just need to ensure the accuracy of paragraph 18 as well.

Ould Mohamed AHID TOURAD (Mauritanie)

Ma délégation est d'avis de soutenir la proposition du Directeur général adjoint qui vient d'être proposée pour qu'on puisse avancer. Je vous remercie.

Igor MARINCEK (Switzerland)

I thank Mr Hjort for this proposal. I just have one question for the Legal Counsel. In the second sentence, do we have to say “In adopting the Third Report of the Credentials Committee” or do we have to “note” it? Do we formally have to adopt it?

LEGAL COUNSEL

Obviously you are not adopting paragraph 3. I think it is probably better to take note of the Report of the Credentials Committee.

CHAIRMAN

So can I ask you to take note of the Report of the Credentials Committee? Thank you.

DRAFT REPORTS OF PLENARY - PARTS X, XII AND XIII (C 97/REP/10, C 97/REP/12, C 97/REP/13)

PROJETS DES RAPPORTS DE LA PLENIERE - PARTIES X, XII ET XIII (C 97/REP/10, C 97/REP/12, C 97/REP/13)

PROYECTOS DE INFORMES DE LA PLENARIA - PARTES X, XII Y XIII
(C 97/REP/10, C 97/REP/12, C 97/REP/13)

SECRETARY-GENERAL

We are talking about adoption of the Reports of Plenary and, in particular, Reports C 97/REP/10, C 97/REP/12, C 97/REP/13 and C 97/REP/14.

With regard to C 97/REP/10, as many delegations have noted, paragraph 18 on page 4 of C 97/REP/10 is incomplete and I would like to read what paragraph 18 should say, duly completed. I quote: “The credentials of the representatives of the United Nations, its Specialized Agencies and related organizations were duly deposited as prescribed under Rule III-2 of the General Rules of the Organization”. You are to add, therefore, after the words “related organizations were” the following words “duly deposited as prescribed under Rule III-2 of the General Rules of the Organization.”

You also have, of course, the amendments to paragraph 17 which were suggested by the Deputy Director-General.

Unfortunately I was unable to get the entire wording so I would ask, with your permission Mr Chairman, for the Deputy Director-General to read out paragraph 17 of C 97/REP/10 as it has been amended to take into account your discussions on the Credentials Committee Report.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I would suggest that the text as it is in paragraph 17 remain and that added to it would be two sentences.

The first would read: “The Conference noted that the Afghanistan delegation was seated provisionally in accord with Rule III-5”.

The second sentence to be added could read: “In taking note of the Third Report of the Credentials Committee, the Conference noted that the opinion expressed in paragraph 3 was not in accord with the Basic Texts of the Organization and concluded that, in the future, delegations should submit their credentials at the beginning of the Conference”.

Mame BALLA SY (Sénégal)

J'avais toujours insisté sur le fait que: si on demande qu'on dépose les pouvoirs, que ce soit au début ou à une période donnée, il faut ajouter surtout: “en bonne et due forme”, parce que le problème qu'on a c'est cela, il ne suffit pas de déposer, il faut que les gens le fassent en bonne et due forme, je propose donc à l'amendement que nous venons d'entendre, qu'on ajoute qu'ils devraient déposer leurs pouvoirs en bonne et due forme au plus tard au début de la Conférence. Je

pense que c'est cela qui règle le problème, sinon on va déposer, on dira qu'on a déposé, vous direz que ce n'est pas bon, on dira que c'est bon. C'est cela le problème.

Andrew Keith PEARSON (Australia)

I am a little concerned at what seems to be a change of -- I am not sure if it is the General Rules or not -- my understanding of the various notifications I received require that credentials are submitted so many days in advance. I think this opens up a point which Australia was in fact going to raise, the general comment on how the Conference has run. Rather than pick it up later I might, with the indulgence of my colleagues, make the point that there have been a number of areas regarding how the Conference has been run this time which reflect, perhaps, a slight creaking of the Conference structure and the Conference mechanisms, reflecting that it has, I suspect, been quite some time since there has been a bit of a look at the Organization and the rules surrounding the running of Conferences. We have made some decisions to reduce the timing, but there has not been a look at the structure surrounding that, and I think this is but one example. Other examples I would put on the record include the operations of the Resolutions Committee and also the whole area of submission of Draft Resolutions, and the difficulties that those have created for this Conference.

I am wondering if, rather than perhaps, at this time, we venture into what appears to be a change that needs some further thought, as my colleague from Senegal has pointed out, we do need to get these sorts of wordings correct. We should decide whether, in fact, we should be asking, perhaps the Council or the CCLM to actually have a look at the structure surrounding the Conference, and report back to all the membership at a later stage, obviously before November 1999, to consider the entire workings of the Conference.

LEGAL COUNSEL

I would like to point out that, in fact, you have a requirement in Rule III-2 which says that "insofar as possible, the credentials should be deposited with the Director-General not less than fifteen days before the opening of the Session". I would really suggest that to be completely in line with this Rule, maybe we should say that, "in future, delegations should submit their credentials in their proper form at least fifteen days before the opening of the Conference, in accordance with Rule III-2. and at the latest at the beginning of the Conference."

So, it would read: "but not in accordance with the Basic Texts of the Organization" (that is paragraph 3) "and concluded that in the future delegations should submit their credentials in their proper legal form at least fifteen days before the Conference, in accordance with Rule III-2 (GRO) and at the latest at the beginning of the Conference Session".

Then you are completely in accord with the Rules as they stand at the moment.

Ms Deborah MALAC (United States of America)

Before we move to adopt C 97/REP/10, we would like to ask for a point of clarification regarding paragraph 21 of the that report. In that paragraph, it states that the Conference, in accepting the restoration of voting rights for a number of Member Nations, that was done on the basis that they had proposed instalment plans for payment of their arrears. We are not aware that, at least in the case of one country which is listed in that list, any discussion took place about instalment plans, and we would appreciate some clarification of that issue.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I do not know how this phrase got there. To my knowledge, the General Committee did not consider this matter of instalment plans and therefore the Conference could not have taken action. I would suggest that the phrase "that had proposed instalment plans" be deleted.

What in fact the Conference did was agreed that voting rights would be restored to these twelve Member Nations for this Conference.

Ronald ROSE (Canada)

I simply want to endorse the comments of the delegate of Australia concerning a requirement to take a close look at the rather, in some cases, archaic regulations which we use to run the Conference. The next Conference will be the last one of the current millennium. Let us hope that we will be able to shed a lot of the trite regulations that, in some cases, impede progress. So I would support a proposal that Conference should request Council to examine the regulations which determine how the Conference is actually conducted.

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

We are looking at document C 97/REP/10, paragraph 14. I notice we are adopting that paragraph as given in Appendix C of document C 97/REP/12. I have consulted C 97/REP/12 and I do not find an Appendix C, so this is not clear. I have document C 97/REP/12 here, but it would not be harmful to have that Appendix attached to the document that we are actually approving. I notice generally in the Reports they refer to appendices that are not readily available. In terms of practice, I think those appendices should be, even if it means reproducing them from other documents because sometimes those documents are not available. I left my papers here hoping to refer to them this morning, and they are not here this morning.

Anyhow, the substance of what I am saying is that paragraph 14 refers to Appendix C, which is not available in this document for reference so that we could see what we are approving.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Barbados has a point but, you will excuse me, I think it is a technicality. Appendix C is part of document C 97/12. We assume, in the Secretariat, that people have all their documents. We ask them to carry their documents with them and we assume that they have read their documents, so that when we make that reference in the Report, we frankly would prefer not, every time, to have to reproduce appendices to other Conference documents, because it would add to the time and cost.

I would therefore urge the honourable delegate to look at his document C 97/12, Appendix C, and refresh his memory.

Ralph BOYCE (Barbados)

I have seen the document. The functions are two pages long. It occurs to me that, where we are referring to a final document that, as happens in the case of resolutions, it should be there that we can see what it is we are finally approving, in the same way that we made comments on documents that have been discussed before, including resolutions. I think the opportunity should be given for delegates to have a view of the final document that is being proposed for adoption.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

If I could read paragraph 14: "The Conference approved the functions of the Resolutions Committee and the criteria for the formulation of resolutions, as given in Appendix C of Document C 97/12". It is a reference to another document. It is merely a reference.

Rosendo ELA NSUE MIBUY (Guinea Ecuatorial)

Me remito al párrafo 20 del C 97/REP/10 que dice: "... posteriormente cuatro de estos Estados Miembros, Bolivia, Guinea ..." esta Guinea es Guinea Ecuatorial y entonces cuando solo viene Guinea puede remitirse a confusión de ser otra Guinea. Ruego si se puede añadir Guinea Ecuatorial.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much. It will be done.

Any other comments?

If not, can I ask to adopt three documents; C 97/REP/10, with changes in paragraphs 17 and 18, and two changes in paragraph 21; and documents C 97/REP/12 and C 97/REP/13.

No objections. We can adopt them. Thank you.

Jean S. CAMARA (Guinée)

Je me vois obligé de revenir sur le document qui vient d'être adopté parce que je suivais dans une autre langue et j'entendais: Guinée Equatoriale, et j'ai entendu: Guinée, mais c'est la République de Guinée qui a payé ce n'est pas pas la Guinée Equatoriale, c'est la République de Guinée qui avait payé une somme complémentaire pour avoir le droit de vote à la suite. Donc je crois qu'il faut bien suivre. Je regrette de revenir sur le document mais ce n'est pas la règle.

CHAIRMAN

We will have to clarify this question, certainly.

The Deputy Director-General has the floor.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The Assistant Director-General for Administration and Finance Department is not here at the moment. Could we rest assured that the Secretariat will verify, based on the actual payments received, which country it was and that the record will correctly report that country.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

It took me a little while to get the Report of the General Committee. I am reading from it and it is clear that it is Guinea which made a payment to regularize its voting rights position.

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much for this clarification.

I would like to repeat that we adopted just now three documents: C 97/REP/10, C 97/REP/12 and C 97/REP/13, and now we have to consider the fourth document, C 97/REP/14.

Draft Reports of Plenary, Parts X, XII and XIII, as amended, were adopted
Les projets de rapport de la Pléniere - Parties X, XII et XIII, ainsi amendées, sont approuvés
Los proyectos de informe de la Plenaria - Partes X, XII, y XIII, así enmendados, son aprobados

DRAFT REPORT OF PLENARY - PART XIV (C 97/REP/14)

PROJET DE RAPPORT DE LA PLENIERE - QUATORZIEME PARTIE (C 97/REP/14)

PROYECTO DE INFORME DE LA PLENARIA - PARTE XIV (C 97/REP/14)

I would like to give the floor to the delegate of Canada about the results of the Contact Group that was formed yesterday morning.

Ronald ROSE (Canada)

When your Contact Group convened yesterday, the Members requested me to preside over their discussions. I would like to thank the Members of the Contact Group for, according to me, their trust. I have been asked, on their behalf, to present this Report to you.

We met, yesterday, on two occasions and the results of our deliberations are before you in C 97/REP/14 and the Resolution, which appears on page 2 of that document. The Resolution that appears before you has been approved by all of the Members of the Contact Group.

Following our deliberations, it has been suggested that one word be added to the draft that you have in front of you. I would like to propose that we add one word to the text of the agreed

Resolution, which is entitled “The Conservation of Sustainable Use of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture”, and that that one word would come in operative paragraph 2. We would suggest that we add the word “closely” following the word “collaborate”, so that we would encourage “FAO to collaborate closely with the Executive Secretary of the CBD”.

That change has been cleared by the majority of the Members of the Contact Group and, it is my understanding that it would be agreeable to all of the Members. With that one proposal, I believe that I can present to you an agreed text for this Resolution.

CHAIRMAN

Are there any comments?

If not, I would like to propose to adopt, with the insertion, the whole Report, document C 97/REP/14.

Draft Report of Plenary, Part XIV, including resolution, was adopted
Le projet de rapport de la Plénière, Partie XIV, y compris la résolution, est adopté
El proyecto de informe de la Plenaria, parte XIV, incluida la resolución es aprobado

CHAIRMAN

We have finished our agenda of today, so I would like to ask you to remain in the Hall because the Director-General will join us before closing our Conference.

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the participants for their constructive and comprehensive contribution to the success of the Conference, particularly the support to the Chairman of the Conference, who had the most difficult morning during this Session.

I would like to mention, with deep gratitude, the efforts of all of you towards the achievement of an atmosphere of solidarity and harmony, towards the sustainability of consensus, which is a core factor for the achievement of any tangible results.

It gives me great pleasure to express my cordial thanks to the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, for his permanent support that was so evident during the Conference.

I would like to thank the Deputy Director-General, Mr Hjort, and Mr Zenny, Secretary-General, for their sustainable support for the last Chairman of the Conference.

I thank all of the staff of FAO Headquarters and, in particular, the interpreters for their multi-lingual support.

I would like to join the proposal of Namibia to thank the young ladies who served us in a very professional way during this Conference.

Before closing this Session, I would like to give the floor to the Director-General.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

This Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference has been extremely fruitful. Not only has it been able to complete its work within a shorter timeframe than originally programmed, but it has also taken far-reaching decisions which will guide the programmes of the Organization for the next biennium and beyond.

I wish to express my sincerest appreciation to the Chairman and the Vice-Chairmen of the Conference and to the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the three Commissions, who have so ably conducted the various discussions.

I wish also to express my gratitude to the delegates, who have spent long hours in the Drafting Committees or in the Resolutions and Credentials Committees, and to all delegations which have shown a real spirit of cooperation in their attempts to reach a consensus on most issues.

At this Conference, all Members have clearly renewed their commitment towards the objectives of their Organization.

The Conference had a particularly constructive discussion on the Follow-up to the World Food Summit. It underlined the primary responsibility of national governments for implementing the Summit Plan of Action, and provided clear guidance on the reporting process on progress achieved.

I am grateful for the support and encouragement given by the Conference to the various initiatives taken by the Organization, such as: the establishment of a coordination mechanism within the UN system, both at Headquarters and at country level, to support national efforts; the development, in collaboration with other institutions concerned, of the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System; the steps taken to foster cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights, whose role in the definition of the rights related to food is highlighted by a Resolution; the assistance provided to developing countries in the preparation of Draft National Strategies for Agriculture and Food Security towards the year 2010; the expansion of the Special Programme for Food Security, recognizing its role as a catalyst for mobilizing investment resources and triggering policy reforms and the South-South Cooperation Scheme; and, finally, the TeleFood initiative for which the Conference also expressed its support by a Resolution.

The Conference also provided support and guidance, on the Secretariat's proposal related to important technical programmes such as the Programme against African Trypanosomiasis and the Desert Locust component of EMPRES. It emphasized the importance of FAO's work in the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, and the need to continue negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources.

The Conference also adopted a number of decisions which will streamline the committees of the Organization and improve its operation, thus facilitating the work of the Governing Bodies and the Secretariat.

It adopted a comprehensive and wide-ranging revision of the International Plant Protection Convention. Once the revised Convention enters into force, the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures will be established for the formal setting of international phytosanitary standards which, in the meantime, will continue under the interim arrangement.

I wish to further congratulate the Member Nations on what they have accomplished in their efforts to systematically review the Statutory Bodies of the Organization. This is the result of an exercise which the Council, in November 1995, decided to pursue as one of the measures to achieve further savings and efficiencies in governance. Subsequently, the Programme and Finance Committees carried the matter forward with the assistance of the Ad Hoc Contact Group on Statutory Bodies, which they established. This effort allowed the preparation and adoption, by the Conference, of a Resolution which will go a long way towards streamlining the Statutory Bodies of FAO, through the immediate abolition of 16 bodies, which could be followed by the further abolition of 67 subsidiary bodies, subject to confirmation by the parent body concerned, and of 20 joint bodies.

The additional guidance given by the Conference on a number of related matters will contribute, as well, to the efficiency of governance.

I also particularly welcomed the interest of the Conference in the Secretariat's work on the new Programme Budget Process, including the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget. The interest of the Member Nations is made clear by the adoption of the Resolution entitled "Strengthening the FAO 2000 Project".

I am pleased to note the positive results of the budget discussions. Although, in real terms, the resources allocated are lower than for the previous biennium, I welcome the adoption of the

budget 1998-99 with only one abstention. Such consensus is a testimony of the universal support, by the membership, for FAO's work. I will endeavour to ensure that it is implemented as effectively as possible.

Finally, I can assure you that the Secretariat will make every effort to reach the objectives set by the Conference. It will ensure, in particular, that the Organization maintains a proper balance between its normative and operational activities, as reflected in the Programme of Work and Budget. It will continue also to improve the administrative and financial management of the Organization to ensure greater efficiency in its operations. Above all, it will strive to build an FAO where all Member Nations, big or small, poor or rich, will feel that their priorities, concerns and interests, within the mandate of the Organization, are met with effective and timely action; an FAO, which in cooperation with its development partners, at bilateral and multilateral level, will ensure that the conditions of living of the final end-users, the farmers, the herdsmen, the foresters and the fishermen, are improved through higher productivity, more income and greater employment opportunities, in a sustainable environment.

Mr Chairman, let me express again my gratitude to all delegates and wish them a good journey back to their home country.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRMAN

Thank you very much, Mr Director-General, for your statement which effectively brings to end the substantive work of the Conference.

Before I close this last meeting of the Session, does anyone wish to speak? If not, I would like to thank you again, and may I remind you that the Council will convene, for its Hundred and Fourteenth Session, tomorrow morning in the Red Room.

I declare the Twenty-ninth FAO Conference Session closed.

The meeting rose at 12.30 hours.

La séance est levée à 12 h 30.

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.30 horas.