

**REPORT OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA**

Bamako, Mali, 30 January-3 February 2006

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FAO Member Nations in the Africa Region

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

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Africa

First	-	Lagos, Nigeria, 3 – 12 November 1960
Second	-	Tunis, Tunisia, 1 – 10 November 1962
Third	-	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3 – 15 September 1964
Fourth	-	Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 9 – 19 November 1966
Fifth	-	Kampala, Uganda, 18 – 29 November 1968
Sixth	-	Algiers, Algeria, 17 September – 3 October 1970
Seventh	-	Libreville, Gabon, 14 – 30 September 1972
Eighth	-	Rose Hill, Mauritius, 1 – 17 August 1974
Ninth	-	Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2 – 12 November 1976
Tenth	-	Arusha, Tanzania, 18 – 28 September 1978
Eleventh	-	Lomé, Togo, 16 – 27 June 1980
Twelfth	-	Algiers, Algeria, 22 September – 2 October 1982
Thirteenth	-	Harare, Zimbabwe, 16 – 25 July 1984
Fourteenth	-	Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 2 – 11 September 1986
Fifteenth	-	Moka, Mauritius, 26 April – 4 May 1988
Sixteenth	-	Marrakech, Morocco, 11 – 15 June 1990
Seventeenth	-	Accra, Ghana, 20 – 24 July 1992
Eighteenth	-	Gaborone, Botswana, 24 – 28 October 1994
Nineteenth	-	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16 – 20 April 1996
Twentieth	-	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16 – 20 February 1998
Twenty-first	-	Yaoundé, Cameroon, 21 – 25 February 2000
Twenty-second	-	Cairo, Egypt, 4-8 February 2002
Twenty-third	-	Johannesburg, South Africa, 1-5 March 2004
Twenty-fourth	-	Bamako, Mali, 30 January – 3 February 2006

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SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Matters arising from 33rd session of the FAO Conference, Rome 19-26 November 2005 (ARC/06/05)

The Conference:

1. welcomed the Director General's presentation and the proposed FAO reform aimed at making the Organisation more effective and efficient, and positioning it as a Knowledge Organisation.
2. noted that decentralization was key to the reform and emphasized the need for greater services to the region, notably through the sub-regional economic communities and groupings including: CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and AMU. (paragraph 62).
3. stressed the need for additional effort to recruit national professional staff (paragraph 65).
4. emphasised the need for African member countries to meet their financial commitment and pay their arrears owed to the FAO (paragraph 64).
5. called on member countries concerned to pursue a process of internal consultation to arrive at a consensus on the two countries to host the two new sub-regional offices for Eastern and Central Africa (paragraph 63).

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 2004-2005 with a focus on the Achievement of the World Food Summit (WFS) targets and the Millennium Development Goals (ARC/06/2)

The Conference:

6. appreciated the report presented by Mr. Oloche Anebi Edache, Assistant-Director General and Regional Representative for Africa, on FAO activities in Africa during the biennium 2004-2005 as follow-up measures to the recommendations of the 23rd ARC, especially with regard to FAO technical assistance to member countries in the formulation and finalization of National Medium Term Investment Programmes and Bankable Investment Project Profiles in the NEPAD/CAADP framework, in the implementation of the SPFS and various other activities (paragraph 68).
7. commended FAO's active role in support of African agriculture and expressed its appreciation of FAO support in the mobilization of financial resources to help overcome the invasion of desert locust (paragraph 67).
8. commended FAO for the positive response to the avian influenza crisis and noted that it would be useful to extend the support provided to the whole continent, in collaboration with other UN agencies and development partners (paragraph 68).
9. noted and praised the South-South cooperation programme in addressing emergency and development issues (paragraph 68).

Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management under Globalization and Liberalization to Promote Economic Growth (ARC/06/3)

For the Attention of Governments, Regional Economic Communities, and Research Organisations

The Conference:

10. noted that enhanced competitiveness of agriculture (crops/livestock/forestry and fisheries) is crucial to economic growth and development in Africa, and has to be addressed by increasing productivity and marketing efficiency. (paragraph 71)

For the Attention of Governments, Regional Economic Communities, and Other Partners

The Conference:

11. noted that intra-regional trade presents challenges especially for the landlocked countries and recommended that special efforts should be made to develop infrastructure such as feeder roads, rail and water transportation to open up remote areas; (paragraph 77)

For the Attention of Governments, Regional Economic Communities, and FAO

The Conference:

12. recommended that an assessment of what needs to be done to promote trade within Africa should be carried out; (paragraph 79)

13. noted that there is currently lack of pooling of resources in trade negotiations and recommended that FAO plays an active role in:

- (i) capacity building to strengthen skills on international trade standards in order to enhance access to markets;
- (ii) analysing in which commodities member countries have competitive and comparative advantages; and
- (iii) studies to develop common agricultural policies in the RECs; (paragraph 79)

For the Attention of FAO, Financial Institutions and other Specialized Agencies

The Conference:

14. noted the poor access by farmers to financial resources and the lack of strategies for resource mobilization;

- (i) recognized the need to improve on current micro-financing strategies as well as develop strategies to facilitate Public-Private partnerships to improve investments and access to financing by farmers;

(ii) further recognized that intermediaries in financing are required and,

(iii) recommended that FAO in consultation with specialized institutions contribute to the organization of training in financing; (paragraph 81)

For the Attention of Governments, Research Organisations and International Financial Institutions

The Conference:

15. recognised the need to adapt technologies to local conditions and recommended that research should be reinforced through development of human resources with special attention given to the development of technologies that enhance rain-fed agriculture while supporting small-scale and low-cost irrigation and water harvesting technologies especially for semi-arid and drought prone areas;

16. noted that infrastructure development including irrigation, marketing, agro-processing, electrification etc. is a major constraint in many African countries and recognised the need for a concerted effort by government and public-private partnership to promote financing in this area (paragraph 78)

17. emphasised the significance of investment in research, technology development and dissemination and of developing capacity for adaptation of technology to country needs and noted that value added and processing activities are also crucial to enhancing competitiveness of agricultural products and to that end, recommended that appropriate measures to support investments in value added facilities should be put in place in the production areas; (paragraph 83)

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

18. (i) noted that structural adjustment measures leading to the privatisation of marketing and the disfranchising of marketing boards have left small scale farmers without access to support services including marketing information;

(ii) recommended that strategies for linking farmers to markets need to be re-visited in order to improve access to these vitally important services and to facilitate the participation of farmers in the agro-industrial sector; (paragraph 84)

African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme (ARC/06/4)

For the Attention of Governments and FAO

The Conference:

19. (i) noted that seed is one of the most crucial elements in the livelihoods of agricultural communities, and

(ii) requested FAO and its Member States to develop an Action Plan with clear indications of detailed activities, timeframes and allocation of responsibilities for the aggressive promotion of the use of improved seeds by farmers; (paragraph 85)

For the Attention of Governments, Regional Economic Communities, African Union and Research Organisations

The Conference:

20. recommended that:

- a. institutional arrangements should be clearly defined with emphasis on reliance on African expertise.
- b. duplication of efforts should be avoided by ensuring collaboration among the Regional and Subregional Organizations, including research and training institutions and taking into account existing programmes/initiatives at national, sub-regional and regional level.
- c. priorities for progressive implementation, e.g. seed production starting with the main crops, be identified including forage and forestry products; policy and legal arrangements on seeds and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture be developed and capacity building on technical issues such as seed quality control, phytosanitary, varietal uniformity aspects and traceability, etc be done.
- d. African research institutions should be encouraged to resuscitate seed research and governments to upgrade existing facilities.
- e. activities related to the use of biotechnology for improving seeds together with the envisaged initiative for capacity building to manage genetically modified organisms should be in compliance with the relevant conventions, protocols as well as national policies and legal frameworks.
- f. an assessment of the level of investment in seed development, production and trade including funds for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and identification of the conditions needed to increase such investments be conducted.
- g. participants from the A.U. Member States receive a progress report on the development of the Action Plan at the next Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government to be held in July 2006 in Banjul, the Gambia; (paragraph 87).
- h. the budget of the Plan of Action reflect the need to place strong emphasis on capacity building and potential funding services to be clearly identified. In revising the indicative budget presented in the document, a balance should be maintained by allocating more funds for capacity building and upgrading research institutions; (paragraph 86)

Policy and Regulation of Biotechnology in Food Production (ARC/06/INF/5)

For the Attention of Governments, Regional Economic Communities and Research Organisations

The Conference:

21. called for national, sub-regional/regional initiatives aimed at:

- (i) reinforcing capacities in the formulation of national regulatory frameworks;
- (ii) reinforcing human capacities of National Biosafety Committees (in terms of critical mass and level of expertise) and
- (iii) reinforcing national and subregional capacities for the implementation of GMO diagnostic/analytical tools for informed decision-making that complies with the terms set out in existing conventions, protocols as well as national policies and legal frameworks; (paragraph 88)

22. stressed the need to have an understanding of the benefits and risks associated with the adoption and use of biotechnology products and called upon public research institutions to be in the forefront of research on biotechnology while ensuring effective public awareness and information sharing; (paragraph 89)

23. suggested that all available biotechnology options (including selection by molecular marker, micro-propagation, tissue culture, cloning, embryo transfer and genetic engineering, etc.) be taken into consideration as a "*continuum*", each option being used according to its specific characteristics on a case by case basis; (paragraph 90)

Fire in the Agriculture-Forestry Interface (ARC/06/INF/6)

For the Attention of FAO and Other Partners

The Conference:

24. stressed the need to sensitize local populations and strengthen their capacity for fire prevention, control and management; (paragraph 91)

25. recommended that FAO, in collaboration with relevant partners, pursue efforts to prepare fire control manuals and provide training and equipment to village level fire brigades; (paragraph 92)

26. recommended the establishment of networks and working groups on fire in Sub-Saharan Africa; and urged FAO to strengthen these initiatives and to help countries make optimal use of remote sensing data for bush fire prevention and control at different levels; (paragraph 94)

27. recommended that FAO help disseminate successful national initiatives to other member countries in the region; (paragraph 95)

28. noted that the issue of the impacts of fire on carbon emissions and climate changes needed to be further studied and documented, and recommended that FAO and relevant partners pursue work on the issue in order to improve understanding and knowledge of both citizens and political leaders. (paragraph 93)

Agrarian Reform, Land Policies and the Millennium Development Goals: FAO's interventions and lessons learned during the Past decade (ARC/06/INF/7)

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

29. emphasized the need to reinforce access and easing land registration processes at local levels to promote security of tenure; (paragraph 98)

30. acknowledged registration of diverse rights as pertinent to land and agrarian reform, stressing customary, collective and other diverse existing land holdings; (paragraph 99)

31. emphasized that the sensitivities around land issues call for interactive processes, dialogue and consultation at all levels to ensure robust participation of all stakeholders and actors (paragraph 100)

32. (i) noted with great concern increasing land scarcity and fragmentation of holdings

(ii) underlined land conflict as a pertinent area for further support, and

(iii) recommended that effective existing customary practices in local contexts should be used when possible in strengthening conflict mediation processes, as well as use of local land commissions; (paragraph 101)

33. stressed as priority area for future focus, the promotion of balanced policies in support of land consolidation, commercial agriculture and investment while also protecting land rights and production systems of smallholders; (paragraph 102)

Parallel and Side Events

AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE

For the Attention of Governments

The African Union Conference:

34. urged Member States to implement policies and programmes that support small scale farmers and the expansion of agribusiness activities, including contract farming for smallholder farmers: (paragraph 114)

35. adopted the following recommendations:

- a) the adoption of the Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) System as described in the "Guidance Note" developed by the AU/NEPAD for use in Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System.
- b) Crop, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry sectors (including Research and Development in these sectors) be the core areas for the allocation of the 10%.
- c) use of expenditure data rather than the budget data for the tracking system.
- d) Member States to submit, by December 31 of each year, the duly completed Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System questionnaire to the African Union Commission.
- e) that Member States utilize sufficient budgetary resources for the global development of rural areas;
- f) that Member States place particular emphasis on the development of national and regional infrastructure to facilitate trade of agricultural goods; (paragraph 117)

For the Attention of Governments, Regional Economic Communities and African Union Commission

The African Union Conference:

36. urged Member States and Regional Economic Groupings to develop intra and inter-regional trade in food products particularly from food surplus to deficit zones; (paragraph 110)
37. recommended strengthening the capacity of the African Union Commission in order to improve coordination of initiatives in the area of food security at the continental and sub-regional levels; (paragraph 110)

For the Attention of Governments, Donors and NEPAD

The African Union Conference:

38. recognized the progress made by many Member States in the development of National Medium-Term Investment Programmes (NMTIPs) and Bankable Investment Project Profiles (BIPP) within the framework of CAADP and urged Member States to accelerate implementation of CAADP by adopting the NMTIPs and BIPPs and including them in their National Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks;(paragraph 112)
39. urged Member States to ensure funding of CAADP from domestic budgets, savings resulting from debt relief, and, where appropriate, resources mobilized from bilateral and multilateral donors; (paragraph 112)
40. acknowledged the importance of water, land and fisheries resources for food production and income generation and urged Member States with irrigation potential to take advantage of the African Water Facility hosted by the African Development Bank and World Bank; (paragraph 113)

41. underscored the urgent need to respond to Africa's critical problems of hunger, poverty and disease by employing innovative complementary and comprehensive approaches aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and growth; expressed concern at the duplication of efforts and non coherence in implementing the CAADP and the Sirte Declarations by the NEPAD Secretariat and AU Commission respectively; (paragraph 111)

For the Attention of Governments, Regional Economic Communities and FARA

The African Union Conference:

42. recognized the importance of agricultural research, technology dissemination and transfer and called on regional economic communities and Member States to realign their regional and national research priorities to the Framework for Africa Agricultural Productivity (FAAP) within the broader CAADP framework with the support and collaboration of FARA; (paragraph 116)

FAO-FO/NGO/CSO REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR AFRICA

For the Attention of Governments

The Consultation:

43. recommended that Governments:

- a) safeguard the land rights of agricultural producers through appropriate instruments, including the land register, rural land use planning and the monitoring of land ownership.
- b) elaborate and implement, through a participatory approach, land policies and legislation that focus on the security of land tenure of family holdings, on equitable access to land by all, especially the vulnerable groups (women, the young, migrants, pastoralists and disadvantaged social groups) and on the sustainable management of natural resources;
- c) protect African agriculture and implement appropriate mechanisms for the management of supply;
- d) establish enabling conditions for populations to consume the food and agriculture products that they produce;
- e) honour the commitments made at the 2003 Summit of the African Union in Maputo to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture;
- f) implement appropriate mechanisms of financing, and support to investment for the modernization of family agricultural holdings;
- g) adopt a moratorium of 10 years on all use, marketing and importation of GMO varieties and derived products. This delay should serve to produce appropriate legislation and to inform and train stakeholders, in particular the agricultural producers;

- h) provide strong support to agricultural research for the development of seeds suited to the production conditions of family holdings;
- i) support FAO reform towards enhanced dialogue with civil society.
- j) take into account the rights of citizens by adopting the principles of food sovereignty.

For the Attention of Governments and FAO

Allow civil society organizations to introduce discussion items into the agenda of the Regional Conference for Africa.

For the Attention of FAO

The Consultation:

44. recommended that FAO:

- a) contribute towards reinforcing the capacity of farmer organizations to defend their land rights through the establishment of information, training and experience-exchange programmes and through studies and research on land issues.
- b) adopt the right to food sovereignty as a right to be defended in the framework of the guidelines on the right to food and as a principle to be observed in food security programmes;
- c) put in place an effective programme for developing a multiparty partnership against hunger, for supporting subregional and country alliances and for strengthening farmer organization and civil society capacity to defend citizens' rights to food.
- d) put in place a more effective mechanism for partnership with civil society, notably through reinforcement of the operating capacity of the FAO/NGO/CSO unit at Headquarters, providing it with sufficient human resources and appropriate means of operation; the gradual decentralization of this unit to the subregional offices; and the creation of operational focal points in country offices and the establishment of ongoing dialogue and open partnership with civil society at the level of all country offices.

For the Attention of Civil Societies and Farmers Organisations

The Consultation:

45. recommended that Civil Societies Organisations

- a) participate meaningfully in the shaping of land policies and legislation, by conducting independent studies and through own reflections;
- b) advocate for consideration of the rights and legitimate interests of Civil Societies and Farmers Organisations.

- c) mobilize all components of society, public and private institutions so that the fight against hunger becomes a daily concern and a citizen's act, in particular by promoting the food and agricultural products of the region and by engaging actively in the establishment and invigoration of national and subregional alliances throughout sub-Saharan Africa;
- d) mobilize internal financial resources to support actions undertaken in the framework of alliances;
- e) Pursue exchanges among African farmer organizations to reinforce their negotiating position in defining regional and subregional policies.

V. OTHER MATTERS

46. None was discussed (paragraph 120)

VI. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Items to be considered for the 25th Regional Conference for Africa

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference

47. recommended that member countries submit to the FAO Secretariat their proposed topics/selected issues of importance to the region for consideration in the Agenda of the 25th FAO Regional Conference for Africa to be held in Kenya in 2008 (paragraph 121).

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Plenary Session of the Twenty-Fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held at the “Centre International de Conférence, Bamako”, Republic of Mali, from 30 January to 3 February 2006.
2. The Conference was attended by 171 delegates from 41 Member Nations of the Region, of which: 25 were Ministerial level representatives; 3 observers from Member Nations outside the Region, 1 Observer from the Holy See, 6 United Nations Specialized Agencies, 16 Observers from Intergovernmental Organizations and 28 from International and Regional non-governmental organizations. The list of delegates is given in Appendix B.

Inaugural Ceremony

3. The Inaugural Ceremony was held at the “Centre International de Conférence de Bamako”, in the presence of His Excellency Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic of Mali; Mr. Jacques Diouf, the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Mr. Naeini Noori, the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council.
4. On this occasion, the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council, the Director-General of FAO and the President of the Republic of Mali delivered speeches summarized under section II – Statements.

Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteurs

5. The Conference considered the recommendations made by the Africa Group of Permanent Representatives to FAO in Rome, regarding the officers to service this session of the Conference and approved by acclamation the composition of the bureau as follows:

Chairperson:	Republic of Mali H.E. Seydou Traoré Minister for Agriculture
First Vice-Chairperson:	Angola H.E. Gilberto Buta Lutucuta Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development
Second Vice-Chairperson:	Congo H.E. Jeanne Dambendzet Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
First Rapporteur:	South Africa Angela Thoko Didiza Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs
Second Rapporteur:	Algeria H.E. Said Barkat Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

6. The Conference adopted the Agenda and Timetable as given in Appendix A, while the list of documents is shown in Appendix C.

II. STATEMENTS

Statement by the Director-General of FAO

7. The Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf, opened his statement by expressing his deep gratitude to President Amadou Toumani Touré for having kindly agreed to be such an attentive host of the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference. He extolled the President as the personification of the great virtues of the founding fathers of sovereign Africa and praised his commitment to the good governance, consensus and national unity that were essential for building a prosperous state and reviving the continent.

8. The Director-General also thanked the Government and people of Mali for their warm welcome and their generous hospitality to both himself and to the delegates at the Conference.

9. Referring to the state of food and agriculture in the world, he deplored the fact that 27 percent of the African population were still chronically undernourished. Unless the trend was reversed, in 2015 almost half the world poor would live in sub-Saharan Africa.

10. The Director-General then reviewed the development of agriculture in Africa in 2004-2005 and noted that Africa was the only region of the world in which average *per capita* food production had been in constant decline for 40 years, while it had steadily risen in the world during the past 30 years.

11. With regard to trade in agricultural commodities, Africa had only accounted for 1.2 percent of world trade in the 1990s, against 3.1 percent in the 1950s. Agricultural commodity imports had been increasing more rapidly than exports since the 1960s and Africa had posted a US\$20 billion agricultural deficit during the period 2001-2003.

12. Referring to the constraints to Africa's agriculture, the Director-General mentioned the following facts: Africa only irrigated 7 percent of its arable land, compared to 38 percent in Asia; hence the need for very high priority to be given to investment in irrigated agriculture because of its important potential for safeguarding production and increasing productivity.

13. The low level of fertilizer use in the region was another concern: Africa only applied 23 kg of fertilizer per hectare, down to a mere 9 kg in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 151 kg in Asia. FAO was ready to provide its support to the Fertilizer Summit planned for June 2006 to look into the issue in greater depth.

14. With respect to the transboundary animal pests and diseases which continued to ravage Africa, FAO's joint initiative with the OIE entitled "Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases" would help to reinforce national veterinary services and capacities through North-South and South-South partnerships.

15. As for plant protection, measures were being taken to harmonize quarantine systems, especially in the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention.
16. One of the major constraints remained the mobilization of sufficient resources for the financing of agriculture. FAO would continue to collaborate with the African Union, the Secretariat of NEPAD, the AfDB, the IMF and other institutions in defining a mechanism to track budgetary allocations as stipulated in the Maputo commitment: to allocate at least 10 percent of national budgetary resources to agricultural and rural development within five years.
17. With regard to actions under way to remove constraints through implementation of the CAADP, the Director-General recalled that FAO had prepared complementary project documents for the livestock, fisheries and forestry subsectors. The Organization had provided its technical assistance, for a value of US\$7 million, for the preparation in 48 countries of the CAADP National Medium-Term Investment Programmes and Bankable Investment Projects. A total of 200 such projects had been finalized in 37 countries for a value of US\$7.3 billion.
18. The FAO Special Programme for Food Security was now operational in 44 African countries and had been upgraded to a national programme in 15 of those countries.
19. Mr Diouf then referred to the outcome of the Thirty-third Session of the FAO Conference, which had taken place in Rome in November 2005 and which had examined his proposals for the reform of the Organization. Among other matters, the Conference had approved certain changes to the organizational structure at FAO headquarters from 1 January 2006, together with the implementation of decentralization proposals in one region and the opening of another subregional office. In this connection, he had decided to begin the exercise with the African region and the Central Asian subregion.
20. With less than ten years to 2015, the date by which the world's leaders had pledged to halve hunger and extreme poverty, the Director-General highlighted the need for political commitment at the highest national, subregional and international levels for the necessary urgent actions to be taken. It was now up to the ministers of the economy, of finance and of planning to implement the commitments that had been made in Maputo and Sirte by their Heads of State and Government, so that the images of starving African children dying of hunger could be banished from the world's television screens.
21. He finished by wishing the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa every success in its work.

Opening Address by the President of the Republic of Mali

22. The Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was opened under the patronage of His Excellency, Mr Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic and Head of State of Mali.
23. After warmly welcoming the participants to Mali, the President of the Republic stated that the Malian people were extremely grateful for the opportunity they had been given to host the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

24. On the subject of food insecurity, the Head of State stressed that Africa needed to tap the enormous potential that it possesses to meet existing challenges through firm commitment and determined agricultural policy.

25. The Head of State then urged the participants to rise to the dual challenge of "Production and Productivity", on the one hand, and of "Trade and Competitiveness", on the other.

26. He advocated the need to modernize African agriculture by capitalizing on the factors of success, including the control of water, land-use planning, the use of fertilizer, plant protection and the promotion of agricultural research and technological innovation.

27. When expressing his expectations concerning the conclusions and recommendations of the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa, the Head of State briefly outlined to the assembly some of the landmark measures that Mali had undertaken to guarantee the emergence and development of a modern agricultural sector that was based on the objectives of high production and optimal productivity, which had proven to be essential factors for effective and sustainable food sovereignty.

28. With regard to the Maputo Declaration, the Head of State stressed that Mali was already allocating 14 percent of its budgetary resources to agriculture.

29. Thanking FAO for its constant assistance in facilitating agricultural development in Africa, the Head of State stressed that the Organization should be proud of its commitment in many areas and especially in those relating to (i) food security; (ii) the fight against transboundary animal pests and diseases; (iii) the regulation of trade in pesticides and other dangerous chemical substances; and (iv) the promotion of South-South cooperation.

30. After reiterating his confidence in the Director-General of FAO and expressing his support for the ongoing reforms, the Head of State wished the participants an excellent stay in Mali and every success in the work of the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

Statement by the Independent Chairman of FAO Council

31. The Independent Chairman of the FAO Council, His Excellency Naeini Noori expressed his gratitude to the President of the Republic of Mali, the Government and the great People of Mali for the outstanding hospitality and generosity provided to all participants in the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

32. He pointed out that in a world with a GDP exceeding 40,000 billion dollars – some countries enjoy *per capita* income of more than \$ 40,000 per year, each day 25,000 children die because of hunger and malnutrition, and 3 billion people live with an income of less than 2 dollars per day. “In simple words, during the five days that we are struggling here in Bamako, to find better ways for achieving food security, more than 125,000 children will never wake up from their sleep”.

33. He recalled that FAO with the logo of “FIAT PANIS”, “Food for all”, during its 60 years of existence has provided outstanding services to the poor, to the hungry and in particular to the development of agriculture the world over.

34. The Independent Chairman reminded the African Ministers for Agriculture that they are the

first group of thinkers and decision makers who are laying down the foundation of the new innovative and effective changes in the structure and functioning of FAO which can better serve the goals of the World Food Summit, the World Food Summit: *five years later* and the MDGs, including, among others, reduction of the number of hungry and malnourished by half by the year 2015. He wished them the best of success in their deliberations.

Statement by the Outgoing Chairperson

35. On behalf of the people and President of South Africa, Her Excellency Thoko Didiza, the Minister for Agriculture thanked the people of Mali for the hospitality extended to the participants.

36. She reminded the Conference about the decisions taken in Johannesburg in March 2004:

- a) Ratify the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture which guarantees future generations access and benefits from conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity;
- b) Eliminate trade distorting subsidies and improve competitiveness, market access of African agricultural products;
- c) Accelerate the development of bankable projects for increased investments in agriculture in the framework of CAADP;
- d) Reform and improve agricultural research and extension systems;
- e) Increase budget allocation to 10 % for financing agriculture.

37. She noted that, in general, there has been some progress, albeit mixed, in implementing these resolutions. Greater attention is still needed. She then invited the Ministers to be vigilant and continue implementing the resolutions as agreed in Johannesburg in 2004 and to effect the same continuity in the discussions of this Conference in Bamako. She expressed the hope that this Conference will further chart the way forward for the African agenda for agricultural development as outlined in NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme.

38. Concluding, H.E. Thoko Didiza stated that South Africa was pleased to pass on the baton for the leadership of Africa on agricultural matters under the auspices of the FAO to the government of Mali, the Conference's host.

Statement by the IFAD

39. The Vice-President of IFAD, Mr. Cyril Enweze, recalled that twenty-eight years ago, when IFAD was established, the global food deficit was the mobilizing force for action.

40. The problem today is that despite the global abundance of food, poverty and hunger still affect more than 800 million people around the world. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, almost a third of the total population is facing food insecurity in spite of the recognized potential of agriculture in Africa. In this context five major constraints must be tackled: (i) low productivity

in agriculture; (ii) high transport costs; (iii) fragmented markets; (iv) low diffusion of technology; (v) unfavourable trade regimes.

41. Drawing upon IFAD's experience in alleviating poverty and food security in Africa, Mr. Cyril Enweze drew attention to the following priority needs:

- secure access to land and water for rural smallholders;
- access to technology whether in the form of higher yielding varieties, improved soil fertility, or new cropping methods for African farmers;
- financial services, vital to the economic empowerment of smallholder farmers;
- strong organizations for poor people and real representation to defend their interests when it comes to input prices, marketing, financial services and political influence;
- elimination of direct and indirect agricultural export subsidies of developed countries.

42. Finally, he promised that IFAD will continue to mobilize financial resources for Africa.

Statement by the World Food Programme

43. The Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Ms. Sheila Sisulu, stated that the number of undernourished people in Africa continues to rise. While many countries are beginning to see the results of food security strategies, population growth continues to outpace food production. Nutrition and education need to be integrated more effectively into larger development efforts in order to spur wide ranging economic and social improvements that depend on healthier, better educated people.

44. More and more evidence is also becoming available on the importance of education in reducing hunger. Poor nutrition and lack of schooling present tremendous obstacles to development. Until we stamp out malnutrition and achieve universal education, we cannot expect to truly eradicate poverty.

45. This is one of the main reasons that World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are working together to launch a global initiative to end child hunger and undernutrition. The initiative aims to garner broad-based, global partnerships in order to focus and support national efforts to eradicate child hunger and undernutrition. The success of the initiative will rely on the collective ability to work towards a common purpose.

46. Ms. Sisulu informed the Conference that WFP, FAO and IFAD are working on a twin-track approach to ending hunger – short-term investments in food aid to prevent lasting damage from malnutrition and longer-term investments so people in the poorest countries can feed themselves. However, the investment needed to enable poor farmers to compete fairly with their counterparts in the rich world – roads, markets, research -- must be forthcoming, and be a priority for their governments.

47. In conclusion, the WFP Deputy Executive Director reminded the Conference that when crises hit, it is women and children who pay the highest price, and while emergency food aid is

essential to keeping people alive, the real need is for the political will and financial resources to make the investments that we know can make a difference.

Statement by the Representative of the Holy See

48. The Representative of the Holy See, Monsignor Renato Volante started by expressing his appreciation to the Government and People of Mali for their hospitality.

49. He added that his presence in this high-level conference was motivated by the interest which the Holy See takes in FAO's overall initiatives; in this sense, the Holy See encourages all actions oriented to safeguarding life by rules and programmes.

50. He advocated that an inclusive approach to international cooperation is necessary for development and growth of peoples and countries; in this perspective, he called on African countries to work in close cooperation with FAO to develop strategies for sustainable livelihoods, income growth, food security and agricultural production, while preserving the environment.

51. The Holy See considers of great relevance, the attainment in the region of the *Millennium Development Goals* in order to eradicate poverty and malnutrition.

52. The Holy See particularly commended the initiative related to African seeds while recognizing the need to consider the challenges presented by seed industries with their legal and technical protection which restrict access to biodiversity.

53. Finally, the representative of the Holy See assured participants of the availability of the Catholic Church, in its various sectors and institutions to cooperate in activities against hunger, underdevelopment and poverty.

Statement by Italian Cooperation

54. The Representative of the Italian Cooperation recalled that the common objective was to halve the number of people suffering from hunger and extreme poverty by 2015.

55. To this end, it was important that agriculture be considered as a priority sector in national development strategies and that it receives the support of effective policy and administrative measures in order to create the required infrastructure, to promote adequate investment and to support small farmers, with emphasis on the involvement of NGOs and civil society.

56. On the bilateral level, Italian assistance to agriculture has taken the form of multiple initiatives focusing on the agricultural sector and rural development in general. At the multilateral level, the assistance has translated as an increase in contributions granted to the international agencies and in particular to the extraordinary contribution of 100 millions euros (of which 60 million has already been made available) to the FAO Trust Fund for food security programmes as adopted at the *WFS:fyl*.

57. The Representative of Italian Cooperation concluded by recalling that at the G8 Summit in Genova in 2001, the Italian Government had assured NEPAD of its support to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme designed in close collaboration with FAO.

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Matters arising from 33rd Session of the FAO Conference (Rome 19 – 26 November 2005)[ARC/06/5]

58. A panorama of FAO reform in the context of a changing world was provided with the aid of a DVD. Introducing the topic, the Director General, Dr Jacques Diouf, stated that FAO reform is aimed at making the Organization more effective and efficient, and positioning it as a knowledge organization.

59. As a consequence of the reform, much of the Organisation's hierarchy would be eliminated. The technical departments will be reorganized in such a way as to foster better collaboration within the Organisation and for better delivery of services to member countries. Key to the reform is greater decentralisation, with a significant decrease of the current level of professional staff of 70% in headquarters. In effect, joint structures and programmes will be promoted and decentralised staff would work as technical teams in key disciplines, including 30% of FAORs' time provided into the team efforts.

60. In addition, the reform is designed to promote greater consultation with NGOs, up-scaling of SPFS to the national level and an expansion of the ambassadorial programme.

61. Information services of general nature such as WAICENT would be reinforced and expanded. To bring onboard segments of society and countries unable to access the information provided by the Organisation easily, FAO is establishing a new "ASK FAO" programme.

62. FAO will be providing greater services to the African region, notably through the sub-regional economic communities and groupings including CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and UMA.

63. For the two new sub-regional offices to be established for Eastern and Central Africa, the Director-General called on member countries concerned to pursue a process of internal consultation to arrive at a consensus on the countries to host the two new sub-regional offices.

64. Concerning the financing of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO, the Minister for Agriculture of Cameroon called on Member States from Africa to contribute to the Trust Fund, even as a token contribution. In response, the Director-General emphasised the need for African member countries to meet their financial commitments and pay arrears owed to the FAO.

65. And, finally, in response to a comment by the Minister for Agriculture of Algeria, the Director-General stressed that there would be additional effort to recruit national professional staff.

FAO Activities in the Region 2004-2005 with a focus on the Achievement of the World Food Summit (WFS) targets and the Millennium Development Goals (ARC/06/2)

66. The Conference welcomed the comprehensive report presented by Mr. Oloche Anebi Edache, Assistant-Director General and Regional Representative for Africa, informing on FAO activities in Africa during the biennium 2004-2005. The report presented follow-up measures to

recommendations of the 23rd ARC, especially with regard to FAO technical assistance to member countries in the formulation/finalisation of National Medium Term Programmes and Bankable Investment Project Profiles in the NEPAD/CAADP framework, in the implementation of the SPFS and various other activities.

67. The Conference commended FAO's active role in support of African agriculture. It expressed its appreciation of FAO support in the mobilisation of financial resources to help overcome the invasion of desert locust. In this respect, collaboration among African countries was highlighted. Member countries stressed the need to evaluate the impact of activities undertaken during the biennium on food security and poverty reduction.

68. The Conference further commended FAO for the positive response to the avian influenza crisis and noted that it would be useful to extend the support provided to the whole continent, in collaboration with other UN agencies and development partners. The South-South Cooperation Programme was particularly noted and praised for addressing emergency and development issues.

Report of the Technical Committee ARC/06/TC/REP

69. The Conference had on its agenda two discussion papers (i) Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management under Globalization and Liberalization to Promote Economic Growth and (ii) African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme, and four information items: (i) Policy and Regulation of Biotechnology in Food Production; (ii) Fire in the Agriculture-Forestry Interface; (iii) Agrarian Reform, Land Policies and the Millennium Development Goals: FAO's interventions and lessons learned during the Past decade; and (iv) New Approaches to Information Access under WAICENT.

70. The Rapporteur of the Technical Committee, Ms Vangile Titi, on behalf of the Chairperson, presented the report of the Committee, laying emphasis on the recommendations of the two discussion items and giving an overview of the information items.

The Conference deliberated on the report, amended it and endorsed it as follows:

Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management under Globalization and Liberalization to Promote Economic Growth (ARC/06/3)

The Conference:

71. noted that enhanced competitiveness of agriculture (crops/livestock/forestry and fisheries), is crucial to economic growth and development in Africa and has to be addressed by increasing production and marketing efficiency;

72. noted that there are two essential factors affecting agricultural competitiveness:

- (i) constraints of economies of scale, since most farmers are smallholders and are scattered over large areas, with poor access to inputs and other support services
- (ii) unfair competition in world trade, because of the subsidy being given to their farmers by the developed countries.

73. noted that agriculture in Africa is characterised by low-input and low productivity, and recognized the need to develop strategies for increased fertilizer use, and other soil fertility improvement systems as well as promotion of mechanization; further recognized, that competitiveness of agriculture can be achieved by strengthening family farms as they are the backbone of agriculture and by promoting the commercialization of agriculture.

74. noted that the increase in agricultural production achieved in the past has been facilitated by a conducive enabling environment and recognised that policies that address lack of support services and low prices of commodities are key to competitiveness as they impact on different aspects of production.

75. recognised that technologies have to be adapted to the local conditions and recommended that research should be reinforced through development of human resources with special attention given to the development of technologies that enhance rain-fed agriculture while supporting small-scale and low-cost irrigation and water harvesting technologies especially for semi-arid and drought prone areas.

76. recognised that strategies to bring together farmers, input suppliers, processors, traders, agricultural banks etc., to chart out partnerships and develop cohesive programmes, should be considered; noted that there are good examples such as contract farming where these partnership arrangements have shown significant results and should be promoted.

77. noted that intra-regional trade presents challenges especially for the landlocked countries and recommended that special efforts should be made to develop infrastructure such as feeder roads, rail and water transportation to open up remote areas.

78. noted that infrastructure development including irrigation, marketing, agro-processing, electrification etc. is a major constraint in many African countries and recognised the need for a concerted effort by government and public-private partnership to promote financing in this area.

79. recommended that an assessment of what needs to be done to promote trade within Africa should be undertaken, and noted that there is currently lack of pooling of resources in trade negotiations and recommended that FAO continue to play an active role in:

1. capacity building to strengthen skills on international trade standards in order to enhance access to markets;
2. analysing those commodities in which member countries have competitive and comparative advantages; and
3. studies to develop common agricultural policies in the RECs

80. noted the need to articulate how the WTO Hong Kong meeting held in December 2005 will affect agriculture in Africa recognising that while there are many resolutions made in such meetings, there is lack of effective follow up and implementation.

81. noted the poor access to financial resources and the lack of strategies for resource mobilization, noted further that banking facilities are out of reach of most farmers and that the current micro-financing facilities are not adequate, leading to low levels of investments; recognized the need to improve on current micro-financing strategies as well as develop

strategies to facilitate Public-Private-Partnerships to improve investments and access to financing by farmers; further recognized that intermediation in financing is required and recommended that FAO in consultation with specialized institutions should contribute to the organisation of training in financing.

82. emphasised that competitiveness must include all the aspects of farming systems which integrate crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries at the farm level and noted that there are many instances where livestock complements cropping by acting as a source of savings and financing.

83. emphasised that investment in research, technology development and dissemination and in developing capacity for adaptation of technology to country needs is crucial and noted that value added and processing activities are also crucial to enhanced competitiveness of agricultural products; and to that end recommended that appropriate measures to support investments in value added facilities should be put in place in the production areas.

84. noted that structural adjustment measures leading to the privatisation of marketing and disfranchising of marketing boards left small scale farmers without access to support services including marketing information; recommended that strategies for linking farmers to markets need to be re-visited to improve access to these vitally important services and to facilitate the participation of farmers in the agro-industrial sector.

African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme (ARC/06/4)

The Conference:

85. noted that seed is one of the most crucial elements in the livelihoods of agricultural communities and that Africa has been unable to take full advantage of the recent advances in the seed sector development, noted further the request by member countries participating in the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Africa for FAO and its Member Nations to develop an Action Plan with clear indications of detailed activities, timeframes and allocation of responsibilities.

86. recommended that:

- a) institutional arrangements should be clearly defined with emphasis on reliance on African expertise;
- b) duplication of efforts should be avoided by ensuring collaboration among the Regional and Subregional Organizations, including research and training institutions and taking into account existing programmes/initiatives at national, sub-regional and regional level. ;
- c) priorities for progressive implementation e.g. seed production starting with the main crops, should be identified including forage and forestry products; policy and legal arrangements on seeds and Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) be developed and capacity building on technical issues such as seed quality control, phytosanitary, varietal uniformity aspects and traceability, etc be done;
- d) African research institutions should be encouraged to resuscitate seed research and that governments should upgrade existing facilities;

- e) activities related to the use of biotechnology for improving seeds together with the envisaged initiative for capacity building to manage genetically modified organisms, should be in compliance with the relevant conventions, protocols as well as national policies and legal frameworks;
- f) an assessment of the level of investment, in seed development, production and trade including funds for the conservation and use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and identification of the conditions needed to increase such investments, should be conducted;
- g) the budget of the Plan of Action should reflect the need to place strong emphasis on capacity building and that potential funding services should be clearly identified;
- h) in revising the indicative budget presented in the document, a balance should be maintained by allocating more funds for capacity building and upgrading research institutions.

87. Participants from the AU Member States requested to receive a progress report on the development of the Action Plan at the next Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government to be held in July 2006 in Banjul, the Gambia.

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

Policy and Regulation of Biotechnology in Food Production (ARC/06/INF/5)

The Conference:

88. called for national, sub-regional/regional initiatives aimed at:

1. reinforcing capacities in the formulation of national regulatory frameworks;
2. reinforcing human capacities of National Biosafety Committees (in terms of critical mass and level of expertise) and
3. reinforcing national and subregional capacities for the implementation of GMO diagnostic/analytical tools for informed decision-making that comply with the terms set out in existing conventions, protocols as well as national policies and legal frameworks.

89. stressed the need to have an understanding of the benefits and risks associated with the adoption and use of biotechnology products and called upon public research institutions to be in the forefront of research on biotechnology while ensuring effective public awareness and information sharing.

90. suggested that all available biotechnology options (including selection by molecular marker, micro-propagation, tissue culture, cloning, embryo transfer and genetic engineering, etc.) be

taken into consideration as a "*continuum*", each option being used according to its specific characteristics on a case by case basis.

Fire in the Agriculture-Forestry Interface (ARC/06/INF/6)

The Conference:

91. stressed negative impacts of fires in rural areas, as contributing to the destruction of trees, crops, pastures, livestock and wildlife and raised the need to sensitize local populations and strengthen their capacity for fire prevention, control and management;

92. recommended that FAO, in collaboration with relevant partners, pursue efforts to prepare Fire Control Manuals and provide training and equipment to village level fire brigades where they exist;

93. noted that the issue of the impacts of fire on carbon emissions and climate changes needed to be further studied and documented, and recommended that FAO and relevant partners pursue work on the issue in order to improve understanding and knowledge of both the citizenry and political leaders;

94. further recommended the establishment of Networks and Working Groups on Fire in Sub-Saharan Africa; and urged FAO to strengthen these initiatives and to help countries make optimal use of remote sensing data for bush fire prevention and control at different levels;

95. finally recommended that FAO help disseminate successful national initiatives to other member countries in the region;

Agrarian Reform, Land Policies and the Millennium Development Goals: FAO's interventions and lessons learned during the Past decade (ARC/06/INF/7)

96. This information paper underlined that access to land is crucial in the eradication of food insecurity and entrenched rural poverty in Africa. It underscored that rising demographic pressures contribute to land scarcity, overuse and degradation of land and natural resources.

97. Several member countries shared their ongoing national experiences in policy formulation, design of legislative frameworks and implementation strategies and processes in land reform. This collective "wisdom" of sharing experiences to analyse issues was noted as critical for moving forward in land reform and promoting sustainable agricultural investment. The Conference noted that ICARRD (International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development) to be held in March 2006, was a platform to strengthen this exchange of dialogue and thanked FAO for bringing land issues back on the agenda as a key rural development priority.

98. Several delegates cited decentralization as a national priority in the land and agrarian reform process. Emphasis was laid *inter alia* on reinforcing access and easing of registration processes at local levels to promote security of tenure, which reinforces greater stewardship over natural resources and fosters investment and competitiveness among smallholder and commercial export producers.

99. The registration of diverse rights was acknowledged as pertinent to land and agrarian reform, while stressing customary, collective and other diverse existing land holdings.

100. The Conference recognised that land and agrarian reform is not just a technical issue, but also a social, political and economic question and of utmost national importance and concern requiring bold policies. In addition, it was emphasized that the sensitivities around land issues call for iterative processes and, most importantly, dialogue and consultation at all levels to ensure robust participation and inclusion from all stakeholders and actors concerned.

101. The Conference placed emphasis on processes in support of community-based management of land tenure arrangements such as diverse land administration processes including allocation, land sharing, land-use planning, land transfers, bequeathing, and land conflict and mediation. Land conflict was underlined as a pertinent area for further support, in the reality of decreasing land availability, increasing desertification, rising cross-border conflicts and migrations and continuing farmer-pastoral conflicts. It was noted that effective existing customary practices in local contexts should be used when possible in strengthening conflict mediation processes, as well as use of local land commissions.

102. Increasing land scarcity and fragmentation of landholdings was noted as most worrisome and promotion of balanced policies in support of land consolidation, commercial agriculture and investment while also protecting land rights and production systems of smallholders was stressed as a priority area for future focus.

New Approaches to Information Access under WAICENT (ARC/06/INF/8)

103. The presentation indicated that FAO is enhancing its role as a Knowledge Organization and highlighted the current and future role of the WAICENT Framework in developing and strengthening its policies, processes and practices in creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge.

104. The presentation further indicated that FAO has a wide range of digital repositories of data and information available online that are heavily used by its audiences, and that the Organization has developed standards in support of the effective management and dissemination of these resources.

105. The conference noted the information contained in the presentation and the efforts being made to enable FAO enhance its role as a knowledge Organization.

V. PARALLEL AND SIDE EVENTS

A.U. CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE

106. The Conference of the AU Ministers of Agriculture was convened from 31 January to 1 February 2006 in Bamako, Mali, to consider and discuss the reports that had been prepared by the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat in accordance with the request of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

107. The Conference was attended by 40 Member States.

108. The Conference reviewed the regional trend in the food security situation and noted that

although the percentage of undernourished people in Africa had decreased by two percent (from 29 to 27 percent), the absolute number increased by 20 percent (from 176 to 210 million people) over the period 1990/92 to 2000/02.

109. The Conference deliberated extensively on some strategic initiatives being undertaken at different levels to increase food production including use of irrigation, fertilizer, improved seeds, agricultural implements, research and extension, developing market infrastructure and trade, and improving agricultural financing.

110. Members States and the Regional Economic Communities were particularly urged to develop intra and inter-regional trade in food products, particularly from food surplus to deficit zones. The Conference recommended strengthening of the capacity of the African Union Commission in order to improve coordination of initiatives in the area of food security at the continental and sub-regional level.

111. The Conference reiterated the urgent need to respond to Africa's critical problems of hunger, poverty and disease by employing innovative complementary and comprehensive approaches aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and growth. The Conference expressed concern at the duplication of efforts and non-coherence in implementing the CAADP and the Sirte Declarations by the NEPAD Secretariat and AU Commission, respectively.

112. The Conference recognized the progress made by many Member States in the development of National Medium-Term Investment (NMTIPs) and Bankable Investment Project Profiles within the framework of CAADP. The Conference urged Member States to accelerate implementation of CAADP by adopting the NMTIPs and BIPPs and including them in their National Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and to ensure funding from domestic budgets, savings resulting from debt relief, and where appropriate, resources mobilized from bilateral and multilateral donors.

113. The Conference recognized the importance of water, land and fisheries resources for food production and income generation and urged Member States with irrigation potential to take advantage of the African Water Facility hosted by the African Development Bank and World Bank. Member States were encouraged to mobilize matching resources to upscale successful experiences in sustainable land management and other natural resources within the TerrAfrica initiative.

114. The Conference urged Member States to implement policies and programmes that support small scale farmers and the expansion of agribusiness activities, including contract farming for smallholder farmers.

115. The Conference called for a special attention to be given to the development of national and regional infrastructure in order to facilitate marketing of agricultural production and the expansion of trade in food markets.

116. The Conference recognized the importance of agricultural research, technology dissemination and transfer and called on regional economic communities and Member States to realign their regional and national research priorities to the Framework for Africa Agricultural Productivity (FAAP) within the broader CAADP framework with the support and collaboration of FARA.

117. The Conference recommended that:

- a. Member States should adopt the Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) System as described in the "Guidance Note" developed by the AU/NEPAD for use in Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System.
- b. crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry sectors (including research and development in these sectors) be the core areas for the allocation of the 10%.
- c. expenditure data rather than the budget data be used for the tracking system.
- d. Member States should submit, by December 31 of each year, duly completed Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System questionnaire to the African Union Commission.
- e. Member States should utilize sufficient budgetary resources for the global development of rural areas.
- f. Member States should place particular emphasis on the development of national and regional infrastructure to facilitate trade of agricultural goods.

FAO-FO/NGO/CSO REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR AFRICA

118. The 5th NGO/CSO Consultation for Africa was held from 27 to 29 January 2006 in Bamako, Mali. The consultation brought together 40 participants from 22 countries representing Civil Society Organizations, mostly Farmer Organizations, to discuss issues pertinent to the future of agriculture and rural development across the continent. The Consultation was held with participation by FAO and through the support of the Government of Italy. A CSO delegation was mandated to present the conclusions to the 24th FAO Regional Conference.

119. The discussions focused on four major areas:

- a) FAO and governments in Africa must address land and agrarian reform issues, which are basic to guaranteeing family farmers the security needed to invest in and improve their production and livelihoods. The International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, scheduled for 6 to 10 March 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, was viewed as an opportunity to highlight farmer priorities to recognise their rights to land, natural resources and plant genetic resources.
- b) the emergence of National Alliances against Hunger in Burkina Faso and Ghana, for example, demonstrate the value of mobilising civil society, government and private sector together to end hunger and malnutrition. However, these Alliances must combine effective national policy with initiatives of peoples' organizations and their priorities. Civil Society will stimulate the spread of national alliances and the creation of sub-regional alliances in Africa.
- c) Farmer Organizations and Governments must join forces to reinforce agriculture and trade at the sub-regional scale, in order to escape the domination of bilateral and international agreements, notably EPAs and the WTO. The participants called on FAO and its Members to adopt an approach to food sovereignty which will encourage

national production, foods, industries and cultural traditions. They also called for a 10-year moratorium on the introduction of GMOs, as recently agreed upon at national and local levels in many countries in both North and South, and for continued ban of “terminator” seed technologies.

- d) Finally, Civil Society Organizations expressed support for the spirit of the proposed FAO reform presented in November 2005, and in particular, the proposal to further decentralise the Organization and bring it closer to the countries to address their needs and priorities more effectively and efficiently. Participants stressed that FAO must also put into place the staff and programmes required to work constantly and closely with farmers, women, youth and other groups to make the reform a success and to respond effectively to the tremendous challenges facing Africa.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

120. None was discussed

VII. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Items to be considered for the 25th Regional Conference for Africa

121. The Chairperson of the Conference requested FAO member countries to submit to the Conference Secretariat the items that they would like to propose for discussion in the 25th ARC.

Date and Place of the Twenty-fifth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

122. The Chairperson of the Africa Group of Permanent Representatives to FAO in Rome, the Ambassador from Madagascar, H.E. Auguste Richard Paraina, reported to the Conference that following consultations among Permanent Representatives, it had been proposed that the 25th FAO Regional Conference for Africa be held in Kenya in 2008.

123. The Conference accepted by acclamation this offer, which would be conveyed to the Director-General of FAO who would decide on the date and place of the Conference, in consultation with member countries.

Adoption of the Report of the Conference

124. The conference considered and, after a few amendments, adopted its Report by acclamation.

Closure of the Conference

125. In a brief statement, the FAO Assistant Director-General (ADG) and Regional Representative for Africa, Mr. Oloche Anebi Edache, on behalf of the FAO Director-General, Mr. Jacques Diouf, praised the delegates for their hardwork, as evidenced by the wise recommendations put forth by the Conference. He recalled that the Conference was preceded by two important meetings: the 33rd session of FAO’s Conference held in Rome from 19 to 26 November 2005 in the context of the reform proposals, and the first AU meeting of Ministers of Agriculture held on 1 February 2006.

126. Referring to the discussions on the critical situation of food security in the Region, Mr. Edache reminded participants of their reaffirmation that adequate nutrition is one of the basic human rights promoted by the World Food Summit, and addressed at field level through the up-scaled Special Programme for Food Security. He also highlighted the participants' renewed commitment to concrete action to implement the CAADP. He stressed that in order to ensure that the WFS and MDG goals were attained by 2015, the food security situation in the Region would have to be enhanced through innovative measures.

127. The ADG commended participants for the in-depth discussions of the documents submitted by the FAO Secretariat covering major issues relating to the fight against hunger and poverty, and the imperatives of enhancing the competitiveness of agriculture and natural resource management. He said that from the comments of delegates and their active participation, FAO felt convinced that the agenda and deliberations of the Conference had addressed felt needs. He also welcomed the Conference's review of the *Report on FAO Activities in the Region* and their expressed appreciation for the technical assistance provided by FAO. Mr. Edache pointed to the briefing by FAO Director-General on: (i) the orientation of the future programme of work for the Region and on the progressive implementation of FAO's reforms; (ii) the global emergency issues of the time and the need for adequate preparation to contain them and especially any outbreak of the Avian Influenza that may occur; and (iii) the ongoing work to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on agriculture.

128. The ADG expressed his deep appreciation to the Delegates and observers for the interest shown, as well as their active participation during the Conference and for the quality of the debate. He assured member countries of FAO's commitment to assist them in achieving the WFS and MDG targets within available means and resources.

129. Finally, Mr. Edache expressed the sincere appreciation of FAO and all distinguished delegates and observers through the Conference Chairman, to the Government and People of Mali for the kind hospitality extended to participants and for providing excellent facilities for the Twenty-Fourth FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

130. In his closing remarks, His Excellency Mr. Ousmane Issoufi Maïga, Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Republic of Mali, expressed the satisfaction of his government and that of the Malian people for an effective and constructive Conference, which also served as an occasion for Mali to renew its support to the ideals of FAO.

131. He congratulated participants on the high quality of their debate, which enabled the conference to come up with recommendations whose implementation should offer Africa the opportunity to realize its MDG targets.

132. Referring to the themes discussed during the Conference, the Prime Minister noted that they reflected the common preoccupations in food security and the agriculture sector; more so as food security is of paramount importance in the continent. He recalled that the review and analysis of the status of African agriculture and food security during the Conference identified major challenges and effective means of addressing these. He pointed out that the Conference noted in particular that enhancing the competitiveness of agriculture is one of the essential conditions for economic growth and development in Africa; and that to bring this about would require increased production through improved productivity, reduction of production costs and an increase in the region's share of the global market, opening up of currently difficult-to-reach

production areas, and better access to electrification and other infrastructure by rural farmers and herders.

133. The Prime Minister further recalled that the plenary session examined in-depth and unanimously approved the revised proposal for FAO reform. In consequence, he exhorted member countries to pay close attention to its implementation and to pledge their support to the Director-General of FAO.

134. On behalf of the Government and people of Mali, he thanked the member countries for the trust reposed in Mali by electing it the President of the Conference and pledged that Mali will rise to this responsibility. He then congratulated Kenya for its selection as the host country for the 25th ARC in 2008. Finally, the Prime Minister congratulated the participants again for their deliberations and pertinent recommendations, and wished them a safe and pleasant return to their various countries.

135. He then declared the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Africa officially closed.

AGENDA OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE**Technical Committee Meeting**

30-31 January 2006

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

4. Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management under Globalization and Liberalization to Promote Economic Growth
5. African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme
6. Policy and Regulation of Biotechnology in Food Production
7. Fire in the Agriculture-Forestry Interface
8. Agrarian Reform, Land Policies and the Millennium Development Goals: FAO's Interventions and Lessons Learned during the Past Decade
9. New Approaches to Information Access under WAICENT

III. OTHER MATTERS**IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

10. Adoption of the Report of the Technical Committee
11. Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting

Plenary Session

2-3 February 2006

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Opening Ceremony
2. Election of the Chairperson and Vice Chairpersons and Appointment of the Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council
5. Statement by the Director General of FAO
6. Opening Address by the President of the Republic of Mali
7. Statement by the Vice-President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
8. Statement by the Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP)
9. Statement by the Representative of the Holy See

10. Statement by the Italian Cooperation

III. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

12. Matters arising from the Thirty-third Session of the FAO Conference (Rome, 19-26 November 2005)

13. Report on FAO Activities in the region. 2004-2005 with a focus on the Achievement of the World Food Summit (WFS) targets and the Millennium Development Goals

14. Report of the Technical Committee including outcomes of the Discussion Items:

- Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources under Globalization and Liberalization to promote Economic Growth
- African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme

15. Report of Conclusions of the Fifth FAO-FO/NGO/CSO Regional Consultation

III. **OTHER MATTERS**

IV. **CONCLUDING ITEMS**

16. Items to be considered for the 25th Regional Conference for Africa

17. Date and Place of the 25th Regional Conference for Africa

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

19. Closure of the Conference

APPENDIX B**TWENTY-FOURTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA****Bamako, Mali, 30 January- 3 February 2006****VINGT-QUATRIEME CONFERENCE REGIONALE POUR L'AFRIQUE****Bamako, Mali, 30 janvier – 3 février 2006****LIST OF DELEGATES**
LISTE DES DELEGUES**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**
COMITE TECHNIQUE

Chairperson: Président:	Mr. Zana Sanogo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Mali
First Vice-Chairperson: Premier Vice-Président:	Mr. Pedro Agostinho Kanga, Director of Cabinet for Cooperation and International Relations, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Angola
Second Vice-Chairperson: Deuxième Vice-Président:	Ms. Georgette Bamana Dandou, Director General of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Republic of Congo
Rapporteur:	Ms. Vangile Titi, Deputy Director-General, Department of Agriculture, South Africa
Co-Rapporteur:	Mr. Ait Amer Meziane Aomar, Director of Studies, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Algeria

PLENARY SESSION
SESSION PLENIERE

Chairperson: Président:	His Excellency Mr. Seydou Traoré, Minister for Agriculture, Mali
First Vice-Chairperson: Premier Vice-Président:	His Excellency Mr. Gilberto Buta Lutucuta, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Angola
Second Vice-Chairperson: Deuxième Vice-Président:	Her Excellency Mrs. Jeanne Dambendzet, Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Republic of Congo
First Rapporteur: Premier Rapporteur:	Her Excellency Mrs. Angela Thoko Didiza, Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, South Africa

Second Rapporteur: His Excellency Mr. Said Barkat, Minister for Agriculture and
Deuxième Rapporteur: Rural Development, Algeria

MEMBER NATIONS IN THE REGION
ETATS MEMBRES DE LA RÉGION

ALGERIA – ALGÉRIE

Délégué

Said Barkat
 Ministre
 Ministère de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 12 Bd Amirouche
 Alger
 Tel : +213-21 71 17 12

Suppléants

Abdelkrim Gheraieb
 Ambassadeur d'Algérie à Bamako
 Ambassade d'Algérie
 Bamako, Mali

Ait Amer Meziane Aomar
 Directeur d'études
 Ministère de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 12 Bd Amirouche
 Alger
 Tel: +213 21 71 17 12
 Courriel : oaitamer@hotmail.com

Bouskrine Boudaa
 Conseiller
 Ministère de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 12 Bd Amirouche
 Alger
 Tel : +213-21 71 17 12

ANGOLA

Délégué

Gilberto Buta Lutucuta
 Ministre de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural

Suppléants

Mateva Kiala Kia
 Conseiller et Représentant permanent
 adjoint

Ambassade d'Angola/Italie
 Benvenuto
 Griziotti, 72
 00166, Rome, Italie
 Tel/Fax : +39 06 393 700 08
 Courriel : nsengalu@hotmail.com
kiala2002@libero.it

Pedro Agostinho Kanga
 Directeur du cabinet de la coopération
 et des relations internationales
 Tel : +244 222 324 221

Tobias Lopes
 Directeur adjoint du Cabinet
 ministériel
 Minader
 Luanda
 Tel/Fax : +244 221 323 650
 Courriel : tobiaslopes@hotmail.com

BENIN - BÉNIN

Délégué

Joseph Ouake
 Directeur adjoint du Cabinet du
 Ministre de l'agriculture de l'élevage
 et de la pêche
 Ministère de l'agriculture, de
 l'élevage et de la pêche
 01 BP 4966 Cotonou
 Tel : +229-21-386 812
 Fax: +229-21-300 326
 Courriel: johouake@yahoo.fr

Suppléants

Madina Sephou
 Conseiller technique à l'agriculture, à
 l'alimentation et au développement
 durable
 Ministère en charge de l'agriculture
 03 BP 2900, Cotonou, Bénin
 Tel: +229 20 22 23 36
 Fax: +229 21 30 03 26
 Courriel : sephodina@yahoo.fr

Hontonnou Dossou Bata
 Directeur de l'agriculture
 01 BP 58 Porto-Novo
 Tel : +229 20 21 32 90/21300326
 Courriel : dosbata@yahoo.fr

BOTSWANA

Delegate

Micus Chimbombi
 Deputy Permanent Secretary
 Private Bag 003
 Gaborone
 Tel: +267-3950658
 Fax: +267-5975805
 E-mail: mchimbombi@gov.bw

Alternate

Keleemetse Garebamono
 Principal Agricultural Economist
 Private Bag 0031
 Gaborone

BURKINA FASO

Délégué

Bonoudaba Dabiré
 Ministre délégué chargé de
 l'agriculture
 Ouagadougou

Suppléants

André Anatole Yameogo
 Secrétaire exécutif
 Conseil national de sécurité
 alimentaire
 01 BP 4644
 Ouagadougou
 Tel : 50 31 69 52/50 30 68 86
 Courriel : secnsa@cenbtrin.bf

Boubacar Cissé
 Représentant permanent adjoint
 Via XX Sttembre 86
 00187 Rome
 Fax : +3906 327 5790
 Courriel : bker-cisse@hotmail.com

BURUNDI

Délégué

Elie Buzoya
 Ministre de l'agriculture et de
 l'élevage
 B.P. 1850 Bujumbura, Burundi
 Tel : +257 24 21 68
 Fax : +257 22 28 73
 Courriel : buzoyaelie@yahoo.fr

Suppléant

Livingstone Sindayigaya
 Conseiller principal
 Ministère de l'agriculture
 BP 1850
 Bujumbura
 Tel : +257 24 21 68
 Fax : +257 22 28 73
 Courriel : sindayigaya@yahoo.com

CAMEROON – CAMEROUN

Délégué

Clobert Tchatat
 Ministre de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 Ministère de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 Yaoundé
 Tel : +237-223 1091

Suppléants

Michael Tabong Kima
 Représentant permanent auprès de la
 FAO
 Via Siracusa, 4/6
 Rome
 Tel : +3906 44 291 285

Mme Sylvie Onana Bilonga
 Chargé d'Etudes
 Services du Premier Ministre
 Tel : +237 951 58 13/223 57 35
 Courriel : onanas@yahoo.fr

Lasconi Medi MOUNGUI
 Représentant permanent adjoint
 auprès de la FAO

Via Sracusa 4/6 Rome, Italie
 Tel : +39 06 44 03 644
 Courriel : medimoungui@yahoo.fr

Tel : + 238 26 16 902
 Fax : +238 26 16 906
 Courriel : adelaidr@ma.gov.cv

Bibani Ndouta Ndono
 Ministère de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 Tel : +237-233 1250
 Fax : +237-792 4997

Philip Moumie
 Secrétaire permanent
 Comité FAO/PAM
 Tel : + 257 221 63 22/989 43 08
 Courriel : moumiephilip@yahoo.fr

Mme. Marie Jeanine Atanga
 Sous-Directeur
 Ministère de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 Yaoundé
 Tel : +237 778 40 03
 Courriel : jeanine@yahoo.fr

CAPE VERDE – CAP-VERT

Délégué

Clarimundo Gonçalves
 Directeur général de l'agriculture, de
 la sylviculture et de l'élevage
 MAAD-DGASP
 Achanda S-Ficipe
 BP 278 Praia
 Tel : +238-26 47 539/41
 Fax : +238-26 47 543
 Courriel : dgasp@cvtelecom.cv

Suppléants

Mme Maria Goretti Santos Lima
 Conseiller au Représentant permanent
 auprès de la FAO
 Ambassade du Cap Vert en Italie
 Via G. Carducci, n° 4
 Rome, Italie
 Courriel: limagoretti@hotmail.com

Mme. Adelaide Manuella Ribeiro
 Directrice du bureau d'études,
 planification et coopération
 BP 50 Praia

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC – REPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE

Délégué

Parfait Anicet Mbay
 Ministre du développement rural
 B.P. 786 Bangui
 Tel : + 236 50 11 77

Suppléant

Michel Bissefi
 Assistant du Chargé de mission en
 agriculture
 B.P. 786 Bangui
 Tel : +236 04 77 92
 Courriel : michelbissefi@yahoo.fr

CHAD – TCHAD

Délégué

Albert Pahimi Padake
 Ministre de l'agriculture
 Tel : +235 52 65 66

Suppléant

Outhman Issa Ibet
 Directeur général adjoint
 Production agricole et formation
 Tel : +235 52 45 11/52 45 38

CONGO

Délégué

Mme. Jeanne Dambendzet
 Ministre de l'agriculture, de l'élevage
 et de la pêche
 BP 2453 Brazzaville
 Courriel : minisagriculture@yahoo.fr

Suppléants

Appolinaire Ngouembé
 Directeur général de la pêche et de
 l'agriculture
 29 rue Thomas Sankara
 BP 1650 Brazzaville
 Mikalon II Brazzaville

Tel : +242 558 08 22/81 10 97
 Courriel : ngouembe@yahoo.fr

Mme. Georgette Bamana Dandou
 Directrice générale de l'agriculture
 Case N°113, Sonaco Moukando
 BP 2453 Brazzaville
 Tel : +242 531 28 94

Valentin Okombo-Ngassaki
 Directeur général de l'élevage
 Coordonnateur national du Projet
 PACE Congo
 BP 83 Brazzaville
 131 Rue Yaba Talangai
 Brazzaville
 Tel : +242 661 18 81/548 49 44
 Courriel : valentin_okombo@yahoo.fr

Joseph Ouamba
 Inspecteur des services administratifs
 et financiers
 Tel : +242 668 94 57
 166 rue Yaba Talangai
 Brazzaville

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Délégué

Alphonse Douaty
 Ministre de la production animale et
 des ressources halieutiques
 B.P. V.82 Abidjan
 Tel : +225 20 22 99 20
 Fax : + 225 20 21 34 23

Suppléants

Gbaka Richard Zady
 Ambassadeur et Représentant
 permanent auprès de la FAO
 Via G. Saliceto 8
 00161 Rome
 Tel : +39 06 44 231 129

Marcel Koffi-Koumi
 Directeur de la planification et des
 programmes
 Ministère de la production animale et
 des ressources halieutiques
 BP 332 Cidex 1 Abidjan 28

BP V 185 Abidjan
 Tel : +225 20 21 88 75
 Fax : +225 20 21 94 62
 Courriel : makokoumi@aviso.ci

Mory Bamba
 Chargé de mission
 Ministère de la production animale et
 des ressources halieutiques
 BP V.82 Abidjan

Aboubakar Bakayoko
 Représentant permanent adjoint
 Via G. Saliceto 8
 00161 Rome, Italie

Apia Edmond N'Dri
 Directeur des productions alimentaires
 et de la diversification
 Ministère de l'agriculture
 B.P. V. 84 Abidjan
 Tel : +225 20 22 24 81
 Courriel : daq@orciso.ci

Alassane Zié Diamouténé
 Directeur de Cabinet
 BP. V 82 Abidjan
 Tel : +225 20 22 813
 Fax : + 225 20 21 26 10
 Courriel : diamoutene@hotmail.com

EGYPT – EGYPTE

Delegate

Mostafa Gendy
 Ambassadeur d'Egypte au Mali
 Ambassade d'Egypte au Mali
 Bamako

Alternate

Karim Abdul-Eneim
 Consul, Attaché diplomatique
 Ambassade d'Egypte au Mali

ETHIOPIA – ÉTHIOPIE

Delegate

Abera Deressa
 State Minister for Agricultural
 Development Sector

GABON

Délégué

Faustin Boukoubi
Ministre de l'agriculture, de l'élevage
et du développement rural
Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'élevage
et du développement rural
Tel : +241 923 22 42

Suppléants

Jean Pierre Leguama
Aide de Camp
Tel : +241 923 22 42

Aristide Ongone Obame
Secrétaire général
Commission FAO
BP 19246
Libreville

THE GAMBIA – GAMBIE

Delegate

Yankuba Touray
Secretary of State for Agriculture
Department of State for Agriculture
(DOSA)
The Quadrangle
Banjul
Cel: + 229 996 02 34

Alternates

Suruwa Bahkr Wawa Jaitey
Permanent Secretary
Department of State for Agriculture
Tel: +220 420 23 22/420 11 87
Cell: + 220 996 30 40
E-mail: sbwawajaitey@yahoo.com

Alagie Kebbeh
Director
114 Brunubii Estates
NIACOFAG
Tel: +220 991 31 08
E-mail: alagiekebbeh@hotmail.com

GHANA

Delegate

Ernest A. Debrah
Minister for Food and Agriculture
Ministry of Food and Agriculture
PO Box MB37
Accra
Tel : +233-21-663036

Alternates

Kofi Dsane-Selby
Ambassador of Ghana and Permanent
Representative to FAO
Embassy of Ghana
Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 86217191
E-mail: ghembassy@rdn.it

Lambert Abusah
Assistant Director
Ministry of Food and Agriculture
PO Box MB37 Accra
Tel: +233-21-668 246/668 245
Fax: +233 244 225 222
E-mail: doeabusah@yahoo.com

Kweku Nicol
Alternate Permanent Representative
Embassy of Ghana
Rome
Tel: +39 06 86217191
E-mail: ghembassy@rdn.it

William G.M. Brandful
Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of Ghana
Bamako, Mali
Tel : +223 229 60 83/229 09 38
E-mail : dhm.ghana@afribone.net.ml

GUINEA – GUINÉE CONAKRY

Délégué

Jean Paul Sarr
Ministre de l'agriculture, de l'élevage,
des eaux et forêts
B.P. 576 Conakry
Tel : +224 210046

Suppléants

Mohamed Dioumessi
 Directeur général
 BCEPA/MAEEF
 Ministère de l'agriculture, de
 l'élevage, des eaux et forêts
 B.P. 576
 Conakry
 Tel : +224 43 10 35/224 29 87 23
 Courriel : mbdioumessi2000@yahoo.fr

Abdoul Karim Camara
 Directeur national de l'agriculture
 Ministère de l'agriculture, de
 l'élevage des eaux et forêts
 République de Guinée
 Tel : 21 78 00/41 42 60
 Courriel : nup@afribone.net.gn

Sékou Béavogui
 Directeur général
 Institut de recherche agronomique
 de Guinée
 B.P. 1523 Conakry
 Boulevard du Commerce
 Conakry
 Tel : +224 54 31 34
 Fax : + 224 43 55 80
 Courriel : beaoguissekou@yahoo.fr

GUINEA BISSAU – GUINÉE BISSAU

Délégué

Sola N'Quilin Nabitchita
 Ministre de l'agriculture et du
 développement rural
 BP 71 Bissau
 Tel : +245 72 034 16

Suppléant

Marcelino Martins
 Directeur Général de l'agriculture
 BP 71 Bissau
 Tel : +245 661 79 60/20 30 28
 Fax : +245 22 24 83
 Courriel : paidr@telecom.gw

KENYA

Delegate

Kipruto Kirwa
 Minister for Agriculture
 Ministry of Agriculture
 PO Box 30028-00100
 Nairobi

Alternates

Ms. Ann Belinda Nyikuli
 Ambassador of Kenya in Italy and
 Permanent Representative to FAO
 Embassy of Kenya
 Via D'Umenisimo 16
 Rome, Italy

Joseph Mburu
 Agriculture attaché
 Embassy of Kenya
 Rome

Alfred Mwangi Maina
 Senior Conservator
 Forestry Department
 Ministry of Environment and Natural
 Resources

Chagemu Kedera
 Managing Director of Kenya Plant
 and Health Inspectorate Services
 (KEPHIS)
 PO Box 13794 Nairobi

Martin Ngundo Isika
 Senior Assistant
 Director of Livestock Production
 Department of Livestock Production
 and Fisheries Development
 Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
 P.O. Box 34188, Code 00100
 Nairobi
 Tel: + 254 020 272 82 54
 E-mail: dlp@nalep.co.ke

Bernard Ayugu Karani
 Senior Deputy Director
 Fisheries Department
 Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
 PO Box 58167

Nairobi
Tel: 020 3743699/3742320
E-mail: samaki@sawanet.com

Ariel Karugah
Deputy Director, Veterinary Services
Veterinary Res. Labs
Ministry of Agriculture
Nairobi
P.O. Kangomi, Nairobi
Tel: +254 631 285
E-mail: karugah@yahoo.com

Wilson Songa
Secretary of Agriculture
Ministry of Agriculture
PO Box 30028-00100
Nairobi

Anthony Mwangi Maina
Deputy CCF
Forest Department
Box 30513 Nairobi
E-mail : mainaan2000@yahoo.com

LESOTHO

Delegate

Molise Paul Tšeole
Assistant Minister of Agriculture and
Food Security
P.O. Box 24
Tel: 233 14 610

Alternates

Molopo Mokorosi
Senior Economic Planner
Head, Ministerial Monitoring and
Evaluation
Department of Planning and Policy
Analysis
Ministry of Agriculture
Box 24 Maseru
Tel: +266-223 16391
Fax: +266 223 10186

Ms. Veronica Lethusang Hanyane
Director
Ministry of Agriculture
PO Box 24 Maseru

Tel: +266 223 14 610
Fax: +266 22 310 356

Tsotesi Makong
First Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 1387
Maseru 100
Tel: +266 27 000 206

Mamosala Semakaleng Shale
First Secretary
Embassy of Lesotho in Italy
Via Serchio 8
Rome
Tel: +39 06 854 24 96
E-mail: lesothoembassy.rome@tin.it

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

Delegate

Abu Baker Al-Mansouri
Inspector General (Minister) of
Agriculture and Animal Wealth and
Fishery Sector
Tripoli

Alternates

Abdalla Zayed
Permanent Representative of Libya
to FAO
Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 335 180 7139
E-mail: aazaied@ltnet.net

Adel Elhamassi
Third Secretary
Libyan Representation to FAO
Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 335 180 7139
E-mail: elhamassi2001@yahoo.com

MADAGASCAR

Délégué

Auguste Richard Paraina
Ambassadeur de Madagascar auprès
de la FAO
Via Riccardo Zandonai 84/A
00194 Rome

Italie
 Tel : +39 06 363 077 97/294 306
 Courriel : ambamada@hotmail.com

Suppléant

Monja
 Conseiller Représentant permanent
 adjoint auprès de la FAO
 Via Riccardo Zandonaci 84 :A
 00194 Rome
 Italie
 Tel : +39 06 363 077 97/329 43 06
 Courriel : ambamo@hotmail.com

MALAWI

Delegate

Henry Mumba
 Minister of Agriculture
 PO Box 30134
 Lilongwe 3
 Tel: +265 17 89 218

Alternates

Brebner Donald Sambo Mhango
 Deputy Director of Agriculture and
 Food Security
 P.O. Box 30134, Lilongwe
 Tel: +265 17 89189/ 789 21 8
 E-mail: mhangob@yahoo.com

Ms. Erica Maganga
 Programme Manager
 P/Bag 379, Chichiri, Bwaurure
 Ministry of Agriculture
 Tel: + 265 16 25 116
 E-mail: ship@globenw.net

MALI

Délégué

Seydou Traoré
 Ministre de l'agriculture
 Ministère de l'agriculture
 Rue Mohamed V
 Bamako

Suppléants

Ibrahim Bocar Daga
 Ambassadeur du Mali en Italie

Représentant permanent auprès de la
 FAO

Via Antonio Bosio 2, 00161
 Rome, Italie

Tel : +39 06 44 25 40 68

Fax : +39 06 44 25 40 29

Courriel : amb.malirome@tiscalinet.it

Modibo Mahamane Touré
 Deuxième Conseiller

Représentant permanent adjoint du
 Mali auprès de la FAO

Via Cassia 1020, 00161 Rome
 Italie

Tel : +39 06 44 25 40 68

Fax: + 39 06 44 25 40 69

Courriel : modimah@yahoo.com

Mme. Lansry Nana Yaya Haidara
 Commissaire sécurité alimentaire

Tel : +223 229 15 36

Courriel : csa@cefib.com

Zana Sanogo

Secrétaire général

Ministère de l'agriculture

BP 61, Bamako

Tel : 223 92 49/223 10 23

Courriel : zana_sanogo@yahoo.fr

Mahamet Keïta

Conseiller technique

Ministère de l'élevage et de la
 pêche

Tel : +223 678 48 45

Courriel : keitamahamet@yahoo.fr

Mamadou Kané

Directeur national des services
 vétérinaires (DNSV)

03 BP 220 Bamako

Courriel : dnsv.dir@cefib.com

Seydou Idrissa

Directeur national de l'agriculture
 Direction nationale de l'agriculture
 Bamako

Tel : +223 223 336

Courriel : dna@dna.gov.ml

Aboumédiane Touré
 Coordinateur des réformes
 institutionnelles
 Ministère de l'agriculture
 BP 661 Bamako
 Tel : +223 223 5600
 Courriel : carimdr@afribone.netaml

Abdoulaye Kouyaté
 Directeur régional Génie rural du
 district de Bamako
 Tel : +223 648 25 55
 Fax : +223 220 42 18

Saidou Tembely
 Directeur Général
 Laboratoire central vétérinaire
 BP 2295 Bamako
 Tel : +223 224 33 44/607 50 46
 Courriel : stembeley@yahoo.com

Francis Keita
 Chef de Département
 BP E5589
 Bamako
 Tel : +223 221 40 73

Mamadou Coulibaly
 CCAOWCO
 Développement rural
 Kayes Khasso
 Tel : +223 252 12 38

Diallo Diallo
 MDRE
 Ségou
 Tel : +223 320 549

Aissa A. Maiga Diop
 Chef Projet Telefood
 Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire
 Présidence de la République
 CSA
 Tel : +223 686 33 33

Brahima Sangaré
 Chef
 Département Planification – Suivi
 Commissariat Sécurité alimentaire
 s/c Présidence de la République

Bamako
 Tel : +223 229 15 36
 Courriel : Bsangare@cefib.com

Alassane Boucana
 Conseiller technique
 Ministère de l'environnement et de
 l'assainissement
 Tel : +223 229 51 65
 Courriel : albonmaiga@yahoo.fr

Yaya Malle
 FENATRA
 Rue Mohamed V
 Sise Ministère de l'agriculture
 Tel : +223 222 51 65
 Courriel : fenatramali@yahoo.fr

Demba Kébé
 Conseiller technique
 Ministère de l'agriculture
 BP 61 Bamako
 Tel : +223 222 34 36
 Courriel : demba.kebe@ier.ml

Fousseyni Traoré
 Secrétaire général
 Assemblée permanente des chambres
 d'agriculture du Mali (APCAM)
 Tel : +223 221 8725
 Fax : +223 221 8737
 Courriel : apcam@apcam.org

Bakary Togola
 Président
 APCAM
 Tel : +223 221 8725
 Courriel: apcam@apcam.org

Saidou Tembely
 Directeur général
 Laboratoire central vétérinaire
 BP 2295 Bamako
 Tel : +223 224 33 44/607 50 46
 Courriel : stembeley@yahoo.com

Diarra Fousseyni
 Conseiller technique
 Ministère de l'agriculture
 Bamako

Tel : +223 222 29 79
 Courriel : fousseynid2000@yahoo.fr

Bino Témé
 Directeur Général
 Institut d'économie rurale (IER)
 B. P. 258 Bamako, Mali
 Tel : +223 2220116/2223775
 Courriel : bino.teme@ier.ml

Aliou Korcoss
 Agent de la délégation générale à
 l'intégration africaine (DGIA)
 Délégation générale à l'intégration
 africaine, Bamako
 Tel/Fax : +223 229 11 22/229 10
 07/672 26 76
 Courriel : korcas@yahoo.fr

MAURITANIA – MAURITANIE

Délégué

Sylly Gandega
 Ministre du développement rural et de
 l'environnement - MDRE
 Nouackchott

Suppléants

Yahya Ngam
 Ambassadeur de Mauritanie en Italie
 Rome, Italie
 Tel : +39 06 85351530/85351441
 Courriel : yahyangam@yahoo.fr

Mohamed Yahya Ould Mohamed
 Mahmoud
 Chargé de mission au Ministère du
 développement rural et de
 l'environnement

Moma Ould Hamalla
 Directeur de l'agriculture
 Ministère du développement rural et
 de l'environnement - MDRE

MOROCCO – MAROC

Délégué

Mohamed Miloughmane
 Directeur des aménagements fonciers
 Ministère de l'agriculture, du
 développement rural et des pêches
 maritimes
 Tel : +212 37 29 99 45
 Courriel :
milourhm@agr.madrpm.gov.ma

Suppléant

Mohamed Bouaam
 Chargé des affaires de la division de
 la coopération
 Ministère de l'agriculture, du
 développement rural et des pêches
 maritimes
 BP 607, Rabat-Chellah
 Tel : +212 37 76 48 91
 Fax : +212 377 685 48
 Email : medbouam@yahoo.fr

MOZAMBIQUE

Delegate

Tomás Frederico Mandlate
 Minister of Agriculture
 Maputo
 Praça dos Heróis
 1406-4th Floor
 Tel: +258 214 60 360

Alternates

Ms. Gertrudes Simiao Muchave
 International Cooperation Officer
 Praca dos Heros/1406 – 3rd floor
 Maputo
 Tel: +258 214 60 360
 E-mail: gmuchave@map.gov.mz

Francisco Elias Paulo Cigarro
 Permanent Representative to FAO
 Via Filippo Corridoni
 N°14 6 Roma
 Tel: +39 06 455 199
 E-mail: fcigarro@tiscali.it

NAMIBIA – NAMIBIE

Delegate

Nicky Iyambo

Minister for Agriculture,
Water and Forestry - MAWF
Windhoek

Tel: +234-9 080 3700 895

Alternates

Desiderius R. Tshikesho
Under-Secretary Department of
Agriculture
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and
Forestry
Private Bag 13184
Windhoek
Tel: +264 61 208 76 94
Fax: +264 61 208 77 87
E-mail: tshikeshod@mawrd.gov.na

S.A. Aliyu
Special Assistant to the Minister
Federal Ministry of Agriculture &
Rural Development
Nigeria – Abuja
Tel: +234-9 080 3311 6597

Mohamed Ila Lawal
Deputy Director
Federal Ministry of Agriculture &
Rural Development
Nigeria – Abuja
Tel: +234-9 080 3314 1872
E-mail: nsgrfma@hotmail.com

Louisa N. Shiwalo
Chief Co-op Officer
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and
Forestry
Private Bag 13184
Windhoek
Tel: +264 061 208 76 17
Fax: +264 61 208 75 65
E-mail: shiwalol@mwrld.gov.na

Lombin Ganyir
Permanent Representative of Nigeria
to FAO, Rome
Embassy of Nigeria,
Via Cassiodoro 2/C Rome
Tel: +39 06 68 77 840
E-mail: nigeriapermrep@ermail.com

NIGERIA

Delegate

Mallam Adamu Bello
Federal Minister of Agriculture &
Rural Development
Area II, Garki, Abuja
Tel: +234-9 080 331 16 597

SENEGAL - SÉNÉGAL

Délégué

Omar Top
Secrétaire général du Ministère de
l'agriculture et de l'hydraulique
Tel : +221 849 71 91

Alternates

Titus O. Okolo
Deputy Director
National Seed Service,
Federal Ministry of Agriculture &
Rural Development
Abuja
Tel: +234-9 080 441 153 54
E-mail: tookolo@yahoo.com

Suppléants

Mamadou Faye
Conseiller technique du Ministre de
l'agriculture
Ministère de l'agriculture
Building administratif
3^{ème} étage, pièce No. 314
Tel : +221 822 51 57
Courriel : mfaye@yahoo.fr

Bello Sule
Director
Federal Ministry of Agriculture &
Rural Development
Abuja

Moussa Bocar Ly
Ministre Conseiller
Représentant permanent adjoint
auprès de la FAO
66 via Giulia
00186 Rome, Italie
Tel : +39 06 682 19 294

Courriel : ambassenequiri@yahoo.fr

Mamadou Aliou Diallo
 Directeur de l'agriculture
 14, Avenue Lamine Guèye
 B.P. 486
 Tel : +221 822 39 31
 Courriel : pdasi@sentoo.sn

SIERRA LEONE

Delegate

Francis F. Kutubu Ngebeh
 Deputy Minister
 Ministry of Agriculture and Food
 Security
 Tel: +23 22 235 471
 Fax: +232 22 23 047
 Email: francis_senehun@yahoo.com

Alternate

Sahr N. Fomba
 Chief Research Officer
 Rice Research Station, Rokupr
 National Agricultural Research
 Coordinating Council
 PMB 736
 Freetown
 Tel: +232-22 -226 074/223 282
 E-mail: rokupr@sierratel.sl

SOUTH AFRICA – AFRIQUE DU SUD

Delegate

Angela Thoko Didiza
 Minister for Agriculture and Land
 Affairs
 Ministry of Agriculture and Land
 Affairs
 Private Bag X250, Pretoria, 0001
 Tel: +27 12 319 60 00
 E-mail: minister@nda.agric.za

Alternates

Mbongwa Masiphula
 Director General
 Department of Agriculture
 Private bag X250
 Pretoria 0001
 Tel: +27 12 319 72 11/325 73 94

E-mail: DG@nda.agric.za

Vangile Titi
 Deputy Director General
 Department of Agriculture
 20 Beatrix Street
 Acardia, Pretoria 0001
 Tel: +27 12 319 1290
 Fax: +27 12 325 1042
 E-mail: Ddgpme@nda.agric.za

Shadrack Ralekeno Moephuli
 Assistant Director-General
 Agricultural Production
 Department of Agriculture
 Private Bag X973
 Pretoria, 0001
 Tel: +27 12 349 6347
 E-mail: ADGAP@nda.agric.za

Lenin M. Shope
 Permanent Representative to Rome
 South African Embassy
 Via Tanaro 14, Rome 00198
 Italy
 Tel: +39 335 635 3883
 Fax: +39 06 8525 4301
 E-mail: sae2@sudafrica.it

Margaret Mohapi
 Agricultural Attaché
 South African Embassy in Italy
 Via Tanaro, 14
 00198 Rome
 Tel: +39 06 8525 4239
 Fax: +39 06 8525 4224
 E-mail: agri.rome@flashnet.it

Bongeka Mdleleni
 Personal Assistant to the Director
 General
 Private Bag X250
 Pretoria 0001
 Tel: +27 12 319 6682
 Fax: +27 12 325 7394
 E-mail: secdg@nda.agri.za

Thapsana Molepo
 Manager
 Multilaterals Department of Agric

20 Beatrix Street Arcadia
 Pretoria
 Tel: + 27 12 319 6621
 Fax: + 27 12 325 1042
 E-mail: thapsana@nda.agric.za

Alfred Kgasi
 Private Bag X07
 Onderstepoort 0110
 Tel: +27 12 522 1591
 E-mail: Alfred@obpvaccines.co.za

Pandelani Mathoma
 Ambassadeur
 Ambassade de l'Afrique du Sud
 Bâtiment Diarra
 ACI-2000 Hamdallaye
 Bamako, Mali
 Tel : +223 229 2925
 Fax : +223 229 2926
 E-mail: bamako@foreign.gov.za

Nare Mabuela
 Communication Officer
 20 Beatrix Street
 Arcadia
 Pretoria
 Tel: +2712 319 7929/083 369 60
 45/012 323 25 16
 E-mail: nareM@nda.agric.za

Dora Ndaba
 Vice Chairperson
 NAMC
 229 Malborough Road
 Lombardy East
 Johannesburg
 Tel: +27 011 443 0232

Linda Makulen
 Onderstepoort Biological
 1011 Outsout Pan Produits
 Ondestepoort
 E-mail: Linda@dopvaccines.co.za

SUDAN – SOUDAN

Delegate

Anne Itto
 State Minister for Agriculture

Federal ministry of Agriculture and
 Forestry
 Khartoum

Alternates

Salim Salih
 Head
 Department of International Cap
 Khartoum
 Tel: 77 21 210

Mohammed Hassan Nur
 Director General
 Ministry of Animal Resources &
 Fisheries
 P.O. Box 293 Khartoum
 Tel: 01 834 65 996
 Fax: 01834 74 961
 E-mail: hassanurnur@hotmail.com

Salih Ibrahim Salih
 Head department of International
 Cooperation
 P.O. Box 285, Khartoum, Sudan
 Tel: 77 21 21

SWAZILAND – SWAZILAND

Delegate

Mtiti Wilson Fakudze
 Minister of agriculture and
 cooperatives
 Minister of Agriculture and food
 cooperatives
 P.O. Box 162 Mbabane
 Tel: +268 40 42 745/ 268 404 17 33
 E-mail: fakudzm@gov.sz

Alternate

Patrick King Lukhele
 Director of Agriculture
 Ministry of Agriculture and
 Cooperatives
 PO Box 162 Mbabane
 Tel: +268-404 94 14
 Fax: +228-404 17 33
 E-mail: lukhelepa@gov.sz

TANZANIA – TANZANIE

Delegate

Christopher K. Chiza
Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food
Security and Cooperatives
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security
and Cooperatives
P.O. Box 9192
Dar Es Salaam

Alternates

C. Kajolo
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security
and Cooperatives
PO Box 9192
Dar-es-Salaam
Tel: +255-22-286 2065/286 2075

Costa Ricky Mahalu
Ambassador & Permanent
Representative
Embassy of the UR of Tanzania
Viale Cortina D'Ampezzo 185
00135

Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 334 85 820
Fax: +3906 334 85 828
E-mail: info@embassyoftanzania.it

Nicodemus Jacob Mollel
Principal Livestock Officer
Ministry of Livestock
Box 30 Ngerengere
Tel : +255 023 26 20 50 505/ 0748 59
57 31
Dodoma

Perpetua Hingi
Agricultural Attaché
Embassy of Tanzania in Italy
Viale Cortina D'Ampezzo
185 00135 Rome
Tel: +39 06 334 85 820/334 85 828
E-mail: mingi@yahoo.co.uk

Msafiri Wilberi Marwa
2nd Secretary
Tanzania Embassy
P.O. Box 1077, Addis Ababa
E-mail: marwajr@yahoo.com

TOGO**Délégué**

Kondi Charles Agba
Ministre d'Etat
Ministre de l'agriculture, de l'élevage
et de la pêche
Ministère de l'agriculture, de
l'élevage et de la pêche
B.P. 385 Lomé
Tel : +228 220 07 07
Fax : +228 221 73 45

Suppléant

Kwami Adri
Conseiller technique
Ministère de l'agriculture, de
l'élevage et de la pêche
BP 385 Lomé
Tel : +228 221 03 05/220 07 07
Fax : +228 221-73-45
Courriel : nicoadriother@yahoo.fr

TUNISIA – TUNISIE**Délégué**

Cheour Farhat
Ambassadeur de la Tunisie au Mali
Bamako

Suppléant

Mohamed Hedi Litifi
Secrétaire des affaires étrangères
Ambassade de Tunisie à Bamako
Tel : +223 224 17 56

UGANDA – OUGANDA**Delegate**

Ms. Mary Mugenyi
Minister of State, Animal Industry
Ministry of Agriculture, Animal
Industry and Fisheries
P.O. Box 102 Entebbe
Email: mrmugenyi@hotmail.com

Alternates

Robert Sabiiti
First Secretary, Agriculture attaché
Uganda Embassy in Italy

Lungotevere Dei Mellini
44, Scala Valadier. Int.
B. 00193, Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 322 52 20
E-mail: rsabiiti@yahoo.com

Rhoda Peace Tumuslime
Commissioner Planning
Ministry of Agriculture Animal
Industry and Fisheries
Box 102 Entebbe
Tel: +256 41 256
Fax: +256 320 722
Email: rtumusiime@apdmaif.or.ug

ZAMBIA – ZAMBIE

Delegate

Ms. Lucy M. Mungoma
Ambassador and Permanent
Representative to FAO
Embassy of Zambia in Italy
Via Ennio Quirino
Visconti 8 00193
Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 36 08 88 24

ZIMBABWE

Delegate

Ms. Mary Margaret Muchada
Ambassador
Via Virgilio 8
000193, Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 683 083 24 /+39 06
683 082 82
E-mail: muchada@msu.com

Alternates

V.T. Mutiro
Chief Agricultural Economist
Ministry of Agriculture
Harare

Ms. Janet F. Bitegeko
Director of Policy and Planning
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security
and Cooperatives
P.O. Box 9192
Tel: +255 22 286 20 74/ 286 44 60
E-mail: dpp@kilimo.gv.tz

Muchenje Mike Nyere
Minister Counsellor
Via Virgilio 8
000193, Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 683 08 324/683 08 282
E-mail: zimbabwe-wolit@tiscalinet.it

OBSERVERS FROM MEMBER NATIONS NOT SERVICED IN THE REGION **OBSERVATEURS DES ETATS MEMBRES QUI NE SONT PAS DE LA REGION**

FRANCE

Charles Millon
Représentant permanent de la France auprès
de la FAO
Rome, Italie

Guillaume Mongellaz
Chargé de mission
Ambassade de France au Mali
Bamako
Mali

ITALY - ITALIE

Agostino Mathis
Ambassadeur d'Italie au Mali
Tel : +221 8220076
Courriel : ambasciata.dakar@esteri.it

Loriana Dembele Riccarelli
Consul d'Italie au Mali
Résidence Consulat Italie
Moguanbougou Plateau
Avenue Al Qoods
Bamako

Tel : +223 221 85 74/675 11 46
 Courriel : Loriana@cefib.com

Marco Platzer
 Attaché de Coopération
 Ambassade d'Italie à Dakar
 Tel : +221 822 00 76
 Courriel: marco.plateau@esteri.it

Francesco Cantone
 Coopération italienne
 Piazzale Farnesina 1
 Rome
 Tel : +39 06 369 12 995

Courriel : francesco.cantone@esteri.it

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA -
 ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE**

Willem Brakel
 Alternate Permanent Representative to UN
 Agencies
 Via Veneto 1191
 00187 Rome
 Tel: +39 06 4674 3506
 E-mail: brakel.wh@state.gov

OTHER OBSERVERS
AUTRES OBSERVATEURS

HOLY SEE - SAINT-SIÈGE

Monseigneur Renato Volante
 Observateur permanent du Saint-Siège
 auprès de la FAO
 Mission d'observation du Saint-Siège
 auprès de la FAO
 Palazzo S. Callisto-
 Cité du Vatican

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES
REPRÉSENTANTS DES NATIONS UNIES ET DES INSTITUTIONS SPECIALISÉES

**INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR
 AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
 (IFAD)**

Cyril Enweze
 Vice President
 Via del Serafico, 107
 00142 Rome, Italy
 Tel: +39 0654592604
 Fax: +39 065043463
 E-mail: c.enweze@ifad.org

Hamed Haidara
 Country Programme Manager
 Africa Division

Via del Serafico, 107
 00142 Rome, Italy
 Tel: +39 0654592604
 Fax: +39 065043463
 E-mail: h.haidara@ifad.org

Nadine Grossa
 Country Programme Manager
 Via del Serafico, 107
 00142 Rome, Italy
 Tel: + 39 0654593125
 E-mail: n.gbossa@ifad.org

**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS
UNIES POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT
INDUSTRIEL (ONUDI)**

Massata Cissé
Représentant Résident de l'ONUDI pour le
Burkina Faso, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Mali et le
Niger
Courriel : m.cisse@unido.org

Ahmed Rafik Ben Brahim
Directeur Service des agro-industries et de
l'appui sectoriel
Centre international de Vienne
BP 300 A-1400, Vienne
Autriche
Tel : +43 1 260 26-5109
Fax : +431 260 26 6849
Courriel : abenbrahim@unido.org

Fatou Haidara
Directrice du Bureau Afrique de l'ONUDI
Centre international de Vienne
BP 300
A-1400
Vienne
Tel : +43 1 222 02 61
Courriel : f.haidara@unido.org

**ORGANISATION
MÉTÉOROLOGIQUE MONDIALE
(OMM)**

Mohamed Boulama
Représentant bureau sous-régional pour
l'Afrique du Nord, du Centre et de l'Ouest
UN House
Central Area Garki
Abuja, Nigeria
Tel : + 234 9 461 6280

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME (UNDP)**

Moctar Hanne
Humanitarian Affairs Officer

PNUD/OCHA
Bamako, Mali
Tel: +223 222-01-81
E-mail: moctar.hanne@undp.org
hanne@un.org

**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA)**

Josué Dioné
Director, Sustainable Development
Division
UN Economic Commission for Africa
(UNECA)
P.O. Box 3001, Addis Ababa
Ethiopie
Tel: +251 11 551 0350
Fax: + 251 11 551 0406
E-mail: jdione@uneca.org

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

Sheila Sisulu
Deputy Executive Director
Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70
00148 Rome – Italy
Tel: +39 06 65132041/2005
Fax: +39 06 65132839
E-mail: Sheila.sisulu@wfp.org

Haladou Salha (link with title/address)
Senior Adviser for Africa
Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70
00148 Rome – Italy
Tel: +39 06 65132301
Fax: +39 06 65132301
E-mail: haladou.salha@wfp.org

WORLD BANK

Moctar Touré
1818 H St Nw
Washington DC USA
Tel: +1 202 473 9008

OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
OBSERVATEURS DES ORGANISATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES

**ARAB AUTHORITY FOR
AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT (AAID)**

Amir A. Khalil
Advisor International Co-operation
Khartoum
Sudan
Tel: +249 912 390 242
Fax: +249 183 764 672
E-mail: amir@abdablakhalil.com

AFRICAN UNION (AU)

Rosebud Kurwijila
Commissioner for Rural Economy and
Agriculture
AU Commission Commissioner
Rural Economy and Agriculture
P. O. Box 3243
Tel: +251 55 17 700
Fax: +251 55 17 844
Website: www.africa-union.org

Ahmadu Babagana
Director
Department of Rural Economy and
Agriculture
PO Box 3243
Addis Ababa
Tel: +251 55 17 700
Fax: +251 55 17 844

Edson Mpyisi
Head of Division
Food Security and Agriculture
PO Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 55 17 700
Fax: +251 55 17 844

Brave Rona Ndisale
Head of Division
Rural Economy and Agriculture
PO Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Tel: +251 11 551 6062
Fax: +251 11 551 7700
E-mail: ndisaleB@africa-union.org

Ayalew Awoke
AU Commission –Protocol
PO Box 3243
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

**AFRICAN UNION/INERAFRICAIN
BUREAU FOR ANIMAL RESEARCH
(AU/IBAR)**

Modibo Traoré
Directeur of IBAR
Nairobi – Kenya
Courriel : modibo.traore@au-ibar.org

**COMITE PERMANENT INTER-ETAT
DE LUTTE CONTRE LA
SECHERESSE DANS LE SAHEL
(CILSS)**

Moustapha Amadou
Directeur Général
INSAH/CILSS
B.P. 1530
Bamako, Mali
Tel : +223 222 23 37/674 41 20
Courriel : dginsah@insah.org

Khassoum Dièye
Responsable GRN/SP
BP 1530
Avenue Nelson Mandela
Badala Gougou
Bamako, Mali
Tel : +223-2234067
Fax : +223-922-5980
Courriel : dieye@agrosoc.insah.org

Boubacar Diallo
Food Security coordinator
BP 1530 Bamako
Tel: +223 222 80 86
Courriel : bdiallo@insah.org

Sadio Traoré
Spécialiste en population
B.P. 1530, Bamako, Mali
Tel : +223 222 80 86
Courriel : straore@cerpod.insah.org

COMMISSION UEMOA

Mouslim A. Maïga
Coordonnateur du PRSA
01 BP 543 Ouagadougou 01
Burkina Faso
Courriel : mmaiga@uemoa.int

COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA)

Cris Muyunda
Senior Agriculture Advisor
Box 30051
Lusuka, Zambia
Tel: +260 1 22 97 25
E-mail: cmuyunda@comesa.int

Bruce Mukunda
SPS/Livestock Expert
Box 30051
Lusuka, Zambia
Tel: +260 1 22 97 25/32
E-mail: bmukanda@comesa.int

COMMUNAUTE DES ÉTATS SAHELO-SAHARIENS (CEN-SAD)

Nuri Hassan
CEN-SAD Food Security Advisor
PO Box 81824
Tripoli
Tel: +21821 333 2347/214440076
E-mail: nuribader@maktoob.com

COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE DES ÉTATS DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE (CEEAC)

Joel Béassem
Coordinateur PRSA et Environnement
BP 2112
Libreville, Gabon

Tel : 241 444 731
Fax : 241 444 732
Courriel : joel_beassem@yahoo.fr

COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET MONÉTAIRE DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE (CEMAC)

Isaias Obama Angwe
Directeur de l'agriculture
B.P. 969
Bangui, République Centrafricaine
Tel : + 236 61 21 35
Courriel : isaiasangue@yahoo.fr

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

Yamar Mbodj
NEPAD/Agriculture Advisor
BP 60, Yacubu Gowon Crescent, Abuja
Tel: +234- 314 76 36
Email: mbodjyamar@yahoo.fr

Qwelibo Subah
Principal Programme Officer/Agriculture
BP 60, Yacubu Gowon Crescent, Abuja
Tel: +234- 314 76 36
Email: jqsubah@yahoo.fr

ICRISAT MALI

Bonny Ntaré
Représentant résident
BP 320 Bamako
Tel : +223 33 75
Courriel : b.ntare@cgiar.org

NEPAD SECRETARIAT

Richard Mkandawire
NEPAD Agriculture Advisor
P.O. Box 1234
Midrand 1685
South Africa
Tel: + 27 11 313 3123
Fax: + 27 11 313 3450
E-mail: mkandawire@nepad.org

Boitshepo Giyose
Nutrition & Food Security Advisor

P.O. Box 1234
 Halfway House
 Midrand 1685
 South Africa
 Tel: +27 11 313 3153
 Fax: +27 11 313 3450
 E-mail: bibig@nepad.org

Augustin Wambo
 Expert Associé
 Politique agricole
 FAO/NEPAD
 P.O. Box 1234
 Midrand 1685
 Afrique du Sud
 Tel : + 27 11 313 3123
 Fax : + 27 11 313 3450
 Courriel : augustin@nepad.org

Faustin Mwape
 FAO Agriculture Advisor
 NEPAD
 P.O. Box 1234
 Midrand 1685
 South Africa
 Tel: + 27 11 313 3123
 Fax: + 27 11 313 3450
 E-mail: faustinm@nepad.org

Clifford Wang
 Consultant
 NEPAD
 Halfway House
 Midrand 1658
 E-mail: cwang@powertech.no

Felicia Andrews
 Consultant
 NEPAD Secretariat
 PO Box 1234
 Halfway House
 Midrand 1685
 Fax: 27 11 313 3153
 E-mail: feliciaa@nepad.org

Maria Wanzala
 IFDC Africa Fertiliser Summit Adviser

PO Box 1234
 Halfway House
 Midrand 1685
 South Africa
 Tel: +27 11 313 3141
 Email: mariaw@nepad.org

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN
 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
 (SADC)**

Ms. Margaret Nyirenda
 Director
 Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
 (FANR)
 Private Bag 0095
 Gaborone
 Botswana
 Tel: 2673972848
 E-mail: mnyirenda@sadc.int

Bonaventure Mtei
 Senior Programme Manager Livestock
 C/O SADC Secretariat
 Tel: + 267 71 88 89 75/ 39 72 848
 E-mail: bjmtei@sadc.int

UNION DU MAGREB ARABE (UMA)

El-Mehdi Abouzriba El-Khabat
 Directeur
 Direction de la sécurité alimentaire
 14 rue Zalagh
 Rabat, maroc
 Tel : +212 74 72 78 22

Ahmed Srikah
 Chef de division
 Direction sécurité alimentaire
 Secrétariat Général de l'UMA
 14 rue Zalagh
 Rabat, maroc
 Tel : +212 37 67 12 85
 Fax : +212 37 67 12 53

**OBSERVERS FROM INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS/
OBSERVATEURS DES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES NON
GOUVERNEMENTAL**

**DIRECTION NATIONALE DE LA
CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE**

Felix Dakouo
Directeur national de la Conservation de la
nature
Tel : +223 36 95/97/223 36 96
Courriel :
conservationnature@datetech.net.ml

GRAIN-THIRD WORLD NETWORK

Jeanne Zoundjihekpon

Professeur de génétique
06 BP 2083
Cotonou, Bénin
Tel : +229 21 33 79 50
Fax : +229 21 3379 15
Courriel : jeanne@grain.org

ROCKFELLER FOUNDATION

Akin Adesina
Associate Director
E-mail: cadim@ic.col

**REGIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/ORGANISATIONS
REGIONALES NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES**

APRAM

Bakary Labita
Bourse du Travail
Tel : +223-639 88 78
Bamako

**ASSEMBLÉE PERMANENTE DES
CHAMBRES D'AGRICULTURE DU
MALI (APCAM)**

Bakary Togola
Président
Tel : +223 221 8725
Courriel : apcam@apcam.org

Mariam Walett Sarid
Chargée de la Formation
Plate-forme des organisations paysannes
Tel : +223 671 36 66

Fousseyni Traoré
Secrétaire général
Assemblée Permanente des chambres
d'agriculture du Mali
Tel : +223 221 8725

Fax : +223 221 8737

**ASSOCIATION POUR LA
PROMOTION DES MONTAGNES ET
COLLINES DE L'AFRIQUE DE
L'OUEST (APMCOA)**

Gbohhou Ferdinand Bélé
Président
Représentation sous-régionale du forum de
la montagne
Bamako, Mali
Tel : +223 907 30 58

**CIP POUR LA SOUVERAINETÉ
ALIMENTAIRE**

Beatrice Gasco Verdier
CIP pour la Souveraineté alimentaire
Tel : 39 349 84 66 103
Courriel : lo@foodsovereignty.org

CNOP Mali

Souleymane Mansamakan Keita

Vice Président de la Coordination nationale
des organisations paysannes du Mali
(CNOP)
Tel : +223 221 87 37
Courriel : smkertapfp@yahoo.fr

Keffa Diarra
Secrétaire général
Tel : +223 221 25 87/603 58 18

**COMMISSION NATIONALE DES
JEUNES RURAUX DU MALI (CNJR-
MALI)**

Nouradine Zakaria Touré
Président
Tel : +223 649 07 02
Fax : +223 221 87 37
Courriel : CNJR-MLI@yahoo.fr

Brahima Bamia
Responsable chargé de l'artisanat de la
CNJR
B.P. Bandiagara
Tel : +223 689 60 76/244 20 64
Courriel : bamiabrahima@yahoo.fr

**EASTERN AFRICA FARMERS
FEDERATION (EAFF)**

Stephen Laititi Mutunga
Coordinator
P.O. Box 13741
00800
Nairobi, Kenya
E-mail: smutunga@yahoo.com

**FORUM FOR AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH IN AFRICA (FARA)**

Anthony Youdeowei
Consultant
2 Gowa Close Roman Ridge

PMB CT 173, Accra, Ghana
Tel: +233 21 77 45 61
Fax: +233 21 77 28 23
E-mail: mjones@fara-africa.org
ayoudeowei@yahoo.co.uk

Adama Traoré
Consultant
Gowa Close Roman Ridge
PMB CT 173, Accra, Ghana
Tel: +233 21 77 45 61
Fax: +233 21 77 28 23
E-mail: mjones@fara-africa.org

FENAFER

Rokiatou Cissé
Secrétaire administrative
Tel : +223 646 29 73
Courriel : fenafermli@hotmail.com

FEDERATION NATIONALE DU MALI

Abdoulaye Kontao
Secrétaire général
Fédération nationale du Mali
Mopti
Tel : +223 6055070/6122848

**LA FEDERATION DES JEUNES
FEMMES DE LA DIASPORA ET DE
L'INTERIEUR DU MALI**

Lalla Sacko
Coordinatrice
Rue 300 Porte 103
Dioumazana Nafadji du Mali
Tel : +223 224 07 01
Fax : +223 678 2570
Courriel : mli.diaspora@yahoo.fr

MALI APHN

Seydou Djiré
Vice Président
Niarela Rue 145 Porte 270

Bamako
Tel : +223 221 53 25
Cel : +223 673 16 21

OP BASSE

Foulematou Camara
Présidente – Trésorière du Conseil

National des Organisations paysannes de
Guinée
Tel : +224 34 70 94

OPERATION PÊCHE

Fanta Salamata Diouané
Tel : +223 606 84 49

ORGANISATION NATIONALE DES FEMMES RURALES «FLEURS DE CENTRAFRIQUE »

Odette Guerel-Baïle Toumane
Présidente
Tel : +236 04 27 21

PREP MALI

Bakary Koné
Ingénieur d'agriculture et en génie rural
Camendtariat à la sécurité alimentaire
Tel : +223 678 58 78

PROPAC

Alexandre Désiré Alexandre Manga Ndza
Représentant de la Présidente de la
PROPAC
B.P. 7445 Yaoundé, Cameoun
Tel : +237 722 37 20 / 223 41 90
Courriel : manganopcam@yahoo.fr

Bangaly Cissé
Chercheur IER
Tel : +223 676 67 96
Courriel : bangaly.cisse@ier.ml

Aminata Sidibé
Chercheur afro-économiste
Tel : +223 648 79 38
Courriel : aminatassidibe@yahoo.fr

Dioukou Sissoko
Chercheur
Tel : +223 229 29 42/604 87 44
Courriel : dioukou.sissoko@ici.ml

MALI/SAP-CSA

Mary Diallo
Coordonnateur
Niaréhu Bamako
B.P. 9660
Tel : +223 221 27 28/674 35 03/ 622 06 67
Courriel : marysao2@yahoo.fr

RESEAU DES ORGANISATIONS PAYSANNES ET DES PRODUCTEURS AGRICILES DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST (ROPPA)

Ndiogou Fall
Président
B.P. 269 Thiès, Sénégal
Tel : +221 939 58 58
Courriel : fongs@sentoo.sn

Mohamadou Magha
Coordonnateur
09 BP 884 Ouagadougou
Burkina Faso
Tel : +226 50 362 613/50 36 08 25
Courriel : mohamadou.magha@roppa-ao.org

SOUTHERN AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL UNIONS (SACAU)

Lewang Peter Rammutla
Vice President
P.O. box 10480 Centurion
0046 South Africa
Tel: +27 12 663 1480
Fax: +27 12 663 1631
E-mail: ceo@sacau.org

UNACA

Paulo Uime
Président UNACA
Rua Major Kanhangulo
146 -1 Luanda
Tel : +244 222 39 30 87
Courriel : paulouime@nexus.ao

UNION NATIONALE DES SOCIETES COOPERATIVES DES FEMMES DU MALI

Fatoumata Kourouma
Responsable de l'Union nationale des
sociétés coopératives des femmes du Mali
S/C Modibo Diallo
UNSCFM
Tel : +223 643 00 67
Courriel : kouroumafanta2002@yahoo.fr

USMEFAN

Arigbede Makanjuola
Apaara House
Amola Quarter Odeomu Osun State
Nigeria
Tel: +234 2 810 7367
E-mail: arigbede@skannet.com

COMITÉ NATIONAL D'ORGANISATION (CNO)/
NATIONAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Col. Souleymane Sidibé	Président CNO de la 24 ^{ème} Conférence Régionale de la FAO pour l'Afrique	
Frédéric Jondot	Assistant Président CNO	Equipement et Infrastructure
El Hadj Omar Tall	Assistant Président CNO	Chargé de Liaison assistant
Boubacar Ballo	Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération Internationale	Transport, Hébergement et Protocole
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Sidiki N'Fa Konaté	Directeur Office de Radio TV (ORTM)	Assistant Chargé de la Presse
Djibril Tall	Ministère de l'équipement et des transports	Assistant Chargé du Transport
Abdoulaye Guindo	Ministère de l'Equipement et des Transports	Assistant Chargé du Transport
Abdoulaye Boré	Représentant Gouvernorat du District de Bamako	Assistant Chargé de l'hébergement et de la restauration
Dr Amadou Sidibé	Ministère de la Santé	Couverture Sanitaire
Sira Sangaré	Ministère de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme	Espace Conférence
Souley Bah	Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances	Protocole/Accueil/Hébergement
Mamadou Traoré	MDB (DAF Primature)	Protocole/Accueil/Hébergement
Mme Sidibé	Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances	Equipement/Infrastructure
Papa Bacari Cissouma	Direction Générale des Marchés Publics Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances	Equipement/Infrastructure
Brahima Sangaré	Commissariat Sécurité Alimentaire	Espace Conférence
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Boubacar Diouf	Ministère de la Sécurité Intérieure (MSIPC)	Couverture sécuritaire
Djimé Diallo	Ministère de l'Administration Territoriale et des collectivités locales	Commission Transport
Haiballah A. Maiga	Ministère des Domaines de l'Etat et des Affaires Foncières	Permanence CNO
Amadou Tandia	Ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Assainissement	Santé/Assainissement

FAO STAFF/PERSONNEL DE LA FAO

Mr. Jacques Diouf	Director-General
Mr Oloche Anebi Edache	Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Africa, RAF, Accra
Mr. Geoffrey Mrema	Sub-regional Representative for Southern and East Africa, SAFR, Harare
Mr. Arturo Martinez	Chief, Seed and Plant Genetic Resources Services, AGPS, Rome
Mr. Abdul Aziz Sy	Senior Officer for Science and Technology, RAF, Accra
Mr. Weldeghaber Kidane	AU/NEPAD Focal Point, TCAR, Rome
Mr. Justin Rushemeza	Senior Policy Officer, SAFR, Harare
Mr. Thomas Price	Senior Programme Officer, Civil Society, TCDS, Rome
Ms. Pamela Pozarny	Land Tenure and Rural Development Officer
Ms. Susan Minae	Farming Systems Development Officer, SAFR, Harare
Ms. Sylvana Ntaryamira	Liaison Officer (NGO), RAF, Accra
Mr. Justin Chisenga	Information Management Specialist, RAF, Accra
Ms. Ada Ndeso-Atanga	Meetings and Publications Officer, Consultant, RAF, Accra
Mr. Cheikh Bathily	Assistant FAO Representative in Mali, Bamako

SUPPORT STAFF/PERSONNEL D'APPUI

Ms. Rosemary Baeta, RAF, Accra	Mr. Boubacar Keita, FAO-Mali
Ms. Ruby Agyei, RAF, Accra	Mr. Seyan Doumbia, FAO-Mali
Ms. Ami Kumapley, RAF, Accra	Ms. Fatoumata Diaby, FAO-Mali
Ms. Dorcas D. Amoah, RAF, Accra	Ms. Marie Sissoko, FAO-Mali
Ms. Christabel E. Essel, RAF, Accra	Ms. Fatoumata Keita, FAO-Mali
Mr. Koffi Honouga, RAF, Accra	Ms. Fatim Sangaré, FAO-Mali

CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT / SECRETARIAT DE LA CONFERENCE

Conference Secretary	Mr. Madhy Bamba, RAF, Accra
Conference Affairs Officer	Ms. Mariam Mahamat Nour, FAOR/Mali
Reports Officer	Mr. Moïse Sonou, RAF, Accra
Information Officer	Mr. Paul Fouda-Onambele, RAF, Accra
Conference Documents Officer	Mr. Pape D. Koné, RAF, Accra
Assistant to Conference Affairs Officer	Mr. Yossef Tadesse, RAF, Accra
Information Technology Officer	Mr. Peter Bregy, OCD, Rome

INTERPRETERS / INTERPRETES

Mr. Pierre Fournier Chief Interpreter, GIC, Rome	Mr. Mohmar Khary Diagne Interpreter
Mr. Danilo Reyna Interpreter, GIC, Rome	Ms. Maria Aïda Diop Wane Interpreter
Mr. Mohammed Ali Ben Yedder Interpreter	Mr. Malick Sy Interpreter
Mr. M. Larbi Bennacer Interpreter	Ms. Vera Futscher Pereira Interpreter
Ms. Samah Iskandar Interpreter	Mr. Migel Peixoto Interpreter
Mr. Elgalal Osman Interpreter	Ms. Patrica Roman Interpreter
Ms. Sroda Bedarida-Gaveh Interpreter	Ms. Graciella Lusso Interpreter
Ms. Sheila Cardno Interpreter	Ms. Yvonne Tarabal-Errea Interpreter

APPENDIX C**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

ARC/06/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ARC/06/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region, 2004-05 with a focus on the Achievement of the World Food Summit (WFS) Targets and the Millennium Development Goals
ARC/06/3	Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management under Globalization and Liberalizaion to promote Economic Growth.
ARC/06/4	African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme
ARC/06/5	Matters arising from 33 rd Session of the FAO Conference (Rome 19-26 November 2005)
ARC/06/INF/1	Provisional List of Documents
ARC/06/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
ARC/06/INF/3	Information Note
ARC/06/INF/4	Statement of the Director-General
ARC/04/INF/5	Policy and Regulation of Biotechnology in Food Production
ARC/04/INF/6	Fire in the Agriculture-Forestry Interface
ARC/04/INF/7	Agrarian Reform, Land Policies and the Millennium Development Goals: FAO's Interventions and Lessons Learned during the Past Decade
ARC/04/INF/8	New Approaches to Information access under WAICENT

APPENDIX D**STATEMENT BY THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRMAN OF THE FAO COUNCIL****Bamako, Mali, 2 February 2006**

*Mr. President,
Mr. Prime Minister,
Mr. Director General of FAO,
Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my pleasure and indeed an honor to express on my behalf and on behalf of all Member States of FAO, our most sincere thanks and gratitude to you Mr. President and through you to your Government and to Great People of Mali for the outstanding hospitality and generosity provided to all participants in the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

It is impossible to name all who deserve appreciation and thanks, but I am duty bound to wholeheartedly thank the honorable Minister of Agriculture and His Excellency Ambassador DAGA for their dedication to sacred goals and objectives of FAO and for their tireless efforts in making such excellent arrangements for this conference.

The unique sense of history and civilization which is embodied in the name of Mali, Bamako and Timbuktu, creates an atmosphere of confidence, trust, hope and optimism which is prerequisite to successes in all such gatherings.

Mr. Chairman, we are living in a world endowed with such a global prosperity and material wealth which no one could realistically have predicted even half a century ago. The world GDP is exceeding 40,000 billions dollars.

Some countries enjoy per capita income of more than 40.000\$ per year. But in the very same world each day 25,000 children die because of hunger and malnutrition, and 3 billion people live with an income of less than 2 dollars per day. In simple words, during the five that that we are struggling here in Bamako, to find better ways for achieving food security, more than 125,000 children will never wake up from their sleep.

On the other hand, the world is rapidly shrinking to a so called global Village, what happens in one part of this village will have its impacts and repercussions felt in other parts in matter of hours if not minutes.

Such a world cannot be anymore, led and managed by the so called invisible hands claimed by classical economists. This world needs a very visible heart to beat in all corners of the globe.

Mr. Chairman,

FAO is, or better to say, can be such a visible heart on issues related to food and nutrition, a very basic human right. If we did not have a FAO it would be high time to create it.

This organization with the logo of “FIAT PANIS”, “Food for all”, during its 60 years of existence has provided outstanding services to the poor, to the hungry and in particular of the agricultural development the world over.

Now, in the 61st year of history of FAO, we are reaching a major turning point. In line with the whole UN system, both the visionary DG of FAO, a true son of Africa, Dr. J. Diouf and the member states of FAO have proposed studies evaluations insights and visions which are aimed at reforming FAO to an organization, consistent with the new realities and needs of its member states and at the same time able of taking advantage of many opportunities which the twenty first century provides for dealing with challenges ahead of us.

Let’s hope, pray to the Almighty and take action with the best of our abilities to make these reform proposals a success story to be remembered by all and especially by the poor and hungry for years to come.

Distinguished Ministers, you are the first group of thinkers and decision makers which are laying down the foundation of the new innovative and effective changes in the structure and functioning of FAO which can better serve the goals of the World Food Summit, the WFS five years later and the MDGs, that is, among others, reduction of the number of hungry and malnourished by half by the year 2015. I wish you the best of success in your deliberations.

Dear sisters and brothers let me finalize my statement by adding a touch of history to it. In the dawn of the second millennium, that is, more than 1000 years ago, the house of a Persian SUFI (ABOLHASSAN KRARAGHANI) was open to the public as a guest house and at its entrance was written: “Who ever enter this house give him/her food, do not ask his/her faith. Because the one who is entitled to life by the almighty is definitely entitled to food by Abolhassan”. This is the kind of conviction which is needed to uproot hunger and misery from our World.

Thank you.

APPENDIX E**STATEMENT BY THE FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA****Bamako, Mali, 2 February 2006**

*Excellency, Mr President of the Republic of Mali,
Mr Prime Minister,
Mr Chairman of the Council,
Distinguished Ministers,
Honourable Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to be here with the participants at the Twenty-fourth FAO Regional Conference held in this capital of Mali which is so rich in history and symbols of Africa's glorious past.

I should like to express my deep gratitude to President Amadou Toumani Touré, to his Government and to the people of Mali for their warm welcome and generous hospitality. Their profound attachment to the dignity and solidarity of the peoples of the continent that was the cradle of humanity no longer needs to be demonstrated.

(State of food and agriculture in the world)

Hunger and poverty are now recognized as the two major scourges of humanity. While the number of hungry fell by 23 million during the first half of the 1990s, it rose by 20 million during the second half of the same decade. Yet, the World Food Summit (WFS) held in 1996 and the Millennium Summit set the goal of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015.

Global *per capita* food production has risen steadily during the past 30 years. Yet, some 852 million people are undernourished in the world, including 815 million in the developing countries, 28 million in the countries in transition and 9 million in the industrialized countries. In 2000-2002, 27 percent of the African population, some 210 million people, suffered chronic undernutrition. Unless the current trend is inverted, the number of undernourished people on this continent will increase between now and 2015, when almost half the world's poor will live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Development of Agriculture in Africa 2004-2005: outcome**Food production**

Africa is the only region in the world in which average *per capita* food production has fallen steadily over the past 40 years, while agriculture accounts for 17 percent of GDP, 57 percent of employment and 11 percent of exports.

Animal production is also struggling to meet demand. Cattle production is rising by 1.4 percent per year, sheep production by 2.5 percent and goat production by 4.3 percent,

while the human population is growing at 2.6 percent. The importation of animal products, often at dumping prices and of suspect quality, is increasing – thus rendering the subsector unattractive for investment.

Fishery products and aquaculture

Africa's fish production has fallen during the last ten years, with *per capita* consumption dropping from 8.8 kg in 1990 to about 7.8 kg in 2001. Africa's coastal waters are overexploited and its fishery resources are clearly diminishing. Yet, its immense inland water and aquaculture resources remain untapped. The result is an increase in imports of fish whose quality is not closely controlled.

Forestry sector

Africa's forests perform important ecological, economic, social and cultural functions. In some countries, the forestry sector is the second contributor to GDP.

The forests of the Congo Basin represent the world's second largest tropical forest after the Amazon. Yet, deforestation is advancing at more than 600 000 hectares per year.

FAO will therefore continue to work with Government and subregional organizations to develop policies and programmes for the sustainable management and the conservation of African forest ecosystems.

Agricultural commodity trade

The continent's share of world trade in the 1990s amounted to 1.2 percent, down from 3.1 percent the 1950s. Africa's share of global agricultural exports has dropped significantly, from 8 percent in 1971-1980 to 3.4 percent in 1991-2000. Imports of agricultural commodities have been rising more rapidly than exports since the 1960s and Africa, taken as a whole, has been a net agricultural importer since 1980. Its agricultural deficit reached US\$20 billion in 2001-2003.

FAO continues to provide various forms of support to African countries, in particular for building capacity in areas relating to agricultural trade. After the conclusion of the WTO Framework Agreement, FAO held seven regional workshops, including two in Africa, to clarify technical issues associated with the trade negotiations. The Organization has also thus prepared regional programmes for the nine African regional economic communities in response to the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements of the WTO. FAO will continue to examine the major issues relating to the international agricultural trade and to provide technical assistance to African countries.

The constraints

Water

Only 7 percent of Africa's arable land is irrigated, compared to 38 percent in Asia. The proportion is only 4 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. The region uses less than 3 percent of

its water resources, the lowest percentage of the developing world, compared to 20 percent in Asia and 10 percent in South America. The real percentage growth of irrigated land in the region only amounts to an average 0.88 percent per year and in many cases is in fact negative. Very high priority should be given to investment in irrigated agriculture because of its important potential for safeguarding production and raising productivity.

Rural infrastructure

The network of rural roads is largely inadequate and transport costs are high. Traditional storage practices cause losses of as much as 40 percent of harvest. Key infrastructure needed to make agriculture competitive includes markets, packing and refrigeration plants, slaughterhouses and fishing ports.

Fertilizer

The region's low use of fertilizer is another major constraint to productivity and competitiveness. Africa only applies 23 kg of fertilizer to each hectare of arable land, compared to 151 kg in Asia. The figure for sub-Saharan Africa is 9 kg. The Twenty-third FAO Regional Conference for Africa, held in Johannesburg in 2004, recommended that the Heads of State and Government give priority to developing Africa's fertilizer industry so that farmers use more fertilizer. I am pleased to note that a Fertilizer Summit is planned for June 2006 to look more closely into this matter. FAO is ready to provide its support to this important meeting.

Pests and diseases

Pests and transboundary animal diseases continue to ravage Africa. We are all aware of the extensive damage caused by the recent desert locust invasion and the serious threat posed by avian influenza. FAO has always advocated an approach that is essentially based on prevention, with the training of national officers in early detection and in the control of these scourges, together with the mobilisation of international expertise and financial resources. The joint FAO/OIE initiative entitled "Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases" is a step in this direction with the primary objective of reinforcing national veterinary services and capacities through North-South and South-South partnerships, but also of helping regional networks to better determine intervention measures and to improve their related understanding.

With regard to plant protection, measures have been taken to standardize quarantine systems, especially in the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention. FAO is leading the African programme on pesticide stocks which involves a large number of partners. A project coordinating unit will be set up within the NEPAD Secretariat, thereby providing an additional opportunity for cooperation between the two organizations.

Financing (at national level – 10% of the national budget)

If adequate resources are to be mobilized, Africa's ministers of agriculture and their colleagues in finance and planning will need to work together to honour the commitments made by the Heads of State and Government in Maputo in July 2003 to allocate at least 10 percent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development within five years.

FAO will continue to collaborate with the African Union, the NEPAD Secretariat, the ADB, the IMF and other institutions in defining a mechanism to monitor budgetary allocations as stipulated in the Maputo commitment.

The CAADP and its implementation

Since its adoption in Rome in January 2002 by the African ministers of agriculture, NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme has become a government priority in the region. A programme of this nature needs to be dynamic if it is to reflect changing regional priorities and correct shortcomings. In follow-up to the recommendation of the African Heads of State and Government meeting in Maputo in July 2003 and in Sirte in February 2004, FAO has prepared complementary project documents on the livestock, fisheries and forestry subsectors. The document on livestock was approved in Kigali in December 2005 by the AU ministers responsible for livestock production, while the other documents are being reviewed by the appropriate bodies of the Union. FAO is providing an additional assistance to ensure there is synergy between the NEPAD action plan for livestock production and the action plans of the economic communities and other regional organizations in Africa.

FAO has provided technical assistance valued at US\$7 million for the preparation in 48 countries of the CAADP's National Medium-Term Investment Programmes and bankable investment projects. A total of 200 such projects have been finalized with an overall value of US\$7.3 billion in 37 countries.

FAO's Special Programme for Food Security is in operation in 44 African countries. In 15 countries, it has been expanded to become a national programme. In addition, 500 experts and technicians are at work in 25 African countries under Special Programme South-South Cooperation. The integration of national and regional activities is ensured by regional economic organization programmes to enhance quality and harmonize zoo- and phytosanitary standards.

Other initiatives

Seeds

In the region, only one-third of seeds pass through a system of control, while the other two-thirds come from the informal sector. Viable systems of production and certification should therefore be urgently established. On this subject, an African seeds programme is being formulated and its effective implementation could help to remove this constraint.

(Agenda of the Regional Conference)

The Regional Conference will be looking closely at two priority topics:

- enhancing the competitiveness of agriculture and natural resources management in the framework of globalization and liberalization in order to promote economic growth and,
- the African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme.

Outcome of the 33rd Conference of FAO

As regards the 33rd Session of the Conference of FAO which took place in Rome in November 2005, the Conference adopted a budget of US\$765.7 million for the 2006-2007 biennium, which represents zero nominal growth plus security expenditures and US\$6 million for priority programmes. The Conference also looked at my proposals for reform of the Organization. Among other aspects, it approved certain changes to the organizational structure at Headquarters from 1 January 2006 together with the implementation of decentralization proposals in one region and the opening of another subregional office. I have decided to start this exercise with the African region and the Central Asian subregion.

FAO will also have to raise some US\$15 million in voluntary contributions to cover the transition costs linked to reform.

The Programme of Work and Budget 2006-2007 is therefore being revisited to accommodate these initial changes in organizational structure at Headquarters and the decentralized offices, and to place a special emphasis on the dissemination of knowledge and the building of capacities in developing countries. In this connection, I intend to present you with a document on the follow-up to the Conference and the implementation of FAO reform. I hope that the related proposals to be placed before the Council in November will receive your support.

The Conference also decided to convene an International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, which will be held from 7 to 10 March this year in Porto Alegre, Brazil. I am confident that the African countries will participate actively in this meeting.

(Side events/Parallel events)

Finally, yesterday, the Ministerial Meeting of the African Union examined the state of food security in Africa and implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. It also discussed the establishment of a system to monitor the allocation of at least 10 percent of national budgets to agriculture and rural development in the next five years and the proposed merger of the Comprehensive Programme action plan and that of the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water. FAO is willing to help the African Union to implement the decisions of the meeting. This gives me the opportunity to thank the Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture for the excellent cooperation that exists between our two institutions.

Conclusion

*Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Fewer than ten years separate us from 2015, the date by which the leaders of the entire world have pledged to halve the level of hunger and extreme poverty. Today's dramatic situation calls for political commitment at the highest national, subregional and continental level for the necessary urgent actions to be undertaken. FAO and the technical ministries have worked hard and the bankable programmes and projects have been drawn

up. It is now for the ministers of the economy, of finance and of planning to implement the commitments that were made in Maputo and Sirte by their Heads of State and Government so that we can banish from the world's television screens those images of starving African children dying of hunger. Africa's revival will be just an idle dream and a pious hope if its governments have to continue each year to seek emergency aid to feed their populations.

I wish you every success in your work and thank you for your kind attention.

APPENDIX F**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI****Bamako, Mali, 2nd February 2006**

*Mr Prime Minister, Head of Government,
 Mr President of the National Assembly,
 Messrs Presidents of the Institutions of the Republic,
 Mr Jacques Diouf, Director General of FAO,
 Distinguished Ambassadors,
 Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the International Organizations,
 Mr Governor of the District of Bamako,
 Honourable Deputies,
 Mr Mayor of the District of Bamako,
 Mr Mayor of Ward III of the District of Bamako,
 Distinguished Guests,
 Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is with great pride that Mali, an agropastoral country par excellence, welcomes this 24th Regional Conference for Africa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO.

I should like to extend a warm welcome to Bamako to all the participants and to express the sincere gratitude of the Malian people to all those who worked for the selection of Mali as the venue of this important meeting and who contributed to its good organization.

My sincere thanks go to my brother Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, for his personal involvement and that of his Organization in preparing the conference.

This is also an occasion for me to reiterate our profound congratulations on his brilliant re-election at the head of FAO.

The confidence that the Member Nations have just renewed in him is most eloquent testimony to the remarkable work accomplished at the head of FAO.

Mali is proud to have co-sponsored his candidature.

In you, Mr Director-General, we appreciate the man of conviction, your faith in the rich potential of African agriculture and the many battles that you are waging to enable our continent to draw benefit from this wealth.

You can count on the sustained and resolute support of Mali.

I should also like to express our total satisfaction to the president of the national organizing committee of the conference and to all his collaborators for the work accomplished.

I include our ambassador to FAO in Rome and all his staff who rallied behind this cause for many months.

*Mr Director-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This regional conference in Bamako is taking place less than one year after the emergence of serious food problems in Sahel caused by poor rainfall and the widespread invasion of locusts.

The resulting food insecurity has been a painful experience in some of our regions. Our States have put appropriate emergency policies in place to deal with the precarious food situation.

But I can tell you from personal experience how difficult these moments are for a Statesman, as the right to food is the very first of the rights that we need to guarantee our populations.

This food crisis reawakened in me the terrible memory of the severe drought that struck the Sahel and other parts of the continent between 1968 and 1973, affecting 16 countries from Cape Verde to Ethiopia, and that reached its peak between 1972 and 1973.

As a young officer of the Malian army at the time, I took part in the food airlift to the northern regions that were affected by famine.

I witnessed first-hand:

- the pangs of hunger of the victims in the camps;
- the extreme suffering of the children;
- the difficulties of communities;
- the lack of water;
- the loss of livestock, the primary object of value;
- the degradation of the ecosystem;
- the displacement of populations;
- the disruption of the social fabric;
- and, above all, the blows to the pride and dignity of such noble men and women.

We will never measure the social, cultural, economic and financial impact of that severe drought on the northern regions of Mali.

The army's contribution was decisive in managing the emergency food relief, but that operation will always remain one of the toughest moments of my life as a soldier.

Slightly more than 30 years later, in 2004, as Head of State, I also had a hard time witnessing the consequences of the food insecurity that affected the human and livestock populations.

The rains ceased early and were poorly distributed.

The invasion of desert locusts and other plant pests caused prices to soar to unprecedented levels, benefiting speculation and the hoarding of cereal stocks and animal feed.

I know just how much my compatriots suffered from this situation, despite the efforts of the government which distributed cereals free of charge in the most affected areas and cancelled VAT on cereal imports – two measures cost more than 22 billion CFAF.

We received precious assistance from some of our partners in dealing with this food crisis.

We would however strongly emphasize that haste was not always the overriding concern in the mobilization of aid.

The international community was somewhat timid in its support for the control of locusts.

But its appeals were never met with the rapid response that the danger merited.

With regard to food aid, we sometimes had the feeling that words were not enough to move certain people, if those words were not accompanied by the most harrowing of images.

Emergency food aid needs to be mobilized under conditions that correspond to the objective, far from the futile squabbles of differing schools of thought.

It amounts to 35 000 tonnes of dry cereals each year, when the monthly consumption of maize, millet and sorghum amounts to some 146 000 tonnes.

The programme of restructuring of the cereal market, which organizes our food security, is a commitment of the Malian Government.

But we have to be prepared to accept its limits and the need to modernize it.

*Honourable Ministers,
Mr Director-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Africa is not condemned by fate to suffer problems of food security.

Other continents have faced and risen to the same challenge through commitment and purposeful agricultural policy.

Africa should also have great ambitions for its agriculture. It has huge potential but this is largely underexploited.

Mali is a perfect example of this paradox. We have significant resources in agricultural land, especially in the central delta of the Niger extending from Djénné to Tombouctou and covering some 35 000 km².

The Niger delta is one of the world's largest floodplains.

It is West Africa's largest arable wetland and Africa's second largest after the Okavango delta in Botswana.

Nor do we lack water, for our country is drained by the two largest rivers of West Africa running over more than 2 400 km.

Does a country that has such assets, land and water, the two fundamentals for agriculture, have the right to be hungry?

Of course not!

We must therefore look at our production systems which are largely dependent on the availability and distribution of rainwater, which places our crops in a state of constant vulnerability.

Looking closely at the situation, we only option is to address the twin challenge of production and productivity on the one hand, and global trade and competitiveness on the other.

We can act on production and productivity through a policy of agricultural modernization that plays on the factors of success that are:

- control of water;
- land-use planning;
- use of fertilizer;
- plant protection; and
- promotion of agricultural research and technological innovation.

The conference of Bamako will be looking at these central planks of any "Green Revolution".

Your conclusions will undoubtedly be a source of inspiration to governments.

*Mr Director-General,
Honourable Ministers,*

Mali has resolved to no longer leave its fate to the vagaries of the weather.

With this in mind, we have embarked on a vast programme of land-use planning covering more than 50 000 hectares under partial or total irrigation.

At the same time, the Government has initiated a Law on Agricultural Policy that was formulated together with all rural players and their representative organizations.

This Law on Agricultural Policy aims to provide the tools and guarantees that are needed for the emergence of a modern agricultural sector that is focused on high production and optimal productivity.

The Law on Agricultural Policy is a global vision of rural development and covers the entire primary sector in scope.

The development and optimization of animal and fishery production are also widely considered.

The same applies to the management of forestry and wildlife resources and to the status of the operator who is a key determinant of the success of the envisaged reforms.

It is our fervent hope that the implementation of such a stimulative and attractive framework will spur a more substantial mobilization of private investment for the development of agriculture as a whole, from production to processing.

The contribution of the private sector will be a valuable complement to the efforts of the State.

I am pleased to point out that Mali devotes 14 percent of its budgetary resources to agriculture, and thus exceeds the 10 percent threshold set in the Maputo Declaration, on the initiative of the African Union.

It is the convergence of all these actions that will lead our country to food sovereignty and to its food security component.

This will also enable us to offer better employment prospects to the rural young who – and this can never be said enough – are the segment of our youth that is most seriously affected by unemployment and underemployment.

*Honourable Ministers,
Mr Director-General,*

This 24th Regional Conference provides us with an ideal opportunity to thank FAO for all the assistance it has given to Mali in emergency situations and for its support to the process of agricultural change.

The Organization, which has just celebrated its 60th anniversary, can be proud of its commitment in many areas, including:

- Food security,
- The fight against pests of all sorts and transboundary animal diseases,
- The regulation of trade in pesticides and other reputedly dangerous chemical substances,
- The promotion of South-South cooperation.

Dr Jacques Diouf has undeniably brought his personal touch to this endeavour.

I wish to reassure him of Mali's support for the implementation of the FAO reforms he has initiated, aimed at ensuring that the Organization operates more efficiently, that local expertise is put to the best possible use and that the provision of services is as close to our countries as possible.

On this note of confidence in FAO and in African agriculture, I wish all participants every success in their work and an excellent stay in Mali.

Thank you for your kind attention.

APPENDIX G**CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI**

Bamako, Mali 3 February 2006

*Honourable Members of the Government of Mali,
Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Messrs Presidents of the Institutions of the Republic of Mali,
Mr Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
(FAO),
Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council of FAO,
Honourable Heads of Diplomatic and Consular Missions,
Distinguished Representatives of Subregional and International Organizations,
Mr Governor of the District of Bamako,
Mr Mayor of the District of Bamako,
Mr Mayor of Ward IV,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is now my honour, on behalf of His Excellency Mr Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic, to proceed with the closure of this 24th FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

I should like first to express the satisfaction of my Government and all the people of Mali with your participation and your most effective and constructive contributions to this meeting, which has been an opportunity for us to renew our support for the ideals of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

I should also like to congratulate you on the quality of the debate which enabled us to reach appropriate recommendations whose implementation will, I am sure, provide the African continent with an opportunity to make up for time lost and to steer towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

We have agreed that the main topics of this meeting reflect our shared concerns over the sustainable development of agriculture and food security. This latter aspect is vital for any sustainable development and is of particular relevance to our continent.

Your frank and fruitful discussions have examined the state of Africa's agriculture and food security and have highlighted the major challenges that lie ahead and means of best dealing with those challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have noted that the heightened competitiveness of agriculture, in its broadest interpretation, is a fundamental requisite for economic growth and development in Africa; and that this can be achieved by increasing production through enhanced productivity, lower production costs, effective marketing strategies to boost Africa's share of world trade, the opening up of production areas and increased producer access to rural electrification.

You have also noted African agriculture's heavy dependence on and vulnerability to climatic conditions, the worrying degradation of its food and agriculture situation, population pressure and its attendant consequences, and the low exploitation of its potentials for agricultural growth.

Your observations have led you to identify the best ways of changing this situation. Some of the actions you have highlighted are:

- the building of research and extension capacity for the generation and dissemination of technologies and techniques to intensify production systems that are adapted to local conditions;
- the formulation and implementation of participatory strategies for the increased use of mineral fertilizer;
- the development of technologies for irrigation and hydro-agricultural works;
- the elaboration and implementation of strategies to establish linkages between farmers and markets, on the one hand, and to encourage partnerships between the public and private sectors to facilitate producer access to financing, on the other.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As regards seeds and the use of biotechnology, you are in agreement over the need to set up an African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme whose implementation and synergies with national programmes will give Africa the seeds resource base it needs for an effective agricultural sector.

However, given that modern agricultural biotechnology is still the subject of fierce controversy, you have called for national, subregional and regional initiatives to build capacity in the formulation of national regulatory frameworks and install diagnostic and analytical tools for genetically modified organisms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With regard to the age-old practice of bush fires, you have wisely called for the building of national and producer capacity to prevent, control and manage this scourge.

Your discussions have highlighted the timeliness of the International Summit on Agrarian Reform. However, mindful of the sensitivity of this issue, you have put forward two

major recommendations for the identification of strategies and support measures to enhance farmer access to land:

- implementation of coherent land management policies that take the social, political and economic dimensions in to account, together with legislative frameworks that are conducive to investment, while safeguarding the interests of the smallholdings that still account for the bulk of Africa's agricultural production; and
- establishment of a framework of dialogue and consultation that includes strong grassroots participation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your plenary session has also dealt with the FAO reform proposals that the Director-General presented to the Conference in November 2005.

You have also looked at the revised proposals that resulted from the outcome of the Conference and have given them your unanimous endorsement.

I therefore urge you to keep a close watch over their implementation and to provide your steadfast support the Director-General, Jacques Diouf, as he faces this new challenge.

Mali joins you in commending FAO on the progress of its activities in Africa, especially in the fields of plant protection and food security. However, these achievements now need to be consolidated on the basis of the opinions you have just voiced.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like, on behalf of the Government and people of Mali, to reiterate my sincere thanks and profound gratitude to all the FAO member countries for their confidence in entrusting us to chair the Regional Conference.

We took over the baton in the full knowledge of our responsibility. And I assure you that my country spared no effort in seeking to live up to your expectations.

We congratulate our sister Republic of Kenya for being chosen to host the 25th session of the Regional Conference and assure her, here and now, of our willingness to help with its organization and to share the experience we have gained.

Before concluding, I should like once again to commend all the participants on their valuable contribution to the quality of the debate and on the relevance of the outcome of the meeting.

I wish our illustrious guests a safe and agreeable journey home and hereby bring the 24th FAO Regional Conference for Africa to a close.

Thank you for your kind attention.

APPENDIX H**REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA****Bamako, Mali, 30 - 31 January 2006****II. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS****Organization**

1. The Technical Committee of the Twenty-fourth Africa Regional Conference (ARC) of FAO met from 30 to 31 January 2006, at the *Centre International de Conférence* (CIC), Bamako, Mali.

2. The meeting was attended by 189 delegates (including 25 at Ministerial level) from 40 Member Nations of the Region, 2 observers from Member Nations outside the Region, 5 representatives of the United Nations Specialized Agencies and 34 observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; the list of delegates is given as Appendix B.

Opening Ceremony (Agenda Item 1)

3. The meeting of the Technical Committee of the 24th ARC was chaired by the Representative of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Masiphula Mbongwa, outgoing Chair. He conveyed to the participants and the people of Mali the greetings of the people of South Africa and expressed his gratitude for the wonderful hospitality the host country has extended to the delegates. He reminded the meeting of the need to continue implementing the resolutions agreed upon in Johannesburg in 2004 during the 23rd ARC for the development of the African agriculture as outlined in CAADP. Finally, the outgoing Chair expressed his pleasure to hand over to Mali the baton for the leadership of Africa on agricultural matters.

4. The Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Africa, Mr. Oloche Anebi Edache, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf. He expressed FAO's appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Mali for hosting this Conference and for putting at its disposal the excellent facilities at the *Centre International de Conférence* (CIC), Bamako. He also thanked the National Organising Committee for its hard work. He noted that the Conference also provides an opportunity to stage numerous exhibitions and other parallel events planned by the national authorities that would enhance the participants' stay in the Republic of Mali.

5. He referred to the last Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in March 2004, which unanimously adopted concrete recommendations to ensure the implementation process of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) at the national, regional and continental levels.

6. He drew the delegates' attention to the state of food security in the continent: the number of hungry and food insecure in Africa is expected to remain the same until 2015 if the current trend continues. The majority of Sub-Saharan countries is even worse off than at any time during the last three decades. The situation has actually been compounded by civil strife in several countries, natural disasters such as drought and desert locust invasion. To reach the MDG goal No.1, the Region will need to accelerate dramatically the pace of poverty reduction. With reference to the member countries' common endeavour to find lasting solutions to the Region's food crisis and other emerging issues, delegates were invited to study and deliberate on the two main discussion papers:

- a. Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management under Globalization and Liberalization to Promote Economic Growth;
- b. African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme.

7. Furthermore, the following information papers were submitted to the delegates:

- Policy and Regulation of Biotechnology in Food Production
- Fire in the Agriculture-Forestry Interface
- Agrarian Reform, Land Policies and the Millennium Development Goals: FAO's Interventions and Lessons Learned during the Past Decade
- New Approaches to Information Access and Knowledge Exchange under WAICENT

8. The FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa then called on delegates to closely examine these papers and to come up with recommendations that would assist their governments to formulate and implement policies that could bring improvement in agriculture and food production in the region. In concluding he renewed the FAO's commitment to place its technical expertise and experience at the service of all the member states in the region.

9. In his opening address, the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Seydou Traore welcomed the delegates and observers and stated that his country felt honoured for hosting the 24th ARC. He congratulated the Director-General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf for his brilliant re-election, an acknowledgement of the good work FAO has been doing and a testimony of his commitment to eradicate hunger. The whole Africa shares the vision of a world freed from hunger. However, the realization of that goal entails not only the formulation of policies and programmes that are consistent with national realities, but also calls for enhanced sub-regional cooperation in the framework of the CAADP of the NEPAD.

10. He recalled the commitment of African countries to the Millennium Development Goals, especially the halving of the number of hungry and poor people by 2015. However, 10 years before the deadline it has been established that poverty has increased

in Sub-Saharan Africa between 1990 and 2001 as against a worldwide decrease from 30 to 20 %. Africa missed the Green Revolution which benefited Asia. Africa has a low-input and low-productivity agriculture using 9 kg of fertilizer per hectare as against 100 kg in South-East Asia and 200 kg in industrialised countries. Less than 10 % of arable lands are irrigated in Africa as against 40% in Asia.

11. His Excellency Mr. Seydou Traore called for the development of appropriate seed technologies and rural infrastructures, the promotion of private investment, capacity building in respect of trans-boundary diseases, the formulation and implementation of a Pan-African Programme to eradicate the Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP). He welcomed the forthcoming International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development to be held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. He emphasized the need for a legislative framework for all required actions and acknowledged the assistance of FAO in the formulation of such frameworks. Under the guidance of His Excellency Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic, Mali is currently formulating *une Loi d'Orientation Agricole*. He insisted on the importance of human resources development for the implementation of the expected recommendations of this Conference, particularly as regards the control of diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. He wished the delegates a nice stay in Mali and declared the 24th Technical Committee Meeting opened.

Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

12. The meeting unanimously elected Dr. Zana SANOGO, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Mali as chair.

13. The meeting then elected, also by acclamation, the other members of the bureau as follows:

First Vice-Chairperson: Angola
Mr. Pedro Agostinho Kanga
Directeur du Cabinet de la Coopération et des Relations internationales

Second Vice-Chairperson: Republic of Congo,
Mme Georgette Bamana Dandou
Directrice générale de l'agriculture au Ministère de l'agriculture de l'élevage et de la pêche

Rapporteur: South Africa,
Ms Vangile Titi
Deputy Director-General
Department of Agriculture

Co-Rapporteur: Algeria
Mr. Ait Amer Meziane Aomar
Directeur d'Etudes
Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement rural

14. **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable.** The Meeting adopted the Agenda and Timetable with an amendment to the title of document ARC/06/INF/5 which now reads as follows “Policy and Regulations of Biotechnology in Food Production”. The Agenda is given as Appendix A, while the list of documents is shown in Appendix C.

II. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Natural Resources Management under Globalization and Liberalization to promote Economic Growth (ARC/06/3)

15. The Technical Committee welcomed the presentation of this agenda item, introduced by FAO, which elaborated the issues and challenges of enhancing competitiveness along the supply chain by examining production related factors, marketing and infrastructure related factors with respect to national, intraregional and export markets. The paper also examined macro-economic policy factors such as national monetary, fiscal and customs policies, etc. that are crucial to enhancing competitiveness in agriculture and natural resources management under globalization and liberalization to promote economic growth and highlighted policy strategies and actions that need to be put in place to enhance competitiveness.

16. Enhanced competitiveness of agriculture (crops/livestock/forestry and fisheries), is crucial to economic growth and development in Africa and has to be addressed by increasing production efficiency, thus enhancing productivity and reducing costs of production. Competitiveness should also be promoted through increased value of market share in the global arena through effective trade strategies.

17. The technical committee had, in the context of globalization, examined the document presented by FAO and agreed with the issues raised and noted that there are two essential factors that affect agricultural competitiveness. In fact, in Africa it was noted that there is need to address constraints of generating economies of scale since most farmers in Africa are small and scattered over large areas, and have poor access to inputs and hence experience high average costs of production. At the same time, African producers face unfair competition in the world trade because developed countries subsidize their farmers. In fact subsidies in developed countries represent a hindrance to agricultural competitiveness in Africa.

18. The meeting noted that agriculture in Africa is low-input and has low productivity and there is need to develop strategies for increased fertilizer use, other soil fertility improvement systems and mechanization. It was recognized however, that competitiveness of agriculture can be achieved by strengthening family farms as they are the backbone of agriculture and at the same time promote the commercializing of agriculture.

19. In the last few years there have been major achievements such as increased cereal production that has been facilitated by a conducive enabling environment. Hence policy that addresses the lack of support services and low prices of commodities is key to competitiveness as it impacts on different aspects of production.

20. Technologies have to be adapted to the local conditions and research needs to be reinforced through development of human resources. Special attention should be given to development of technologies that enhance rain-fed agriculture while supporting small-scale and low-cost irrigation and water harvesting technologies especially for semi –arid and drought prone areas.

21. Strategies to bring together farmers, input suppliers processors, traders, agricultural banks etc., to chart out partnerships and develop cohesive programmes to promote competitiveness, should be considered. There are good examples where these partnership arrangements have shown significant results.

22. Intra-regional trade present challenges especially for the landlocked countries and special attention should be made to develop infrastructure such as feeder roads, rail and water transportation to open up these remote areas as well as developing improved marketing information systems.

23. Infrastructure development including marketing, electrification and irrigation, agro-processing, etc. is a major constraint in many African countries and there is need for a concerted effort by government and public-private partnership to promote financing in this area.

24. An assessment of what needs to be done to promote trade within Africa is required. There is currently lack of pooling of resources in trade negotiations and FAO can play a role in

- i) capacity building to strengthen skills on international trade standards in order to enhance access to markets
- ii) analysing in which commodities member countries have competitive and comparative advantages; and
- iii) studies to develop common agricultural policies in the RECs

The technical meeting noted the need to articulate how the WTO Hong Kong meeting held in December 2005 will affect agriculture in Africa. It was pointed out that there are many resolutions made in such meeting but there is lack of effective follow up and implementation.

25. The poor access to financial resources and the lack of strategies for resource mobilisation were noted. Most farmers are out of range of banking facilities and the current micro-financing facilities are not adequate leading to low levels of investments. There is need to improve on current micro-financing strategies as well as develop strategy to facilitate Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) to improve investment and access by farmers. In addition, intermediaries in financing are required and FAO in consultation with specialized institutions can contribute to the organization of training in financing.

26. Competitiveness must include all the aspects of farming systems which integrate crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries at the farm level. There are many instances where livestock complements cropping by acting as a source of savings and financing.

27. Investment in research, technology development and dissemination and in developing capacity for adaptation of technology to country needs is crucial. Value added and processing activities are also crucial to enhanced competitiveness of agricultural products and to that end, appropriate measures should be put in place in the production areas.

28. Structural adjustment measures leading to the privatisation of marketing and disfranchising marketing boards left small scale farmers without access to support services including marketing information. Strategies for linking farmers to markets need to be re-visited to improve access to these crucial services and to facilitate the participation of farmers in the agro-industrial sector.

African Seeds and Biotechnology Programme (ARC/06/4)

29. Seed is one of the most crucial elements in the livelihoods of agricultural communities. Africa has been unable to take full advantage of the recent advances in seed sector development mainly because of weak seed production and distribution systems, inadequate supply of quality seed, lack of access to improved germplasm, weak entrepreneurial capacity of small- and medium-size seed enterprises, and inadequate implementation of seed policies and international agreements and conventions.

30. The Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) in Sirte, Libya, on 5 July 2005, in discussing the importance of improved seeds for increasing agricultural productivity and food security in the continent, recognized that African governments cannot alone confront challenges represented by developments in the international seed industries and by legal and technical issues which restrict seed exchange. The African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) is proposed to provide a strategic approach for the comprehensive development of the seed sector and biotechnology in Africa, taking into account the different needs of the countries and regions. However CSO Representatives present at the Conference requested a 10-year moratorium on the uptake of GMOs.

31. Member countries participating in the FAO 24th Regional Conference welcomed the proposal and applauded the integrated approach of the programme. They requested FAO and its Member States to develop an Action Plan with clear indications of detailed activities, timeframes and allocation of responsibilities.

32. To improve on their proposal participants made the following recommendations:

- a) Institutional arrangements should be clearly defined with emphasis on reliance on African expertise.
- b) Duplication of efforts should be avoided by ensuring collaboration among the Regional and Subregional Organizations, including research and training institutions and taking into account existing programmes/initiatives at national, sub-regional and regional level.

- c) Identify priorities for progressive implementation e.g. seed production starting with the main crops including forage and forests; policy and legal arrangements on seeds and Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA), and capacity building on technical issues such as seed quality control, phytosanitary, varietal uniformity aspects and traceability etc.
- d) Encourage African research institution to resuscitate seed research and government to upgrade existing facilities.
- e) Activities related to the use of biotechnology for improving seeds together with the envisaged initiative for capacity building to manage genetically modified organisms, should be in compliance with the relevant conventions, protocols as well as national policies and legal frameworks.
- f) Assess the level of investment in seed development, production and trade including funds for the conservation and use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and identify the conditions needed to increase such investments.
- g) Participants from the A.U. Member States requested to receive a progress report on the development of the Action Plan at the next Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government to be held in July 2006 in Banjul, the Gambia.
- h) The budget of the Plan of Action should reflect the need to place strong emphasis on capacity building and potential funding services to be clearly identified. In revising the indicative budget presented in the document, a balance should be maintained by allocating more funds for capacity building and upgrading research institutions.

Policy and Regulation of Biotechnology in Food Production (ARC/06/INF/5)

33. Modern agricultural biotechnology has become a highly controversial issue which polarizes civil society in terms of the potential benefits and risks of adopting genetic engineering technologies and resulting products in food and agriculture systems. Africa as a region is grappling with policy and regulatory choices as it tries to position itself in the current global discussions. This paper reviews existing policy and regulatory instruments and summarizes discussions in the region on genetically modified products. It contains general considerations and recommendations for national, sub-regional and regional dialogue on the sensitive issue of incorporating genetically modified products in food and agriculture systems in Africa.

34. The introductory summary aroused considerable interest among participants who were reassured by the complementarity of this theme with that the African Seed and Biotechnology programme.

35. Participants called for national, sub-regional/regional initiatives aimed at:

- i) reinforcing capacities in the formulation of national regulatory frameworks;
- ii) reinforcing human capacities of National Biosafety Committees (in terms of critical mass and level of expertise) and
- iii) reinforcing national and subregional capacities for the implementation of GMO diagnostic/analytical tools for informed decision-making that complied with the terms set out in existing conventions, protocols as well as national policies and legal frameworks.

36. Participants also stressed the need to have an understanding of the benefits and risks associated with the adoption and use of biotechnology products and called upon public research institutions to be in the forefront of research on biotechnology while ensuring effective public awareness and information sharing.

37. It has also been suggested that all available biotechnology options (including selection by molecular marker, micropropagation, tissue culture, cloning, embryo transfer and genetic engineering, etc.) be taken into consideration as a "*continuum*", *each option being used according to its specific characteristics on a case by case basis.*

Fire in the Agriculture-Forestry Interface (ARC/06/INF/6)

38. The document was introduced to the Committee as a paper recommended by the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC). The outcome of its discussion by this conference will be brought to the attention of the AFWC at its 15th session in Maputo, Mozambique in March 2006.

39. The paper highlighted the following key points:

- Fire has been used by people in Africa for many thousands of years and therefore should be considered a natural phenomenon. It is not fire as such that is a problem but the way it is (mis)-applied;
- Fire is probably the oldest land- and resource-use tool employed by people;
- Fire regimes for agricultural land-use purposes modify extensively landscapes.
- Fires in Africa contribute an estimated 24 % to global carbon dioxide emissions from biomass burning, and almost 10 % to global CO emissions from all human sources;
- Fires are a source of smoke, particulates, aerosols and precursor gases to the production of tropospheric ozone;

- Regional atmospheric circulation systems distribute the products of fires far from their sources. During this circulation, the gases and aerosols interact, with solar radiation serving as the catalyst;
- Regular burning may adversely affect soil quality;
- Community-based natural resource management programmes across Africa provide an opportunity for collaboration in managing fires;
- Capacity building programmes on fire management at local level will contribute towards enhancing participatory management and control of wild fires.

The paper was discussed by the Committee:

40. Delegates stressed negative impacts of fires in rural areas, as contributing to destruction of trees, crops, pastures, livestock and wildlife. They raised the need to sensitize local population and strengthen their capacity for fire prevention, control and management.

41. The Committee further recommended that FAO, in collaboration with relevant Partners, should pursue efforts to prepare Fire Control Manuals and provide training and equipment to village level fire brigades, as is done in some African countries.

42. The issue of the impacts of fire on carbon emissions and climate changes needs more documented studies. The Committee recommended that FAO and relevant Partners should pursue work on this issue in order to improve understanding and knowledge of both citizenry and political leaders.

43. Delegates commended the establishment of Networks and Working Groups on Fire in Sub-Saharan Africa. They urged FAO to strengthen these initiatives and to help countries make optimal use of remote sensing data for bush fire prevention and control at different levels.

44. The example of Mali where meteorological information is used by the citizenry prevent bush fire occurrence was strongly commended. It was recommended that FAO should help disseminate such successful national initiatives to other member countries in the region.

Agrarian Reform, Land Policies and the Millennium Development Goals: FAO's interventions and lessons learned during the Past decade (ARC/06/INF/7)

45. The information note paper underlined that access to land is a crucial factor in the eradication of food insecurity and entrenched rural poverty in Africa, where the majority of the population are rural smallholders and nearly half of the population lives in poverty. Getting the land issue right, it was stated was fundamental to sustainable development and investment and economic national growth. It underscored that rising demographic pressures are generating land scarcity, overuse and degradation of land and natural

resources, and that competition and inequities bear serious consequences for the poor and marginalized.

46. The paper highlighted that secure access to land provides a valuable safety net as a source of shelter, food, income and sustainable livelihoods, and that appropriate land policies, improved institutions and secure access to land contribute immensely to achieving the MDGs goals, addressing MDG1 (poverty and hunger eradication), MDG 7 (urban and peri-urban interface and environmental sustainability), and MDG 8 (global partnership for development) in specific. Fostering wide participation and empowerment through dialogue on local and macro levels is illuminated in the paper as critical to ensuring appropriate, equitable and fair agrarian reform.

47. In Africa it is noted that there are a number of choices in striking the right balance and appropriate mix toward strengthening policy, legal and institutional arrangements, for example: smallholder versus commercial development, statutory or customary rights-based regimes, extent of decentralized land administration, participatory processes. The paper noted that FAO is organising in March the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, hosted by Brazil, to build a sustainable global platform of exchange, partnerships and enhanced international cooperation.

48. Several members of the Committee shared their ongoing national experiences in policy formulation, design of legislative frameworks and implementation strategies and processes in land reform. This collective “wisdom” of sharing experiences to analyse issues was noted as critical for moving forward in land reform and for promoting sustainable agricultural investment. Many delegates noted that ICARRD to be held in March was a platform to strengthen this exchange of dialogue. The Committee thanked FAO for bringing land issues back on their agenda as a key rural development priority.

49. Several delegates cited decentralization as a national priority in the land and agrarian reform process, notably to ensure appropriate and sustainable land use and management, fostering investment while promoting smallholder production. Emphasis was made inter alia on reinforcing access and facility to ease registration processes at local levels to promote security of tenure (for example through “one stop shops”). It was noted that security of land tenure would enhance food security, investment and competitiveness in agriculture by smallholding rural farmers and thus promote their professionalisation and modernization of production practices.

50. The registration of diverse rights was acknowledged as pertinent to land and agrarian reform, stressing customary, collective and other diverse existing land holdings. Analysis of the local context of specific existing landholdings and forms of land use was highlighted as an important element in the process of determining appropriate policies and strategies for sustainable land reform, an initiative in which SADC informed the Committee that it is soon undertaking in partnership with UNDP Drylands Center and DFID.

51. The Committee expressed fervent recognition that land and agrarian reform is not just a technical issue, but also a social, political and economic, and of utmost national importance and concern requiring bold policies. In addition, it was emphasized that the sensitivities around land issues call for caution, iterative processes and most importantly,

dialogue and consultation at all levels to ensure robust participation and inclusion from all stakeholders and actors concerned.

52. The Committee placed emphasis on processes in support of community-based management of land tenure arrangements such as diverse land administration processes including allocation, land sharing, land-use planning, land transfers, bequeathing, and notably land conflict and mediation. Land conflict was underlined as a pertinent area for further support, noted by several delegates as increasingly relevant in their contexts given the reality of decreasing land availability, increasing desertification, rising cross-border conflicts and migrations and continuing farmer-pastoral conflicts. It was noted that effective existing customary practices in local contexts should be used when possible in strengthening conflict mediation processes, as well as use of local land commissions.

53. Several delegates cited increasing land scarcity and fragmentation of landholdings as most concerning. Promoting balanced policies in support of land consolidation, commercial agriculture and investment while also protecting land rights and production systems of smallholders was stressed as a priority area for future focus. Reaching the right mix between investment and market-oriented agriculture with smallholding family farming was a topic of discussion from several member countries confronted with this challenge.

New Approaches to Information Access under WAICENT (ARC/06/INF/8)

54. The presentation indicated that FAO is enhancing its role as a Knowledge Organization and highlighted the current and future role of the WAICENT Framework in developing and strengthening its policies, processes and practices in creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge. Further indicated that FAO has a wide range of digital repositories of data and information available online that are heavily used by its audiences, and the Organization has developed standards in support of the effective management and dissemination of these resources. These resources and their associated standards constitute principal components of the WAICENT Framework, and FAO has created internal and external consultative processes to support and advocate for their use.

55. Recognizing the great importance of its Web site, FAO undertook a major survey of its audiences in order to establish their needs, from which a series of recommendations arose for development of the site and the processes which support it.

56. The conference noted the information contained in the presentation and the efforts being made to enable FAO enhance its role as a knowledge organization.

III. OTHER MATTERS

57. There was none.

III. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Adoption of the Report of the Technical Committee

58. The meeting considered its report and adopted it after some amendments.

Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting

59. In his concluding remarks, Dr. Zana Sanogo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Republic of Mali, thanked the FAO for the high quality of the documents prepared for the Conference and the delegates for their keen participation and diligence throughout the meeting. He also thanked the Rapporteurs and the secretariat for the long hours they devoted to put together an excellent and succinct report, making it easier for it to be adopted by delegates with only few amendments.

APPENDIX I**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE****Bamako, Mali, 31 January – 1 February 2006****1. Background**

The African Union Conference for Ministers of Agriculture recognized and reiterated the importance of agriculture and the need for Africa to utilize its full potential to increase its food and agricultural production so as to guarantee sustainable food security and ensure economic prosperity for its peoples. The conference recalled the numerous decisions and initiatives adopted by the African Heads of State and Government to address the situation. These include: (i) the preparation of the “Status of Food Security Report” that would be presented to the Assembly every July; (ii) the integration of the Implementation of the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water with the Comprehensive Africa’s Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) to be reported to the 9th Executive Council in July 2006; (iii) the request to define, in collaboration with Member States and the NEPAD Secretariat, the core areas of agriculture and rural development relevant to the 10 percent budget allocation and report regularly.

The convening of the current Conference of the AU Ministers of Agriculture from 31 January to 1 February 2006 in Bamako, Mali, is to consider and discuss the reports that have been prepared by the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat in accordance with the request of the Assembly.

2. Participation

The Following Member States of the African Union participated in the Conference: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In addition, the following agencies, organizations and institutions also participated in the Conference: NEPAD, COMESA, ECCAS, ECOWAS, SADC, AMU, CILSS, UEMOA, FARA, FAO, IFAD, IFDC, IFPRI, UNECA, WFP.

3. Election of Bureau

The Chair for the opening session called on the bureau as constituted in the recent AU summit in Khartoum to preside over the meeting.

Chair:	Republic of Congo
1 st Vice Chair:	Sudan
2 nd Vice Chair:	Egypt

3rd Vice Chair: Namibia
 Rapporteur: Mali

4. Consideration of the Report of Experts

Following the presentations and discussions the conference made the following recommendations.

5.1 Status of Food Security in Africa

The conference reviewed the regional trend of the food security situation and noted that although the percentage of undernourished people in Africa decreased by two percent (from 29 to 27 percent), the absolute number increased by 20 percent (from 176 to 210 million people) over the period 1990/92 to 2000/02. The conference also noted that the rates for undernourishment in the various regions were 4% in North Africa, 16% for West Africa, 40% for Southern and East Africa and 55% for Central Africa.

The serious challenges posed to food security by factors such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, natural and man-made disasters especially conflicts and civil unrest were acknowledged.

The Conference recalled the World Food Summit and MDG objectives of reducing hunger and malnutrition by half by the year 2015; and noted that currently there are many countries in Africa facing serious food shortages especially in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and some countries in Southern Africa.;

The conference deliberated extensively on some strategic initiatives being undertaken at different levels to increase food production including use of irrigation, fertilizer, improved seeds, agricultural implements, research and extension, developing market infrastructure and trade; improving agricultural financing. The conference reached a consensus on the importance of coordinating and aligning these food security initiatives and called for the speedy implementation of effective response to combat the situation at the national, regional, and continental levels. Member States and the Regional Economic Communities were particularly urged to develop intra and inter-regional trade in food products particularly from food surplus to deficit zones. The Conference recommended strengthening the capacity of the African Union Commission in order to improve coordination of initiatives in the area of food security at the continental and sub-regional level.

6.1 CAADP - Sirte Implementation

The conference reiterated the urgent need to respond to Africa's critical problems of hunger, poverty and disease by employing innovative complementary and comprehensive approaches aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and growth.

The conference referred the decisions the African Heads of State and Government adopted on the Comprehensive Africa's Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of AU/NEPAD in Maputo in 2003, as a framework for the restoration of agriculture sector development in Africa and noted that the Sirte Declaration on *the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in*

Africa reaffirms the Maputo Declaration on *Agriculture and Food Security in Africa* and complements the CAADP framework. The conference expressed concern at the duplication of efforts and non coherence in implementing the CAADP and the Sirte Declarations by the NEPAD Secretariat and AU Commission respectively.

The Conference recognized the progress made by many Member States in the development of National Medium-Term Investment (NMTIPs) and Bankable Investment Project Profiles within the framework of CAADP. The conference urged Member States to accelerate implementation of CAADP by adopting the NMTIPs and BIPPs and include them in their National Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and to ensure funding from domestic budgets, savings resulting from debt relief, and, where appropriate, resources mobilized from bilateral and multilateral donors. The African Union Commission was urged to play the leadership role to coordinate the implementation of CAADP-Sirte and support the NEPAD Secretariat and RECs to plan, assess and monitor the progress at continental, regional and national level. The conference further requested the African Union Commission, NEPAD and the RECs to assist Member States in advocating and mobilizing resources for implementing the national programmes as well as monitoring the progress.

6.2 Progress Report on CAADP Implementation with emphasis on Country Level Activities:

6.2.1 Natural resource management

The conference recognized the importance of water, land and fisheries resources for food production and income generation and urged Member States with irrigation potential to take advantage of the African Water Facility hosted by the African Development Bank and World Bank. Member States were encouraged to mobilize matching resources to upscale successful experiences in sustainable land management and other natural resources within the TerrAfrica initiative.

After acknowledging the fragile food security and poor nutrition in the continent; and Recognizing the importance of agribusiness and infrastructure in the promotion of food security and income generation, the Conference **urged** Member States to implement policies and programs that support small scale farmers and the expansion of agribusiness activities, including contract farming for smallholder farmers.

The conference called for a special attention to be given to the national and regional infrastructure development to facilitate marketing of agricultural products and the expansion of trade in food markets. The development and strengthening of the existing food reserve systems, including market information systems, weather based production insurance schemes should also be addressed.

On Research and technology transfer, the conference recognized the importance of agricultural research, technology dissemination and transfer and called on regional economic communities and Member States to realign their regional and national research priorities to the Framework for Africa Agricultural Productivity (FAAP) within the broader CAADP framework with the support and collaboration of FARA.

Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System (10% Budget)

The conference considered the outcome of the AU/NEPAD experts' consultative workshops held on the Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System within the context of the Maputo Declaration on the commitment of Member States to allocate at least 10% of their budgets to agriculture and rural development and the Abuja AU Assembly decision on the need for a definition of the core areas for the 10% budget allocation using an internationally accepted system that allows comparison across countries. The conference then adopted the following recommendations:

1. The adoption of the Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) System as described in the "Guidance Note" developed by the AU/NEPAD for use in Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System.
2. Crop, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry sectors (including Research and Development in these sectors) be the core areas for the allocation of the 10%.
3. Use of expenditure data rather than the budget data for the tracking system.
4. Member States to submit, by December 31 of each year, the duly completed Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System questionnaire to the African Union Commission.
5. That Member States utilise sufficient budgetary resources for the global development of rural areas.
6. That Member States place particular emphasis on the development of national and regional infrastructure to facilitate trade of agricultural goods.

The conference finally closed its sessions on the reception of information notes by the NEPD Secretariat on the status of preparation for the forth coming Fertilizer summit scheduled for Abuja – Nigeria in June 2006 as well as the status of implementation of the TerrAfrica Sustainable Land Management Initiative.

APPENDIX J**FINAL STATEMENT OF THE FIFTH FAO-FO/NGO/CSO REGIONAL
CONSULTATION****Bamako, Mali, 27 -29 January 2006**

The Fifth Regional Consultation of farmer organizations, non-governmental organizations and other components of African civil society was held on 27, 28 and 29 January 2006 in Bamako, Mali. These consultations serve as a consultative mechanism that enables:

- i) Civil society organizations meeting within the International Planning Committee (IPC) to monitor implementation of the guidelines from the World Food Summit: *five years later* (WFS:fyL);
- ii) FAO to consider their positions during discussions and decisions on rural development and the fight against hunger.

The participants welcomed the fraternal atmosphere at the consultation and the facilities made available to them by the Government of Mali, FAO, the International Planning Committee and Italian Cooperation. They thanked the National Coordination of Farmer Organizations (CNOP) of Mali and the Network of Peasant Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of West Africa (ROPPA) for their unstinting help in organizing the meeting.

The purpose of this 5th Consultation was to prepare the participation of farmer organizations and other components of civil society in the 24th FAO Regional Conference, so that they could communicate their views and proposals on the direction to be followed for the elimination of hunger and poverty, while at the same time ensuring sustainable agricultural development in Africa.

The issues discussed refer to land tenure, the fight against poverty and food sovereignty, as well as relations between FAO and civil society. The participants were able to examine each of these issues, to engage in commitments and to put forward recommendations for the consideration of FAO and Governments.

Land tenure and agrarian reform in Africa

Land and natural resources are the cornerstone of family production systems. Regrettably, the security of their land tenure is becoming increasingly precarious, which explains why a large majority of Africa's populations have difficulty in gaining sustainable access to sufficient and wholesome food. Among other causes, this precariousness is brought about by:

- o land tenure policies that ignore customary rights;

- the propensity of certain governments to favour the establishment of multinationals or agrobusiness;
- urban expansion;
- the marginalization of certain social groups (small producers, women, the young, pastoralists and migrants);
- unjust systems of expropriation.

The situation is becoming increasingly untenable in many areas and for an ever larger segment of the population. This explains the increasing occurrence of land disputes between different users of natural resources or even between these users and the State, with significant repercussions on social stability.

This observation led the participants at the 5th Consultation to suggest a thorough overhaul of Africa's land tenure systems, which can only be done with the political courage of those in government and a firm commitment of farmer organizations and civil society to defend the rights of producers.

For the participants, the land issue has been a subject of controversy since liberalization and globalization became the watchwords of economic and social development in Africa. Land and agrarian reform needs to take place in a spirit of equity, so that family holdings and marginalized groups can enjoy their rights in a sustainable manner and can invest in the modernization of their factors of production.

Farmer organizations and other actors of civil society need to mobilize to defend their perceptions of the land reforms that are needed. They need to be informed and to be trained in better recognizing and defending their rights.

Land policies need to rest on new legislation that integrates customary rights and non-discriminatory social practices *vis-à-vis* women, the young, migrants and socially discriminated groups. They also need to provide more effective systems of conflict management that take heed of local bodies and mechanisms for dispute settlement.

Such policies and legislation need to be drawn up by adopting a participatory approach that confers real responsibility on farmer organizations, giving them their own framework for reflection and consultation on these matters.

Fight against hunger and the International Alliance

According to FAO data, hunger has eased slightly in all parts of the world except in sub-Saharan Africa. Each year, millions of individuals join the horde of people living off less than one dollar a day and suffering hunger and malnutrition. This is one of the gravest of violations of human rights.

Farmer organizations and other components of civil society have repeatedly pointed out that there can be no sustainable solution to hunger and poverty in our region without agricultural development.

We remain convinced that African agriculture can feed Africa while continuing to fulfil other fundamental missions, including the sustainable management of natural resources, the persistence of cultural and social balances, higher incomes and economic growth. Diversity of agroecological zones, availability of natural resources, our economic riches and our peasant farmer knowledge and know-how are as many assets that can be used to banish hunger for good.

We are also very sceptical of the notion that genetically modified organisms are the panacea for increasing production and eliminating hunger.

We think, rather, that Governments should attach greater importance to the volume and mechanisms of funding of investment for family holdings. We also oppose any attempt to introduce GMOs, particularly those that carry the "terminator" gene that induces seed sterility at harvest and that dangerously imperils biological and genetic diversity on our continent.

Rather than letting itself be duped by these technologies, which are questioned in many developed countries, Africa should equip itself with bold agricultural and trade policies – the only way of triggering significant positive change between now and 2015.

In a context of inequitable globalization and liberalization, only measures of protection at subregional borders and a citizen's act of consuming local products can guarantee a sustained increase in agricultural production. This requires Governments and FAO to adopt principles of food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty is the right of people to produce to feed themselves and to protect what they produce. This is the right that needs to be upheld in multilateral trade negotiations (WTO) and bilateral negotiations (Economic Partnership Agreements with Europe). Africa must therefore equip itself with the means to protect its agriculture and put in place a system of management of supply that corresponds to its food needs.

The fight against hunger requires a genuine mobilization of all forces and a synergy of actions. That is why we wholeheartedly subscribe to the spirit of the International Alliance Against Hunger. For we believe that a partnership of many actors can be an appropriate way of circumscribing hunger and malnutrition in our countries and at the subregional level. The commitment of Governments, FAO, the private sector and civil society to the Alliance must therefore be more robust and more solid.

FAO – Civil Society relations in the framework of FAO reform

The participants at the 5th Regional Consultation welcome FAO's efforts to establish closer ties with civil society. We welcome the good relations that exist between the International Planning Committee and FAO Headquarters on the one hand and between components of civil society and certain country offices in Africa, on the other.

However, we believe that actual collaboration between FAO and civil society falls far short of expressed commitments. That is why, in the perspective of anticipated reform,

Governments and FAO should take appropriate measures at the institutional, technical and financial level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing observations and findings, we, the participants at the 5th Consultation, make the following recommendations:

On land issues

1- We urge Governments to:

- a. Elaborate and implement, through a participatory approach, land policies and legislation that focus on the security of land tenure of family holdings, on equitable access to land by all, especially the vulnerable groups (women, the young, migrants, pastoralists and disadvantaged social groups) and on the sustainable management of natural resources;
- b. Safeguard the land rights of agricultural producers through appropriate instruments, including the land register, rural land use planning and the monitoring of land ownership.

2- We urge FAO to:

- a. Contribute towards reinforcing the capacity of farmer organizations to defend their land rights through the establishment of information, training and experience-exchange programmes;
- b. Provide its technical and financial support to farmer organizations and to Governments in formulating and implementing reforms, including through studies and research on land issues.

3- We, for our part, undertake to:

- a. Participate meaningfully in the shaping of land policies and legislation, by conducting independent studies and our own reflections;
- b. Advocate for the consideration of our rights and legitimate interests.

Fight against poverty

In the framework of the elimination of hunger and malnutrition in Africa, we:

1. Urge Governments, the subregional integration institutions and the African Union (AU) to:
 - a. Take into account the rights of their citizens by adopting the principles of food sovereignty.

2. Demand from Governments:

- a. The establishment of enabling conditions for populations to consume the food and agricultural products that they produce;
- b. The protection of African agriculture and the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for the management of supply;
- c. The honouring of the commitments made at the 2003 Summit of the African Union in Maputo to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture;
- d. The implementation of appropriate mechanisms of financing and support to investment for the modernization of family agricultural holdings;
- e. A moratorium of 10 years on all use, marketing and importation of GMO varieties and derived products. This delay should serve to produce appropriate legislation and to inform and train stakeholders, in particular the agricultural producers;
- f. A firm and non-negotiable commitment to counter any attempt to remove the moratorium on "terminator" technology;
- g. Strong support to agricultural research for the development of seeds suited to the production conditions of family holdings;
- h. The adoption of appropriate policy and legislation for the protection of genetic resources, and of farmer and community rights over biological resources.

3. We urge FAO to:

- a. Adopt the right to food sovereignty as a right to be defended in the framework of the guidelines on the right to food and as a principle to be observed in food security programmes;
- b. Put in place an effective programme for developing a multiparty partnership against hunger, for supporting subregional and country alliances and for strengthening farmer organization and civil society capacity to defend citizens' rights to food.

4. We undertake to:

- a. Mobilize all components of society and public and private institutions so that the fight against hunger becomes a daily concern and a citizen's act, in particular by promoting the food and agricultural products of the region

and by engaging actively in the establishment and invigoration of national and subregional alliances throughout sub-Saharan Africa;

- b. Mobilize our own internal financial resources to support actions undertaken in the framework of alliances;
- c. Pursue exchanges between African farmer organizations to reinforce their negotiating position in defining regional and subregional policies.

FAO – Civil Society relations

To reinforce relations between FAO and civil society organizations, we:

1. Call on Governments and FAO to:
 - a. Allow civil society organizations to introduce discussion items into the agenda of the Regional Conference for Africa
2. Call on Governments to:
 - a. Support FAO reform towards enhanced dialogue with civil society.
3. Urge FAO to put in place a more effective mechanism for partnership with civil society, notably through:
 - a. Reinforcement of the operating capacity of the FO/NGO/CSO unit at Headquarters, providing it with sufficient human resources and appropriate means of operation;
 - b. The gradual decentralization of this unit to the subregional offices;
 - c. The creation of operational focal points in country offices;
 - d. The establishment of ongoing dialogue and open partnership with civil society at the level of all country offices.

Done in Bamako on 29 January 2006

The participants