



Members' Update

FAO renewal



Round-up of the regional conferences

Three FAO Regional Conferences have been held under a new format recommended in the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA).

The FAO Conference, in line with the IPA, agreed in November 2009 to give an enhanced role to the conferences. They have become part of the Organization's governing bodies and, starting in 2010, will report to the Council on programme and budget matters and to the FAO Conference on policy and regulatory matters.

The first three sessions under this revised arrangement were: the 31st Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama City, Panama, from 26 to 30 April, the 26th Regional Conference for Africa in Luanda, Angola, from 3 to 7 May, and the 27th Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan, Armenia, from 10 to 14 May.

All three regional conferences discussed issues including the IPA, regional priorities and work programme, the reform of the Committee on Food Security (CFS) and the establishment of a global Shared Services Centre.

In line with the request made by the Conference Committee for follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation (CoC-IEE) and endorsed by the FAO Conference, they also discussed the "vision" for the structure and functioning of the decentralized offices network. Each conference included a forum organized with the private sector, NGOs and other civil society organizations.

The three conferences also discussed technical and policy matters relating to their regions and how agriculture has been performing:

- In Panama, member countries discussed a set of policies aimed at supporting small-scale farmers, boosting domestic staple food markets, increasing small-scale farm productivity and introducing risk-management mechanisms. They also discussed the food security situation in Haiti.
- In Luanda, members talked of the threats to poverty reduction and food security posed by climate change. African member countries also looked at the effects of high food prices on food security and the challenges and opportunities for biofuels production in African countries. Members also adopted the Luanda Declaration on Investing in Agriculture to Ensure Food Security in Africa.
- In Yerevan, the conference discussed the key role agriculture had played in moving people out of poverty and the threat to this positive trend posed by the international financial and economic crisis.

The final reports of the three regional conferences are posted on FAO's Web site. The chairpersons of the three conferences are expected in Rome to report to the 140th session of the FAO Council in November 2010.

Still to come are the 30th Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, from 27 September to 1 October 2010, in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea, and the 30th Regional Conference for the Near East, from 4 to 8 December 2010, in Khartoum, Sudan. Further news coverage of the three conferences already held is available by clicking the following links: [Latin America and the Caribbean](#), [Africa](#), [Europe](#).

Staff day is marked

FAO employees came together recently to mark the Organization's first-ever staff day.

Colleagues at headquarters were joined by many field offices in recognizing the vital role staff play in helping FAO deliver its mandate. Some 500 employees packed the Red Room at headquarters with overspill space in the Green Room, while colleagues in Bangkok helped launch the event by describing some of the initiatives taking place in their office.

Colleagues in Budapest, Accra, Cairo and Ankara also greeted staff and told of their own celebrations for the day. Director-General Jacques Diouf said staff were the foundation on which results could be achieved.

Eve Crowley, in economic and social development, told colleagues: "The challenge is to harness our strength and make the Organization as effective as possible. Success will depend on all of you."

Staff day reflected FAO's "internal vision" statement, launched last November on vision day, which included emphasis on staff working together as a team in order to deliver FAO's mandate.

The statement in turn was born out of the culture change process recommended in the Independent External Evaluation for a renewed FAO.

Comments? Suggestions? Write to Members-Update@fao.org.