COUNCIL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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Sixty-First Session

Rome, 5 - 9 November 1973

REPORT OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

Rome, 8 - 19 October 1973

Matters requiring the attention of the Council

The Committee wishes to bring the following matters in particular to the attention of the Council:

1. Its discussion on the agricultural commodity situation, problems and outlook (paragraphs 10-30).

2. Its consideration of the Secretariat's study on international agricultural adjustment (paragraphs 31-47).

3. Its discussion on the Director-General's proposal on international action to ensure adequate basic food stocks (paragraphs 48-67).

4. Its consideration of the preparations for intensive commodity consultations under UNCTAD Resolution 83 (III) (paragraphs 118-129).

5. Its consideration of FAO's contribution to multilateral trade negotiations under GATT (paragraphs 130-136).

6. Its evaluation of its subsidiary bodies (paragraphs 137-142).

7. Its review of FAO's programme of work in the field of commodities (paragraphs 143-149).

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on Commodity Problems held its Forty-Eighth Session from 8 to 19 October 1973 at FAO Headquarters, Rome. The session was attended by representatives of 58 of the 70 Member Governments of the Committee and by observers from 11 other FAO Member Governments and from 17 international organizations.

2. The session was opened by the Director-General of FAO, Dr. A.H. Boerma. Referring to the widespread shortages and sharp price increases in international commodity markets over the last fifteen months and the factors which had given rise to these, he pointed to the supply outlook as one of the main issues on the Committee's agenda. Commenting on the particularly dramatic developments in the wheat market, the Director-General welcomed the partial easing of the supply situation which had resulted from government actions, but he stressed that there were still developing countries being priced out of world markets at a time when food aid levels had been cut and that there remained the serious question of whether sufficient supplies had been set aside to meet any major emergency requirements which might arise in future.

3. The Director-General emphasized that the need for closer cooperation between governments and a determined approach to coordinated food policies had become still more urgent. He drew the attention of delegates to the great importance of providing the world with an effective food security system and, in this context, to his proposal for international action to ensure adequate basic food stocks, which was to be considered at the forthcoming FAO Conference. At the same time, the Director-General stressed the need to view the severe, current problems of supply shortages and national stockholding within the broader, longer-term perspective of international agricultural adjustment which had as its principal aim a balanced expansion of agricultural production and trade through a greater degree of coordination of national policies.

4. Concluding his statement, the Director-General referred to the new responsibilities placed on the FAO intergovernmental commodity groups for the implementation of UNCTAD Resolution 83 (III) concerning intensive commodity consultations, and expressed his hope that these would hasten effective intergovernmental action on the commodities to be reviewed.

5. The session was presided over by Mr. Juan Carlos Vignaud (Argentina), Chairman, assisted by Mr. A.V. Vickery (United Kingdom), First Vice-Chairman.

6. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda which had been circulated as document CCP 73/1.

7. The Committee was assisted during the session by a drafting group composed of the delegations of Argentina, Canada, Egypt, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico and the United States, under the chairmanship of Mr. R. Soegeng-Amat (Indonesia).

8. The Committee heard statements by the representatives of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the UN/FAO World Food Programme, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Economic Community, the International Wheat Council, and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

9. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the opening of its membership introduced by the Conference as an experiment at its last session, since it enabled all interested Member Governments to participate fully in the work of the Committee.

I. REVIEW OF WORLD AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY SITUATION, PROBLEMS AND OUTLOOK

1. Current situation and short-term outlook

10. The Committee reviewed the world commodity situation and the short-term outlook on the basis of information contained in the FAO Commodity Review and Outlook 1972-1973, in the supplementary updating document, and in the statements made by delegates.

11. The Committee noted that world agricultural commodity markets during the past 15 months had witnessed some striking changes. In sharp contrast to earlier years, most agricultural commodity markets in 1972 and 1973 were characterized by supply shortages, sharp price increases and declining carryover stocks. The commodities affected comprised not only food and feed commodities such as wheat, coarse grains, rice, oilseeds and oilcakes, fishmeal and sugar but also some tropical beverages and agricultural raw materials, especially wool, sisal and henequen, and rubber. The rise in export prices of some agricultural commodities, especially grains, rice, oilseeds, oilcakes and meals and fishery and forestry products, was even greater during recent months than during the latter half of 1972 and the first half of 1973. For instance, prices of wheat between 29 June and 24 August 1973 rose by about 70 percent or more, approximately equivalent to their total rise between 1 July 1972 and 29 June 1973. However, for a few commodities, such as sugar and beef, prices over recent months either remained stable or eased slightly due to seasonal increases in supplies or relatively more favourable prospects for current year's output.

12. The value of world agricultural exports in 1972 rose by approximately 15 percent, the highest annual increase over the last decade. Commodities in the grains/feed category accounted for about two thirds of the total expansion in trade. Gains from exports of tropical beverages, sugar, fishery products, tobacco and wine were also significant. However, the most dramatic upturn occurred in the markets for agricultural raw materials, although the impact in terms of export earnings will be felt more in 1973 as increases in demand and prices in most instances took place during the last quarter of 1972 and the early months of 1973. The only important commodities to show a decline in export earnings in 1972 were fats and oils, pepper and rubber, but for these commodities prices showed a marked increase in 1973.

13. As in previous years of trade expansion, the major share of the export gains resulting from the considerable rise in the value of world agricultural trade, approximately two thirds of the total increase, accrued to the developed countries, whereas exports from centrally planned countries declined by 3 percent. The value of the principal agricultural exports of developed countries rose by a little more than 19 percent over 1971. During the year, the value of concessional exports of agricultural products by these countries was not appreciably different from that of the previous year, so that the entire expansion was in commercial exports. Consequently, the share of these countries in world agricultural trade increased from approximately 59 percent in 1971 to 61 percent in 1972. The export earnings of developing countries rose by approximately 12 percent. These gains were substantial after the virtual stagnation of 1971, and the generally modest increases of earlier years. Nevertheless, their share in world agricultural exports declined from 32.4 percent in 1971 to 31.5 percent in 1972.

14. The unprecedented expansion in the value of world agricultural exports in 1972 occurred in a period of growing inflation, particularly in industrialized countries, and fluctuating currency exchange rates. The UN export unit value index for all commodities rose by 7.6 percent, compared with an average annual increase of only 2.1 percent from 1963 to 1971. The real purchasing power of agricultural exports for the world as a whole increased, therefore, by only about 7 percent, although the situation for individual countries varied widely, particularly for developing countries, according to the commodity composition of their imports and exports.

15. The Committee agreed that one of the major causes of the current "boom" in agricultural markets was the simultaneous occurrence of adverse natural conditions over wide areas, including some major producing and consuming countries such as the U.S.S.R.,

China, India, Bangladesh and Brazil, which caused extensive shortfalls in output of many interrelated commodities. These shortfalls led to a sharp rise in import demand and a heavy drawing down of carryover stocks to meet current requirements. The increases in prices were accentuated by recurrent monetary disturbances, changes in currency exchange rates and, in the view of many delegations, by widespread speculation in commodity markets. A simultaneous upturn in economic activity in most industrialized countries leading to a sharp increase in demand for agricultural raw materials and the more income-elastic foods gave a further boost to prices.

16. A number of countries had already taken steps to stimulate production in the coming season. As a result, output of many commodities in 1973/74 was expected to be much larger than in the previous year. But with carryover stocks at low levels, and import demand continuing strong, the short-term outlook was for supplies of most agricultural commodities to remain in balance with demand though in some cases the position might be tight. There was little prospect of a significant replenishment of stocks for the next year or two; in fact, for several commodities carryover stocks in 1973/74 were likely to be reduced further despite larger output. Consequently, prices were likely to remain high, although below the peak levels attained in recent months. The market situation in 1974/75 would thus depend to a large extent on output in that season. The delegate of one major exporting country pointed to its considerable potential for further expansion of grains production by 1974/75 provided prices remained favourable. Most delegates stressed the need for closer international cooperation, as the solution of the present problem will depend not only on the exporting countries but also on the main consuming countries. Other delegates requested the adoption of urgent measures to ensure supplies of basic food commodities to importing countries at equitable prices.

17. The representative of the International Wheat Council informed the Committee that the latest forecast of export availabilities and import requirements in 1973/74 pointed to a definite improvement in the supply/demand situation for wheat as production in the United States was likely to be a record and export availabilities in Canada were significantly higher than earlier forecast. Consequently, total export availabilities of wheat in 1973/74 were thought to be nearer the upper limit of the earlier forecast of 59 to 62 million tons and might even rise to 63 or 64 million tons. On the other hand, import requirements were likely to be lower than the upper limit of the earlier forecast of 62-65 million tons. Thus, while the situation for wheat would continue to be tight, the gap between supplies and requirements was likely to be virtually closed mainly owing to curtailment of demand by importing countries due to higher prices and the prospect of a further reduction in carryover stocks in the major exporting countries of about 6 to 7 million tons, leaving a closing stock of about 20 million tons at the end of 1973/74.

18. The representative of UNCTAD in his statement to the Committee explained that, while the dollar value of the exports of all developing countries had increased substantially between 1970 and 1972, most of the gains had accrued to petroleum exporting countries or certain countries whose exports of manufactures had been growing fast. The purchasing power of the exports of all other developing countries - the great majority - had actually declined because of the increase in the prices of their imports. Only a slight improvement in their terms of trade was likely in 1973 according to the OECD's Economic Outlook for July 1973, and the actual purchasing power of these countries' exports might continue to decline, if the volume of their exports were to fall back. The price upswings had not extended to all commodities exported by developing countries. For some agricultural commodities such as tea, bananas and citrus fruit, prices had remained depressed even during 1972 and 1973. Even where they had occurred, increases in prices measured in dollars were exaggerated because of changes in currency values. The extent of the exaggeration was shown in a new index of commodity prices recently computed by the Commodities Division of the UNCTAD Secretariat and included in the September issue of its Monthly Commodity Price Bulletin.

19. The Committee's discussion of the current situation and short-term outlook for trade touched on a number of issues of importance to many countries and regions. There was general agreement with the Secretariat's analysis of the factors underlying the present situation. Some delegates, however, stressed the influence of speculation in particular in determining price changes. Delegates of many importing countries pointed to the

adverse consequences of tight supplies and high prices on their domestic economies, their balance of payments and their counter-inflationary policies. Delegates of some developing importing countries warned that the high levels of prices might pose a threat to already low nutritional levels as they did not have the reserves to pay such inflated prices for basic necessities. Representatives of several other countries stressed the difficulties arising from the high prices of feedingstuffs for their livestock industries and the effects of inflation in developed countries on the prices of farm requisites imported by developing countries. It was pointed out that, in view of their dependence on imports for food and their vulnerability in times of short supplies, the developing importing countries should be supported in intensifying their efforts toward further increasing their food production. Some delegates of developed importing countries stated that the current situation might also accentuate their efforts toward self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs.

2. Longer-term issues

20. While reviewing the current situation and short-term outlook for world agricultural commodities, the Committee considered whether the present situation should be regarded as temporary. Some delegates felt that the probability of the simultaneous recurrences of all of the main factors which had led to the difficulties of 1972/73 was low and that therefore the present situation should be regarded as being exceptional. However, some delegates pointed out that the present situation was the consequence of structural deficiencies to which had been added temporary or short-term difficulties. Whilst stressing the difficulty of separating long and short-term factors, the Committee identified several longer-term tendencies in world agricultural production and trade which gave rise to serious concern.

21. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the slowing down in the growth of agricultural and food production in the sixties as compared with the fifties. This was attributed by the Secretariat to three main causes: the curtailment of surplus output of some basic agricultural commodities by the application of refined supply management techniques particularly in developed countries; the difficulties in raising per caput food production in developing countries due to rising population and their growing dependence on scarce capital and technology for raising yields; and the difficulties associated with changing patterns of consumption and production toward protein-rich products in the centrally planned economies and in other countries.

22. Several delegates stressed that while output levels of staple foodstuffs had been adjusted to effective demand in developed countries in recent years, the potential capacity for raising production in these countries to meet foreseeable requirements still existed and could be used if prices were sufficiently remunerative. It was also pointed out that there was a large potential for raising production in many developing countries which could be utilized if the difficulties of formulating long-term production plans were reduced by assuring market access for their agricultural exports at remunerative prices, and by providing adequate technical and financial assistance.

23. In the light of the potentialities for increased production, several delegates stressed the need to guard against the possible re-emergence of burdensome surpluses originating in developed exporting countries in response to the current state of tight supplies and high prices with attendant adverse repercussions on commodity markets. Some delegates of importing countries also stated the intention of their governments to reconsider their agricultural policies so as to ensure a greater degree of self-sufficiency in basic food and feed commodities. It was, therefore, suggested that there was a need to keep under close review the changes made in the agricultural policies and programmes by both exporting and importing countries in reaction to the current situation.

24. The Committee discussed alternative approaches to the solution of long-term commodity problems. The Committee recommended that priority should be given to raising food production, which would provide greater protection in the event of unforeseen emergencies. However, several delegates stressed that increases in production for export should not be

brought about through the use of export subsidies. In particular, the Committee stressed the need for the developing countries to be able to close the gap between the current, low rate of increase of their agricultural production and the target rate accepted in the International Strategy for the Second UN Development Decade. In this connection the Committee emphasized both the importance of the cooperation of developed countries in helping toward the achievement of this goal and the need for developing countries to consider whether adequate priority was being given to agriculture in their national development plans.

25. In order for governments to be able to take appropriate policy decisions, it was suggested by some delegates that there was a need for more reliable long-term forecasts, particularly of agricultural production. They recalled that only a few years ago views had been expressed that the developed countries should reduce their grains production. 1/ The Committee recognized that projections could not take into account unforeseeable fluctuations in weather and continuous changes in government policies in response to changing situations, and was reminded by the Secretariat that the FAO long-term projections were not intended as forecasts of what was expected to happen. Accordingly, its projections should be used with great caution in drawing conclusions regarding the actual commodity outlook. In this context several delegates felt that it would be desirable for FAO to reexamine the commodity projections, especially for the basic foodstuffs. The Secretariat informed the Committee that a monitoring exercise on these would be undertaken and, additionally, that the Intergovernmental Group on Grains decided to review the medium-term outlook at its next session.

26. Many delegates pointed out that the producing developing countries were heavily dependent on agricultural commodities for foreign exchange earnings and stressed that a fast rate of growth in agricultural production for export should be encouraged by means of guarantees for improved conditions of access to markets. In this context the Committee emphasized the importance of the multilateral trade negotiations recently opened at the Ministerial Meeting of GATT in Tokyo, and the forthcoming intensive commodity consultations to be held under UNCTAD Resolution 83 (III). The Committee's attention was drawn by some delegates to the provisions of the Declaration of Ministers approved at the Tokyo meeting, especially the principle of non-reciprocity, maintenance and improvement of the Generalized System of Preferences, and the application of differential measures to provide special and more favourable treatment to the trade of the developing countries.

27. The Committee considered the implications of the current situation and the underlying longer-term trends for the stability of agricultural commodity markets. While some delegates felt that the instability of agricultural trade and prices was unlikely to be greater in the future than in the past, most delegates felt that a new situation seemed to be emerging in which wide fluctuations in agricultural markets were likely to become more common unless appropriate measures were taken. Several reasons were given for the tendency toward greater instability. In the first place, the greater interdependence of commodity markets, particularly in those between feedgrains, oilcakes and meals and livestock products, means that large and sudden swings in production or demand in one commodity will have significant effects on the volume of trade and prices of the inter-related commodities. Secondly, the growing dependence of agriculture on industrial inputs increases the vulnerability of agriculture in the event of irregular input supplies, particularly for developing countries which have to resort to substantial imports of these inputs. Thirdly, the pursuit of autarkic policies in the larger countries, with the consequence that trade forms a smaller part of world consumption, would imply that even slight changes in their production could have substantial effects on trade volumes and prices. Finally, the lack of timely information about production trends and about policy decisions affecting international trade in the larger centrally planned countries could increase uncertainty in world markets.

1/ For views expressed on this subject, see paragraph 43 in II - International Agricultural Adjustment.

28. Several possible approaches to reducing instability in agricultural markets were discussed by the Committee. Some delegates stressed the role of international commodity agreements and the need to find new techniques to improve the effectiveness of such agreements. Others stressed the need to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers. Other measures mentioned which could be pursued within the framework of both approaches were the adoption of appropriate stock policies, the extension of long-term bilateral or multilateral contracts and harmonization of national production and trade policies.

29. Some delegates, while referring to the limitations of horizontal diversification on the part of developing countries, suggested that FAO should provide technical assistance to individual countries in evaluating the choice of alternative commodity policies within the overall framework of international trade and development.

3. Contents of the FAO Commodity Review and Outlook

30. The Committee welcomed the inclusion of the section on policy alternatives contained in the general chapter as well as in the individual commodity sub-chapters. It was felt that the new format was conducive to action-oriented consideration of international commodity problems and should be continued. The Committee also welcomed the special chapter on regional trade and suggested that such studies should be further pursued, for example by analyzing the effect of changes in exchange rates on the direction of trade and the implications of shifts in the pattern of trade flows between main trading blocs, in particular for developing countries.

II. INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

31. To assist the forthcoming deliberations of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference next month, when international agricultural adjustment will be a major theme, the Committee undertook a preview of the analyses and proposals of the Director-General's report to Conference "International Agricultural Adjustment" (C 73/15). The Committee also had before it a note which summarized the main points of the document.

32. In introducing the item, the Secretariat outlined the main features of the analysis and proposals in the Director-General's study and reported the position of the supporting studies to be tabled at Conference. The Secretariat also recalled that work in FAO on adjustment had evolved under the guidance of the Committee and the subject had been discussed at several previous sessions.

33. The Committee took note of the main lines of the Director-General's report to Conference which interpreted international agricultural adjustment as concerned with the direction of world agricultural development. What was considered a desirable direction would change over time but during the next fifteen years or so (and after adequate stocks had been built up) the report held that the essence of international adjustment was a relatively small retardation of the rate of growth of agricultural output in developed countries as a group and a significant acceleration in developing countries as a group. This would be consistent with the differing growth rates of demand in the two groups of countries and such balancing adjustments could also permit agricultural exports of developing countries to grow more in line with rates implied by the objectives of the Second Development Decade. The report included an illustrative model of trade which suggested that a policy-induced increase in exports of developing countries which would be rather marginal to total production could contribute significantly to the earnings of developing countries and could be accommodated within a general expansion of agricultural trade.

34. The question raised in the Director-General's report was how the continuous process of adjustment in the agricultural sectors of all countries could contribute better to the desired direction at the world level. At the global level there was no counterpart of the national government with its power to introduce and implement policies. Equivalent action at that level could only be undertaken by agreement. The Director-General's report therefore suggested for consideration of governments an approach to a strategy of international agricultural adjustment. Although it was difficult to summarize such a complex matter adequately, the report distinguished several major elements in such an approach:

35. The first would be an acceptance by governments of international adjustment as the direction in which world agriculture ought to move and the selection of appropriate broad objectives for this development. A basic prerequisite for progress would be the readiness of governments to try to harmonize or concert national policies in the agreed general direction.

36. The second element would consist of guidelines and targets for the changes involved. These would refer to both national and international situations or outcomes. To draw up such guidelines and to adapt them to evolving conditions would be a continuing process. The Director-General had suggested a number of kinds of guidelines or targets which could be taken into account in the initial set which might be formulated by Member Governments over the next year.

37. The third element of the strategy would be a concerted and periodical reporting on developments and outlook in world agriculture according to selected indicators, i.e. the monitoring of changes and outlook, and discussions amongst governments based on them. Following their appraisal of such developments and outlook, governments would be better placed to undertake or continue in various fora whatever policy consultations they deemed desirable to adjust their agricultural policies.

38. The Director-General's report concluded that a suitable forum for periodic monitoring and appraisal would presumably need to be chosen or established by Conference. As to institutional machinery, a number of bodies which might be used were already in existence, both within FAO and elsewhere, and the report suggested that Conference might request the Council to explore their possible roles in furthering the progress on international agricultural adjustment. It was the view of the Director-General that if international consultative machinery on adjustment had been in position and functioning, the marked imbalances of 1973 between supply and demand of some products would not have reached the same dimensions.

39. The Committee agreed that the Director-General's report provided a suitable basis for the initiation of discussions at Conference. It set forth an approach to the development of a strategy of international agricultural adjustment which, while giving a new focus to intergovernmental discussions, was also a development of previous FAO work. At the present stage, however, the proposals of the Director-General were in fairly broad outline and therefore required more detailed elaboration and discussion before their full implications would become apparent. Some delegates emphasized that, because of increasing interdependence, it was time for countries to come closer together and make cooperation more of a reality. National goals had to be related to international interests of broader nature, particularly those reflected in the strategy for the Second Development Decade.

40. In commenting on the analysis and proposals of the Director-General's report on international agricultural adjustment, the Committee gave particular attention to the following aspects: the concept of international adjustment; objectives; guidelines and targets; monitoring and outlook discussions and consultations regarding policy adjustments; secretariat machinery; and the next steps, especially those which might be taken by the Conference. The views of the Committee are presented below under those headings except that the discussion of possible next steps are reported under the foregoing headings.

The concept of international adjustment

41. The Committee agreed that agricultural adjustment was the task of bringing and keeping the supply and demand for agricultural products, as well as factors of production, into reasonable balance, both within and between countries, and of doing so in a way which took account of other objectives to which governments subscribed. An alternative brief description: "managing change in an acceptable way" was also referred to. Delegates drew attention to the broad nature of the process and particularly to the importance of aspects other than trade.

42. To many delegates the essence of international adjustment, which should be an evolutionary process, was that national policies bearing on agriculture should be harmonized to a greater degree during this period of great change in world agriculture. In the course of an improved harmonization of national policies, there was need to establish the means of taking full account of the special requirements and problems of developing countries.

43. There was considerable discussion of the bearing of recent events in commodity markets, particularly the shortages of grains, on the requirements of adjustment at the present time and what the implications were for the longer term. Several delegates were of the view that these events demonstrated the unwisdom of earlier advice that production in developed countries should be reduced and they doubted the correctness of the claim in the Director-General's report that if international consultative machinery on adjustment had been in position and functioning the difficulties of 1973 would never have reached the dimensions which they did. Some delegates, while noting the inherent limitations to the extent to which future conditions could be forecast, placed emphasis on the need to review progress regularly so as to see to what extent national policies were improved. Corrections of deviations from that trend, whether the deviations were shortages or surpluses or took

some other form, should consist more of coordinated rather than haphazard reactions. The absence of the means to bring about such coordination was therefore one of the factors in the recent difficulties. A number of delegates restated their view that the concept of international agricultural adjustment as applied to developing countries was synonymous with the expansion of their agricultural production and trade. They also said that in the policies adopted by some developed countries preference had been given to measures for insulating their markets through protection of their inefficient farms. Such policies should not be followed because of the harm which they did to producing developing countries and because they did not make an effective contribution to solving the problems created by temporary situations of shortage.

Objectives

44. The Committee considered whether it was necessary to outline broad objectives in order to have a consensus as to what direction of change in world agriculture was appropriate, especially in the longer run. The Committee recalled that the Conference, at its Sixteenth Session, had agreed that "international agricultural adjustments should have as their primary objective the adoption of measures which would meet the special requirements of the developing countries and that these should be viewed in the context of the international strategy for the Second Development Decade." The Constitution of FAO and certain resolutions of the UNCTAD conferences were also relevant in this context. Nevertheless, many delegations considered that it would be appropriate for the forthcoming session of the Conference to try to make a selection of general objectives pertaining more specifically to international agricultural adjustment but still within the context already indicated. A number of delegates emphasized that these objectives should not be related only to trade, which had received considerable emphasis in the Director-General's report, because the Conference at its Sixteenth Session had already agreed that the objectives of adjustment did not cover trade alone but also structural change in agriculture and production. They noted that trade policies in many instances were outward symptoms of domestic production policies.

45. There was wide support for the idea that guidelines would be an appropriate element in a strategy for international agricultural adjustment, covering both national and international aspects. Such guidelines could translate broad objectives into more specific terms and allow suitable indicators of progress to be chosen. Many delegates felt that the suggestions contained in the Director-General's report, such as possible growth rates for agricultural exports from developing countries, adequacy of stocks, or progressive reductions in levels of export subsidies were a starting point but the range of guidelines would need to be examined carefully and defined in more detail. The Committee emphasized the need for guidelines to be interpreted flexibly and to be adapted to changing conditions. Some delegates drew attention to how events over the past 18 months had shown how quickly guidelines which referred to the shorter term could become outdated. Other delegates noted that guidelines should enable short-term situations and issues to be placed more clearly in a longer-term context. On the question of whether guidelines might include quantified targets which were already widely used nationally and in regional schemes, it was generally thought that this could best be considered when guidelines were in the process of being further evolved. It was also appreciated that the extent to which governments might be committed to guidelines and targets would depend on the relevant circumstances but delegates generally felt that both objectives and guidelines would be more indications of intent than of commitment. It was suggested that in order to facilitate the deliberations of Conference, the Secretariat should attempt to evolve further the guidelines suggested in the Director-General's report. In doing so, the discussion of the Committee should be drawn on.

Monitoring and outlook discussions and consultations regarding policy adjustments

46. The Committee noted that the adoption of a strategy for international agricultural adjustment would require close and constant observations and analysis of developments and of outlooks. Performance, plans and projections needed to be under continuing review.

A number of delegates expressed the likely interest of their countries in participating in a periodic monitoring of adjustment progress against the benchmarks of agreed guidelines and objectives. The Committee noted that the Director-General's report distinguished between (a) discussions which, on the basis of the monitoring of selected indicators, could assess the extent of progress and problems being encountered and (b) subsequent policy consultations which countries might commence or continue in various fora. The main purpose of the first kind of discussions was to contribute to the information and understanding of governments in any subsequent policy consultations.

Intergovernmental machinery

47. The Committee was of the opinion that sufficient machinery at the international level appeared to exist in FAO and elsewhere to carry out the tasks which would arise should a strategy of international agricultural adjustment be adopted along the general lines proposed by the Director-General. It suggested that Conference might consider entrusting substantive roles to the CCP and the Committee on Agriculture, which would report through Council to Conference.

III. INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO ENSURE ADEQUATE BASIC FOOD STOCKS

48. The Council had requested the CCP to give a preliminary scrutiny to the Director-General's proposal for a world food security policy (doc. C 73/17) which will be considered by the forthcoming session of the FAO Conference. The Committee was requested to advise on the commodity policy aspects of the proposal and in particular on the proposed guidelines for stock policies and the suggested consultative machinery.

49. At the invitation of the Committee, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme outlined the Programme's experience in national food reserve projects and the conclusions of the recent session of the Intergovernmental Committee as to the WFP's future role in assisting developing countries to build national food reserves. He also recalled the main recommendations of the WFP report on "Food Aid and Related Issues in the Second Development Decade", approved by the IGC in 1970. Although the WFP's capacity to provide assistance in the field of national reserve stocks was severely limited at present by the extreme scarcity of resources, he believed the attitude of donor countries would be sympathetic when requests for specific projects, particularly for the least developed countries, were considered.

50. The Committee noted that it was not called on to decide on the general acceptability of the proposal, which would be the responsibility of the Conference. It stressed the preliminary nature of its comments especially since many member governments were still studying the proposal and had not yet determined their position, which would be stated at the FAO Conference.

51. The Committee considered that the Director-General's proposal was a timely initiative in view of the widespread concern over the adequacy of world food stocks and recognized that a major rebuilding of stocks would not be possible at least until after the 1974 crops were harvested, but the opportunity should be taken now to consider how a recurrence of world shortage conditions could be avoided. Although a new pattern of stockholding would have to be developed gradually, there should be no delay in reconsidering national stock policies in the light of the changed world supply situation, and a number of delegates indicated that their governments were actively reassessing their stock policies. The Committee noted in particular the statement of the United States delegate who pointed out that, although his country would continue to hold stocks commensurate with its responsibilities as the world's largest grain exporter and food aid donor, food storage was costly and it could not be expected that the United States and Canada alone would maintain the world's food reserves.

52. A number of general comments were made on the proposal, which envisaged an international undertaking by governments to adopt national stockholding policies with the common objective of maintaining a safe level of global stocks to ensure an adequate world availability of cereals, the basic foodstuffs, to sustain a steady expansion of consumption and to offset the year-to-year fluctuations in output. Several delegates agreed that any acceptable scheme must, as envisaged in the proposal, leave the key decisions in the hands of individual governments. This implied that the effectiveness of the proposals would be proportional to the efforts of individual countries and the extent of participation. It was stressed that it would be particularly necessary for major grain producing and consuming countries such as the U.S.S.R. to participate. In this connection, it was noted that the Director-General envisaged transmitting the text of any resolution on this subject, as may be agreed by the Conference, to the U.S.S.R. and other non-member nations requesting their cooperation. It was also noted that the U.S.S.R. was a member of the International Wheat Council which, on the invitation of the Director-General and as suggested by the FAO Council, was considering its participation in the proposed scheme.

53. The Committee considered that the relationship of the proposed international undertaking to the GATT trade negotiations should be further clarified and, in particular, it should be made clear that any such undertaking as might be adopted by the Conference should be without prejudice to any future multilateral negotiations on an international grains arrangement in the GATT or under other auspices.

54. Some delegates pointed out that the procedure envisaged by the Director-General of soliciting an "undertaking" from delegations at the Conference was quite unusual. In the past, governments had not been asked to make undertakings until all information needed for a full understanding of their nature, scope and limitations had been made available to them. They felt that this practice should continue to be respected. Other delegates stressed the urgency of initiating international action on this matter without delay, and hoped that the forthcoming Conference could take some definite decisions leading to effective action.

55. Questions were also raised as to the relationship of the Director-General's proposal for a world food security policy to the recent proposal of the United States Government in the UN General Assembly that a World Food Conference should be held in 1974. Some delegates stressed that this initiative might imply the need to revise the Director-General's proposal and also to review FAO activities in this field. The Committee was informed by the United States delegate that this proposal, as well as the possible time, place, auspices and agenda, was still under consideration in UN bodies. It was also informed that the Director-General had welcomed this initiative, and had pointed out that the forthcoming session of the FAO Conference would be an ideal forum for a more detailed consideration of the United States proposal.

56. The link between food security and food aid was underlined, especially as there was a problem of not only assuring world supplies but also of financing food assistance in times of shortage. In this connection, some delegates stressed that food aid programmes should not be used as a channel for disposing of surpluses accumulated as a result of subsidized production, since this would adversely affect world markets in general and particularly the interests of developing countries heavily dependent on agricultural exports. They further stressed that such policies should be avoided because of the need to ensure stable and remunerative prices in these markets for agricultural producers in the developing countries. They emphasized, therefore, the need for the proposal to provide clear safeguards against this danger. In this connection the Committee noted that the Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal had prepared in 1957 a detailed report on the use of food aid for building national reserves in developing countries.

57. The difficulties which would arise in the practical implementation of the proposal were stressed by various delegations in discussion. Thus, reserve stocks should be isolated from commercial markets in order to avoid having a disruptive effect. As regards the concept of "minimum" stocks, it was suggested that the operational problems of the international sugar agreement, and particularly the activities of private stock holders, had shown that over-reliance should not be placed on this as a sole means of assuring world food security in times of severe shortage. It was also suggested that the purpose of the proposal should distinguish more clearly between the food aid and disaster relief aspect, and the price stabilization aspect, since each of these aspects would require different types of international action. The Committee was informed that the Director-General's proposal had a more general purpose of helping to ensure a more stable flow of world food supplies at all times including periods of crop failure; the holding of minimum stocks with this general purpose would have an indirect effect in reducing price fluctuations, and a direct effect in ensuring the availability of adequate supplies to maintain a continuity in food aid programmes.

58. The Committee noted the financial and technical difficulties faced by developing countries in maintaining their food stocks at adequate level. Food production was a separate but related problem, since many developing countries could only build up their stocks if they were able to produce more grains than their current consumption requirements. It was felt that a programme of international assistance, as envisaged in the proposal, would be an essential element if the proposal was to be fully effective. In the view of several delegates implementation of the proposal would have to be accompanied by definite commitments of assistance by developed countries. They also stressed the importance of ensuring that the WFP had sufficient resources to play a significant role in assisting developing countries in national food stock projects. It was stated that there would be contradictions in supporting the Director-General's proposal while at the same time not assuring adequate resources to WFP to enable it to assist developing countries, and in particular the least developed countries.

59. The delegates of several developed countries pointed out that their governments were providing economic aid in the grain storage field and some others stated they were willing to extend such aid in the future. It was also suggested that the proposal could provide an improved basis for setting priorities for international aid for long-term stockholding programmes in developing countries.

60. A number of questions were raised on the cost of establishing and operating reserve stocks, and it was suggested that more information was needed on the cost of storage. The Committee was informed that a number of studies had already been carried out by FAO on storage, storage costs and food reserve policies, and these could be made available to interested governments. A recent interagency meeting had also recommended a general study on food stock policies, for use in project formulation, which would cover both the costs and benefits of storage programmes as well as other related issues. The interagency meeting also considered the possibility of organizing joint missions to assist developing countries in their storage programmes.

61. Some delegates also considered that the costs could be reduced through the holding of regional or international reserves. Recent experience in the Sahelian Zone of West Africa, which had shown the difficulties of providing aid to land-locked countries even if there were adequate global supplies, indicated the need to consider decentralized storage as well as regional reserves.

62. As regards the proposed consultations, many delegates considered it would be beneficial to hold regular intergovernmental consultations on the adequacy of food stocks. The Committee noted that the Director-General proposed the use of existing machinery for carrying out the suggested consultations, and it agreed that full use should be made of the standing bodies with responsibilities in this field. Some delegates considered that it would be appropriate for the FAO Council, with the assistance of the appropriate subsidiary bodies as suggested in the Director-General's proposal, to be responsible for assessing the adequacy of food stocks and to advise governments on any action considered necessary to remedy any related problems in assuring adequate food supplies. It was also agreed that the Intergovernmental Groups on Rice and Grains, perhaps through joint sessions, could have an important role in assessing stock levels. The Committee noted that the Grains Group had not yet been able to adopt definite recommendations on procedures for appraising the adequacy of stocks, as it considered that this involved problems which called for a thorough investigation.

63. The Committee also noted that the Grains Group had carried out a preliminary review of the information system required. The main need, in the view of some delegates, was to gain the full cooperation of all the main grain producing and consuming countries. It would also be necessary to standardize the form in which information was reported, and it was noted that the Grains Group had agreed on a questionnaire on stocks which might be sent to governments to test what information would be forthcoming. Some delegates of the Committee considered that the information system should provide an early warning, at the intergovernmental level, of changes in stocks, food supplies and policies, and that it should be extended to cover information on essential production requisites such as fertilizer so as to facilitate production planning.

64. Stress was laid on the need to associate closely the International Wheat Council with the proposed machinery for information and consultation. The Executive Secretary of the International Wheat Council informed the Committee that the IWC had commended the Director-General's initiative and considered the proposal worthy of further consideration. The Wheat Council, which could play a role both in the proposed food information system and in the appraisal of stocks, was ready to cooperate closely bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication of effort.

65. As regards the proposed voluntary guidelines for national stock policies, the Committee noted that these were intended as general considerations for governments to take into account in reviewing or establishing stock policies, with a view to ensuring that a common objective was kept in mind. They did not attempt to set forth a precise formula

for determining the level of stocks. It was also noted that the guidelines were not exhaustive, and it was intended that each country would apply them in a flexible way according to its circumstances. Several delegates agreed that this would be a sensible approach as stock requirements varied according to local circumstances and the determination of national stock levels was a matter for decision by the individual governments concerned.

66. It was suggested that the term "world food security" might not be appropriate to describe the proposal, as an improved world trading system and other factors, such as food aid, and larger food production and other measures in addition to adequate stocks would be involved in this very broad concept. Some delegates stressed that the administrative expenses to FAO of any scheme should be kept to the minimum possible.

67. The observer for the International Bank informed the Committee that the President of IBRD strongly supported the efforts of the Director-General to organize a coordinated system of national food reserves and that he was fully prepared to recommend that the World Bank participate in its financing. The observers for the UNCTAD and the Commonwealth Secretariat informed the Committee of their organizations' interest in the proposal and of willingness to collaborate at the secretariat level in future work in this field. The representative of UNCTAD in his statement referred in particular to the relationship of the proposal to international price stabilization arrangements.

IV. REPORTS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUPS AND SUBSIDIARY BODIES

1. Grains

68. The Committee took note of the Report of the Sixteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Grains. With regard to the 1973/74 season, the Committee noted the Group's conclusions that for wheat in spite of a considerable expansion of production the outlook was for a somewhat reduced but still large volume of trade and a further reduction in carryover stocks. A number of delegates pointed out that export availabilities had increased as a result of policy decisions to reduce stocks further, as well as of an improvement in crop prospects in major producing countries. A number of delegates referred to the possibility that export availabilities of wheat might be increased if the EEC reduced or eliminated the denaturing premium. The representative of the Commission of the EEC informed the Committee that this matter was being actively considered by the EEC authorities and that a decision was expected in the near future. Also for coarse grains, the Group's report indicated that a substantial rise in output was in prospect, and its forecast of trade showed a balance between export availabilities and import requirements. However, some delegates stressed that the Group's forecasts did not indicate the maximum quantity of coarse grains that could be made available for export, as carryover stocks could be reduced if import demand for coarse grains should rise above the forecast.

69. A number of delegates drew attention to the grave problems which had been created for developing countries by the present world grain shortage. Delegates of developing countries attending the last session of the Group on Grains had pointed out in particular that, even though some improvement had been reported in actual export availabilities of grains, the continuing high prices, shortage of credit, and reduced food aid programmes prevented these countries from obtaining all their requirements. The Group's report contained suggestions made by a number of delegates on ways of alleviating the harmful effects of the current shortage on the developing countries. A delegate from an observer country suggested that the Group on Grains should be asked to consider these suggestions at its next session and to make specific recommendations to CCP on this matter.

70. The Committee noted that the Group had decided that it should meet again in April 1974 to reassess the world grain position after the harvest in the southern hemisphere had been completed. It was the understanding of the Committee that this would be a forward looking assessment mainly looking to 1974/75 and possibly beyond, and that the Group intended to make a thorough analysis of the medium-term outlook at its next regular session in October 1974.

71. The Group's discussion on the practical problems and procedures involved in, and the information system required for, an appraisal of the adequacy of world cereals stocks in connection with the Director-General's proposal for a world food security policy are referred to above in section III. The Committee recognized that an evaluation of the adequacy of stocks raised a number of difficulties which the Group had encountered in its preliminary exploration of the matter which had not enabled it to adopt concrete recommendations.

72. As regards the intensive intergovernmental consultations on grains (excluding wheat) which the Group had been requested by UNCTAD to undertake, the Committee noted that a session for this purpose was now scheduled for 3-5 April 1974. A number of delegates stressed the importance they attached to these consultations, and emphasized that adequate documentation should be submitted to member governments well ahead of the session. One delegate felt that it would be premature to hold intensive consultations in April, since governments might not be in a position to make proposals on grains at that stage in view of the expected timetable for the GATT negotiations, but other delegates favoured the dates selected, emphasizing the separate character of the intensive consultations to be undertaken under the UNCTAD resolutions. The delegate for Argentina pointed out that his government had not yet been consulted by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on the type of grains to be covered by the consultations and that consequently, his government had not yet been able to define its position on the subject of the types of grains to be included.

2. Rice

73. The Committee took note of the Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Rice held in New Delhi in May 1973. It expressed its appreciation to the Government of India for the hospitality extended to the Group.

74. The Committee stressed that the developing countries account for the bulk of the world rice imports. Most delegations endorsed the Group's view that, although in the short run production adjustments might have to be in developed countries because of the greater flexibility of their production system, in the long run the emphasis should be on assisting developing countries to strengthen their production base so as to diminish their dependence on imports. The basic need was to secure sufficient supplies of rice at reasonable prices to countries whose crops were affected by natural calamities, while at the same time assuring stable markets to exporters at reasonable prices. It was agreed that wide fluctuations in world rice supplies and prices were in the interests of neither the exporting nor the importing countries.

75. Several delegates stressed that the main rice problem was still a production problem, the solution of which required, inter alia, investment in improving and extending irrigation facilities and in providing sufficient supplies of critical inputs, such as fertilizers and pesticides. In this connection the Committee suggested that the Rice Group should consider carrying out studies of the rice policies and programmes of selected developing rice importing countries which produce rice, analyzing the progress achieved and the main bottlenecks encountered, along the lines of similar studies presently undertaken by the Group for selected rice exporting countries.

76. Some delegates suggested that, in view of the importance of rice for many developing countries, the Intergovernmental Group on Rice should meet every six months so as to keep the developments in the world rice situation under closer review. However, the Committee noted that in addition to the survey of the world rice situation and outlook made by the Group at its annual session, the Secretariat carried out periodic reviews which were made available to the governments in the Commodity Review and Outlook, the annual FAO Rice Report and the up-to-date statement presented at the CCP session.

77. With regard to the intensive ad hoc intergovernmental consultations in pursuance of UNCTAD Resolution 83 (III) the Committee was informed of the documents that the FAO Secretariat had prepared and that the UNCTAD Secretariat was preparing for the forthcoming consultation on rice. Some delegates stressed that in the case of rice, the important aspects that would need to be tackled at the consultation related to the problems of pricing policy and the coordination of national stock policies. One delegate felt that a solution might be found in an international rice agreement.

3. Meat

78. The Committee noted the report of the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Meat (CCP. 73/7) which met in Rome in June 1973. Several delegates pointed out the quality and usefulness of its studies and discussions, and it was stressed that this was the only international forum dealing with world meat problems. Delegates underlined in particular the usefulness of the Meat Trade Intelligence Bulletin and agreed that the Bulletin should be continued on a permanent basis. It was appreciated that the compendium on trade and non-trade barriers had been updated but a delegate felt that a more detailed inclusion of health regulations would increase its usefulness, especially in the light of the possible forthcoming trade negotiations. The Committee supported the Group's efforts to improve its work in the cereal/feed/livestock sector and several delegates stressed the need for close cooperation in this field with the Intergovernmental Groups on Grains and Oilseeds, Oils and Fats. As concerns the Group's future work on commodity projections, the Committee welcomed the intention of the Secretariat to submit to the Group's next session a monitoring study on the 1980 meat production and demand projections, with special reference to changes in per caput consumption patterns and the effects of price changes on

the demand for the major types of meat.

79. The Committee was informed that, following the Group's recommendation, a revised proposal on an international meat development scheme would be submitted by the Director-General to the next session of the Committee on Agriculture, which would be considering the general problem of livestock development. Several delegates stressed the importance for many developing countries of expanding meat production as a means of meeting the protein requirements of their populations and of increasing foreign exchange earnings and for these reasons assistance from FAO and other sources for developing the livestock sector was welcomed. As regards the possible inclusion of meat in the intensive consultations under Resolution 83(III) of the UNCTAD Committee on Commodities, the Committee noted that UNCTAD was the competent body to decide on this question, by means of consultations between the Secretary-General and governments, and with the agreement of the latter.

4. Oilseeds, Oils and Fats

80. The Committee noted the Report of the Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Oilseeds, Oils and Fats (CCP 73/4) which met in February 1973. The Group's regular evaluation of the short-term market outlook, which now also covers oilcakes, had therefore been prepared before the recent upsurge in world market prices for oilseeds, oils, fats and oilcakes. The Committee noted that in addition to market outlook work, the Group's current programme included work on promoting trade between developing countries, on examining the possibility of a programme of end-use research for lauric oils and palm oil, and on the problems of aflatoxins in oilseeds and oilcakes. However, considerable emphasis was being given to the analysis of trade liberalization problems. The Committee felt that studies of the type recently prepared for the Group on tariff and non-tariff barriers (CCP:OF 73/5) were useful, particularly for developing countries in their preparations for both the intensive consultations under the UNCTAD resolutions and for the multilateral trade negotiations of the GATT. The Committee was informed that work on the studies requested by the Group at its last session on the assessment and quantification of several specific tariff reduction measures were well advanced and that the Group's recent and current work on trade liberalization would be part of the documentation for the intensive consultations.

81. Some delegates expressed the view that the various barriers to trade facing developing countries were not inconsiderable and that proposals for action possibilities should cover both the question of reducing or abolishing duties on crude and refined oils in order to favour industrialization in the developing countries and that of discouraging inefficient production of fats and oils in developed countries.

82. It was pointed out that tariff reductions were only one of the subjects for the forthcoming intensive consultations and that additional work on other topics would also need to be undertaken by the Secretariat in order to service the consultations. The importance of timely distribution of documentation was stressed, as also was the particular need in this group of commodities for as wide a country participation as possible.

5. Cocoa

83. The Committee heard a report on the recent session and other activities of the Sub-Group on Statistics of the Intergovernmental Group on Cocoa. It noted that the Thirty-Third Session had been convened as a special session in response to a request by the Interim Committee of the International Cocoa Council in order to provide statistical material bearing on the question of export quotas which the Council had to consider. It also noted that the Sub-Group had requested a further meeting to be held this year and that this had been arranged: first to undertake its usual forecasts of production and grindings; and secondly to discuss and make recommendations on the future role of the Sub-Group - in fact whether it should be terminated in view of the commencement of operations by the International Cocoa Council.

84. The Committee noted that delegates to the Sub-Group's sessions had expressed the view that the success achieved and the expertise built up by both the Secretariat and the Sub-Group was of great value to all exporting and importing countries, and it was their view, therefore, that FAO could have a continuing role to play in international cooperation in cocoa production and marketing. Delegates had pointed out that the statistical requirements of the Council were different from forecasts of production and demand made by the Sub-Group. Furthermore, other important cocoa activities carried on by FAO at the request of the Sub-Group would need to be taken into consideration by the governments. The representative of the Director-General had noted, however, that FAO was operating under considerable financial restraints and it had been his view that, once in operation, the Council should be able to take over most, or indeed all, of the Sub-Group's activities and in particular the publication of the Statistical Bulletin. However, the Director-General had agreed, in view of the importance of cocoa to so many developing countries, that he would do his best to meet the request of governments.

85. The Committee also noted that the Executive Committee of the International Cocoa Council had decided, in principle, that the Council would need a statistics committee and that the Executive Director of the Council had been authorized to discuss the matter with the Sub-Group and the Director-General at the Sub-Group's next session. The Committee noted that specific recommendations on the Sub-Group's future were, therefore, to be made at this session, but some delegates felt that consideration should be given to continuing the Sub-Group for the time being. A report on the result of the discussions would be presented to the next session of the CCP.

6. Tea

86. The Committee took note of the Reports of the Sixth Session of the Sub-Group of Exporters and the Second Session of the Sub-Group on Promotion of the Intergovernmental Group on Tea, held at FAO this year. It noted that delegations from 17 exporting countries which accounted for 95 percent of world tea exports had decided to continue the informal "quota" arrangement for the years 1973/74 and 1974/75 and to consult on market developments. Furthermore, the Sub-Group had decided to examine the possibilities of additional approaches in international cooperation to solve the persistent problem of low prices.

87. There had been little improvement in export prices, as the trade realized that the quotas would not significantly reduce supplies coming to the market. The Committee therefore expressed interest in the work on "multidimensional" international cooperation and in the preparations for meetings of the Exporters Sub-Group and for the intensive consultations. Studies on various techniques for improving prices - or at least for stopping the price erosion in real terms that had persisted for ten years or more - were being prepared in FAO and in UNCTAD, with a view to presenting specific suggestions. Further, since it had been agreed that promotion was an essential part of a comprehensive approach to the solution of the tea industry's problems, the cooperation had been sought of the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Centre. It was hoped to arrange first an international symposium on market expansion, at which experts would analyze techniques and methods of promotion and marketing and ascertain how consumption could be best enhanced in developing and expanding markets, and, secondly, a global study to evaluate the cost-benefit effect of different levels of inputs into promotion with relation to the incremental consumption to be gained in various expanding markets. The Trade Centre was exploring ways to finance these projects which could be of substantial benefit to tea exporting countries. The Committee hoped that the above mentioned activities would be pursued actively in view of the persistence of depressed international tea prices.

7. Bananas

88. The Committee received the Report of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Bananas. Delegates recorded their appreciation to the authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany for the excellent arrangements for the session and the warm hospitality provided.

89. The Committee noted the Group's conclusion that while trade during 1973 was likely to be in balance due to adverse climatic factors in most main producing regions, prices still presented a problem on most markets particularly when viewed in relation to rising production and distribution costs. It was also noted that banana prices had not followed the strong upward trend noticeable for most other commodities, and medium-term forecasts indicated that there was still a likelihood of a considerably greater increase in export availabilities than in import demand even at the low current prices.

90. The Committee welcomed the constructive work which the Group had undertaken in the field of access to markets and it was recognized that discussions of the Group had helped maintain a trend toward market liberalization in accordance with the spirit of the Canary Islands consensus. 1/ The Group's discussions had also brought about a closer understanding between free market and preferential market suppliers. Some delegates emphasized, however, that there was still room for further progress toward trade liberalization and cited in particular the tremendous growth in Japanese consumption since that country had removed quantitative restrictions on banana imports in 1963.

91. The Committee recognized that one of the most important problems confronting the world banana economy was how to achieve balanced expansion in production and trade at reasonable prices. It welcomed the progress achieved at the Bremen meeting and approved the Group's recommendation "that exporting countries should undertake all necessary efforts with the aim of adjusting their production programmes to market requirements, in particular as regards quantity and quality, with a view to obtaining prices which are remunerative to producers and fair to consumers and to reducing excessive price fluctuations so as to improve the income of producing countries".

92. The Committee noted the opportunity of the intensive consultations on bananas scheduled for the spring of 1974 and expressed the hope that they would yield meaningful results. Some delegates suggested that, to gain the maximum benefit from these consultations, it would seem desirable that the Sub-Group of Exporters should meet beforehand. They referred to the possibility of a meeting of free market exporting countries in order to clarify the position of this group. They considered that such a meeting could facilitate progress in the Sub-Group of Exporters and in the intensive consultations.

8. Citrus Fruit

93. The Committee was informed that the Intergovernmental Group on Citrus Fruit had not met since the previous session of the CCP but that a regular session was scheduled for May 1974 in Athens, Greece, and that intensive intergovernmental consultations on citrus fruit would be held at a special session of the Group in January 1974 in Rome.

94. The Committee took note of the deterioration in the citrus situation, in particular that of oranges. International markets were increasingly suffering from temporary imbalances of supply and demand resulting in marketing difficulties and low prices. Prospects for an improvement of the situation were not favourable as further substantial increases in supplies were expected. There was serious danger of structural surpluses of

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1/ Report of the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Bananas, CCP 67/28, para 22.

oranges and tangerines unless major improvements could be effected in market access and consumption. Although the processing sector appeared to provide some scope it was not thought that diversion of fruit, surplus to the fresh market, to processing would provide a viable alternative in the future. Specialized production exclusively for processing had substantially expanded and it appeared doubtful whether processing industries based on residual supplies could be competitive. Prospects for lemons and grapefruit were somewhat more favourable.

95. The Committee noted that the citrus economy was confronted with serious problems both in the field of market access and pricing policy. In view of this, the importance of the work of the Intergovernmental Group was strongly emphasized by a number of delegations from citrus exporting countries. They also stressed the need for more regular sessions, preferably annual, as this Intergovernmental Group provided a useful forum for the exchange of information on all aspects of the world citrus economy and for intergovernmental consultations on policies.

9. Wine and Vine Products

96. The Committee was informed of the favourable trends prevailing on the international wine market. These had been partly due to the reduced 1972 output but more particularly to the continuation of keen international demand, notably for better quality wines. Prices rose appreciably and stocks were run down. Prospects were good for a continuation of these favourable trends, although the 1973 crop was considerably larger than that of the previous year. The Committee heard with interest of the continuing efforts of the Secretariat to organize training courses in developing countries for the improvement of wine quality. Unfortunately, financial restraints faced by the UNDP had delayed the implementation of these plans.

97. The Committee expressed appreciation of the up to date information on production, trade and other developments issued periodically by the Secretariat and requested that these reports should be continued. Finally, the Committee expressed appreciation of the generous offer of the Government of Spain to host the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Group in 1974.

10. Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres

98. The Committee took note of the Reports of the Sixth and Seventh Sessions of the Intergovernmental Group on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres, and noted in particular that, at the latter session, the Group had agreed on a moderate rise in the recommended indicative target price ranges for Bangladesh jute and Thai kenaf. In this connection, the Committee welcomed the fact that Bangladesh, the main jute exporting country, had continued to maintain its export prices within the recommended indicative range. As a consequence of the successful operation of the informal arrangements, jute had been virtually the only agricultural raw material whose prices had remained stable over the past 18 months. With increased supplies available this season and a continued stability of price, its competitive position vis-à-vis synthetics had improved.

99. The Committee noted that the Group continued to review the progress of the UNDP and IBRD efforts to establish "Jute International" with a view to furthering research, product development and promotion of jute and kenaf on an international basis. The CCP fully endorsed this action, stressing the importance of finding the necessary financial and other support for research and development work not only on food crops but also on jute and other agricultural raw materials.

11. Hard Fibres

100. The Committee took note of the reports of the Fifth and Sixth Sessions of the Intergovernmental Group on Hard Fibres. A severe shortage of sisal, and consequent high prices, had rendered the informal arrangements on sisal and henequen inoperative in 1972-73, though the Committee noted that virtually all countries participating in the Group had agreed on the need to retain the arrangements in being in principle until a more normal situation would enable them to be operated again more successfully.

101. The CCP also noted that the Group had substantially raised its recommended indicative target price for African sisal, though this was still well below actual market prices, which were dangerously uncompetitive with synthetics in the longer run. The Group had also decided not to proceed for the time being with discussions on a longer-term formal commodity agreement for sisal and henequen, nor on the proposed development of an export stamp scheme.

102. The Group was continuing useful work on hard fibre research through its Advisory Working Party on Hard Fibre Research, and in this connection the CCP reiterated the need for intensified international cooperation and coordination in further research and development work for hard fibres and other agricultural raw materials threatened by synthetics. Finally, the Committee noted that full account should be taken of the special requirements of coir fibre and coir yarn in the development of the Group's work programme, especially in relation to the transfer of processing technology from developed to developing countries, and in studies of the competitive situation of hard fibres vis-à-vis synthetics.

12. Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal (CSD)

103. The Committee took note of two reports of the Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal, the Twenty-Third Report to CCP (CCP 73/13) and the Second Report on "Tied Sales" (CCP 73/19). The Committee expressed its thanks to Mr. George Mackey, the Acting Chairman of the Sub-Commtittee, who had come from Washington to present the two papers. He noted that the CSD, which had been ably chaired by Mr. A.F. Ludowyke, Delegate for Sri Lanka, until his departure from Washington two months previously, is now comprised of 45 member countries, the European Economic Community, 19 observer countries, and 7 international organizations. The CSD had reviewed 230 notifications of transactions during the period under review (September 1972 - July 1973). The bilateral transactions involved 50 recipient countries and 9 donor countries, while the notices of World Food Programme projects covered 33 recipient countries. While the discussions had focussed particularly on the practice of "tied sales" provisions in food aid transactions, consideration was also given to CSD/WFP consultation procedures and the Turkish wheat reserve project of the WFP. Efforts during the reporting period to quantify "relatively small size" transactions subject to ex post facto notification had to be set aside until the "tied sales" report was completed, but the CSD expected to give this matter increasing attention.

104. Referring to the Second Report on "Tied Sales" the Acting CSD Chairman recalled that after the first report had been submitted in 1969, the Committee had asked the CSD to continue its watchful role over "tied sales" or "tied usual marketing requirements" and "tied offset requirements". Following a proposal in CSD to review this practice and to update the 1969 report, it agreed to discuss the subject as a main agenda item with the view to submitting a report to the Committee. The second report comprised a short substantive main text, to which were appended a statistical annex and 14 country statements. The Acting Chairman said that it had been no easy task to accommodate the divergent views within the CSD.

105. The CSD report had summarized these views as follows:

(i) Delegates criticizing tied provisions asserted that such practices restricted growth of commercial markets, often tended to freeze a status quo that favoured the tying donor, restricted the commercial freedom of the recipient, diluted the quality of food aid and offered a dangerous precedent for the growing number of countries engaging in concessional transactions. They believed that global UMRs offered sufficient protection to all commercial suppliers. In the interests of continued efforts toward freer trade a number of CSD delegates urged the United States to reconsider its policy on "tied sales" with the view to eventual elimination of such provisions in its concessional transactions.

(ii) The United States reaffirmed its position that "tied sales" provisions were essential to its efforts to prevent its concessional sales from displacing its commercial sales in an established market. The United States also pointed out to the CSD that its procedures which were developed to protect its markets and those of other suppliers had been adopted in most respects by FAO in its basic Principles. It denied any transgression of the Principles either in fact or spirit, and defended its right, if not necessity, to operate as it had and stated that it would similarly defend comparable rights of other supplying countries.

106. The CSD also reported that the analysis of more recent statistics on transactions indicated little change from the earlier report, but the incidence of "tied" provisions had decreased.

107. Noting that food aid remained important even though resources were now tight in donor countries, and that therefore the role of CSD was still of significance, the Committee commended the CSD for the two reports, in particular the Second Report on "tied sales".

108. Many delegates reiterated their opposition to the practice of "tied sales" for the reasons given above, regretted their continuation and supported the relevant conclusions of the CSD. They reaffirmed the position of their governments as fully set out in the statements attached to the Report on "Tied Sales". They hoped that the present market situation would make easier the elimination, or the phasing out, of the practice. The delegate for the United States stressed that the purpose of "tied UMRs" was to protect the legitimate interests of the United States, not to encroach on the markets of other suppliers, and his government continued to discuss bilaterally and in the CSD any questions raised. The CSD had now thoroughly explored the matter, and he expected it, in its normal monitoring of transactions, to keep the CCP informed of developments in this area.

109. The Committee endorsed the recommendations in the Second Report as follows:

(i) The CSD should continue to follow closely the use of tied provisions and have prepared for it a quarterly summary of transactions continuing tied provisions.

(ii) In its regular review of concessional transactions involving "tied sales", the CSD should give particular attention to:

(a) trends or changes in such transactions;

(b) new or unusual provisions in such transactions;

(c) actual or potential impact of tied provisions on patterns of trade;

(d) guidelines followed in defining or negotiating tied arrangements;

(e) factual analysis of and procedures used in determining UMRs, and

(f) arrangements made for reporting actual shipments undertaken as opposed to potential presented in tied transactions.

110. In addition, there was wide support in the Committee for the proposal that countries using "tied sales" provisions provide interested third countries with information on the factors which led to their use, and that the CSD should look at the root causes of "tied sales" transactions and formulate guidelines for presentation to the Committee.

111. In general, the Committee welcomed the continuing useful work performed by CSD and the contribution which it had made over the years toward an orderly disposal of agricultural commodities. It agreed that, in view of the great changes in conditions which had occurred since the CSD was established nearly 20 years ago, it would be opportune for the CSD to evaluate its overall activities, and also to consider whether any change in name would be appropriate.

V. OTHER COMMODITY MATTERS

1. Pepper

112. The Committee was informed of the favourable developments in the field of pepper since its last session. Production continued to recover and international demand was strong. Exports remained at the high level of the previous year and prices had recently risen considerably. No drastic changes in the situation were expected in the near term. In view of this, the Director-General had decided not to convene another ad hoc consultation on pepper at this time. The Committee was also informed of the activities which the Pepper Community envisaged for the near future.

113. The Committee agreed with the analysis of the situation. Representatives of the major pepper exporting countries pointed to the uncertainties which prevailed on the pepper market and the persistent tendency toward wide price fluctuations. The Committee agreed that the FAO should keep the situation under review, continue to report on developments in detail in the annual Commodity Review and Outlook, and be prepared to convene at short notice another consultation if the situation made such a meeting necessary and if requested to do so by the countries chiefly concerned.

2. Tobacco

114. The Committee was informed of the forthcoming ad hoc consultation on tobacco, to be held from 5 to 10 November in Izmir, Turkey. It expressed its appreciation of the offer of the Government of Turkey to host the meeting. The Secretariat also informed the Committee on the documentation prepared for the meeting, which included studies on short-term and long-term developments and outlook, on production and trade policies, on technical aspects of leaf production and processing, on problems of health and on other factors which were likely to have an impact on world tobacco trade. The Committee hoped that the delegations would include tobacco specialists and technicians as well as trade specialists. It heard of the excellent cooperation of many organizations and specialists and of their contribution to the documentation for the session. The representative of the Government of Turkey emphasized the importance of the consultation to his country and reaffirmed his Government's hope that all tobacco importing and exporting countries would participate.

3. Milk and milk products

115. The Committee took note of the Secretariat's annual review of national dairy policies which analyzed recent adjustments and their implications for the international dairy market. The paper concluded that milk output in developed countries had tended to outstrip commercial demand again, but the imbalance was virtually limited to butter in western Europe. Action to curb milk output and to stimulate consumption had been launched by a number of surplus producing countries, and more recently milk production had been affected by the unusually high feed prices. The document also drew attention to the large quantities of milk protein fed to livestock at subsidized prices in western Europe, which contrasted with the growing requirements for milk for human use in developing countries where the gap between local supplies and demand was widening.

116. The Committee noted with interest the additional information provided by some delegates on the latest developments in their countries' dairy policies, as well as a number of corrections. Delegates of developing countries stressed the need for increased efforts to raise domestic milk output. They hoped that assistance provided under the International Scheme for the Coordination of Dairy Development would help to speed up the implementation of dairy programmes in the developing countries. Some delegates also felt that the provision by developed countries of milk products as food aid should be expanded. As such assistance had in some countries led to a considerable rise in demand, resulting even in increased commercial imports, the Committee hoped that the Secretariat could study the effects of food aid on the demand for milk and milk products in greater detail.

4. Sugar

117. At the request of the Committee, the Secretariat gave a report on the United Nations Sugar Conference which had been held under the auspices of UNCTAD in May and September/October 1973. The Conference could not agree on an agreement containing provisions on quotas and prices, and decided to continue the International Sugar Council, which should prepare the ground for new negotiations at an appropriate time.

VI. RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF COMMODITIES

1. Intensive intergovernmental commodity consultations under UNCTAD resolution 83 (III)

118. The Committee was informed of the developments concerning the decision on Resolution 83 (III) of the Third Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development on "Intergovernmental Consultations on Commodities in Connection with Access to Markets and Pricing Policy". Resolution 83 (III) recommended that the Seventh Session of the Committee on Commodities should be convened as a special session for the purpose of organizing intensive intergovernmental consultations with the aim of reaching concrete and significant results on trade liberalization and pricing policy early in the 1970s. At its Seventh (special) Session, the UNCTAD Committee on Commodities adopted Resolution 7 (VII) which provided, inter alia, that these consultations: "(a) should examine problems in the field of trade liberalization and pricing policy, and (b) should aim to present concrete proposals to governments designed to expand trade in products of export interest to the developing countries and thus contribute to the growth of their foreign exchange earnings as well as to their increased participation in market growth by (i) improving their access to world markets, and (ii) securing stable, remunerative and equitable prices for primary products".

119. The UNCTAD Committee had invited the intergovernmental commodity groups concerned, including those established by the CCP, to undertake these intensive consultations and requested the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to provide the necessary coordination in concert with the Director-General of FAO and the Executive Heads of the commodity bodies concerned, with respect to the convening and scheduling of the consultations. The resolution also invited the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Director-General of FAO to cooperate fully in the convening and organizing of such consultations on agricultural commodities for which no intergovernmental groups existed.

120. The Committee was informed that after consultations between the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Director-General of FAO, a tentative timetable of intensive intergovernmental consultations on some agricultural commodities had been agreed upon. The first group of consultations included the following commodities: citrus fruit; rice; jute; grains (excluding wheat); oilseeds, oils and fats; hides and skins; tea; bananas; tobacco; and hard fibres. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD was continuing his consultations with interested governments with a view to obtaining agreement on the inclusion of other commodities in the programme.

121. The following tentative timetable for the intensive consultations had been arranged by the UNCTAD and FAO Secretariats : 1/

Rice	14-16 January 1974
Citrus fruit	17-19 January 1974
Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres	13-15 February 1974
Oilseeds, Oils and Fats	25-27 February 1974
Tea	March (tent.)
Hides and Skins	25-29 March 1974 (Geneva) 2/
Grains	3- 5 April 1974
Hard Fibres	13-15 May 1974
Tobacco	April/May
Bananas	22-24 May 1974

1/ All sessions will be held in Rome except that on Hides and Skins.

2/ Under joint UNCTAD/FAO auspices.

122. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the UNCTAD Committee on Commodities had invited the appropriate intergovernmental commodity groups set up in FAO to undertake the consultations envisaged by the UNCTAD resolution. In this way it had taken account of the view which the CCP had expressed at its Forty-Seventh Session that intergovernmental groups established in FAO and their secretariats should be used to the maximum extent possible as the fora for such consultations in order that experience acquired in FAO might be fully utilized and unnecessary duplication of fora be avoided. It was felt that, while this decision was a recognition of the FAO role in the field of international commodity policies, it also presented a challenge calling for maximum efforts by the commodity groups involved and their secretariats toward the achievement of the objectives of the consultations.

123. It was noted that the FAO Council had authorized the Director-General to invite all states, members of FAO or of UNCTAD, to participate in the consultations on agricultural commodities to be convened under the provisions of Resolution 7 (VII) of the UNCTAD Committee on Commodities. The Committee hoped that all countries interested in the commodities concerned would actively participate in the consultations so as to promote their success.

124. The Committee also noted that the Council at its Sixtieth Session had expressed the hope that the consultations would make an important contribution to the multilateral trade negotiations in GATT. Some delegates expressed their disagreement with the content of paragraph 65 of the FAO Commodity Review and Outlook 1972-73 (CCP 73/15). They stressed that these consultations were not related to the forthcoming GATT multilateral trade negotiations and recalled that, as stated in UNCTAD Resolution 82 (III), expansion of the trade of developing countries should be pursued vigorously and should not be delayed in any way by the forthcoming trade negotiations. These delegates maintained that the consultations should focus on the trade interests of the developing countries. The success of these consultations could contribute to the GATT negotiations if the consultations brought about a more rational and equitable world trade system, which would ensure a secure and increased share of the markets of the developed countries. They expected that the developed countries would make offers as regards access to their markets. Other delegates stressed that under Resolution 7 (VII) the intensive commodity consultations could not involve negotiations.

125. The Committee felt that it would be appropriate for the Secretariat to make known to it the progress and findings of the intensive consultations on agricultural commodities. In this respect several delegates drew attention to the difference in government membership of the consultations and that of intergovernmental groups and the CCP on the one hand and of the wider membership of the UNCTAD Committee on Commodities. It was also pointed out that Resolution 7 (VII) of the Committee on Commodities of UNCTAD had invited the intergovernmental commodity groups concerned to communicate through the appropriate channels the results of their consultations to the governments concerned and to the Committee on Commodities and, where appropriate, to the Committee on Commodity Problems.

126. The Committee noted the list of agricultural commodities to be considered in the first series of consultations. It recognized that the selection of the commodities to be included in the programme of consultations was one of the tasks which the Resolution 7 (VII) of the Committee on Commodities of UNCTAD had assigned to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD after consultations and by agreement with the interested governments.

127. Some delegates pointed out that the document CCP 73/20, reproducing the text of a resolution adopted at the Thirteenth Session of the Trade and Development Board urging the Secretary-General to proceed with the consultations, was incomplete because it did not reflect some very important reservations on the resolution made by some countries. However, it was felt that the Secretariat paper should have noted the circumstances which accompanied the adoption of the resolution. The Secretariat informed the Committee that at the time of preparation of document CCP 73/20, the Report of the Thirteenth Session of the Trade and Development Board which contained those reservations, was not available.

128. The Committee felt that the timetable for the consultations should be so organized as to facilitate adequate preparation by Secretariats and by participating governments. The Secretariats were urged to distribute adequate documentation well in advance of a consultation to facilitate their consideration by the government departments concerned. In the light of these considerations the Secretariats of both UNCTAD and FAO decided to postpone the dates of the first two consultations to January 1974.

129. The possibility of organizing more than one meeting for each commodity was considered. It was felt that each consultation should be organized and programmed so that insofar as possible its work would be limited to a single session. It was accepted, however, that in the case of certain commodities a second session might have to be held at the request of the groups concerned.

2. FAO's contribution to multilateral trade negotiations under GATT

130. The FAO Council at its Sixtieth Session recommended that FAO should and could play a significant role in assisting the multilateral trade negotiations in the GATT, particularly insofar as they dealt with agricultural commodities and trade, by making available to FAO Member Governments and to the Secretariat of GATT, so far as possible, its technical expertise and relevant information. The Council asked the CCP to give further thought to FAO's contribution to multilateral trade negotiations at this session in the light of decisions reached within GATT.

131. The Committee was informed by the representative of GATT that, since the Forty-Seventh Session of the CCP, the contracting parties to the GATT, at their Twenty-Eighth Session in November 1972, had confirmed their intention to undertake new and far-reaching multilateral trade negotiations in the GATT, and established a preparatory committee for the trade negotiations in which all countries, whether members or non-members of the GATT, could take part and decided to convene in September 1973 a ministerial meeting under the auspices of the GATT to which this Committee would submit a report on, inter alia, the broad objectives and principles of the negotiations. The ministerial meeting which was held in Tokyo from 12 to 14 September had formally opened the negotiations approving a declaration in this respect.

132. The representative of GATT recalled the very intensive collaboration developed on an informal basis between FAO and GATT during the Kennedy Round of negotiations and expressed the hope that the GATT could count again on the collaboration by FAO on similar lines in the negotiations about to be undertaken.

133. The Committee noted that, although the ministerial meeting had declared the multilateral trade negotiations officially open, it represented only a first step in the progress of these negotiations. The Trade Negotiations Committee established at this meeting had not yet met and therefore had still to elaborate details of the techniques and modalities of the negotiations, the commodities and the groups of commodities and the barriers on trade - tariff and non-tariff - which would be the subject of negotiations, and appropriate negotiating procedures, including special procedures for negotiations between the developed and the developing countries. The nature of technical assistance required from FAO and the methods of cooperation between the FAO and GATT Secretariats, therefore, could be determined only after the Trade Negotiations Committee of the GATT had made some progress in its work.

134. Several delegates of the developing countries, while emphasizing the great importance of these negotiations for the future expansion of their countries' trade, suggested that FAO should assist in their preparations for participation in the GATT negotiations by providing them information not only on statistics and past trends but also on possible policy alternatives and approaches which, in the opinion of the FAO Secretariat and at the request of Member Nations, would contribute to the achievement of targets for trade expansion laid down in the International Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade. Some of these delegates also suggested that FAO should present a short document

containing a brief description of its contribution to the Kennedy Round and the contribution which it believes it can make to the current round of negotiations to the Trade Negotiations Committee in order to assist in its work of determining the techniques and modalities, and appropriate procedures for the negotiations. They also stressed that FAO studies should contain not only statistical information but also the possible alternative methods and approaches to resolve problems of each individual commodity or group of commodities. Other delegates pointed out that FAO should strictly limit its activities to providing technical expertise, which has been its role hitherto.

135. The Committee was of the view that, as an international organization, the FAO Secretariat should attempt to assist all its Member Nations, at their request, to the best of its ability and within the limits of the resources placed at its disposal. It should not, however, try to influence individual countries to adopt particular policy stances. Its proposals on alternative solutions for achieving the targets of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade should be on a global level, and should be made available to all Member Nations. The Committee, however, felt that in fact it will be mainly the developing countries that will require FAO's technical assistance for participation in these negotiations.

136. The Committee reiterated the FAO Council's view, expressed at its Sixtieth Session, that FAO could make a substantial contribution to the multilateral trade negotiations by making available to FAO Member Governments and to the Secretariat of the GATT, as far as possible, its technical expertise and all relevant information on an informal basis as in the Kennedy round of negotiations.

VII. EVALUATION OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

137. At its Sixteenth Session, the Conference decided that the Committee should undertake an evaluation of the activities of its commodity groups in the light of its criteria for the establishment and supervision of commodity bodies. At its Forty-Seventh Session the Committee made a preliminary evaluation of its subsidiary commodity bodies and decided to reexamine the question at its following session also on the basis of an evaluation of their activities made by the groups themselves.

138. At its Forty-Eighth Session, the Committee noted the relevant extracts from the reports of the intergovernmental groups which had met since the Forty-Seventh Session, namely those on hard fibres; oilseeds, oils and fats; jute, kenaf and allied fibres; meat; bananas; rice; and grains. The views of the Groups on Citrus Fruit and Wine and Vine Products had already been made available to the Committee at its Forty-Seventh Session. The Committee also took note of the activities of the Groups on Cocoa and Tea on the basis of information supplied by the Secretariat.

139. The Committee noted that all the groups which had reviewed their activities in response to its request considered that these activities were useful and should not be curtailed. The Intergovernmental Group on Cocoa had not met in plenary session for many years and activities on this commodity had recently centred around those of its Sub-Group on Statistics. The Committee felt that the status of the Group on Cocoa and the continuance of its activities should be reconsidered at a later session in the light of developments in the International Cocoa Council established following the conclusion of the International Cocoa Agreement.

140. The Committee agreed that the groups had carried out valuable and practical work which justified their continuation. It invited the groups to continue to plan their programmes of work and to schedule their sessions in accordance with the requirements of the changing commodity situations, so as to achieve maximum efficiency, and noted that some of the groups envisaged certain economies in terms of frequency and length of their sessions.

141. Some delegates suggested that the groups give priority in their work to the formulation of recommendations of specific policy measures and noted that such an orientation was also called for by the programme of intensive intergovernmental consultations under UNCTAD Resolution 83 (III).

142. The Committee decided that another evaluation of its subsidiary bodies should be undertaken in due course.

VIII. FAO PROGRAMME OF WORK ON COMMODITIES IN 1974-75

143. The Committee, at its Forty-Seventh Session, had undertaken at the request of the Conference a preliminary examination of the proposed 1974-75 programme of work on commodities under the Regular Programme of the Organization and had generally endorsed it. However, in the absence of fuller details on the activities to be included in the programme and on priorities between programmes, its approval could only be tentative. The Committee had accordingly decided to give further consideration to the subject at its current session.

144. The Committee noted that FAO's work on commodities was subdivided among four sub-programmes. These sub-programmes are summarized below :

Sub-programme 2.5.1.3. - National commodity policy analysis and planning

The activities contemplated under this sub-programme included assistance to individual governments and groups of governments in the development of their commodity programmes and policies, particularly in the trade sector, and in the formulation and support of FAO's field programmes to ensure that world commodity trends and prospects were given proper weight in the formulation of such programmes and policies and to provide a more informed basis for investment decisions.

Sub-programme 2.5.3.1. - Agricultural commodity projections

This sub-programme comprised FAO's activities in the field of agricultural commodity projections and would include in the 1974-75 biennium preparatory work for a further comprehensive set of projections to 1985. The general objectives were to improve the methodology of commodity projections to allow modification of basic assumptions, e.g. the constant-price assumption; to undertake related econometric studies of commodity demand and supply responses; to assemble, update and improve data for the fourth series of projections; to initiate special commodity studies, particularly for long-term price forecasting purposes; to make interim revisions to the last series of main projections; to provide general econometric support to other sub-programmes.

Sub-programme 2.5.3.2. - Development of international commodity policies and actions

The objective of this sub-programme was to assist governments in developing jointly measures and policies that could foster international cooperation and achieve sound conditions of commodity production and trade, inter alia, through the servicing of intergovernmental bodies, including the Conference, Council, Regional Conferences and CCP bodies. In particular: to assess the international effects of national and regional commodity policies; to develop informal international arrangements and other measures aiming at trade expansion, price stabilization and improved access to markets; to analyze possible national and international adjustment measures; to continue work on food aid principles, policies and transactions and on world food security policy; to examine the policy issues likely to result from commodity trends; to analyze the impact of synthetics on the markets for natural products; to identify needs for research on agricultural commodities, particularly raw materials; to foster improvements in marketing (grading, etc.). The sub-programme also included work on food aid matters, including assistance to WFP.

Sub-programme 2.6.1.5. - Basic commodity statistics and market studies

The purpose of this sub-programme was to provide a comprehensive intelligence service on economic developments bearing on agricultural commodities as a basis for analysis and advice on commodity trade and for national and international action on commodity problems. This sub-programme provided the statistical and

intelligence base for all the Organization's activities in the commodity field (including servicing of commodity study groups, advice to governments on commodity programmes and sub-regional integration schemes, and survey missions) and dissemination of information. The analysis it provides is a prerequisite for work in policy analysis, national agricultural planning, and intergovernmental policy consultations and action.

145. The Committee also noted that, as a result of the budgetary stringency, work would cease or be curtailed on a number of commodities since, in real terms, the overall resources for work on commodities during the 1974-75 biennium were likely to be no larger, and might well be smaller, than during 1972-73.

146. The Committee generally accepted the proposed programme of work on commodities. Some concern was expressed regarding the adequacy of the total resources envisaged for these sub-programmes in view of the multilateral trade negotiations in the GATT and the intensive commodity consultations under UNCTAD Resolution 83 (III), and other demands made on the Secretariat.

147. In the course of discussion on sub-programme 2.5.3.2. many delegates recalled that both the FAO Council and the Conference had recommended that FAO should not only study and identify commodity problems but also propose action-oriented solutions and make suggestions for possible policy changes. They stressed that for developing countries in particular, global and especially regional analyses of commodity problems and of possible policy approaches for their solution were a prerequisite for taking national policy decisions. Other delegates expressed the view that since policy decisions could be taken only by governments on the basis of many diverse factors, national and international, and economic, political and social, FAO's work under this sub-programme should be limited to providing information and technical analysis of data.

148. Several delegates drew attention to the limitations of FAO commodity projections. In the context of the present unstable situation in world commodity production, trade and prices, doubts were expressed about the validity of preparing new projections based on such exceptional years as 1972-73 and 1973-74. Some of them suggested that during the next biennium attention should be directed mainly to improvements in methodology which would make it possible to incorporate the effects of price changes, monetary fluctuations or other short-term factors into the long-term projections of demand and supply. Other delegates suggested the need for improvements in the methodology of trade projections which had so far been based mainly on the derived differences between projections of supplies and demand. The Secretariat pointed out that these and other methodological issues were under consideration and would be discussed at meetings with international and government experts before final proposals for a new round of projections were put before the Committee.

149. The Committee emphasized the importance of avoiding unnecessary duplication of work and to ensure increased collaboration and coordination with other international organizations such as UNCTAD, GATT, IBRD, IMF and the regional Economic Commissions which also undertook work on agricultural commodities.

IX. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

150. The Committee decided that its Forty-Ninth Session should be held in October 1974, shortly before the Sixty-Third Session of the FAO Council, the exact date to be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairman.

151. It also agreed that a provisional agenda for the next session should be prepared by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairman, in the light of the decisions of the Conference.

ANNEX I
ANNEXE I
ANEXO I

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LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS
LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES

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President
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ZAIRE
Kinkela DEMBE
Représentant permanent suppléant
auprès de la FAO
Ambassade du Zaïre
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OBSERVATEUR PERMANENT - SAINT SIEGE
OBSERVADOR PERMANENTE - SANTA SEDE
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Resources Management Division
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V. MARRAMA
Economic Adviser
Office of Executive Director
Rome

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i) Intergovernmental/Intergouvernementales/Intergubernamentales (cont.)

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Resources Management Division
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Chief, Resources and Purchases Branch
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Chief, Commodity Programming and
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COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT/SECRETARIAT DU COMMONWEALTH/SECRETARIA DE LA COMMONWEALTH
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Commodities Division
London

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Chef de la Division Organisations
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INTERNATIONAL WHEAT COUNCIL/CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DU BLE/CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DEL TRIGO
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INTERNATIONAL WOOL SECRETARIAT/SECRETARIAT INTERNATIONAL DE LA LAINE/SECRETARIA INTERNACIONAL DE LA LANA
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OECD/OCDE
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ii) Non-governmental/Non-gouvernementales/No gubernamentales

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SEED CRUSHERS/ ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES FABRICANTS D'HUILE/ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DE FABRICANTES DE ACEITE
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ii) Non-governmental/Non-gouvernementales/No gubernamentales (cont.)

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ANNEX II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Number	Title	Agenda item No.
CCP 73/1	Provisional Agenda	II
CCP 73/2	Extracts from the Reports of the Fifty-Ninth and Sixtieth Sessions of the FAO Council	III, IV, V and VI
CCP 73/3	Report of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Hard Fibres	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/4	Report of the Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Oilseeds, Oils and Fats	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/5	Report of the Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/6	Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Rice	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/7	Report of the Third Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Meat	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/8	Report of the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Bananas	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/9	Report of the Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Hard Fibres	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/10	Report of the Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/11	Report of the Sixteenth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Grains	VIII.1(a)
CCP 73/12	Consultative Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal: Twenty-Third Report to CCP	VIII.1(b)
CCP 73/13	Milk and milk products: review of national policies 1972/73	VIII.2(c)
CCP 73/14	FAO programme of work on commodities in 1974-75	IX
CCP 73/15 and Corr. 1	FAO Commodity Review and Outlook 1972-1973	III.1
CCP 73/16	Recent developments in the world agricultural commodity situation and outlook	III.1
CCP 73/17	Developments in agricultural price stabilization and support policies	III.1
CCP 73/18	Evaluation of subsidiary bodies	VIII.3
CCP 73/19	Second Report on "Tied Sales"	VIII.1(b)

Number	Title	Agenda item No.
CCP 73/20	Intergovernmental commodity consultations under UNCTAD Resolution 83(III)	IV
CCP 73/21	International agricultural adjustment (Extracts)	VII
C 73/15 and Corr. 1	International agricultural adjustment	VII
C 73/17	World food security: proposal by the Director-General	VI
WFP/IGC: 17/5, Rev. 1	Food aid and related issues during the Second Development Decade	VI

Number	Title	Agenda item No.
CCP 73/20	Intergovernmental commodity consultations under UNCTAD Resolution 33(III)	IV
CCP 73/21	International agricultural adjustment (Extract)	VII
C 73/49 and Corr. 1	"Ad hoc" agricultural adjustment	VII
C 73/47	Report from Ghana on the status of the International Cocoa Agreement	VI
WFC/LCC: 17/1 Rev. 1	Ad hoc Committee on the Elements of a Food Security Strategy for Africa	IV