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والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
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pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-second Session

Rome, 18-22 June 2007

REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Rome, 25-28 April 2007

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MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

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

- Its welcoming of the achievements in the Programme Implementation Report 2004-05 (paras. 7-9) and Preliminary Programme of Work Proposals for 2008-09 (paras. 10-14).
- Its noting of the ongoing Independent External Evaluation (IEE) process and its recognition that adjustments in the PWB 2008-09 may be required (para. 11).
- Its giving priority to, in no particular order, work on diseases and pests of animals and plants (IPPC, Rotterdam Convention, EMPRES and crisis management), nutrition and consumer protection (Codex Alimentarius, food quality and safety), genetic resources for food and agriculture (International Treaty on PGRFA, animal genetic resources), sustainable natural resources management (climate change, environmental degradation), capacity building support to developing countries to participate more effectively in multilateral trade negotiations, agro-industries, biotechnology, extension and research, agrarian reform and rural development, gender, policy analysis and advice, knowledge exchange and capacity building, and information and statistics (FAOSTAT) (para.13).
- Its concern at the declining proportion of Regular Programme funding compared to extra-budgetary resources, and its noting that increasing dependency on extra-budgetary resources could influence negatively the multilateral nature of the Organization (para.14).
- Its priority to the issue of managing livestock – environment interactions (para. 16) and its agreement for FAO to: organize high-level consultations (para.17), assist countries upon request in designing and implementing policy frameworks (para. 18), and collaborate with member countries and other interested parties to build a body of guidelines, policy papers and decision-support tools (para. 19).
- Its concurrence with the analysis of the trends and challenges in agribusiness and agro-industries development (para. 21); and its confirmation that rebalancing of policies, institutions and services to improve focus is required (para. 22).
- Its highlighting of the risks being faced by small farmers, processors and traders (para. 23) and the risks of industry-developed standards and quality requirements (para. 26).
- Its recommendation that FAO give priority to responding to the challenges of agribusiness and agro-industries development by reinforcing expertise and capacity, providing high quality information and analysis, supporting agro-industry and value chain programmes and enhanced public-private cooperation, and establishing close working relations with UNIDO, other UN agencies and other relevant organizations (para. 28); and its welcoming of the organization of a Global Agro-Industries Forum (para. 29).
- Its noting of the importance of biodiversity and bioenergy to environmental sustainability and food security and its stressing of the increasing concerns of climate change and weather extremes on agriculture (para. 30); its concurrence with FAO's key role with regard to environmental issues related to food and agriculture (para. 31); and its general support to conducting a study on possible elements of an FAO Strategic Framework for Agriculture and Environmental Challenges of the 21st Century (paras. 32–36).
- Its recalling the importance of FAO providing technical assistance to countries on complex issues such as location-specific energy crops, adaptation options to climate change, managing the environment-livestock interface, and for the provision of knowledge tools and advice, possibly through TCPs (para. 37).
- Its acknowledgement of the importance of water resources for agriculture and food production and in poverty alleviation (para. 39); its agreement on the importance of increasing water-use efficiency and water productivity in irrigated agriculture in the context of Integrated Water Resources Management (para. 40); its recommendation that FAO strengthen its efforts to determine the consequences of climate change on water resources and for the agricultural sector (para. 42); and its welcoming of the proposal for a multidisciplinary integrated framework to address water scarcity (para. 47).

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- Its emphasis on the importance of agrarian reform and rural development and the significant and unique role of FAO in the outcome and follow-up of ICARRD (para. 48); its decision to request the Secretariat (i) to submit information on the cross-sectoral treatment by FAO of agrarian reform and rural development, with clearly defined functional responsibilities and points of contact; and (ii) to provide an overview of the existing and ongoing activities of FAO, the capacities of the Regional Offices, FAO technical cooperation programmes, and cost estimates for possible implementation by FAO of recommendations contained in Paragraph 30 of the ICARRD Declaration; and its decision to propose for the consideration of the Regional Conferences, to include in their agendas, the issue of agrarian reform and rural development and ICARRD follow-up (para. 49).

Introduction

1. The Twentieth Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) (Rome, 25-28 April 2007) was attended by representatives of 113 Members of the Committee and by observers from four other Member Nations of FAO. Also participating were observers from the Holy See, the Sovereign Order of Malta, observers from three intergovernmental and 28 international non-governmental organizations having status with FAO, and from one institute of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. The countries and organizations represented at the Session are shown in Appendix C. The Committee was informed that the European Community was participating in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Article II of the FAO Constitution, as outlined in document COAG/2007/Inf.5.

2. Mr David A. Harcharik, Deputy Director-General, made a statement on behalf of the Director-General, which is attached as Appendix D.

I. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons

3. In accordance with Rule I of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee elected Mr Habib Hussein Nasser Al Aboudi of the United Arab Emirates as the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Antonio Pinho of Portugal as the First Vice-Chairperson and Ms Margaret Mohapi of the Republic of South Africa as the Second Vice-Chairperson.

4. The Committee also appointed the following members of the Drafting Committee: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Oman, Philippines, Senegal and Uganda. Mr Paul Murphy of Canada was appointed Chairperson of the Drafting Committee.

II. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable for the Session

5. The Committee agreed to amend the Agenda in order to include “International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD): Outcome and Follow-up” as Item 8. The numbering of the items following was changed accordingly. The timetable was also amended to allow discussion of this new agenda item early in the meeting. The Committee noted that several side events had been organized outside plenary to inform delegates on activities and initiatives in food and agriculture. The revised Agenda and Timetable were adopted. The Agenda is attached as Appendix A.

6. The list of documents placed before the Committee is shown in Appendix B.

III. Review of FAO’s Programme of Work in the Food and Agriculture Sector

A. Programme Implementation Report 2004-05

7. The Committee welcomed the report, noting that its new format and presentation provided clearer and more comprehensive reporting of regional dimensions and extra-budgetary resources and achievements were more evident. Many Members suggested further emphasis on a “results-based” approach, including quantitative analysis of outputs produced and the results of auto-evaluations. They expressed a desire for more information on partnerships, particularly between Rome-based UN agencies on food and agriculture. Some Members expressed concern that the 2004-05 Programme of Work was too fragmented.

8. The Committee appreciated the achievements highlighted in the report despite declining resources and noted FAO’s important contribution to world food security.

9. Reference was made to COAG information document COAG/2007/Inf.14 “*New Initiative for Pesticide Risk Reduction*”, welcoming the international initiative to reduce risks associated with the use of toxic pesticides in general.

B. Preliminary Programme of Work Proposals for 2008-09

10. The Committee welcomed the Preliminary Programme of Work Proposals for 2008-09 and supported its main thrusts. It noted the context of the document in the current planning and budgetary cycle, and the reasons for the lack of detailed 2008-09 resource allocations (see COAG/2007/3 para. 5).

11. The Committee took note of the ongoing Independent External Evaluation (IEE) process and recognized that, following consideration by the Governing Bodies, adjustments in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2008-09 may be required.

12. In considering areas of work for the biennium, Members stressed the need to maintain an adequate balance between normative and operational activities. The importance of linking global norms with their implementation at country and field levels through capacity building was emphasized.

13. The Committee gave particular priority to, in no particular order, work on diseases and pests of animals and plants (IPPC, Rotterdam Convention, EMPRES and crisis management), nutrition and consumer protection (Codex Alimentarius, food quality and safety), genetic resources for food and agriculture (International Treaty on PGRFA, animal genetic resources), sustainable natural resources management (climate change, environmental degradation), capacity building support to developing countries to participate more effectively in multilateral trade negotiations, agro-industries, biotechnology, extension and research, agrarian reform and rural development, gender, policy analysis and advice, knowledge exchange and capacity building, and information and statistics (FAOSTAT). Many Members considered the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security to be a priority. A Member commented that careful treatment of FAOSTAT is needed, including consistency with the old data.

14. The Committee noted the concerns expressed by some Members at the trend of declining resources for the Regular Programme. The Committee expressed concern at the declining proportion of Regular Programme funding compared to extra-budgetary resources, and noted that increasing dependency on extra-budgetary resources could influence negatively the multilateral nature of the Organization.

IV. Managing Livestock – Environment Interactions

15. The Committee expressed appreciation for the document COAG/2007/4. It supported the role of FAO in assisting member countries in reducing the negative environmental impacts of the livestock sector.

16. The Committee attributed priority to this issue in FAO’s Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). While many Members called for a dedicated programme element dealing with this issue, some Members suggested that this should be considered within the broader context of the PWB 2008-09 and taking into account the results of the IEE. While some Members called on donors to provide extra-budgetary resources in support of FAO’s Regular Programme commitments in this area, some other Members expressed the view that FAO should work in this area within existing resource levels.

17. The Committee agreed on the proposal for FAO to organize high-level consultations to assess the scope of livestock-environment interactions and regional variations on their nature and extent, and to identify trade-offs and priority areas for policy development and technical interventions. Several Members expressed that in the analysis of livestock-environment issues,

due attention should be given to the possible positive impacts that livestock could have on the environment and livelihoods.

18. The Committee endorsed the need for FAO to assist countries upon request in designing and implementing policy frameworks to address cross-boundary environmental issues including support to the implementation of international treaties in the area of climate change, biodiversity, water and land degradation.

19. The Committee called on FAO in collaboration with member countries and other interested parties, including the private sector, to build a body of guidelines, policy papers and decision-support tools on mitigating environmental impacts of the livestock sector.

20. Many Members did not support the recommendation in COAG/2007/4, IV, para. 64, bullet 4, that FAO explore opportunities to facilitate international certification schemes in support of sustainable livestock production, as these might be used as non-tariff trade barriers.

V. Challenges of Agribusiness and Agro-industries Development

21. The Committee expressed appreciation for the document COAG/2007/5, noting the importance of trends relating to agribusiness and agro-industries development. The Committee concurred with the analysis of the trends and challenges.

22. The Committee recognized the growing importance of agribusiness and agro-industries in developing regions, and the crucial role of agro-industries in economic development and poverty reduction. Many Members recalled their own experiences and pointed out that they faced major challenges in making adjustments to the organizational and institutional changes taking place in the agricultural sectors of their countries. The Committee confirmed that rebalancing of policies, institutions and services to focus on agribusiness and agro-industries development was required.

23. The Committee drew attention to the risks being faced by small farmers, processors and traders. Many Members expressed concern about the potential impacts on small farmers. The Committee agreed that there was a need to assess and address trade-offs between the rapid pace of agro-industries development and impacts on small-scale farmers and processors.

24. Many Members emphasized the importance of creating business-enabling environments, and noted their support for policy reform and institutional strengthening relating to:

- legal and regulatory frameworks for resources, assets and business operations;
- public sector cooperation with the private sector;
- development of industry and producer organizations;
- clarification of institutional mandates for supporting investment in agribusiness and agro-industries.

25. The Committee drew attention to the need for value-chain programmes that improve the delivery of services to agro-industries, create value-added for small farmers and help farmers respond to changing markets and consumer requirements. Some Members noted their need for technical assistance for such programmes.

26. The Committee also drew attention to the matter of industry-developed standards and quality requirements, and the risks associated with their proliferation. Several Members expressed the view that governments have a role in optimizing the impacts and improving the fairness of industry-developed standards and requirements. Some Members recalled the importance of consistency and the priority of public standards.

27. Many Members concurred with the assessment that responding to the challenges of agribusiness and agro-industries development required increased attention to and capacity for public sector actions relating to:

- analysis of country, regional and global trends and the performance of agro-industries;

- enabling policies, institutions and services including information systems;
 - support for specific agro-industries and value chains and mechanisms to link public and private sector resources.
28. The Committee recommended that FAO give priority to responding to the challenges of agribusiness and agro-industries development and in so doing called on FAO to:
- reinforce expertise and capacity to respond to the challenges posed by agribusiness and agro-industries development;
 - provide high quality information and analysis to support agribusiness and agro-industry policy formulation and investment;
 - support agro-industry and value chain programmes and enhanced public-private cooperation;
 - establish close working relations with UNIDO, other UN agencies and other relevant organizations.
29. The Committee welcomed the organization of a Global Agro-Industries Forum and thanked the Government of India for the offer to host it.

VI. Environment and Agriculture

30. The Committee considered interactions between key environmental challenges and the agriculture sector. It noted the importance of biodiversity and bioenergy to environmental sustainability and food security and stressed the increasing concerns of climate change and weather extremes on agriculture.
31. The Committee concurred with FAO's key role with regard to environmental issues related to food and agriculture.
32. The Committee generally supported the proposal of the Secretariat to conduct a study on possible elements of an FAO Strategic Framework for Agriculture and Environmental Challenges of the 21st Century, pending the outcome of the IEE. Nevertheless, some Members considered it premature for the Secretariat to embark on such a task.
33. The Committee recommended that the study provide a basis for informed decision-making by clearly identifying specific steps for understanding, planning and implementing environmentally sustainable sectoral growth, including the socio-economic and policy implications of different options. The Committee requested that the study be submitted to the Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Agriculture before going to the Thirty-fifth Session of the FAO Conference in 2009.
34. Considering the complexity of the global issues at hand, the Committee recommended that the proposed Strategic Framework referred to in paragraph 32 above adopt a long-term perspective. It also requested that the initiative be costed, preferably counting on Regular Programme resources, and immediately be started, without however pre-empting the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation of the Organization.
35. The Committee requested that the study be developed by the Natural Resources Management and Environment Department through inter-departmental cooperation, and in close consultation with member countries. It also urged that the work be undertaken in close collaboration with other relevant international bodies, and within multilateral environmental agreements.
36. The Committee recommended that the Strategic Framework analyse environmental and agricultural interdependencies, including opportunities and trade-offs in different agroecological areas and according to different regional needs for food and levels of development. With regard to bioenergy, some Members stressed both energy security and challenges to food security posed by competitive resource use. The role of organic agriculture was highlighted with regard to meeting

environmental and food requirements. Also, some Members mentioned agri-environmental measures as important to address environmental issues that are not accounted for by market forces. It was recommended that livestock interactions with the environment be adequately addressed in the Strategic Framework.

37. The Committee recalled the importance of FAO providing technical assistance to countries on complex issues such as location-specific energy crops, adaptation options to climate change, managing the environment-livestock interface, and for the provision of knowledge tools and advice, possibly through TCPs.

VII. Agriculture and Water Scarcity: A Programmatic Approach to Water Use Efficiency and Agricultural Productivity

38. The Committee expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and timely document COAG/2007/7, "*Agriculture and Water Scarcity: a Programmatic Approach to Water Use Efficiency and Agricultural Productivity*".

39. The Committee acknowledged the importance of water resources for agriculture and food production and its significant role in poverty alleviation. However, it highlighted the increasing competition for water demand with other sectors (municipal supply, industry and the environment).

40. The Committee agreed on the importance of increasing water-use efficiency and water productivity in irrigated agriculture, from on-farm water management to irrigation system performance, in the context of Integrated Water Resources Management. Some Members requested FAO to provide technical assistance and guidance in this regard.

41. Several Members stressed the need in developing countries for financial resources to develop the infrastructure for control and distribution of water resources for irrigation development, in particular by introducing low-cost irrigation technologies and irrigation modernization. The need for the participation of the public and private sectors was recognized.

42. The Committee recommended that FAO strengthen its efforts to determine the consequences of climate change on water resources and the implications for the agricultural sector.

43. Many Members highlighted the importance of water harvesting and its potential to contribute substantially to increased food production, and encouraged FAO to strengthen work in this area and secure further resources to provide technical assistance on this subject.

44. Some Members recommended FAO to strengthen activities for mitigation of flood and drought damages. Some Members highlighted the importance of improving the capacity of plant breeding, including through modern biotechnologies, to obtain drought-resistant crop varieties as a contribution to agricultural production and food security in water-stressed areas.

45. Some Members highlighted the importance of the management of international waters in order to avoid conflict among countries sharing these water resources.

46. Some Members identified the need for reforestation to mitigate the effects of desertification and climate change.

47. The Committee welcomed the proposal for a multidisciplinary integrated framework to address water scarcity. Some Members requested further clarification on the implications of this proposal in the existing Programme Entities and on the 2008-09 Programme of Work and Budget. Many Members expressed the need to take account of the results of the Independent External Evaluation before the further development of a structured water programme. The Committee noted that further proposals would be presented to the Twenty-first Session of COAG.

VIII. Issues referred to COAG by Conference and Council: International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD): Outcome and Follow-up

48. In considering the outcome and follow-up of ICARRD, the Committee recalled the importance of agrarian reform and rural development and the significant and unique role of FAO in this matter.
49. The Committee decided to:
- Request the Secretariat to submit, when presenting the Report of the 20th Session of COAG to the 132nd Session of the Council, in June 2007, information on the cross-sectoral treatment by FAO of agrarian reform and rural development, with clearly defined functional responsibilities and points of contact.
 - Request the Secretariat to provide an overview of
 - the existing and ongoing activities of FAO on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development;
 - the capacities of the Regional Offices to deal with the issue of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development;
 - FAO technical cooperation programmes on the matter;
 - cost estimates for possible implementation by FAO of recommendations contained in Paragraph 30 of the ICARRD Declaration.

This overview is to be submitted as an Information document to the Conference, in November 2007, and to be considered by the 34th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), in 2008.

- Propose for the consideration of the Regional Conferences, to include in their agendas, the issue of agrarian reform and rural development and ICARRD follow-up.

IX. Any Other Business

50. The Committee noted the informal nature of side events and that, therefore, no formal reporting was envisaged. The presentations made at the side events, whenever possible, would be made available by the Secretariat, not only to participants but to all other interested parties.
51. The observation was made that the recommendations on the Evaluation of the Desert Locust Campaign (COAG/2007/Inf.7) and on Telefood (COAG/2007/Inf.8) had not yet been fully considered by the relevant Governing Bodies of FAO.
52. The Secretariat was requested to introduce new communication strategies based on on-line documentation distribution and to reduce the number of hard copies distributed, as appropriate.

X. Date and Place of Next Session

53. The Committee noted that its Twenty-first Session would be held at FAO headquarters in Rome in approximately two years' time, back-to-back with the next session of the Committee on Commodity Problems. The Director-General, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee, would determine the exact date, taking into account the overall meeting schedules of the Organization and other Rome-based agencies.

XI. Adoption of the Report

54. The report was adopted on Saturday 28 April 2007.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons
2. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable for the Session
3. Review of FAO's Programme of Work in the Food and Agriculture Sector
 - Programme Implementation Report 2004-05
 - Preliminary Programme of Work Proposals for 2008-09
4. Managing Livestock – Environment Interactions
5. Challenges of Agribusiness and Agro-industries Development
6. Environment and Agriculture
7. Agriculture and Water Scarcity: a Programmatic Approach to Water Use Efficiency and Agricultural Productivity
8. Issues referred to COAG by Conference and Council: International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD): Outcome and Follow-up
9. Any Other Business
10. Date and Place of Next Session
11. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

COAG/2007/1	Provisional Agenda and Timetable
COAG/2007/1 Add.1	Addendum to the Provisional Agenda and Timetable as Proposed by the Chairperson of the Group of 77, Rome Chapter
COAG/2007/2	Programme Implementation Report 2004-2005
COAG/2007/2 Add.1	Programme Implementation Report 2004-05 – Director-General’s Foreword – Executive Summary
COAG/2007/3	Preliminary Programme of Work Proposals for 2008-2009 in the Food and Agriculture Sector
COAG/2007/4	Managing Livestock – Environment Interactions
COAG/2007/5	Challenges of Agribusiness and Agro-industries Development
COAG/2007/6	Environment and Agriculture
COAG/2007/7	Agriculture and Water Scarcity: A Programmatic Approach to Water Use Efficiency and Agricultural Productivity
COAG/2007/8	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD): Outcome and Follow-up
 <u>COAG/2007/INF/Series</u>	
COAG/2007/Inf.1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
COAG/2007/Inf.2 Rev.1	Provisional List of Documents
COAG/2007/Inf.3	List of Members of the Committee
COAG/2007/Inf.4	List of Delegates and Observers
COAG/2007/Inf.5	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Community (EC) and its Member States (MS)
COAG/2007/Inf.6	Follow-up to Agenda 21 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)
COAG/2007/Inf.7	Desert Locust
COAG/2007/Inf.8	Evaluation Reports
COAG/2007/Inf.9	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD): Outcome and Follow-up
COAG/2007/Inf.10	FAO as a Knowledge Organization
COAG/2007/Inf.11	Avian Influenza
COAG/2007/Inf.12	Implementation of the International Bioenergy Platform (IBEP)
COAG/2007/Inf.13	The Agriculture Forest Interface
COAG/2007/Inf.14	New Initiative for Pesticide Risk Reduction

APPENDIX C

COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE SESSION
MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Afghanistan	France	Panama
Algeria	Gabon	Paraguay
Angola	Germany	Peru
Argentina	Ghana	Philippines
Armenia	Greece	Poland
Australia	Guatemala	Portugal
Austria	Guinea	Republic of Korea
Bangladesh	Haiti	Romania
Belgium	Honduras	Russian Federation
Benin	Hungary	San Marino
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iceland	Saudi Arabia
Brazil	India	Senegal
Bulgaria	Indonesia	Serbia
Burkina Faso	Iran, (Islamic Republic of)	Sierra Leone
Burundi	Iraq	Slovakia
Cameroon	Ireland	Slovenia
Canada	Italy	South Africa
Cape Verde	Japan	Spain
China	Jordan	Sri Lanka
Colombia	Kenya	Sudan
Congo	Kuwait	Suriname
Costa Rica	Lebanon	Sweden
Côte d'Ivoire	Lesotho	Switzerland
Cuba	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Thailand
Cyprus	Lithuania	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Czech Republic	Madagascar	Turkey
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Malaysia	Uganda
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mali	Ukraine
Denmark	Mauritius	United Arab Emirates
Dominican Republic	Mexico	United Kingdom
Ecuador	Morocco	United Republic of Tanzania
Egypt	Mozambique	United States of America
El Salvador	Netherlands	Uruguay
Eritrea	Nicaragua	Venezuela
Estonia	Nigeria	Viet Nam
European Community (Member Organization)	Norway	Yemen
Finland	Oman	Zambia
	Pakistan	Zimbabwe

OBSERVERS FROM MEMBER NATIONS NOT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Liberia
Myanmar

Qatar
Tunisia

HOLY SEE

SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA

OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Economic Community of West African States
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture
World Organisation for Animal Health

OBSERVERS FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Action Aid International	International Raiffeisen Union
Compassion in World Farming	International Seed Federation
Crop Life International Federation	Pesticide Action Network
East African Farmers Federation	Plateforme Sous-Régionale d'Organisations Paysannes de l'Afrique Centrale
Greenpeace International	Rotary International
Heifer Project International	Soroptimist International
International Alliance of Women	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions
International Association for Food Protection	Windward Island Farmers Association
International Council of Women	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
International Federation for Home Economics	World Association for Animal Production
International Federation of Agricultural Producers	World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements	World Federation of Trade Unions
International Fertilizer Industry Association	World Society for the Protection of Animals
International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty	World Sugar Research Organization

INSTITUTES OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Bioversity International

APPENDIX D

OPENING STATEMENT**BY****DAVID A. HARCHARIK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon and welcome to the Twentieth Session of the Committee on Agriculture.

Welcome also to the new Assistant Director-General of our Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department - Mr José Sumpsi – who comes on board just in time to participate in his Department's most important meeting. His more than 30 years of experience in the field of agricultural economics, both in his home country, Spain, and also in Latin America and the Caribbean as rural development expert with the Inter-American Development Bank, will, I am sure, stand him in good stead to be an excellent leader of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department. He will be counting on your support. I encourage you to take advantage of this meeting to make his acquaintance.

And thanks to Alexander Müller for the excellent job of serving as Officer-in-Charge until Mr Sumpsi's arrival.

As is well known, the world has sufficient food supplies to feed its entire population. Yet globally, but mainly in developing countries, more than 850 million people are currently suffering from hunger and under-nourishment. Thus, food security, poverty alleviation and sustainability of agriculture are major concerns of our world today, and these concerns are likely to be with us for some time in the future. World population growth, for example, which is projected to increase from today's six and a half billion people to nine billion by 2045, will lead to a higher demand for food, fibres and other agricultural products, placing increased pressure on agriculture production systems. The increasing use of biofuels as a renewable source of energy will also have an impact on agricultural production.

How to maintain and intensify agricultural production, while at the same time preserve natural resources and ecosystems is a monumental challenge. How we meet this challenge is the subject of your session this week.

During the course of this short week we will be seeking your views and advice on a number of specific issues. The first deals with what FAO can do, i.e. FAO's Programme of Work: specifically, the accomplishments during 2004-05 and our proposals for 2008-09.

The accomplishments during 2004/2005 are contained in the Programme Implementation Report. I should like to highlight just a few of the major ones. First of all, three Conventions in which FAO has been involved entered into force: the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, the revised text of the International Plant Protection Convention, and the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent. FAO also played a leading role in the coordination and control of the desert locust in West Africa and in the control of Avian Flu. The publication *Agricultural Biotechnology: Meeting the needs of the poor?* while criticized by some, was welcomed by most and was endorsed by more than 650 independent scientists and economists from around the world. The Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) has become a major catalyst for national and international investment in comprehensive, large-scale programmes covering both the

production and the access aspects of food security, and National Programmes for Food Security (NPFS) now reach millions of farm families, compared to the few thousands of the initial phase.

With respect to the upcoming 2008-09 biennium, our proposals are contained in the document on the Preliminary Programme of Work Proposals. I ask you to note that this is only an initial step in the preparation of the Programme of Work. The budget has not yet been costed, and other or additional priorities may emerge later in the year when our Members discuss the outcome of the Independent External Evaluation. In preparing this document, the Secretariat was guided by the priority-setting criteria established by the Council, with particular attention to: i) relevance to the Strategic Framework (and MDGs), ii) a clear focus on the priorities expressed by Members and iii) an embodiment of FAO's comparative advantage.

Referring now to the substantive issues on your agenda, a recurrent theme is the interface between Agriculture and Environment.

While agricultural production must expand to meet growing food demands, there are serious global challenges to food security. Climate change, for example, is expected to bring reduced availability of water, shifting of growing cycles, biodiversity migration, emergence of new pests and diseases and increased incidence of storms, drought, and flooding. Rapid shifts within the energy sector towards renewable energy sources — in particular bioenergy and the related conversion of land and other productive resources from food to biofuel — may reduce food availability and inflate food prices, and the competition for limited water resources will increase between cities and rural areas, with more and more people leaving the countryside and moving to urban areas.

Agriculture is a major user of natural resources, including 40 percent of land and 70 percent of water. It is also substantially dependent on the capacity of ecosystems to provide these land and water resources, as well as biodiversity, soil, and various vital ecological processes, such as pollination. New areas to consider for the agricultural sector include adaptation to climate change, protection of agro biodiversity and a possible massive reallocation of land to non-food crops.

With respect to water in agriculture, this session will examine a proposal to focus FAO's technical capacity on water scarcity. As agriculture is called to account for its use of water in socio-economic and environmental terms, we need to consider agricultural water management across all productive sub-sectors, including fisheries, forestry and animal production, with the aim of reducing societal and environmental stress. With intensifying competition for raw water and the added complication of climate change, it is important that these challenges be met head-on. Your views this week on how to do this are being sought.

Another important substantive item on your agenda deals with Managing Livestock – Environment Interactions. It addresses sustainability issues in the livestock sector. The livestock sector has a primary and growing role in agricultural economies. It is a major provider of livelihoods for the larger part of the world's poor people. Driven by growing populations and incomes, the increase in demand for animal products will be stronger than for most other food items. The bulk of this growth in meat and in milk production will occur in developing countries. It is expected that intensive production systems will contribute to most of this growth, as they have done in the past three decades.

However, the livestock sector also causes stress to many ecosystems and contributes to global environmental problems. Greenhouse gas emission from livestock production, for example, and from pasture expansion into forests and pasture degradation, is an important factor in climate change. The presence of livestock in the vast majority of the world's ecosystems also affects biodiversity and livestock is often a major source of water pollution.

We urgently need to balance two competing demands: the demand for animal food products on the one hand, and for environmental services on the other hand. Both demands are driven by the same factors: population growth, higher incomes and urbanization. As is often the case, increased livestock production will be constrained by a major limiting factor: its finite natural resource base.

The challenge will be to produce more animal products while substantially reducing the impact of livestock production on the environment. Again, your views on this will be key.

Changes in agribusiness practices are also on your agenda. Food and agricultural systems in many countries are currently undergoing profound changes. The role of the private sector is expanding; smallholder farming is becoming commercialized; food retailers and manufacturers are relying increasingly on specialized procurement channels and are setting standards for food quality and safety. As a consequence, agribusiness and agro-industry are playing increasing and more important roles in socio-economic development.

There are clear benefits from agribusiness and agro-industries development, but the benefits are not necessarily automatic, nor shared by all. Particularly at risk are small-scale farmers, traders, processors, and retailers. Governments can play important roles in optimizing the impacts of agribusiness and agro-industries by strengthening public sector capacities to promote sound agribusiness and agro-industry development.

Before closing, I would like to mention that, in April 2005, COAG endorsed a proposal from Brazil that FAO convene an International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD). The Conference took place in Porto Alegre in March 2006, and subsequently the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the Council recognized the importance of agrarian reform and rural development in eradicating hunger and poverty, as well as the role that FAO could play in building institutional capacity, providing policy advice and technical assistance on agrarian reform and rural development, and empowering the rural poor. Notwithstanding this consensus, CFS and Council members expressed diverse views as to how best to address the recommendations of the ICARRD Declaration.

Some of the key words and messages of the ICARRD Declaration are: dialogue, diversity (of challenges and actors), roles of the State and of a dynamic Civil Society, and capacity building for more effective State and Civil Society institutions. FAO's programme and activities aim to strengthen the capacity of rural public sector institutions to deliver services to the rural poor and to enhance their productivity and incomes. FAO also helps build the self-help capacity of producers' organizations, cooperatives and community-based organizations in support of their members' livelihoods. This Twentieth Session of COAG provides an opportunity to discuss ways to continue these efforts and to implement the key messages of ICARRD.

In conclusion, Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the thread that runs through all these substantive issues is the need for agricultural intensification while at the same time promoting sustainability and safeguarding human health and the environment. The views that you express this week on these matters, will be much appreciated and highly valued, and should serve to guide FAO's programme of work.

I thank you for your attention and I wish you a most successful and productive meeting.