

May 2009



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
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the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
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pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
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организация
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Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-sixth Session

Rome, 15-19 June 2009

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (COAG) Rome, 22 - 25 April 2009

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MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE COUNCIL

The Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Agriculture:

- Requested that more visibility be given to the role of partnerships with other United Nations agencies and international organizations, national institutions and the private sector (para. 8).
- Underlined FAO's important role in the development of policies and instruments for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change relating to agriculture (para. 10).
- Fully supported Strategic Objective D (Food quality and safety), with respect to the Codex standards, including the establishment of EMPRES-Food Safety (para. 12).
- Noted, with respect to Strategic Objective F (Natural Resources), the absence of direct reference to a follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) and related issues of agrarian reform, such as access to and tenure of land, and the sustainability of small farms and requested that these issues be given more priority and visibility within the programme (para. 13).
- Requested that FAO support the development of a global early warning system on the quality and quantity of water in agriculture (para. 13).
- Noted that the issues related to smallholder farming and rural development should be adequately addressed and strengthened, and recommended that the Conference Committee on Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (CoC-IEE) revisit Strategic Objective G (Enabling environments) (para. 14).
- Urged that FAO allocate a greater share of total available resources to supporting member countries in the formulation of livestock sector policies, plans and programmes and in leveraging resources for their implementation (para. 17).
- Strongly suggested that FAO increase its Regular Budget resources devoted to the Organization's Livestock Programme (para. 18).
- Recommended that "lesson learning" and capacity building at all levels – from policy formulation to technology and knowledge extension – should be priority elements of FAO's work in the livestock sector (para. 19).
- Stressed that FAO should help member countries to address animal identification and traceability as well as harmonized regional approaches to disease surveillance in relation to disease control and food safety (para. 23).
- Recommended that FAO strengthen its interdisciplinary capacity in climate change adaptation and mitigation, to exploit the synergies between forest, cropland and pasture policy and management strategies, and requested FAO to monitor the impact of climate change on agriculture and food security (para. 28).
- Emphasized the importance of creating enabling environments for the private sector, and the importance of public-private partnerships (para. 33).

MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE CONFERENCE

The Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Agriculture:

- Stressed that an ecosystem approach be adopted in agricultural management in order to achieve sustainable agriculture, including integrated pest management, organic agriculture, and other traditional and indigenous coping strategies that promote agroecosystem diversification and soil carbon sequestration (para. 27).
- Requested that the work on biodiversity for food and agriculture be strengthened and coordinated among the different sub-sectors and that the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture be implemented (para. 29).
- Requested that the potential and benefits of biofuels be carefully monitored in light of national circumstances and that more analysis be undertaken (para. 30).

Introduction

1. The Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) (Rome, 22-25 April 2009) was attended by representatives of 114 Members of the Committee, and by observers from three other Member Nations of FAO. Also participating were observers from the Holy See, representatives of two United Nations (UN) and specialized agencies, observers from two intergovernmental and 20 international non-governmental organizations having status with FAO, and from two institutes 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/2009/Inf.5.

2. Mr James G. Butler, Deputy Director-General, delivered a statement on behalf of the Director-General.

I. Election of Officers

3. In accordance with Rule I of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee elected Mr Fazil Düşünceli of the Republic of Turkey as the Chairperson of the Committee, His Excellency Carlos Leyton Muñoz of the Republic of Peru as the First Vice-Chairperson and Ms Fiona Bartlett of Australia as the Second Vice-Chairperson.

4. The Committee also appointed the following members of the Drafting Committee: Afghanistan, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Gabon, Haiti, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, New Zealand, Sweden, United States of America and Mr Ibrahim Abu Atileh of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was appointed Chairperson of the Drafting Committee.

II. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable for the Session

5. The Committee agreed that discussion on Item 3 would be resumed after Item 7 and endorsed the proposal to reverse the Sessions devoted to Agenda items 4 and 5. The Committee took note with appreciation that several side events had been organized outside plenary. The revised Agenda and Timetable was adopted. The Agenda is attached as Appendix A.

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

III. Elements of the Strategic Framework and Medium-term Plan (MTP) 2010-2013 of relevance to COAG

7. The Committee welcomed the presentation of the draft elements of the new results-based framework covering the areas of crops, livestock, food quality and safety, and natural resources. It noted the on-going nature of the formulation of the results frameworks and COAG's role to provide its recommendations on the programme priorities.

8. The results-based framework was commended for incorporating the multi-disciplinary nature of FAO's work, and further cross-organizational collaboration was encouraged. The Committee also noted the need for improvement of indicators, targets, assumptions, risks and baselines, this being work in progress. The Committee requested that more visibility be given to the role of partnerships with other UN agencies and international organizations, national institutions and the private sector.

9. FAO was recognized as a neutral forum for the development of knowledge based standards such as through the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Codex Alimentarius. Members of the Committee also reaffirmed the importance of FAO's role in capacity building and the dissemination of research knowledge to the member countries. The Organization's important role in providing technical advice at the country level was recognized.

The Committee noted the need for capacity building to avoid the risk of countries not being able to absorb knowledge.

10. The Committee underlined that FAO has an important role in the development of policies and instruments for the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change relating to agriculture, avoiding overlapping and duplication with other competent fora on the subject. Several members requested that more visibility be given to addressing climate change, particularly in Strategic Objective A (Crops). Members supported the importance of the sustainable use of natural resources and the development of national adaptation plans, recognizing in this regard the importance of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA).

11. With respect to Strategic Objective A (Crops), several countries mentioned the importance of the standards setting, policy development, and the national and regional level supporting role of the Organization. The Committee noted the proposal for the preparation of a code of conduct for a responsible livestock sector as included in Strategic Objective B (Livestock). The Committee did not discuss this issue due to lack of information.

12. Strategic Objective D (Food quality and safety), particularly with respect to the Codex standards was fully supported, including the establishment of EMPRES-Food Safety. Some members expressed the need to render the Codex Alimentarius more participative, efficient and transparent. In this connection, they deemed it appropriate to work further on related organizational results. It was mentioned that financial support to developing country participation in the standards development, through the Codex Trust Fund, should be improved.

13. With respect to Strategic Objective F (Natural resources), members noted the importance of issues raised under the Organizational Results. Some Members noted the absence of direct reference to a follow-up to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) and related issues of agrarian reform, such as access to and tenure of land, and the sustainability of small farms. Several Members requested that these issues be given more priority and visibility within the programme. It was requested that FAO support the development of a global early warning system on the quality and quantity of water in agriculture.

14. The Committee noted that other cross-cutting objectives had been provided in an information document and requested that a substantive presentation and discussion take place on Strategic Objective G (Enabling environments). The Committee noted that the issues related to smallholder farming and rural development should be adequately addressed and strengthened in the Strategic Objective. Following extensive discussion, the Committee recommended that the Conference Committee on Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (CoC-IEE) revisit Strategic Objective G in order to address this issue.

IV. Livestock Policy and Institutional Change for Poverty Reduction

15. The Committee expressed general appreciation for the document COAG/2009/2 and widely recognized the role livestock can play in poverty alleviation, provided that this role is facilitated by enabling policies and institutions.

16. The Committee agreed that livestock sector development requires a twin track approach of a) infrastructure provision and technology transfer, and b) institutional changes within a supportive policy framework. The Committee stressed that livestock sector policy needs to be part of a broader policy umbrella and that a participatory approach to policy formulation is called for.

17. The Committee supported the notion that the livestock sector should no longer be merely regarded as an appendage of agriculture, but as an increasingly important contributor to economic development and food security; it urged that FAO allocate a greater share of total available resources to supporting member countries in the formulation of livestock sector policies, plans and programmes and in leveraging resources for their implementation.

18. Many Members strongly suggested that FAO increase its Regular Budget resources devoted to the Organization's Livestock Programme.
19. The Committee recommended that "lesson learning" and capacity building at all levels – from policy formulation to technology and knowledge extension – should be priority elements of FAO's work in the livestock sector.
20. The Committee highlighted the importance and necessity for FAO to engage systematically in partnerships with, *inter alia*, international financial institutions (IFIs), Regional Organizations, other UN agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector and research institutions to enhance the relevance and impact of FAO activities.
21. The Committee particularly stressed the importance of South-South cooperation in livestock sector development.
22. The Committee furthermore recognized the role of livestock for certain groups such as pastoral communities, smallholders and women-headed households.
23. A significant number of Members made reference to the importance of transboundary and vector-borne animal diseases as major constraints to livestock sector development. In relation to disease control and food safety, animal identification and traceability as well as harmonized regional approaches to disease surveillance were seen as important issues which FAO should help member countries to address. Some delegates called for progress in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Animal Genetic Resources, and other Members urged that greater attention be paid to issues of animal welfare.

V. Agriculture and Environmental Challenges of the Twenty-first Century: A Strategic Approach for FAO

24. The Committee considered the document COAG/2009/3 "*Agriculture and Environmental Challenges of the Twenty-first Century: A Strategic Approach for FAO*", which stresses the necessity to put into practice sustainable modes of production in order to develop resilient and productive farming systems as a basis for income generation, poverty reduction and food security for all.
25. The Committee was informed about future food and fuel demands of the growing global population, in the alarming context of shrinking water resources and greater climate variability. Recognizing that the functioning of sustainable agriculture is dependent on healthy ecosystems with productive soils, efficient use of water and a diverse genetic resource base, the Committee unanimously shared the view that the agriculture and environmental imperatives must be simultaneously tackled.
26. The Committee recognized the relevance and importance of the work of other international bodies, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the CGRFA, the IT-PGRFA, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP) on FAO's sustainable agriculture policies and programmes. The Committee concurred with FAO's key role in presenting agriculture in the environmental policy discussion fora, due to the importance of water, land, biodiversity and climate to food production and rural livelihoods.
27. The Committee stressed that an ecosystem approach be adopted in agricultural management in order to achieve sustainable agriculture, including integrated pest management, organic agriculture and other traditional and indigenous coping strategies that promote agroecosystem diversification and soil carbon sequestration. Several Committee members noted the need for capacity building in new approaches and incentives to producers. The Committee endorsed the proposal that public and private investments be made in agroecological research, at both national and international levels.

28. The Committee recommended that FAO strengthen its inter-disciplinary capacity in climate change adaptation and mitigation, to exploit the synergies between forest, cropland and pasture policy and management strategies. The Committee recognized the implications of land use changes and soil fertility management on food security and climate adaptation and mitigation policies and requested that FAO monitors the impact of climate change on agriculture and food security and develops a pro-poor approach to its assistance, especially in rainfed areas.

29. The Committee requested that the work on biodiversity for food and agriculture be strengthened and coordinated among the different sub-sectors and that the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture be implemented.

30. The Committee requested that the potential and benefits of biofuels be carefully monitored in light of national circumstances and that more analysis be undertaken. The Committee supported a results-oriented international dialogue on biofuels in the context of food security and sustainable development, without however, duplicating ongoing work and/or creating new institutional structures.

31. Some Committee members stressed the need to strengthen the Natural Resources Management and Environment Department in order to strengthen interdisciplinary work within FAO on issues such as water, biodiversity, climate and organic agriculture, as well as inter-institutional partnerships on crosscutting challenges between the food, rural development, energy and environment sectors. Other Members drew attention to the significance of range land management, forestry in land use and environmental issues, and urged that forestry issues be incorporated in a cross-disciplinary manner.

VI. Engaging the Private Sector in Agricultural Development

32. The Committee discussed the document COAG/2009/4, and concurred with the analysis of the paper that the private sector is very diverse and plays a key role in agricultural development.

33. The Committee recognized that there are important actions the public sector can take to engage the private sector in agricultural development. Members emphasized the importance of creating enabling environments for the private sector, and the importance of public-private partnerships. Many Members recalled their own experiences and initiatives to strengthen working relations with the private sector. Most Members noted the importance of developing strategies and priorities at the national level in order to fully take into account the different national specificities.

34. The Committee agreed with the priority action areas at the national level for engaging the private sector in agricultural development. Several Members noted the importance of attention to research, finance and infrastructure development as well as to other issues identified in the paper.

35. The Committee also acknowledged the five priorities for FAO assistance to its Members. Most Members stressed the importance of FAO support at the national level. Several Members noted the importance of taking stock of past experiences in actions to improve cooperation with the private sector and to enhance the role of the private sector in agricultural development. Some Members identified specific areas that would benefit from FAO support such as contract farming, microfinance and databanks on potential private sector partners.

36. The Committee noted the consultation process launched in 2008 to develop a framework for collaborating with the private sector. The Committee asked FAO to provide information on results of the private sector consultation held early in 2009, and on how FAO is now cooperating with the private sector.

37. The Committee concluded that FAO should provide support to its Members for engaging the private sector in agricultural development.

38. The Committee requested that information on actions taken and progress made be provided at the Twenty-second session of the Committee.

VII. The way forward for COAG

39. The Committee reviewed document COAG/2009/5 "*The Way Forward for COAG*" describing a number of issues in the light of discussions in the Joint Meetings of the Programme and Finance Committees, as well as the reform process under way in FAO and putting forward options and proposals for the improvement of the functioning of the Committee, including proposals for implementation at future sessions.

40. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the arrangements in place for the sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems and the Committee on Agriculture whereby they hold back-to-back sessions over a six-day period, with a reduced duration and more focused agendas. The Committee underlined that these arrangements might need to be revisited in future depending on the agendas of the Committees.

41. The Committee expressed general agreement with the proposals regarding its future agenda presented in document COAG/2009/5. Members welcomed the special segment on livestock and considered that the Committee, as the main forum of FAO dealing with agriculture, should focus on substantive topics pertaining to agriculture. Support was expressed for greater Members' involvement and inter-action in the preparation of agendas for sessions, so that the deliberations of the Committee could better respond to the needs of Members.

42. The Committee noted that the process of implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) for FAO Renewal was under way and that a number of amendments to the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization regarding the Technical Committees had been proposed to the Conference Committee and the Council, and would be examined by the Conference at its forthcoming session. The Committee also noted that the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) had recommended amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Technical Committees on the reporting lines and role of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons especially during the inter-session period and that these proposals would be operational at the Twenty-second Session of the Committee.

43. The Committee proposed for consideration the possibility of electing the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons at the end of every biennial session, so as to enhance the effectiveness of COAG.

44. The Committee supported the proposal that the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons should act as a bureau during the inter-session period in order to prepare the work of the Committee and liaise with the secretariat, as appropriate. The Committee took note of the proposal that in order to ensure adequate representation and pending the amendment of the Rules of Procedure, representatives of all regions should be part of the bureau.

45. The Committee agreed with the proposals regarding a keynote speaker and underlined the value of side events, although these were not part of the proceedings.

46. After discussing extensively the option of appointing a rapporteur, the majority of the Committee concluded that the current practice of appointing a Drafting Committee should continue.

VIII. Any Other Business

47. The Committee was informed of progress in the reform and renewal of the Committee on Food Security by its Chairperson. The importance of food security concerns to other FAO technical committees, including the Committee on Agriculture, was noted.

48. No other issues were raised.

IX. Date and Place of Next Session

49. It was agreed that the Committee would meet in Rome in 2010 in accordance with the reformed sequence of FAO Governing Body sessions proposed in the IPA. The exact date would be determined by the Director-General in consultation with the Chairperson.

X. Adoption of the Report

50. The Report was adopted on Saturday 25 April 2009.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons
2. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable for the Session
3. Elements of the Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2010-2013 of Relevance to COAG
4. Livestock Policy and Institutional Change for Poverty Reduction
5. Agriculture and Environmental Challenges of the Twenty-first Century: A Strategic Approach for FAO
6. Engaging the Private Sector in Agricultural Development
7. The Way Forward for COAG
8. Any other business
9. Date and place of next Session
10. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

COAG/2009/1/Rev.1	Provisional Agenda and Timetable
COAG/2009/2	Livestock Policy and Institutional Change for Poverty Reduction
COAG/2009/3	Agriculture and Environmental Challenges of the Twenty-first Century: A Strategic Approach for FAO
COAG/2009/4	Engaging the Private Sector in Agricultural Development
COAG/2009/5	The Way Forward for COAG
COAG/2009/6	Elements of the Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2010-2013 of Relevance to COAG
<u>COAG/2009/INF/Series</u>	
COAG/2009/Inf.1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
COAG/2009/Inf.2	Provisional List of Documents
COAG/2009/Inf.3	List of Members of the Committee
COAG/2009/Inf.4	List of Delegates and Observers
COAG/2009/Inf.5	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Community (EC) and its Member States (MS)
COAG/2009/Inf.6	Follow-up to Agenda 21 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)
COAG/2009/Inf.7	Seed Security for Food Security in the Light of Climate Change and Soaring Food Prices: Challenges and Opportunities
COAG/2009/Inf.8	International Standard Setting for Food Safety and Plant Health – Provision of Scientific Advice and Capacity Building for Developing Countries
COAG/2009/Inf.9	Evaluation Reports
COAG/2009/Inf.10	Public-Private Partnership for Enhancing Organic Agriculture Trade – A Report of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Organic Agriculture
COAG/2009/Inf.11	Elements of an FAO Rural Employment Strategy – Productive, Fair and Just Employment for Rural Development and Food Security
COAG/2009/Inf.12	One World One Health – The Role of FAO
COAG/2009/Inf.13	Programme Implementation Report 2006-07
COAG/2009/Inf.14	Additional Strategic Objectives of Relevance to COAG

ANNEX C

COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED AT THE SESSION

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Afghanistan	France	Pakistan
Algeria	Gabon	Panama
Angola	Gambia	Paraguay
Argentina	Georgia	Peru
Armenia	Germany	Philippines
Australia	Ghana	Poland
Austria	Greece	Portugal
Azerbaijan	Guatemala	Qatar
Bangladesh	Guinea	Republic of Korea
Belarus	Haiti	Romania
Belgium	Honduras	Russian Federation
Brazil	Hungary	San Marino
Burkina Faso	Iceland	Saudi Arabia
Cameroon	India	Senegal
Canada	Indonesia	Slovakia
Cape Verde	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Slovenia
Chile	Ireland	Somalia
China	Italy	South Africa
Colombia	Japan	Spain
Congo	Jordan	Sri Lanka
Costa Rica	Kenya	Sudan
Côte d'Ivoire	Kuwait	Sweden
Cuba	Lebanon	Switzerland
Cyprus	Lesotho	Thailand
Czech Republic	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Tunisia
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Lithuania	Turkey
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Madagascar	Uganda
Denmark	Malaysia	Ukraine
Dominican Republic	Mauritania	United Arab Emirates
Ecuador	Mauritius	United Kingdom
Egypt	Mexico	United Republic of Tanzania
El Salvador	Morocco	United States of America
Eritrea	Mozambique	Uruguay
Estonia	Namibia	Venezuela
Ethiopia	Netherlands	Yemen
European Community (Member Organization)	New Zealand	Zambia
Finland	Nicaragua	Zimbabwe
	Niger	
	Norway	
	Oman	

OBSERVERS FROM MEMBER NATIONS NOT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Chad ; Equatorial Guinea; The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

HOLY SEE

REPRESENTATIVES OF UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

International Atomic Energy Agency
World Food Programme

OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Economic Community of Central African States
Global Forum for Agricultural Research

OBSERVERS FROM NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Action Aid International	International Federation of Women in Legal Careers
Compassion in World Farming	International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
Council for Multilateral Business Diplomacy/IBC	International Raiffeisen Union
Crop Life International	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers's Association
International Alliance of Women	Nordic Genetic Resource Centre
International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies	Rotary International
International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage	Soroptimist International
International Federation for Home Economics	Via Campesina
International Federation of Agricultural Producers	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements	World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

INSTITUTES OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCHAfrica Rice Centre
Bioversity International