

October 2010



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COUNCIL

**Hundred and Fortieth Session**

**Rome, 29 November – 3 December 2010**

**Report of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Regional Conference for Europe  
(Yerevan, Armenia, 13 – 14 May 2010)**

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**ERC/10/REP**

***REPORT***

Yerevan, Armenia  
13 and 14 May 2010

**Twenty-seventh FAO  
Regional Conference  
for Europe**



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

### Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Europe

First	-	Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1949
Second	-	Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1960
Third	-	Rome, Italy, 8-13 October 1962
Fourth	-	Salzburg, Austria, 26-31 October 1964
Fifth	-	Seville, Spain, 5-11 October 1966
Sixth	-	St. Julian's, Malta, 28-31 October 1968
Seventh	-	Budapest, Hungary, 21-25 September 1970
Eighth	-	Munich, Germany, Fed.Rep. of, 18-23 September 1972
Ninth	-	Lausanne, Switzerland, 7-12 October 1974
Tenth	-	Bucharest, Romania, 20-25 September 1976
Eleventh	-	Lisbon, Portugal, 2-7 October 1978
Twelfth	-	Athens, Greece, 22-27 September 1980
Thirteenth	-	Sofia, Bulgaria, 4-8 October 1982
Fourteenth	-	Reykjavik, Iceland, 17-21 September 1984
Fifteenth	-	Istanbul, Turkey, 28 April-2 May 1986
Sixteenth	-	Cracow, Poland, 23-26 August 1988
Seventeenth	-	Venice, Italy, 3-7 April 1990
Eighteenth	-	Prague, Czechoslovakia, 24-28 August 1992
Nineteenth	-	Killarney, Ireland, 6-10 June 1994
Twentieth	-	Tel Aviv, Israel, 29 April-3 May 1996
Twenty-first	-	Tallinn, Estonia, 25-29 May 1998
Twenty-second	-	Porto, Portugal, 24-28 July 2000
Twenty-third	-	Nicosia, Cyprus, 29-31 May 2002
Twenty-fourth	-	Montpellier, France, 5-7 May 2004
Twenty-fifth	-	Riga, Latvia, 8-9 June 2006
Twenty-sixth	-	Innsbruck, Austria, 26-27 June 2008
Twenty-seventh	-	Yerevan, Armenia, 13-14 May 2010

**REPORT**  
**of the**  
**FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE**

**Twenty-seventh Session**  
**Yerevan, Armenia, 13 and 14 May 2010**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE**  
**UNITED NATIONS**  
**Budapest, 2010**

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BUDAPEST





## SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Matters arising from the World Summit on Food Security and the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference, notably implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), including the Decentralized Offices Network**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

welcomed the decision of the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference mandating the Regional Conferences for priority setting for FAO's Decentralized Offices (DOs) Network and invited the member countries to indicate their proposals regarding FAO's presence at country, subregional and regional level in the context of the new medium- and long-term vision of the Decentralized Offices Network (paras 11 and 12);

welcomed the efforts of FAO and the Government of Hungary to improve the facilities of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) in Budapest (para 25).

*For the attention of FAO*

The Conference:

expressed its full support for the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action to enhance the efficiency of the DOs Network (para 11);

requested the secretariat to provide further background documentation on decentralization, including a detailed inventory of the present structure, staffing and funding of the DOs (para 12) and to give serious consideration to fully fledged presence in some of the countries in the region, especially in the Central Asia subregion, while reinforcing its country presence in some others through the nomination of Assistant FAO Representatives (para 12);

expressed satisfaction with the efficient work of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU), the Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU) and the Subregional Office for Central Asia (SEC) (para 13);

suggested to give due consideration to merging the two offices (REU and SEU) in Budapest to enhance efficiency and savings (para 13).

### **Establishment of One Global Shared Services Centre**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

considered that the establishment of the Shared Services Centre (SSC) had improved the efficiency of the Organization and the quality of services provided (para 15).

*For the attention of FAO*

The Conference:

urged the Secretariat to review the Bangkok and Santiago hubs and the possibility of merging them into one global SSC in Budapest (para 15).

## **The role of FAO Regional Conferences in the reformed Committee on World Food Security**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

welcomed and supported the ongoing reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and its initiative to broaden the partnership and consultative process without creating new and parallel structures to facilitate this dialogue (para 17);

welcomed the new opportunities for regional level consultations with the creation of new and parallel structures to facilitate this dialogue (para 17).

*For the attention of FAO*

The Conference:

encouraged the CFS Bureau to speed up the establishment of the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) (para 17).

### **Report on FAO Activities in the Region 2008-09 and the implementation of the recommendations of the 26<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Europe**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

welcomed the report on FAO activities in the region and underlined the importance of partnerships with the United Nations bodies under the Delivering as One initiative and cooperation with the European Union (para 21).

*For the attention of FAO*

The Conference:

encouraged FAO to continue providing technical support, expertise and knowledge through its strengthened Regional Office and DOs Network in Europe and Central Asia, progressively integrating the country-led approach in the areas of intervention (para 24);

requested the secretariat to prepare the report on FAO activities using the results based framework with impacts of the implementation of activities (para 21).

**Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-11 and areas of priority actions for the European region for the following biennium 2012-13**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

recalled that the Strategic Framework 2010-19, approved by the FAO Conference in 2009, focused and prioritized FAO's work, so that it would have measurable impact on meeting Members' needs. Starting with 2010-11, all of FAO's work under all sources of funds should aim to achieve 56 Organizational Results for the expression of corporate priorities (para 27);

recalled that the 2009 FAO Conference had approved a renewed and more inclusive intergovernmental process for review of programme and budget priorities and proposals, where the Regional Conferences report to the FAO Council through the Programme and Finance Committees on regional areas for priority action for the current and future biennia (para 28);

expressed its satisfaction to be able to review the priority areas of FAO's work in the region as it affects directly not only food security issues but also vital economic interests of a number of member countries. The Regional Conference expected that the regional areas of priority action would help the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia to develop coordinated and targeted operational instruments and programmes for FAO's work in the region, including collaboration with partners and mobilization of resources (para 29);

agreed that continuation of the present areas of priority action for the 2012-13 biennium was an appropriate approach linked to the four-year Medium Term Plan (MTP), with adjustments to take account of emerging issues and linkages to the reformed Committee on World Food Security and partnerships (para 32).

*For the attention of FAO*

The Conference:

stressed that the background document did not provide the basis for a thorough discussion of areas of priority action in the region for the current and future biennia. It recognized that the process of prioritization was a work in progress, involving Members and the secretariat, and improvements were to be expected in future documentation (para 30);

highlighted that for the current biennium, elaboration of regional areas of action should be linked to indicators in the results frameworks, identification of opportunities for use of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and leveraging of voluntary contributions (para 31);

requested that a more detailed breakdown of the proposed priority activities for each Strategic Objective be given with the indication of the required regular and extrabudgetary funding including partnerships (para 31);

suggested that this information should be provided and further dialogue be carried out between the secretariat and the Executive Committee of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), the Executive Committee serving as the formal intersessional forum (para 31);

endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the 36th Session of the ECA related to the priority areas as well as to the mechanism of the consultative planning process;

requested that in future FAO provide a work and budget document detailing challenges, shortfalls, etc., including their analysis. The results of informal consultations such as the one held in Budapest in March 2010 should be considered (para 30);

emphasized that priority should be given to regional activities involving advocacy, policy support, capacity-building, knowledge management and neutral fora for discussion in the following areas of action (para 33):

- provision of basic global data and statistics;
- assistance to define national economic, social, food and nutrition policies, with a focus on capacity-building for least developed countries to meet global expectations and benefit from market opportunities;
- normative role at global level, as well as capacity-building to reinforce technical and institutional capacities, especially for least developed countries;
- implementation of food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary standards including global conventions;
- animal and plant transboundary diseases;
- emergencies and rehabilitation;
- interface between climate change and agriculture and rural development;
- gender;
- conservation and management of plant and animal genetic resources, and
- sustainable management of forests.

### **Summary report of recommendations of FAO regional bodies**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

welcomed the summary reports of the four specialized regional commissions and the presentation of the main activities carried out during the last two years (para 37);

urged the specialized regional commissions to convene their future sessions in line with the Regional Conference for Europe in order to allow that priority action could be identified and timely submitted to FAO's Governing Bodies (para 39);

welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)/FAO integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry by the joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission and encouraged both bodies to continue their collaborative work and to look for synergies with other international bodies, including Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) (para 40);

encouraged all countries in the Europe and Central Asia region to join the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EUFMD) (para 41);

stressed that coordination, cooperation and transparency were essential for the control and eradication of infectious diseases and the EUFMD was a successful example in this field (para 41);

welcomed that the European Union and its Member States confirmed their full commitment to working with FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to provide countries in the region with the necessary technical assistance and capacity-building (para 42);

took note of the options for the future of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) proposed in January 2010 and encouraged the 26th Session of the EIFAC

in May 2010 in Zagreb to carefully reflect on these options and considered that the most appropriate option at this stage would be the continuation of EIFAC as an FAO Article VI body (para 43).

*For the attention of FAO*

The Conference:

requested FAO and members of the technical commissions to review the meeting schedules and agenda settings of the specialized regional commissions allowing timely identification of priority actions relevant for the regions concerned (para 39);

requested the EIFAC Secretariat to prepare a detailed report on the continuation of EIFAC as an FAO Article VI body, results-based oriented, including clear links with the relative Strategic Objectives of FAO and with the work carried out by Committee on Fisheries (COFI), the report to provide the main results achieved by EIFAC during the past five years (para 43);

regretted not having received information about the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) (para 38).

**Main conclusions and recommendations stemming from the debate in the  
36<sup>th</sup> Session of the European Commission on Agriculture**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

welcomed the preparation of the four technical documents and the document on mainstreaming gender in rural development through ECA Working Party on Women and Family in Rural Development activities;

emphasized that these technical documents provide useful conclusions and recommendations for various groups of countries addressing sectoral issues of agricultural and rural development.

*For the attention of FAO*

The Conference:

endorsed the conclusions and recommendations from the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the ECA (para 45), and

requested that due consideration be given to the recommendations both related to the technical priorities as well as to the consultation mechanisms for the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 in the Region.

**Date, place and main theme(s) of the Twenty-eighth FAO Regional Conference for Europe**

*For the attention of governments*

The Conference:

agreed that the next 28<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Europe in 2012 be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, and took note of the invitation of the Delegate of Romania to hold the 29<sup>th</sup> session in Bucharest, Romania in 2014 (para 64).

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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1. The Twenty-seventh FAO Regional Conference for Europe was held in Yerevan, Armenia, on 13 and 14 May 2010 at the invitation of the Government of Armenia.
2. The List of Participants is given in Appendix A to this Report.

## **OPENING CEREMONY**

3. The Minister for Agriculture of Armenia, His Excellency Gerasim Alaverdyan welcomed the participants on behalf of his Government and expressed his satisfaction that Armenia was hosting this high-level event of FAO, which was providing strategic guidance and identifying the regional priorities for the Organization.

## **ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSONS AND APPOINTMENT OF RAPPORTEUR**

4. The Conference unanimously elected the First Deputy Minister for Agriculture of Armenia, Samvel Avetisyan, as Chairperson of the Conference.
5. Ms Hedwig Wögerbauer, the Director, Head of the Division for FAO Affairs, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria, and Mr Hans-Jörg Lehmann, Minister, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome were elected unanimously as Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Conference.
6. Her Excellency Cecilia Nordin Van Gansberghe, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Sweden to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome and Mr Ruve Schank, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations were elected as Rapporteurs.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND TIMETABLE**

7. The Regional Conference adopted the Agenda as given in Appendix B to this report and the Timetable for the session.

## **STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

8. The Director-General delivered his Statement to the Regional Conference, the text of which is attached in Appendix D to this report. The Regional Conference thanked the Director-General for his contributions to FAO's work in the region during his three terms.

## **STATEMENT BY THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE FAO COUNCIL**

9. The Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, Mr Luc Guyau, delivered a statement, the text of which is attached in Appendix E to this report.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE WORLD SUMMIT ON FOOD SECURITY AND THE 36TH SESSION OF THE FAO CONFERENCE, NOTABLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IMMEDIATE PLAN OF ACTION (IPA), INCLUDING THE DECENTRALIZED OFFICES NETWORK**

10. The agenda item was introduced by the Director, Office of Support to Decentralization (OSD) of FAO.

11. The Regional Conference expressed its full support for the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action to enhance the efficiency of the Decentralized Offices (DOs) Network. It was regretted, however, that the background documentation made no reference to a number of important reports and decisions on decentralization. Furthermore, it did not present an explicit explanation on the new working methods related to the new role of the Regional Conferences, especially in the framework of priority setting and also it did not provide a detailed inventory of the present structure, staffing and funding of the DOs. Such an overview would allow to make a better judgement on how to best use the available resources for FAO's presence at country, subregional and regional level.

12. A number of member countries requested that, in the context of the new medium- and long-term vision of the DOs Network, serious consideration be given to FAO's fully-fledged presence in some of the countries in the region, thus Kyrgyzstan and an Assistant FAO Representative in the Republic of Moldova.

13. While the Regional Conference expressed its full satisfaction with the efficient work of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and the Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU), both located in Budapest, with the strong support of the Government of Hungary, it was suggested to give due consideration to merge REU and SEU to enhance efficiency and savings. The Delegate of Turkey reiterated its Government's support for FAO's DOs Network and to the work of the Subregional Office for Central Asia (SEC).

### **ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE GLOBAL SHARED SERVICES CENTRE**

14. The Regional Conference recalled that the establishment of the Shared Services Centre (SSC) had been approved in 2005, which resulted in three hubs in Budapest, Santiago de Chile and Bangkok with implementation phased over 2007 to 2009. Based on two reviews undertaken in 2009, FAO Management was carrying out an in-depth analysis of administrative services provided by the SSC in order to validate further savings that could be achieved by a consolidation into one global hub. It noted that the Finance Committee had commented favourably on savings achieved to date and supported efforts to achieve further savings. The FAO Council had stressed that any decision on closing the SSC hubs in Santiago de Chile and Bangkok should be transparent, preceded by in-depth analysis, including consultations with the Regional Conferences.



15. The Regional Conference considered that the establishment of the SSC had been a great success, as it had improved the efficiency of the Organization and the quality of the services provided, making the best use of FAO's resources. It urged the secretariat to review the Bangkok and Santiago hubs and the possibility of merging them into one global SSC in Budapest. The representative of Hungary assured the Regional Conference that the Government of Hungary would provide its full support to a global SSC hub, should it be established in Budapest.

## **THE ROLE OF FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCES IN THE REFORMED COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY**

16. This agenda item was introduced by Mr Noel de Luna, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

17. The Regional Conference welcomed and supported the ongoing reform of the CFS as a central element of the global partnership on agriculture, food security and nutrition and its initiative to broaden the partnership and consultative process. It welcomed the new opportunities for regional level consultations but stressed that there was no need to create new and parallel structures to facilitate this dialogue. It was regretted that the establishment of the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) had been delayed and the Regional Conference encouraged the CFS Bureau to speed up the establishment of the HLPE to allow it to contribute to the CFS session in October 2010.

18. The Regional Conference took note of the proposal of the Chair of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development to serve as a focal point between the Regional Conference and the CFS.

19. The FAO/CSOs-NGOs Consultation for Europe<sup>1</sup> supported the ongoing CFS reform and declared its involvement in the process to make the CFS a venue for decision-making and governance at global and regional levels to respond to challenges to food and agriculture.

## **REPORT ON FAO ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION 2008-2009 AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 26<sup>TH</sup> REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE<sup>2</sup>**

20. The secretariat outlined the activities in the European region in the 2008-2009 biennium.

21. The Regional Conference welcomed the document provided by the secretariat but it was regretted that it had still been prepared in the traditional way, not giving an opportunity for the Regional Conference to have a results-based framework regarding the work performed by FAO in the previous biennium and to draw on lessons learned and on the impact of the implementation of the activities.

22. The Regional Conference welcomed the work undertaken within the Delivering as One initiative and the different activities undertaken in cooperation with several United Nations bodies and recommended FAO to report the effects of these activities to the United Nations High-Level Task Force.

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<sup>1</sup> Held in Yerevan on 10 and 11 May 2010. The Statement is attached as Appendix G to this Report.

<sup>2</sup> ERC/10/2

23. The European Union (EU) confirmed its intention to continue to cooperate with FAO and other organizations, both international financial institutions (IFIs), specialized agencies, NGOs and CSOs to provide relevant assistance and support to countries in the region on demand.
24. The Regional Conference encouraged FAO to continue providing technical support, expertise and knowledge through its strengthened Regional Office and DOs Network in Europe and Central Asia, progressively integrating the country-led approach in the areas of intervention.
25. The Regional Conference welcomed the efforts made by FAO and the Government of Hungary to improve the facilities of REU in Budapest.
26. The FAO/CSOs-NGOs Consultation for Europe supported FAO activities for dissemination of good practices for environment-friendly agriculture and at the same time aiming at improving the livelihoods of rural populations through diversification of jobs and income sources and supported FAO assistance to increase productivity and market access to small farms, including better access to land and microfinance, and development of marketing cooperatives. The Consultation also supported FAO's work on monitoring farm products markets development and prices volatility on agricultural markets.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK AND  
BUDGET (PWB) 2010-11 AND AREAS OF PRIORITY ACTIONS  
FOR THE EUROPEAN REGION FOR THE FOLLOWING  
BIENNIUM 2012-13**

27. The Regional Conference recalled that the Strategic Framework 2010-19, approved by the FAO Conference in 2009, focused and prioritized FAO's work, so that it would have measurable impact in meeting Members' needs. Starting with 2010-11, all of FAO's work under all sources of funds should aim to achieve the 56 Organizational Results as expression of corporate priorities.
28. The Regional Conference also recalled that the 2009 FAO Conference had approved a renewed and more inclusive intergovernmental process for review of programme and budget priorities and proposals, where the Regional Conferences report to the FAO Council through the Programme and Finance Committees on regional areas for priority action for the current and future biennia.
29. The Regional Conference expressed its satisfaction to be able to review the priority areas of FAO's work in the region as it affects directly not only food security issues but also vital economic interests of a number of member countries. The Regional Conference expected that the regional areas of priority action would help REU to develop coordinated and targeted operational instruments and programmes for FAO's work in the region, including collaboration with partners and mobilization of resources.
30. The Regional Conference stressed that the background document did not provide the basis for a thorough discussion on areas of priority action in the region for the current and future biennia. It recognized that the process of prioritization was work in progress, involving Members and the secretariat, and improvements were to be expected in future documentation. For the future, FAO was expected to provide a document detailing challenges and shortfalls etc., including their analysis. The results of informal consultations such as the one held in Budapest in March 2010 should be considered.
31. For the current biennium, elaboration of regional areas of action should be linked to indicators in the results frameworks, identification of opportunities for use of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and leveraging of voluntary contributions. It was requested that a more detailed breakdown of the proposed priority activities for each Strategic

Objective be given with the indication of the required regular and extrabudgetary funding including partnerships. It was suggested that this information should be provided and further dialogue should be carried out between the secretariat and the Executive Committee of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), the ECA serving as the formal intersessional forum.

32. The Regional Conference agreed that continuation of the present areas of priority action for the 2012-13 biennium was an appropriate approach linked to the four-year Medium-Term Plan (MTP), with adjustments to take account of emerging issues and linkages to the reformed Committee on World Food Security, and partnerships.

33. To address the food and agriculture challenges in the region, and taking account of FAO's Strategic Framework and its core functions, the Regional Conference emphasized that priority should be given to regional activities involving advocacy, policy support, capacity-building, knowledge management and neutral fora for discussion in the following areas of action:

- provision of basic global data and statistics;
- assistance to define national economic, social, food and nutrition policies, with a focus on capacity-building for least-developed countries to meet global expectations and benefit from market opportunities;
- normative role at global level, as well as capacity-building to reinforce technical and institutional capacities, especially for least developed countries;
- implementation of food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary standards including global conventions;
- animal and plant transboundary diseases;
- emergencies and rehabilitation;
- interface between climate change and agriculture and rural development;
- gender;
- conservation and management of plant and animal genetic resources, and
- sustainable management of forests.

34. Several Member States that are not Members of the European Union pointed out during the deliberations, that the developments of the European Union agricultural rural policies were also of utmost importance to them. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member countries emphasized the importance of FAO's work in the region.

35. The FAO/CSOs-NGOs Consultation for Europe proposed to establish, based on existing NGOs/CSOs platforms, a facilitating committee with focal points for regular dialogue with FAO and Member States in the Europe region with the task of identification, from the point of view of civil society, of major policy issues in regional food security and presentation of these to the ERC.

## **SUMMARY REPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF FAO REGIONAL BODIES**

36. The item was introduced by the Subregional Coordinator for Central Asia.

37. The Regional Conference welcomed the summary reports of these four specialized regional commissions and the presentation of the main activities carried out during the last two years. However, it would have been desirable that during the 36th Session of the ECA a proper consultation on subregional and regional areas of priority action could have been undertaken.

38. The Regional Conference regretted not having received information about the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

39. The Regional Conference urged the specialized regional commissions to convene their future sessions in line with the Regional Conference for Europe in order to allow that priority action could be identified and timely submitted to FAO's Governing Bodies.

40. The Regional Conference welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2008-13 of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)/FAO integrated Programme of Work on Timber and Forestry by the joint session of the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission. It encouraged both bodies to continue their collaborative work and to look for synergies with other international bodies, including Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

41. The Regional Conference encouraged all countries in the Europe and Central Asia region to join the European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EUFMD). It stressed that coordination, cooperation and transparency were essential for the control and eradication of infectious diseases and the EUFMD was a successful example in this field.

42. The European Union and its Member States confirmed that they were fully committed to working with FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to provide countries in the region with the necessary technical assistance and capacity-building. The European Union welcomed the progress made by the West Eurasia Roadmap, the introduction of the Progressive Control Pathway and its ongoing implementation.

43. The Regional Conference took note of the options for the future of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC) in January 2010. It encouraged the 26th Session of the EIFAC in May 2010 in Zagreb to carefully reflect on these options. It considered that the most appropriate option at this stage would be the continuation of EIFAC as an FAO Article VI body. The Regional Conference requested the EIFAC Secretariat to prepare a detailed report on the continuation of EIFAC as an FAO Article VI body, results-based oriented, including clear links with the relative strategic objectives of FAO and with the work carried out by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI). Such a report should indicate the main results provided by EIFAC during the last five years.

44. The Delegate of Kyrgyzstan informed the Regional Conference that its Government fully supported the creation of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission and the Government of Kyrgyzstan agreed to host the third preparatory intergovernmental meeting of that body later in 2010.

## **MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS STEMMING FROM THE DEBATE IN THE 36TH SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE**

45. The Rapporteur of the 36th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) informed the Regional Conference about the deliberations of the ECA Session and she introduced the conclusions and recommendations of the discussions on Agenda Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, which were the subject of the technical review for submission to the Regional Conference. These were endorsed by the Regional Conference, and are attached as Appendix F to this report.

## **DECLARATION OF THE FAO-CSOs/NGOs CONSULTATION FOR EUROPE**

46. The Declaration was introduced by Ms Anahit Ghazanchyan, Heifer Project International Armenian Branch Office. The text of the Declaration is attached as Appendix G.

47. The Declaration was noted by the Regional Conference. Several Members expressed their strong support to enhance further the cooperation with the FAO-CSOs/NGOs Consultation for Europe.

## **MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE – POLICY RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION: SHARING EXPERIENCE AND ENHANCING COOPERATION IN THE REGION**

48. The item was introduced by the secretariat based on the technical paper ERC/10/7 and a keynote presentation by Franz Fischler on challenges in agriculture and rural development in Europe. During the Round Table the following countries<sup>3</sup> contributed to the debate on the main challenges faced by the agriculture sector and rural areas. A number of countries and one Member Organization presented policies and programmes to counteract the negative impacts of the global financial and economic crises as well as impacts of global climate changes.

49. During the discussion some speakers presented the achievements of the agriculture sector in their countries that have transformed former food insecure, grain importing countries into exporters of grains. The Round Table noted the support and assistance received from the European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by the New Member States that resulted in their successful transition to a market economy and restructuring of the food processing industry and marketing sector. It was noted that countries in the region not being members of the European Union benefited from closely following the developments in the European agricultural policies.

50. During the discussion, delegations highlighted the complexity of the following developments that threatened the achievements, growth and sustainability of agriculture and rural areas in the region, including:

- climate change which was recognized as a factor of increasing negative impact on performance of agriculture. The Round Table speakers recognized agriculture's role in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), among others, from intensive livestock production, as well as in mitigation of the impacts of climate change. They recommended that FAO continue projects to map the impacts of climate change and build capacity in Ministries of Agriculture. Improved risk management and insurance instruments were proposed as ways of addressing the impacts of climate change on crop production;
- the financial and economic crises had caused a decline in farmers' incomes and affected the future of the sector. The participants noted that prices of farm products had become closely linked to energy prices. Further research and analytical work were needed on the volatility of agricultural prices to determine the time span and recurrence as well as impacts on low-income population groups;

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<sup>3</sup> Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Italy; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; the Netherlands; Poland; Russian Federation; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine;

- a number of countries had undertaken policy actions to support sustainable development of rural areas, as these experienced the impacts of the financial crisis. The experience of a number of countries was presented in diversification of sources of incomes and job generation in rural areas, ranging from agro and rural tourism, to niche traditional regional crop production, social and environmental services. The participants recommended exchange of experience and regional cooperation of countries in diversification of rural jobs and sources of incomes. Outside farm jobs are necessary to secure an improved standard of living of rural populations that cannot survive with incomes from farming alone.

51. It was underlined that short-term policy measures to tackle the global financial and economic crises should not displace reform policies to increase the market orientation and mechanisms of agricultural policy, to remove international trade distorting instruments, reduce export subsidies and avoid import restrictions and to improve the competitiveness of the sector.

52. The Round Table noted that countries that face food insecurity and emergencies should consider the twin-track approach recommended by FAO of food assistance and building early warning systems, combined with assistance to revive and rebuild food production.

53. During the Round Table debate it was recommended to mainstream gender into rural policies, taking into account the role of women and their labour inputs into farms and households.

54. Governments were urged to continue reforms to improve farmers' access to markets, including credit. Good governance of land tenure was recognized as another factor improving the enabling environment. Some speakers made reference to the work of FAO on the elaboration of Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land. Support to initiatives to revive or develop new marketable products based on traditional crops or technologies such as dark rye bread was proposed as one example of innovation with high nutritional value.

55. The Round Table participants recommended that governments revive investment in agricultural research and development seen as a necessary condition for increasing agricultural productivity. It was noted that the decline in resources for agricultural research in past decades had resulted in the present shortage of technologies and techniques to increase productivity. The participants spoke for a science-based approach and close scrutiny of risks and benefits for producers and consumers involved in introduction of new technologies, including Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and also recommended that even in periods of shortage of state budget means, research and extension services be offered to farmers as this was one of the most effective ways of supporting farms.

56. The importance of reviving the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Round for successful conclusion in a comprehensive, balanced and coherent way was stressed for a revival of confidence in international agricultural trade. Some speakers mentioned that food security should be on the agenda for the G8-G20 meeting in 2011.

57. The Round Table recognized the importance of regional cooperation and exchange of experiences and recommended FAO to support efforts to share experience of positive and negative policy outcomes and measures put in place to alleviate the impacts of the financial and economic crises and climate change.

58. The Round Table speakers recommended that an expert group for the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia region be formed which would continue the policy dialogue that had commenced during the Regional Conference for Europe. This expert group would exchange experience of successes and failures in food and agricultural policies and reforms as well as farm economics and be a forum for exchange of experiences across countries; support by FAO and other donors to this initiative was recommended. Many participants elaborated on diverse issues

of rural development, especially in the sense of sustainable development of high quality landscapes and food.

59. A number of countries requested FAO to further enhance and develop cooperation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to ensure synergy of actions.

60. The need for strong global governance for food security was reiterated, especially a strengthened and renewed CFS, taking care of international coordination of relevant issues of rural development and agriculture also through the HLPE.

61. The speakers welcomed the offer of a number of countries to share their experiences in transition to market economies, in land reform as well as with regard to programmes and instruments such as contract farming that might improve access of small farms and producers to markets.

62. The Round Table supported the activities of the Standing Working Group on Rural Development in southeastern Europe that provided, with FAO and bilateral donor support, training and capacity-building in rural development.

63. The Regional Conference took note of the statement from the NGOs/CSOs Consultation debates and assessment that the financial and economic crises have in particular affected Caucasus and Central Asia countries, given their strong dependency on agricultural trade and in particular small farms that did not benefit from surges of grain prices on international markets; in addition farmers benefiting from European Union Common Agricultural Policy support were affected, in particular the milk producers. The Consultation supported food sovereignty and improving food security as policy principles and proposed focused technical assistance to: (i) assist farmers in reviving investment and, in order to better access markets, improve environmental and animal welfare standards and quality, and (ii) support ministries of agriculture to incorporate climate change impacts-related policies for better management of land and water resources.

## **DATE, PLACE AND MAIN THEME(S) OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE**

64. The Regional Conference agreed that the next (28th) Regional Conference for Europe in 2012 be held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

65. The Meeting did not propose at this stage themes for the next Regional Conference.

66. Romania offered to host the 38th ECA and the 29th ERC Session in Romania in 2014.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

67. The Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council thanked the Government of Armenia for hosting the 27th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe and invited the ERC Chairperson for consultations before his report on the outcome of the regional conferences would be submitted to the next FAO Council session to be held in November 2010.

## **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

68. With some amendments, the text of the draft report was adopted by the Regional Conference.

## **CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE**

69. The Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia expressed her deep gratitude and appreciation for the warm and generous hospitality which the host Government had extended to all delegations. She thanked the delegations for their participation in the deliberations of the Session that represented an important milestone in the renewed work of the Organization. In addition, she extended her thanks to the secretariat for its work during the Regional Conference.

70. The Delegate of Switzerland, in his capacity as Vice Chairperson of the Regional Conference for Europe thanked the ERC Chairperson for his able guidance and assured those present to provide all the necessary support to carry out the new role of the ERC as a governing body of the Organization.

71. The Chairperson paid tribute to the active participation of all delegations which had enabled the Regional Conference to conclude its heavy agenda in a timely manner. In particular, he referred to the lively exchange of views which had taken place during the Ministerial Round Table and expressed the hope that future Conferences would continue to experience a high-level and enhanced participation from all the members of the Region. A number of delegations thanked the Government of Armenia, the secretariat and the NGOs, as well as the interpreters for their valuable support and effective participation during the Regional Conference.



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**APPENDIX A**


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**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
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## APPENDIX B

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### AGENDA

#### I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

#### II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council

#### III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION

6. Matters arising from the World Summit on Food Security and the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference, notably implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), including the Decentralized Offices Network
7. Establishment of One Global Shared Services Centre
8. The role of FAO Regional Conferences in the reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
9. Report on FAO Activities in the Region 2008-09 and the implementation of the recommendations of the 26<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Europe
10. Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011 and areas of priority actions for the European Region for the following biennium 2012-2013
11. Summary Report of recommendations of FAO regional bodies
12. Main conclusions and recommendations stemming from the debate in the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the European Commission on Agriculture
13. Declaration of the FAO-CSOs/NGOs Consultation for Europe
14. Ministerial Round Table - Policy Response to Challenges in Agricultural and Rural Development in the the Europe and Central Asia Region: Sharing experience and enhancing Cooperation in the Region

#### IV. OTHER MATTERS

12. Date, Place and Main Theme(s) of the Twenty-eighth FAO Regional Conference for Europe
13. Any other business
14. Adoption of the Report
15. Closure of the Conference

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## APPENDIX C

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### LIST OF DOCUMENTS

ERC/10/1/Rev.2	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ERC/10/2	Matters arising from the World Summit on Food Security and the 36th Session of the FAO Conference, notably implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA), including the Decentralized Offices Network
ERC/10/2 Add.1	Towards a New Vision for the Decentralized Offices Network
ERC/10/3	The role of FAO Regional Conferences in the reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
ERC/10/4	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 2008-09 and the implementation of the recommendations of the 26th Regional Conference for Europe
ERC/10/5	Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011 and areas of priority actions for the European Region for the following biennium 2012-2013
ERC/10/6	Establishment of One Global Shared Services Centre
ERC/10/7	Policy response to challenges in agriculture and rural development in the Europe and Central Asia Region

#### **INF SERIES**

ERC/10/INF/1	Information Note
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ERC/10/INF/6	Statement of Competence and Voting Rights by the European Union (EU) and its Member States

#### **LIM SERIES**

ERC/10/LIM/1	Main conclusions and recommendations stemming from the debates of the 36 <sup>th</sup> session of the European Commission on Agriculture
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## APPENDIX D

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### STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

*Your Excellency, Mr Gerasim Alaverdyan, Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia*

*Your Excellency, Mr Arman Kirakossian, Deputy-Minister for Foreign Affairs*

*Mr Chairperson of the FAO Council,*

*Honourable Ministers,*

*Distinguished Delegates,*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

#### **Introduction**

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to be with you for this Twenty-seventh FAO Regional Conference for Europe which is being held in this historic city of Yerevan. Allow me first of all to express, in the name of the Organization, its personnel and also the delegations, our profound gratitude to the President of the Republic, His Excellency Serzh Sargsyan, to the Government and to the people of Armenia for their warm welcome and their hospitality.

This Regional Conference for Europe is the first to be held in a country that is among the principal beneficiaries of FAO's technical assistance. This is strong testimony of the significant progress that has been made in integrating the new Member Nations of this region into the activities and governance of our Organization.

#### **State of food insecurity in the world**

*Mr Chairperson,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

At the World Food Summit of 1996, the Heads of State and Government pledged to reduce by half the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015. This global pledge was subsequently reaffirmed in other international agreements, notably at the Millennium Summit in 2000 and the World Food Summit: *five years later* in 2002. More recently, the World Summit of Heads of State and Government on Food Security, held last November in Rome, decided to reach the total eradication of hunger in the world.

Unfortunately, the latest data compiled by FAO show that the current situation is even more disturbing than it was in 1996. Hunger has risen in the last three years because of falling agricultural investment and soaring food prices. This has been exacerbated by the financial and economic crisis that has affected all regions of the planet. In 2009, the number of hungry people increased by 105 million over the previous year to reach one billion.

## **State of food insecurity in the region and role of agriculture**

The region of Europe and Central Asia is a striking example, in the last ten years, of success in fighting poverty and food insecurity. Since 1998, some 50 million people in the region have succeeded in moving out of poverty. The reduction of food insecurity and poverty has been driven by a general increase in income, particularly for the working poor. In Central Asia, the number of people suffering from hunger fell by 38 percent from 9.3 million in 2000-2002 to 5.8 million in 2004-2006.

Agriculture has played a key role in reducing poverty and food insecurity in the countries of Europe and Central Asia. It is in the poorest of these countries, where the majority of the poor population live in rural areas and employment is essentially provided by agricultural activity, that the sector has recorded the highest rates of growth, fuelled almost exclusively by the small family farms.

The financial and economic crisis could adversely affect the progress and the significant improvements in living standards that have been achieved in the region during the last decade. In fact, according to estimates by the World Bank, the region of Europe and Central Asia is the region that has been hardest hit by the crisis. In addition, FAO studies have shown that the crisis has weakened agriculture, particularly in the countries of Central and East Europe. The countries of the region are facing major economic turmoil, including tighter export markets, lower remittance flows and reduced private financing.

## **Global and regional issues: investing in agriculture to eliminate hunger**

History teaches us that there is no more powerful engine for stimulating growth and eradicating hunger and poverty than investment in agriculture. Whereas the number of hungry has steadily increased worldwide since the mid-1990s, the situation was completely different in the 1970s and 1980s. In those two decades, the number of undernourished people in the world decreased in spite of relatively high population growth. The investments that were made in the agricultural sector at the time, especially in rural infrastructure and scientific research, prompted a rapid increase in cereal yields.

In poor countries that are characterized by large rural populations, small farms and essentially rural poverty, agriculture can be a driving force for growth and hunger reduction, by providing food, employment and income.

Over the last fifty years we have been told that long-term agricultural growth is an indispensable condition for reducing food insecurity and poverty. Empirical studies indicate that growth in GDP that is originating in agriculture is at least twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth in GDP originating in other sectors of the economy.

To feed the world in 2050, with its 9.1 billion inhabitants of which 70 percent will be in urban areas, food production will need to increase by 70 percent globally and to double in the developing countries.

With limited natural resources, agricultural growth will need to come essentially from higher yields. Key factors in such growth will be access to water and modern inputs, good agricultural practices, land and soil management and targeted technologies. But we also need to tackle the constraints of agricultural commodity marketing and ensure that small farmers receive an adequate income. This will mean resolving the problem of insufficiency and inadequacy of information and communication systems, poor roads, storage and processing facilities, as well as food quality and safety control systems.

Moreover, agriculture will have to cope with climate change and its impact on productivity.

But sufficient financial resources are needed to improve infrastructure and modernize agricultural production resources in the poor countries. The proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is allocated to agriculture, including forestry and fisheries, has fallen from 19 percent in 1980 to about 5 percent today. Agriculture in the developing countries needs 44 billion US dollars per year of ODA to finance modern inputs, rural infrastructures and technologies for the benefit of small farmers.

Investing more in the region's agricultural sector could help resolve hunger in other regions of the world. It is estimated that, with sufficient investment, nearly 10 million hectares of arable land could be brought back into cultivation to grow grains and oilseed crops in Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

### **Agenda of the Regional Conference**

At this Twenty-seventh Regional Conference, you will be informed of FAO's activities in the region and will have an opportunity to discuss priorities and implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal, the establishment of the network of decentralized offices and the reform of the Committee on World Food Security.

A ministerial round table will be held on measures taken to deal with agricultural and rural development issues in the region.

### **FAO reform**

FAO is currently undergoing the most profound process of reform within the United Nations system. It is renewing its working arrangements and the way it performs its mandate and delivers its services to member countries.

Implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action has been the primary objective of both the Member Nations and the Secretariat since it was adopted at the Special Session of the Conference in November 2008. The main elements of the Immediate Plan of Action are:

- adoption of a planning framework and a new results-based culture;
- decentralization and greater delegation of authority;
- organizational streamlining;
- improvement of human resource management;
- more effective governance.

Since January, the Regional Offices have been responsible for overseeing the programme and budget of technical officers in the region. They will gradually take over the management of technical work of country offices. In addition, staff of regional offices have been trained to assume responsibility for the Technical Cooperation Programme.

To facilitate the alignment of our administrative structure with the results-based framework, a comprehensive restructuring of the Headquarters was initiated in 2009 and is due for completion in 2012. A key element of this exercise has been the elimination of 40 Director-level positions with the aim of producing a flatter organizational structure and hierarchy.

The Independent Chairperson of the Council will explain in more detail the ongoing activities in this regard, especially at the level of Representatives of Member Nations.

### **Reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**

Last November, the Thirty-sixth Session of the FAO Conference approved another significant reform, that of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The purpose of CFS reform is to improve the governance of world food security, using existing structures and programmes and creating effective partnerships. The renewed CFS has the following important characteristics:

- a global forum of discussion to foster a convergence of views on the causes and consequences of food insecurity and on the modalities of action required in this area;
- a mechanism for the global coordination of efforts to eliminate hunger in order to ensure long-term coherence and effectiveness of action;
- a solid scientific basis: the new CFS comprises a High-Level Panel of Experts that will help in taking appropriate decisions by providing objective and impartial research and analysis;
- an openness to all stakeholders: governments, regional and international institutions, economic and financial partners, farmers' organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, foundations and civil society, all will be well represented.

But for the CFS to be a high-level intergovernmental process of decision-making and thus to acquire political legitimacy, governments need to be represented at ministerial level at its meetings. In addition to relevant technical ministries and departments, the participation of the ministers in charge of cooperation and development is also necessary for the discussion of key economic and financing issues.

At the country level, it is essential to put in place, under the authority of governments, partnerships building on Food Security Thematic Groups and National Alliances Against Hunger, which will need to be strengthened. These two mechanisms should provide support to national authorities which have the responsibility of ensuring a rational allocation and utilization of budgetary resources, official development assistance and private national and foreign direct investments.

Thus, the new Committee on World Food Security and its High-Level Panel of Experts, with the relevant mechanisms at the national level, will constitute the backbone of the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security.

### **Conclusion**

*Honourable Chairperson,*

*Distinguished Ministers,*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Only five years separate us from 2015, the date by which world leaders pledged to reduce by half hunger and extreme poverty. However, if past trends continue, that target may not be reached because actions and resources are not commensurate with the set objectives. Nevertheless, I am convinced that together we can eliminate hunger from our



planet. But for that, we need to move forward from words to deeds, and above all to do it quickly.

During the last fifteen years, several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America have succeeded in increasing agricultural production and significantly reducing the number of undernourished people living in their territory. So we know what it takes to defeat hunger.

If we are to feed the world, agricultural policies everywhere must be based on that perspective. We need to produce more in the developing and transition countries first, but also in those countries that still have unused production potential. And for this effort to benefit the poorest and the hungry, the rules of international agricultural trade will need to facilitate the goal of eradicating world hunger, as was unanimously recalled by the 193 Members at the Summit of Heads of State and Government last November at FAO.

Before closing, I should like to emphasize the key role of the European Union, within the Europe and Central Asia region, as partner of FAO for the technical and financial assistance that is provided to developing countries in the spheres of agriculture and rural development. Besides its contribution to the regular budget, the European Union is FAO's leading partner with, in 2009, a contribution of 365 million US dollars to the Organization's extra-budgetary resources. FAO wishes to further strengthen its excellent collaboration with the European Union and its institutions. This particularly effective collaboration is today heralded by many partners. I hope that in the future we can continue along the same lines and together win the fight against world hunger.

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

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## APPENDIX E

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### STATEMENT BY THE INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL

*Mr Chairman of the Conference,  
Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,  
Mr Director-General,  
Honourable Delegates and Observers,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

#### **Introduction**

May I be permitted, on behalf of the Council of FAO, to express my warmest thanks to the Government of the Republic of Armenia for having organized this Regional Conference and for having put in place all the necessary facilities. I should also like to thank the Armenian people for their wonderful welcome and generosity.

It is an honour and a pleasure to take part in this **Regional Conference**. Our session in Yerevan is the third of five Regional Conferences this year. Last week I was in Luanda for the Regional Conference for Africa and the week before in Panama for the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean. I can assure you that these meetings are now of critical importance given the new role that they have been given by the member countries under the reform plan adopted in 2008 and for which the Basic Texts were amended in 2009.

The 2010 cycle of **Regional Conferences** is a landmark in the institutional life of the Organization as it constitutes the first biennium of implementation of the reform plan, the **Immediate Plan of Action**. Its implementation, financed from the Regular Budget, is under our collective responsibility and calls for sustained efforts on the part of the member countries and of the Secretariat in Rome and the decentralized offices.

As we approach the 139<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council, I wish to take this opportunity:

- (1) to brief you on the unfolding of my mandate as Independent Chairperson of the Council and to report to you on the accomplishment of the mission that you have entrusted to me;
- (2) to provide a progress report on the implementation of the reform plan, in my capacity as Chair of the “Committee on Reform” [CoC - IEE], and on the functioning of the Open-Ended Working Group on Measures Designed to Increase the Efficiency of Governing Bodies (OEWG), which I also chair;
- (3) to envision developments for these different bodies.

#### **First, the unfolding of my mandate**

You elected me in November. I see my work as guided by **five principal axes**, which I should like to share with you:

**1 – Collegiality:** I have introduced a process of **informal coordination** of the Chairs of the Committees with limited membership and the Vice-Chairs of the “Committee on Reform”, whose first meeting was on 9 March. I think the best option is to adopt a consensual and cross-cutting approach to the tasks that lie before us. Regular meetings of this group should

facilitate communication and the search for a common vision in order to address the time limits set for our agenda. Broader consultation to involve the Chairperson of the CFS (Committee on World Food Security) and the Technical Committees of the Council is programmed for 2 June.

**2 – Subsidiarity:** It is essential that the governing bodies maximize the coordination of their actions to avoid duplication and repetition. As we proceed from one level to the next, value needs to be added at each level. I shall make sure that what is dealt with at one level is not dealt with again at a higher level. In this connection, **intersessional work** is essential and reflects the spirit of reform. Positive initiatives have been taken in this sense. They go in the right direction in that they permit an in-depth preparation of the formal sessions.

**3 - Appropriation:** Dialogue within and with the **Regional Groups** is essential and must draw upon regular meetings so that each group can express its concerns and proposals. I therefore invited the Chairs of the Regional Groups to working meetings on 15 March, 22 March, 21 April and 10 May to deal in particular with the topic of **field visits and preparation for the Council**. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Chair of the European Regional Group, Belarus, and the Presidency of the European Union, Spain, for their active collaboration.

**4 – Independence:** Each of you knows that it is important to maintain this criterion, both in relation to the Members and to the Secretariat and the Office of the Director-General, with whom changes are underway in a constructive atmosphere. Rest assured that I view the observance of this independence as crucial to the success of my mission. I strive each day to maintain it, especially in view of important looming deadlines, including the election of the Director-General in 2011 at the Thirty-seventh Session of the Conference.

**5 – Partnership:** Partnership is essential for our mission and we need to consider developing it in all its forms: other United Nations agencies, States, civil society, non-governmental organizations and private enterprise.

## **Second, what is the state of progress of reform?**

Reform is underway. The time is ripe for collective action and we need to help maintain the momentum of the reform process, which is still fragile. Together we must counter all forms of inertia, notably by making best possible use of the Organization's human resources, which we all know are top calibre. **Internal communication** is essential, as it is the staff who see to the everyday implementation of reform. **External communication** is also essential and each country has a part to play in this.

That is how we can expect concrete results, both in Rome and in your region. The new methods of work and preparation of the Committees with limited membership will lead to even more precise recommendations for the upcoming session of the Council. And as you know, the Council has been given added responsibilities in planning, establishing priorities, control, oversight and monitoring the implementation of governance decisions.

The schedule of meetings of the "Committee on Reform" has been revised so that two can be held before the summer. Following our first meeting of 8 April, I wish to take stock with you on four core processes of our road map:

(1) – The Open-Ended Working Group on the efficiency of the governing bodies: This was formally established on 9 April and its tentative work schedule adopted. Intersessional work will clearly be needed given the sensitivity of the topic of representation on the Council.

(2) – The process of preparation of the informal meeting on the integration of extra-budgetary funding: On 14 April, the joint session of the Finance and Programme Committees underlined the need to define the preparatory conditions for this meeting, scheduled under the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA). We should address this issue and take decisions at our next meetings on the monitoring of reform.

(3) – Preparation for election of the Director-General: The address of candidates to the Council and Conference was on the agenda of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters that met last week in Rome. Proposals were put forward by the Secretariat, mainly on the basis of a comparative analysis of rules and practices in effect in other United Nations agencies. Recommendations to be transmitted to the Council will be discussed this month. Elsewhere, a vacancy announcement for the position of Director-General has been posted on the FAO website.

(4) - Status of the Regional Conferences: Reform of governance introduced significant change at regional level, with the Regional Conferences given full governing body status. This is a remarkable step for the consolidation of governance at regional level. The Regional Conferences will now be hierarchically linked to the Conference and the Council, to whom they will also be required to report:

- in the first case, on aspects relating to policy and regulation;
- in the second case, on matters relating to programme and budget.

In this regard, the Programme Committee asked me to draw your attention to the role of the Regional Conferences in defining **regional priorities** and in communicating those priorities to the Council. I highlight this point today, knowing full well that you will give it all the attention it deserves.

Moreover, as the CFS reports to the Council on programme and budgetary matters, I should like to comment on the work of the Bureau of this Committee, which I consider to be extremely positive. The significant advances that have emerged can only benefit the relationship between the CFS and the Council. This liaison will also facilitate the establishment of the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, involving the specialized agencies in Rome - FAO, IFAD, WFP and Bioversity - as well as civil society. This Conference will be examining this issue in detail in the presence of the Chair of the CFS Bureau.

#### **What is the short-term outlook?**

The entry into effect of the new scheduling for the Conference, henceforth to be held in June, will shorten this current biennium by some six months. The agenda is therefore heavy and we will have to use the time available to best effect.

In this regard, work conducted in informal groups is a good approach, on condition that is transparent, open and compatible with the formal sessions of the governing bodies, whose decisions it must not pre-empt. This approach provides for early and careful preparation of important events, such as the election of the Director-General or consideration of extra-budgetary funding in the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-2013. But it must remain coordinated and aligned with the work of the “Committee on Reform”, the Council and other formal or informal bodies.

The next meetings of the “Committee on Reform” will be dealing with **decentralized offices and staff rotation policy**. These are important issues for **decentralization**, whose discussion could be enlightened by the views and recommendations of the Regional Conferences taking place in the meantime. I will facilitate consideration of the inputs of the Regional Conferences in the decision-making processes, particularly during the deliberations of the Council.

The Committees have examined issues of direct relevance to **decentralization**, such as progress in implementing the Technical Cooperation Programme. The Programme Committee specifically recommended that, with support from the Secretariat, I take measures for the **Regional Conferences** to be in a position to formulate precise recommendations to the Council on the priority areas of regions. I will implement this recommendation, particularly in the formulation of the next Programme of Work and Budget.

You will also know that my mandate calls for continued contact with institutions dealing with subjects falling within FAO's remit, so that the Council is kept abreast of corresponding developments. I shall ensure that the Council is kept informed of discussions of interest to FAO taking place in other bodies, and that such dialogue is pursued with other governing bodies, notably those of the institutions dealing with food and agriculture that are based in Rome. In this connection, a particular point of information is included in the agenda of the next session of the Council that will take place next week in Rome. Several important meetings will be taking place in the coming months, including the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Session of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I envisage consultations with you on these events so that we can share the information we have gathered. If I am given the chance, I aim to attend some of these events and thus to meet other international agencies. I shall also be pursuing my meetings with staff representatives and will step up my encounters with representatives of civil society, particularly NGOs, and of course WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Finally, I have planned several missions to the field to coincide with the Regional Conferences, so that I can meet the beneficiaries of FAO's work and assess the impact of reform. That is why I am here this week in Armenia.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, I wish to assure you of my complete availability for the mission you have entrusted to me, both in Rome and in the field. I wish to hear your concerns which I am ready to pass on to all member countries, whenever necessary.

We need to remain focused on the implementation of reform, homing in on the essentials without reopening settled issues. The road is long and strewn with obstacles. The process is still fragile. We must remain united and committed to make FAO more effective and more responsive at its different levels, and we must strengthen the Members' accountability if we are to achieve our primary goal which is to fight better against hunger.

At a time when the agricultural sector and markets remain characterized, in Europe as elsewhere, by instability and uncertainty, it is important to equip producers with appropriate tools to manage risk, while strengthening social mechanisms to protect the vulnerable. Such measures are particularly necessary in the European region, where socio-economic as well as agricultural and rural institutions and policies have recently undergone profound change in many countries. This Conference is therefore called upon to examine not only the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget for 2010-11 but also to formulate recommendations on priority action areas for Europe in the 2012-13 biennium. In this regard, I am interested to note that special focus is placed on a series of long-term regional priorities, including:

- the strengthening of early warning and rapid intervention capacity;
- the development of food production through measures that target agricultural inputs, credit, extension and education;
- the improved functioning and integration of markets;
- an increase in investment in agriculture, food processing, post-harvest technologies, rural infrastructure and social mechanisms to protect the more vulnerable population groups.

Finally, I should like to assure you that reform is not an end in itself, but rather the means to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness of FAO at all levels. The Secretariat and Management have already introduced actions to enable culture change. The regions, including yours, are now better structured to respond to such change.

The Governing Bodies, the Council, the Committees and indeed, I myself, have changed culture to bring each country delegation more closely into the everyday workings of FAO. This is essential if we are to perform our duties everywhere in the field, in all countries, to the full.

Equally important is the need to promote FAO influence and recognition among international bodies.

Along the lines of what has been done with the CFS (Committee on World Food Security), we have other platforms that need stronger cohesion (Water, Land, Climate...). We need to be proactive players. Hence the importance of FAO reform. And taking us forward is our haste to eradicate world hunger, once and for all.

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

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## APPENDIX F

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### MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS STEMMING FROM THE DEBATE IN THE 36TH SESSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE (ECA) ON ITEMS 4 – 9

#### **Item 4: Mapping and policy response to climate change impacts on agriculture and rural areas: ECA 36/10/2**

1. The Commission expressed its appreciation and support for the work of the secretariat on inventory of climate change impacts on agriculture and rural areas and capacity building for Ministries of Agriculture related to adaptation and mitigation of climate change.
2. A number of countries presented assessments of negative impacts of climate change on crop production, deterioration and loss of soils and water resources, soil salinization and loss of forest cover and secondly, experience in programmes to counteract these, including attracting private investment in development of sustainable irrigation systems and increasing productivity through new drought resistant varieties. The Commission supported, for the attention of FAO, the recommendations included in paragraphs 25 to 32 of the document **ECA 36/10/2**. In addition it added:
  - the full involvement of Ministries of Agriculture in work on adaptation and mitigation and on National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and work on Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Strategies;
  - to incorporate climate change related policies into rural development and agriculture policies as well as national programmes for sustainable management of land and water resources, farm level environment protection programmes and multifunctional use of land and improved management of rangelands;
  - dissemination of policies on good agriculture practices for adaptation to climate change impacts and their mitigation, based on solid scientific foundations, for sustainable management of land and water and protection of biodiversity.

#### **Item 5: Challenges of water scarcity in the European and Central Asia region and recommendation for adaptation: ECA 36/10/3**

3. The Commission welcomed this agenda item as water scarcity was a problem that currently many countries in the region face and it was expected to become more severe in relation to climate change. Many countries are already facing serious water management problems that require immediate actions.
4. The Commission acknowledged the strategic approach developed by FAO and supported the technical assistance which has been provided by FAO for the member countries in the region.
5. A number of countries presented assessments of the water scarcity and government responses at national and transboundary levels. It was emphasized that the situation was most critical in the Caucasus and the Central Asian region.
6. The Commission proposed the following recommendations for the attention of the governments:
  - develop governance structures taking into account the experiences of some Mediterranean countries as well as initiatives for the rivers Maas, Schelde and Rhine;

- develop regulatory frameworks through multilateral agreements for water management based on river basins and as an integrated approach to preserve the ecosystems;
- promote dry land agricultural practices to improve water productivity and address the problems related to large-scale salinization of irrigated areas;
- policy options and related strategies dealing with water scarcity should be based on the set of solid principles as suggested by the secretariat:
  - base strategies on a clear understanding of the causes of water scarcity;
  - ensure cost-effectiveness with a full assessment of externalities;
  - improve water governance and institutional capacity;
  - adapt response to local conditions;
  - ensure policy alignment between water, agriculture and food security;
  - anticipate change through robust decision-making and adaptive management.

7. The Commission supported for the attention of FAO the recommendations included in paragraphs 47 to 56 of the document **ECA 36/10/3**.

8. The Commission welcomed the establishment of the FAO Water Platform as endorsed by the FAO Programme Committee. It looks forward to the development of an FAO Water Strategy taking into consideration the recommendations of the evaluation of FAO's role in work related to water. Special attention should be given to the needs of the different regions to improve the related activities of the Organization through both better internal coordination and improved cooperation with partners, including International Financing Institutions (IFIs).

**Item 6: Improvement of rural livelihoods in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS through sustainable improvements in livestock production: ECA 36/10/4**

9. The Commission congratulated the secretariat for the excellent paper prepared on this item and the clear and concise format of the recommendations in Annex 1 of ECA 36/10/4.

10. The Commission emphasized the importance of the document's recommendation that sustainable progress in livestock sector development depends largely on integrated approaches, which take into consideration many relevant activities of the whole value chain. In a number of countries the livestock sector continues to be the main income source of a considerable proportion of rural population. The aspects and correlations of animal and human health were also highlighted as was the importance of cooperation in the prevention of an outbreak of zoonosis.

11. One observer stated that their livestock sector continues to be based on large-scale interventions and an unchanged government support system, thus addressing better production management, animal health and food safety issues.

12. The Commission's main recommendation for the attention of the governments was that:

- policy measures and instruments in the various country groups of the region follow an approach which integrates improvement of feed and fodder levels, advice and other activities to improve breeding and the husbandry and animal health situation as well as access to inputs including land, credit, market information, support services and markets and all other important conditions to achieve sustainable development of livestock farms;
- use be made of the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities related to the geopolitical differences and socio-economic specificities among countries to set suitable policy options and instruments that best contribute to the sustainable development of the livestock sector.



13. The technical recommendations for the attention of FAO in paragraphs 58 to 60 of ECA 36/10/4 were adopted.

**Item 7: Income diversification for sustainable development of European and Central Asian Rural Areas – Role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): ECA 36/10/5**

14. The Commission congratulated the secretariat for the preparation of a comprehensive background document and welcomed this agenda item as it demonstrated the importance of agriculture and related diverse economic activities for the economic development of rural areas and captures the main obstacles and also the opportunities.

15. The Commission recognized the role that FAO plays in assisting countries implementing effective agricultural policies that allow farmers to seize the opportunities of national, regional and global markets, while specifically helping small-scale farms not to lag behind. In this regard, cooperatives and farmer associations should be promoted.

16. Some Members of the Commission expressed their view that the renewed Common Agricultural Policy and the European Union Rural Development Policy were good examples of policies oriented towards a sustainable and competitive agriculture, while setting a whole range of measures to improve rural livelihoods and income diversification.

17. A number of countries presented their ongoing programmes in this field including territorial development, landscape preservation, rural infrastructure development, income diversification through handicrafts, agritourism, promotion of local markets and transboundary trade. It was also pointed out that a number of conditions should be met to create an enabling environment for diversification starting from land use rights to access of resources and services and also that income diversification strategies should be tailored to each specific country.

18. The Commission stressed that exchange of experiences and related networking among member countries were of utmost importance. It was emphasized that learning best practices from other countries and sharing their experiences would be welcomed.

19. The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group of South Eastern Europe (SWG) expressed its gratitude to FAO and other partners of cooperation for the support of their activities, invited other countries from the subregion to join and offered to share their experiences with the Central Asian countries. It emphasized that the case of the SWG could be seen as a worthwhile initiative to be followed also in other subregions.

20. The Commission recognized the excellent assistance FAO and especially the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and its associated subregional offices provide for member countries in the region supporting a number of income diversification programmes and projects in the region and expects that in the decentralization process this assistance would be further enhanced in the future.

21. The Commission welcomed the involvement of FAO in activities supporting income diversification in the region, such as the Agricultural Policy Forum for Southeastern Europe and the collaboration in a wide range of donor funded projects on agriculture and rural development for countries in Europe and Central Asia. Collaboration with other partners in this area was encouraged. Efforts should be made to continue with FAO's involvement in ongoing activities of partners in the region.

22. The Commission supported, for the attention of FAO, the recommendations included in paragraphs 47 to 60 of the document ECA 36/10/5. In addition it added that FAO could further strengthen its assistance to help countries diversify the income of rural areas by:

- promoting quality linked to geographical origin and geographical indications;
- human capital and skills development through vocational training and outreach activities, mainly aimed at small industries and producers;
- improving advisory services to farmers and rural enterprises and sharing experiences on land consolidation.

**Item 8: Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011 and areas of priority actions for the European region for the following biennium 2012-2013: ERC/10/5**

23. The Commission welcomed the opportunity to review “Implementation of the PWB 2010-11 and proposed areas of priority actions for the European region for the biennium 2012-13”, in line with the new role of the Regional Conference as a Governing Body of FAO.

24. The Commission found that the background document did not provide the basis for a thorough discussion on areas of priority action in the region for the current and future biennia. It recognized that the process of prioritization was a work in progress, involving Members and the secretariat, and improvements were to be expected in future documentation. For the current biennium, elaboration of regional areas of action should be linked to indicators in the results frameworks, identification of opportunities for use of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and leverage of voluntary contributions.

25. The Commission agreed that continuation of the present areas of priority action for the 2012-13 biennium was a sensible approach linked to the four-year Medium-Term Plan (MTP), with adjustments to take account of emerging issues, linkages to the reformed Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and partnerships. Members expressed their appreciation of the informal consultation held in Budapest in March 2010, which resulted in the identification of possible areas of priority action at subregional level, including: support to smallholders in improving land tenure systems, market access, food safety, promotion of food quality, support to genetic resources and evaluation of food security. It was regretted that the outcome of that meeting could not be reflected in the background document due to the time constraints despite that the member countries attending the Budapest meeting considered the priorities identified there as important priority areas for FAO interventions in the region.

26. To address the food and agriculture challenges in the region, and taking account of FAO’s Strategic Framework and its core functions, the Commission emphasized that priority should be given to regional activities involving advocacy, policy support, capacity building, knowledge management and neutral fora for discussion in the following areas of action:

- provision of basic global data and statistics;
- assistance to define national economic, social, food and nutrition policies, with a focus on capacity building for least developed countries to meet global expectations and benefit from market opportunities;
- normative role at global level, as well as capacity building to reinforce technical and institutional capacities, especially for least developed countries;
- implementation of food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary standards including global conventions;
- animal and plant transboundary diseases;
- emergencies and rehabilitation;
- interface between climate change and agriculture;
- conservation and management of plant and animal genetic resources;
- sustainable management of forests.

27. The Commission also stressed that the development of the European Union seemed to be important for all member countries of the region and thus the experience from European Union countries should be further transmitted to other member countries of the region.

28. Members appreciated the informal discussion inspired by the Chair following the formal statements, which allowed a more open dialogue among the member countries and with the secretariat, while recognizing that the results of informal consultations need to be formally endorsed.

29. The Commission recommended that:

- the priorities outlined in paragraph 26 should be taken into consideration in the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13;
- the report of the Informal Consultation in Budapest in March 2010 should be included in the priority identification process for the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 (Annex to the ERC Report);
- informal dialogue among Members and with the secretariat should be encouraged during preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget;
- new approaches and formats be considered for the work of the ECA during and between sessions, involving formal and informal mechanisms, as they are needed to bring national and subregional priorities to bear on formulation of regional areas of priority actions.

30. Therefore, the Commission proposed [for consideration by the ERC] that:

- the Executive Committee of the Commission should liaise with the Chair of the ERC and the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia during the intersessional period, including on regional areas for priority action for the next biennium;
- the informal meetings of Members in the region should continue to increase dialogue on the preparation of areas of priority action for the next Programme of Work and Budget.

**Item 9: Mainstreaming gender in rural development through ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) Activities: ECA 36/10/6**

31. Following a summary presentation from the FAO Gender Focal Point in the region the Commission underlined the (i) importance of incorporating gender into farm support and rural development policies, programmes and projects; (ii) assistance to female rural entrepreneurs in developing products and services to market in order to diversify sources of rural populations' incomes; and (iii) improved access for women to land and other production inputs. The issue of manifold impacts of migrations on rural society, both negative in terms of labour loss but also positive through investment of remittances was put as a new emerging issue area of priority. Furthermore, the growing role of women in agriculture was seen as a road to innovativeness and new ideas.

32. The Commission noted that the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) could not hold its 15<sup>th</sup> session back to back with the present 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan and considered that the issue of mainstreaming gender in rural development should be included as a standing item in future ECA meetings.

33. The Commission requested FAO to take a leading role in underscoring the importance of women for agriculture, food security and nutrition. Capacity building in rural areas, fostering of gender policies for governments and policy-makers, and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data are key factors.

34. The Commission stressed that reform-led improvement of gender analysis at FAO must continue and FAO should also draw on the lessons learned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in this area.

35. The Commission took note of the urge of the European Union to governments to carry out necessary reforms to overcome institutional, social, legal and political barriers to gender quality and to specifically ensure that both women and men have equal rights and access to all resources. It is expected that FAO and other agencies and programmes of the United Nations provide guidance on this.

36. The Commission took note of the European Union to urge governments to promote a number of significant non-agricultural policies targeted to women for the elimination of rural poverty.

37. The Commission welcomed the Gender and Land Rights Database developed by FAO and its further update and extension.

38. The Commission also took note of the proposal to invite the ECA WPW to improve its working methods and to include in its agenda all issues of special relevance to foster policy advice and the integration of women in rural development, such as social issues relating to non-agrarian economies, migratory patterns, demographic trends, land as collateral for non-agriculture investment and the influence of these factors on women's involvement in rural development and agriculture. It also urged the countries in the region to actively participate in future sessions and activities for the ECA WPW.

39. The Commission took note of the request of the Chair of the WPW to support its initiative to develop close cooperation with other statutory bodies of FAO, such as the CFS among others, and ensure that funding is provided also on a Regular Programme basis for the implementation of Strategic Objective "K" on Gender.

40. The Commission endorsed the work programme as outlined in paragraph 23 of the document ECA 36/10/6 and proposed to include this item in the future as a standing item of the agenda of the ECA sessions.

41. The Commission recommended that FAO support the Central Asia countries through targeted policy and project sharing experience activities, including gender aspects of land reform and follow-up and, at the request of the WPW Chair, support from extrabudgetary resources be mobilized for the WPW activities.

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## APPENDIX G

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### **STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FAO/CSOs-NGOs CONSULTATION FOR EUROPE ON TOPICS RELATED TO THE AGENDA OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE**

#### **Introduction**

On 10 and 11 May 2010, 44 CSOs and NGOs, representing national organizations from 10 countries and 9 international organizations of the Europe and Central Asia Region, gathered in Yerevan prior to the FAO Regional Conference. They discussed issues on the agenda of the 27<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Europe and the relationships between FAO and Civil Society. The Consultation was chaired by Abgar Yeghoyan, President of the Armenian NGO “Protection of Consumers’ Rights”. The Consultation came to a consensus on the following points.

#### **Analysis of the crisis in the region and the impact on food security**

Regarding the food price crisis:

- many countries in the Caucasus and CIS Region (out of the EU) were particularly affected given their strong dependency on importation of food goods;
- many farmers in the Caucasus and CIS Region were affected by the changes that occurred at the end of their membership of the USSR and by the reforms that followed;
- the national agricultural producers in all parts of the region did not all benefit from temporarily high agriculture prices as they did not have enough investment capacity nor access to inputs and credits;
- in the EU countries, despite the existence of direct payments, farmers were also affected by the crisis - particularly in certain sectors such as the dairy sector - as the prices returned to a very low level falling below European production costs following the crisis; it was also as a result of the CAP reform measures which had substantially reduced tools/instruments for markets regulation/management in all parts of the Region. Small producers were particularly affected given that low prices did not allow them to invest;
- in the new European Union Member States where many small producers remain, the application of new sanitary, traceability, environmental and animal welfare standards meant that farmers were no longer able to sell their products on their national and in the EU market;
- consumers were also affected by the crisis (more dramatically in the Caucasus and CIS Region) given the fact that the prices to consumers remained high, even when the producers’ prices dropped.

Regarding the financial and economic crisis:

- the financial and economic crisis had a strong impact on poverty and food security in the Caucasus and CIS Region, given the impact on incomes.

Regarding the climate change crisis:

- the governments of the Caucasus and CIS Region showed little interest in the impact of climate change that has a severe impact, especially on water availability and scarcity.

### **FAO's role in the Region**

Food and agriculture are central to society in the Region. Environmental, socio-economic and cultural aspects depend on food and agriculture policies. Besides the pre-eminent role of the EU CAP, which is being constantly reviewed, it is of utmost importance to establish a Regional policy based on food sovereignty<sup>4</sup> and improving self-sufficiency.

FAO is a unique forum for cooperation in the Region and is the place where such a regional policy can be formulated. FAO must take into consideration the different analyses regarding food and agriculture coming from all Member States and CSOs in order to design appropriate agricultural and trade policies.

Therefore we ask for a pre-eminent role of FAO to boost cooperation and exchange in this Region and we look to FAO as a fundamental instrument to foster partnerships between CSOs and Member States, especially in the Newly Independent States (NIS) in the Region.

### **CSO expectations of FAO**

FAO should ensure that all the proposed programmes include the full participation of CSOs in a bottom-up approach.

FAO should boost partnership between CSOs in the Region on the following themes:

- support of sustainable production
  - agroecology programmes with involvement of producers
  - family farm and multifunctional activities
  - new models of research based on the involvement of peasants/pastoralists with local knowledge (e.g. participatory breeding), linking research to the farmers and vice versa
  - crucial importance of traditional livestock keeping in the Region
- making the countryside attractive for future generations
  - promotion of livelihood opportunities for rural youth
  - development of rural infrastructure, including services with obligatory involvement of the communities and farmers in decision-making to ensure farmers' ownership and access to the resources
  - development of alternative types of rural employment to support rural inhabitants
- better functioning of markets
  - promotion of price monitoring to combat food monopolies
  - models of distribution to ensure appropriate and just food chains
  - urge governments to include independent CSOs in respective decision-making processes
  - promotion of the creation of farmers' bottom-up cooperatives
  - participation in improving the legal environment
  - remunerative prices for farmers
  - ensure that the conditions of accession to the WTO and the EU will not adversely affect small farmers in the long run
  - supply management (production volumes to be set by the countries)
  - securing access to productive land for small farmers
  - increase FAO's capacity to enable its assistance to the Region
  - improving microfinance, access of farmers to financial resources
- other issues
  - limitation of production and distribution of GMOs in the Region after assessment of their long-term impact and in the light of the precautionary principle
  - how to ensure biosafety in the Region
  - rules and conditions that ensure that the production of agrofuels does not compete with

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<sup>4</sup> For definition, see the 2007 Nyeleny Declaration on the website: [http://www.nyeleny.org/?lang=en&lang\\_fixe=ok](http://www.nyeleny.org/?lang=en&lang_fixe=ok)

land and other resources for food production.

### **Additional recommendations for Newly Independent States (NIS) for collaboration with CSOs**

- establishment of a legal framework for agriculture cooperatives
- establishment of an agriculture insurance system
- public financial and other support for smallholder farmers
- establishment of an appropriate food safety system and valid legal environment for small-scale farmers.

### **Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Reform**

In this context, we urge the Member States to push forward the CFS reform process to achieve the so-called phase 2, namely, that the CFS should be the venue for making decisions on global agricultural policies and the allocation of respective funds, which would also ensure accountability and transparency.

The newly reformed CFS also gives a prominent role to the Region and we support a mechanism for governance at regional level with the full involvement of CSOs. In this context, we reaffirm the need for the autonomous organization of CSOs in order to face the challenges to food and agriculture. To ensure CSOs' participation funds must be assured.

### **Main expectations of Civil Society of the Member States**

Access to land: we support the process to achieve Voluntary guidelines on the access to land and natural resources. The process of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) follow-up is also crucial for the Region. We oppose the unlimited privatization of land and land grabbing that deprive smallholder farmers of fair access to resources.

Climate change: we need to consider developing activities to permit adaptation, but also mitigation activities giving special attention to agroecology, e.g. organic and traditional sustainable ways of farming in the Region.

Markets: Improve domestic (local/national/regional) markets for better access of smallholder farmers and satisfaction of consumers.

Ensure fair exchange in the Region by avoiding the negative impact of trade practices of countries that have stronger capacities to support their agriculture.

### **Next Steps**

The CSOs agreed to build on existing civil society mechanisms in the Region through consultations within the various constituencies. In order to ensure continuity and regular dialogue with FAO and the Member States, there will be a facilitating committee with focal points from the different constituencies and subregions in Europe. The committee will work on a voluntary basis with the FAO Regional Office and Headquarters on the major issues identified above notably within the context of the CFS Reform and changes in global governance of food and agriculture.

It was proposed that at the next FAO Regional Conference for Europe in 2012 that a delegation of civil society attend as participants following the precedents and procedures established within the reformed CFS.

The committee will consult virtually in the immediate future and on a face-to-face basis as possible and appropriate. It will approach the FAO Secretariat for mobilization of resources and development of a joint programme of work.

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## APPENDIX H

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### REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY INFORMAL CONSULTATION HELD IN BUDAPEST

#### A Opening

1. The meeting was opened by the Assistant Director-General, Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia. She welcomed the participants and highlighted the unique opportunity for an informal exchange of views among the member countries regarding priority areas for the future work of FAO in the European and Central Asia Region, and the preparations for the forthcoming Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan.
2. On behalf of the Government of Hungary, the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture welcomed the participants to the meeting and expressed his pleasure at hosting and supporting this event.
3. The representatives from the member countries congratulated the Secretariat for the organization of the event and particularly Hungary for providing the relevant facilities and for its hospitality. It was highlighted that in light of the implementation of the FAO Reform such a meeting was important in order to prepare for the 27<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Europe in Yerevan and to have clear recommendations to be subsequently forwarded by the Regional Conference through the Programme and Finance Committees to the FAO Council.

#### B Introduction and Background

4. The introduction to the meeting, provided by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU), indicated to the participants that the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regional Conference for Europe, held in Porto, Portugal, in 2000, had identified the long-term regional priorities through the formal adoption of the document “Strategic Framework 2000-2015”. All consecutive regional conferences reconfirmed these regional priorities and highlighted those issues, where they wished that FAO would concentrate its efforts in a given biennium.
5. The Immediate Plan of Action for FAO’s Renewal (IPA) approved by the 35th (Special) Session of the FAO Conference in November 2008 laid the foundations for an enhanced results-based approach to programme planning, implementation and reporting in the Organization. It provided the basis for preparing, during 2009, the Strategic Framework 2010-19, the Medium-Term Plan 2010-13 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11, which were endorsed by the 36th Session of the FAO Conference in November 2009.
6. The Conference also adopted a revitalized and more inclusive inter-governmental process of review of priorities and programme and budget proposals, whereby from 2010 the Regional Conferences would *inter alia* report to the Council, through the Programme and Finance Committees, on these matters, and in doing so would:



- advise on, and identify, the special problems of their respective regions and priority areas of work which should be taken into account in the preparation of the planning, programme and budget documents of the Organization and suggest adjustments to these documents;
- review and advise on the performance of the Organization in the region in contributing to the achievement of results against relevant performance indicators, including any pertinent evaluations.

7. Therefore, this informal consultation as well as the discussion on priorities during the forthcoming sessions of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and the Regional Conference for Europe in May 2010 in Yerevan, will consider new modalities regarding the definition of priorities as well as emphasize the new decisive role of the Regional Conference in providing guidance to the secretariat towards a results-based strategic prioritization and work programme setting.

8. The consultation began with a presentation by the Secretariat of the priority areas for the Europe and Central Asia Region and the Subregional offices for Central and Eastern Europe and for Central Asia for the 2010-2011 and 2012-13 biennia and on the new planning process, programme approaches and project tools under the FAO Reform. A detailed discussion of these priority areas in three working groups followed this opening session:

Working Group 1: Central and Eastern Europe (Report in Annex 1)

Working Group 2: South-Eastern Europe (Report in Annex 2)

Working Group 3: Central Asia (Report in Annex 3)

9. The working groups allowed a review of priority areas by country groups. The working groups were attended by member countries from the different areas of the European and Central Asia Region.

10. The discussion confirmed that the European and Central Asia Region was highly differentiated by development and income levels, policy agenda and assistance requirements. A number of Central European countries have joined the European Union (EU) and, thus, the emphasis of FAO's field technical assistance has shifted further south and further east:

- The main policy issues for the countries of South-eastern Europe were related to EU accession. Assistance in this region was oriented toward enhancement of food value chains, introduction of the "*acquis communautaire*", sustainable management of natural resources and ensuring food security.
- The CIS countries further to the East were more in the process of developing agriculture and rural development policies supportive of market agriculture and institutions for sector governance that support the development of family farms and the private sector. These countries require assistance in a broad range of policy, capacity and institutional-building issues, from natural resource management to food safety to value chain developments and others.
- The countries of Central Asia require enhanced attention to issues related to rural poverty and food security as well as to natural resource management.

11. The participants also highlighted that the global economic and financial crisis, climate change and volatile food prices had serious impacts on economic development in many countries in the European and Central Asian region.

12. It was stressed that FAO priorities in the region should include particularly capacity-building related to integrated actions addressing policy, institutions and people, with a special emphasis on market agriculture and the development of family farms. The importance of strengthening institutional capacity was highlighted by several participants and it was emphasized that FAO would have an important role in providing technical assistance in the development and implementation of sound, effective experience-based policies in the region. It should not only ensure access to food, and address malnutrition, but it should provide support to the creation of an enabling environment for family farms to have better access to technologies, inputs, capital goods, credit and markets.

13. Furthermore, FAO should support member countries in their efforts to strengthen the negotiating power of farmers in the value chain and facilitate the enhancement of the capacity of farmers' organizations.

14. Additionally the participants emphasized that it would be important to present draft priority areas for the functional objectives X (Effective collaboration with Member Countries and Stakeholders) and Y (Efficient and effective administration), which had not been provided in the background documentation, sent prior to the organization of the event.

15. Based on the Strategic Framework Objectives and the priorities summarized in background documents, the following issues were highlighted during the discussions of the Consultation:

## **C Summary of the Issues highlighted**

### **C.1 Technical and Policy Issues**

#### **Strategic Objective A: Sustainable intensification of crop production**

- support policies, options and assistance for sustainable crop sector development, and
- sustainable management of land resources for crop production
- support to cross-boundary pest control (locust, etc.)
- pastures

#### **Strategic Objective B: Increased sustainable livestock production**

- policies, options and assistance for sustainable livestock sector development and support policies, with emphasis on animal health (Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), avian influenza, brucellosis, etc.) livestock identification and husbandry
- Rangelands

**Strategic Objective C: Sustainable management and use of fisheries and aquaculture resources**

- the need for close cooperation between the subregional offices and the fisheries commissions and bodies was raised concerning the management of sustainable fisheries, marine and inland
- aquaculture as an income diversification opportunity

**Strategic Objective D: Improved quality and safety of food at all stages of the food chain**

- harmonization and improvement of food safety and standards, based on the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius, for improved access to European markets
- institutions and capacity-building for harmonization of sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, institution building including requirements of WTO membership and regional economic integration and free trade areas

**Strategic Objective E: Sustainable forests management**

- sustainable management of forests and trees was indicated as a priority area together with information collection and sharing  
(for specific recommendations refer to the reports of the working groups)

**Strategic Objective F: Sustainable management of land, water and genetic resources and response to global environmental challenges**

- assessments of and adaptation to the impacts of climate change and programmes for mitigation of the impacts of climate change
- policies and projects for the prevention of desertification, combating droughts and adaptation to climate change
- improvement of agrarian structure and land consolidation
- conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources (plant and animal) in food and agriculture (including benefit sharing)
- technical assistance related policies and projects to support least favoured areas (LFA).
  - policies and projects for the sustainable management of biodiversity, e.g. grasslands

**Strategic Objective G: Enabling environment for markets to improve livelihoods and rural development**

- rural development for poverty reduction and improvement of rural population livelihoods, including diversification of rural jobs and income sources
  - agriculture's contribution to the revival of rural areas and reduction of poverty, including support targeted at small farmers
  - inclusion of rural development into the mandate of Ministries of Agriculture
- support policies and technical assistance for small farms; overcoming limited access to inputs and credit and enhanced access to markets through the reduction of post-harvest losses, on farm storage and improved marketing by farmers
  - support for small farmers, including improved access to land, credit and inputs
  - improvement of access of farmers and small farms to markets and increasing their bargaining power, among other ways, through marketing associations and cooperatives
- support the formation of value chains for agricultural and food products
- impacts of food wholesale and retail chains on standards and contracting
- organic agriculture and regional and traditional products: development of markets; support to farmers starting production and in obtaining certificates
  - development of certification systems for organic products compatible with international systems such as the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)
- agriculture as a supplier of public goods and remuneration of farmers' services

**Strategic Objective H: Improved food security and better nutrition**

- regional and global food security: FAO normative work, statistical data and analyses, methodology, policies and projects
  - food insecurity in the European region; sources and policy response
  - contribution of countries in the Europe and Central Asia region such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to regional and global food security (normative work)
- impacts of financial and economic crises on agriculture and rural areas
- technical assistance to member countries in the regions that are negotiating membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO)

**Special Attention issue:**

- impacts of financial and economic crises on agriculture and rural areas and policy response experience
  - protecting agriculture and rural populations from possible further stages of the financial and economic crises
- regional/subregional studies on rural poverty: causes; policies to reduce the phenomenon and exchange of project experience
- study/studies of food security in the Europe and Central Asia region, including reliable food supply and availability through trade and regional cooperation

**Strategic Objective K: Gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision making**

- mainstreaming gender into agricultural and rural policies needs to be addressed and Unit Results should be available. All FAO activities need to have a gender focus.

**Functional Objective X: Effective collaboration with Member States**

- combining and dissemination of FAO normative work with field projects
- formulation and tailoring Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs) and FAO activities to the specific needs of the member countries in the region
- ensuring catalytic impacts of FAO technical assistance
- support to regional economic integration, including preparations and capacity-building for consultations and negotiations of accession and free trade areas
- country programming and preparation of further National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPFs) including the linkages to other partners in order to have the basis for priority setting at country level
  - facilitate exchange of experience and expertise among groups of countries at different stages of economic transition and reforms
  - facilitating regional networking and cooperation among regional, subregional and technical organizations e.g. the Standing Working Group on Rural Development in South Eastern Europe
- focussed policy advice to Ministries of Agriculture and agricultural and rural institutions
- FAO assistance for the capacity-building of Ministries of Agriculture, for coordination of donor assistance and increased absorption of technical assistance, including the full use of technical assistance offered and avoiding “donor fatigue”
  - better donor coordination in periods of financial and economic crises

- cooperation and synergies with other donors and international financial institutions (IFIs) at regional and country level
- assisting EU New Member States provide technical assistance to other transition economies
- FAO should have an important role in the coordination of donors and with donors including carrying out a donor mapping for the region and the preparation of a resource mobilization strategy. It would be important to link a regional resource mobilization strategy with the FAO global strategy.
- members also asked to be provided with a methodology on how TCP assistance would be allocated across the countries to be able to have a clear idea of how the resources would be spent
- interdisciplinary work should be further emphasized and encouraged
- there was a request to have the functional objective X presented first as it is a fundamental objective

## **C. 2 Overall process and other issues requiring attention for the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)/ERC Yerevan**

16. During the discussion on technical items, the participants also raised various issues related to the process of priority definition as well as information they would like to receive from the Secretariat to be better prepared for the discussions in Yerevan. These are ideas launched by member countries:

- An FAO provided policy forum on sustainable agriculture and rural areas development, as well as discussing models of agriculture in the European and Central Asia Region (cross-cutting issue SO A, SO G, SO F).
- Better aligning the ECA and ERC work with the FAO Council through the Programme and Finance Committees.
- It was stressed that 70 percent of the funding for the region is still with Headquarters and only 30 percent provided to the Decentralized Offices (DOs) in the Region. Thus the normative work needs to be considered as well as priority areas, which go beyond the technical assistance to be provided to the beneficiary countries. Priority areas highlighted by the donor or EU member countries would need to be better reflected.
- In relation to the point above better clarify the contribution of the DOs to the normative work of FAO in the region.
- To provide a clarification regarding the budget breakdown in the region and particularly to indicate the net appropriation versus the voluntary contribution and to provide a clearer picture regarding the extrabudgetary resources available in the region (for the budget breakdown see Annex 4).
- Linking the work in the region also to the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and other technical committees including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).
- Concern was raised that the prioritization should not be linked to the skill mix of FAO offices, but that the priority definition would then need to be followed up to have the adequate skill mix in the decentralized offices.
- It would also be important to clearly indicate the financial aspects of the priority issues giving the member countries an idea as to which of the priorities would need to be financed from the assessed contribution and which part should be covered by extrabudgetary funds.
- The work of other organizations addressing some of the priority issues listed should also be analysed and provided to the member countries, and in this context also the work

which is undertaken together with the other Rome-based agencies and also the EU programmes.

- New ideas, which may not be in line with the presented Unit Results should also be included.
- The Secretariat should further outline what issues could be taken up by the European Regional Group or what could be done by the member countries in the context of the priority definition.
- Participants also requested the Secretariat to present a dynamic view of the priorities in order to allow the member countries to see new emerging and evolving areas.
- Stronger focus should also be given to priority areas by subregion.
- Implementation of priorities should also be handled with a certain level of flexibility.

### **C. 3 Conclusion and Closing of the Session**

17. The participants expressed their high appreciation for the excellent organization of the Consultation and particularly welcomed this unique opportunity to discuss the priorities in an informal way. It was emphasized that this had been of great assistance in understanding the planning process as well as in increasing the dialogue between the member countries themselves and between the member countries and the Secretariat, taking into consideration the specific role of the Regional Conference. It was stressed that such consultations should be further repeated as communication between the countries of the region was important. It was emphasized that a client-driven approach is a prerequisite for the work of the Organization in the region. These discussions would also contribute to eliminating the “silo structure” in the preparation of the priorities as well as of the work plans.

18. On the occasion of her upcoming retirement from the Organization, the participants of the Informal Consultation seized the occasion to express their appreciation for the strategic lead which Ms Maria Kadlecikova, Assistant Director-General, Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia (ADG RR), had provided for the development of FAO’s work programme in the Europe and Central Asia Region.

19. The consultation was closed by the ADG RR, and the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary.

20. The participants also had an opportunity to visit the premises of the Regional and Subregional Office as well as of the FAO Shared Services Centre located in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Hungary. During the visit of the REU and SEU premises, several officers provided short presentations on specific technical issues e.g. biotechnology and the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), as well as a detailed presentation on the preparation process of the Medium-Term Plan (MTP)/PWB and the work planning exercise for 2010-11.

**Annex 1****WORKING GROUP NO 1 - CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

The meeting was attended by Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and the Russian Federation from the subregion, Switzerland and by the EU member countries Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. FAO was represented by the ADG/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia and the Senior Policy Officer, Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU).

The meeting was facilitated by Professor Csaba Csaki, Corvinus University, Hungary

Reporting Officer: Ms Guljahan Kurbanova, Economist, REU

Several participants from the listed countries shared their views and approaches on future cooperation with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and the Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (SEU). The specific economic and institutional situation of the region was articulated by several representatives.

These specific characteristics are:

1. The countries are in various stages of reforms, at very different levels in terms of income and economic development as well as export and import levels.
2. There is a significant group of member countries which are also donors, among these the EU New Member States (NMS); the latter may be seeking cooperation with FAO recognizing the Organization's comparative advantage in some relevant fields of activity.
3. There are countries in Central and Eastern Europe which can significantly influence global and regional food security.
4. The economies and institutions of countries of the region are still fragile due to the transition process, changing linkages to the global and regional international markets, and the structure of their economies.

Taking into account the above issues and proposals expressed by member countries the following directions were put forward as priorities:

1. Develop a tailor-made approach for cooperation between member countries and REU and SEU.
2. Focus on food security issues including countries with important export capacities, which may contribute to global and regional food security in the coming years, and countries, which are importers of agricultural commodities.
3. Continue cooperation on food safety issues in particular with regard to the Codex Alimentarius including translation into the Russian language of Codex documents in order to make them available to Russian-speaking countries and institutions.
4. Cooperate in building food products value added chains and marketing systems in the transition economies.
5. Support small farmers through strengthening input supply systems and by developing a new generation of associations, credit cooperatives and building processed products value added chains.



6. Assist in the formulation and implementation of rural development policies for combating rural poverty. Expand this work to explore options for income diversification in rural areas as a way to improve rural development (agritourism, agroindustries etc.)
7. Develop organic farming to the extent possible, taking into account marketing potential, and support research on biodiversity, its conservation and sustainability.
8. Conduct normative and analytical activities including studies, conferences, discussions for assessment of the impact of the global economic and financial crisis on food security, agriculture, and rural areas, with a view to building an early warning system of risk monitoring and enhance preparedness to shocks.
9. Provide assistance on the sustainable management of forestry.
10. Promote cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO) in particular for non-member countries.
11. Conduct a policy dialogue with member countries on different issues of key importance for agricultural development, including support to small farmers, land management and its consolidation, where needed.
12. Encourage cooperation between countries on sharing experiences and lessons learned through comparative studies, policy dialogue, information dissemination.
13. Intensify advocacy and knowledge-sharing on FAO's comparative advantages.

Budapest, 23 March 2010.

**Annex 2****WORKING GROUP 2 – SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE**

The Working Group session was attended by the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, TfyR Macedonia, from the subregion and representatives of EU countries Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia. FAO was represented by the Deputy Regional Representative – Subregional Coordinator for Central and Eastern Europe and the Senior Field Programme Officer, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU).

The meeting was facilitated by Mr Laszlo Vajda, Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Hungary and the reporting officer was Mr Stjepan Tanic, Agribusiness and Enterprise Development Officer, REU.

The meeting highlighted that European Union accession was an overall high priority for this group of countries. It was observed however, that the member countries of South-Eastern Europe are in different stages of accession to the EU. While the overall situation is similar, the timing of the pre- and accession process is different. There are specific needs of all countries which need to be analysed and addressed individually.

Food safety and quality standards, statistics and data collection for policy decisions are those FAO normative products and services which are priority issues for this country group. It was mentioned that in one of the member countries the last agricultural census carried out had been in 1962, thus there were no reliable data available for policy decisions. This is a concern for several other countries in the subregion.

It was highlighted that there is a need to differentiate the comparative advantages of FAO and the EU, as related to issues of EU accession. FAO should focus on providing assistance to develop institutional capacities for the coordination of donor assistance and technical issues, such as the categorization of less favoured areas (LFAs), and the harmonization of regulations, standards and legislation to EU norms. Taking into consideration the need to address the socio-economic situation of the rural poor, the formulation and/or updating of food security, agriculture and rural development strategies, and addressing land use issues are important areas for FAO assistance. Capacity-building to negotiate with the World Trade Organization (WTO) was also an important requirement.

Beyond the above overall priorities there are specific areas of priority for the individual countries related to food security and safety and assistance for the capacity-building of professional non-governmental agricultural organizations.

Some of the member countries in this subregion had prepared comprehensive sector papers for donor consultation with FAO assistance, covering agriculture, forestry, irrigation, biotechnology, the dairy sector, meat, the fruit and vegetable sectors; others are planning to undertake similar sector reviews and would wish to rely both on FAO's technical assistance as well as on the sharing of the acquired capacities and experiences of neighbouring countries.

While certain issues can be addressed at national level such as capacity-building related to phytosanitary measures, plant protection, sustainable forest management, market infrastructure (warehouses) management, combating forest fires; other issues could be addressed preferably at regional/cross-boundary level; such as the impacts of climate change, rural networking, and avian influenza.

The inputs of the EU member countries to the working group debates was very useful in order to draw attention to the fact that FAO should facilitate communication and networking among EU member countries and pre- and accession countries and to draw lessons from subregional experiences. It was also recommended that close cooperation between FAO and the European Commission in Brussels be established.

It was noted, that the availability of public aid would likely not improve in the immediate future. Therefore it was very encouraging to learn that some member countries such as Belgium are providing non earmarked extrabudgetary resources, allowing FAO Headquarters and the Decentralized Offices (DOs) to carry out strategic planning and subsequent identification of priority areas. It was emphasized that it is necessary to match the priority needs with available funds and decisions on immediate and medium-term priorities.

Budapest. 23 March 2010.

**Annex 3****WORKING GROUP 3 – CENTRAL ASIA**

Participants from Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Turkey from the Central Asia (CA) Region and participants from the EU member countries were the Czech Republic, Estonia and Finland. FAO was represented by the Subregional Coordinator, Central Asia.

Facilitator: Mr David Kirviladze

Reporting Officer: Mustapha Sinaceur, Subregional Coordinator, Central Asia

Questions reviewed by the participants were mainly related to ownership but also concerning the type of support (products and services) the countries were expecting from FAO.

In the absence of other countries from the region, the Subregional Coordinator was asked to introduce the commonalities and/or differences between the priority areas of countries in the CA region; The countries present described the common issues, and comments were made on the working paper distributed: “Subregional Office for Central Asia (SEC) Priority Areas of Work during 2010-2013” as follows:

- Sustainable Intensification of Crop Production
- Increased Sustainable Livestock Production
- Sustainable Management and Use of Fishery and Aquaculture Resources
- Improved Quality and Safety of Foods
- Sustainable Management of Forest and Trees
- Sustainable Management of Land, Water and Genetic Resources
- Enabling Environment for Markets to Improve Livelihoods and Rural Development
- Increased and More Effective Public and Private Investment in Agriculture and Rural Development

In general, the CA countries discussed issues of priorities, strategies and policies related to national government programmes for the provision of food supply and concerning regional development.

The main issues related to:

- low use fertilizers and other chemical inputs due to the limited financial resources of smallholders
- poor storage facilities, which result in a very high level (20-30 percent) of harvest and post-harvest losses
- insufficient knowledge and capacities at all stages of the value chain that results in poor market opportunities
- animal genetics and livestock production
- lack of credits for small and medium-size rural enterprises and individual producers
- poor capacities to prepare rural investments

The delegate of Turkey, a major donor in the subregion, has clearly indicated priorities based on the document “Subregional Office for Central Asia (SEC) Priority Areas of Work during 2010-2013”:

- crop production
- implementation of a livestock identification and recording system
- aquaculture and fisheries
- rangeland management in the region
- conservation and sustainable use of animal and plant genetic resources
- impact of climate change on the rural economy
- gender issues in family farms
- management of water resources and improvement of water use efficiency
- research activities and technical cooperation among other countries in the subregion
- assistance to countries for the preparation of National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPFs)

Apart from issues related to large investment programmes, which are out of the scope for FAO assistance, there was a common understanding of the priorities proposed by FAO’s background document for the subregion, as these are in line with the priorities and needs of member countries.

It was also stressed to provide technical assistance through appropriate national capacity-building programmes.

Budapest. 23 March 2010.