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CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CROP AND LIVESTOCK STATISTICS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

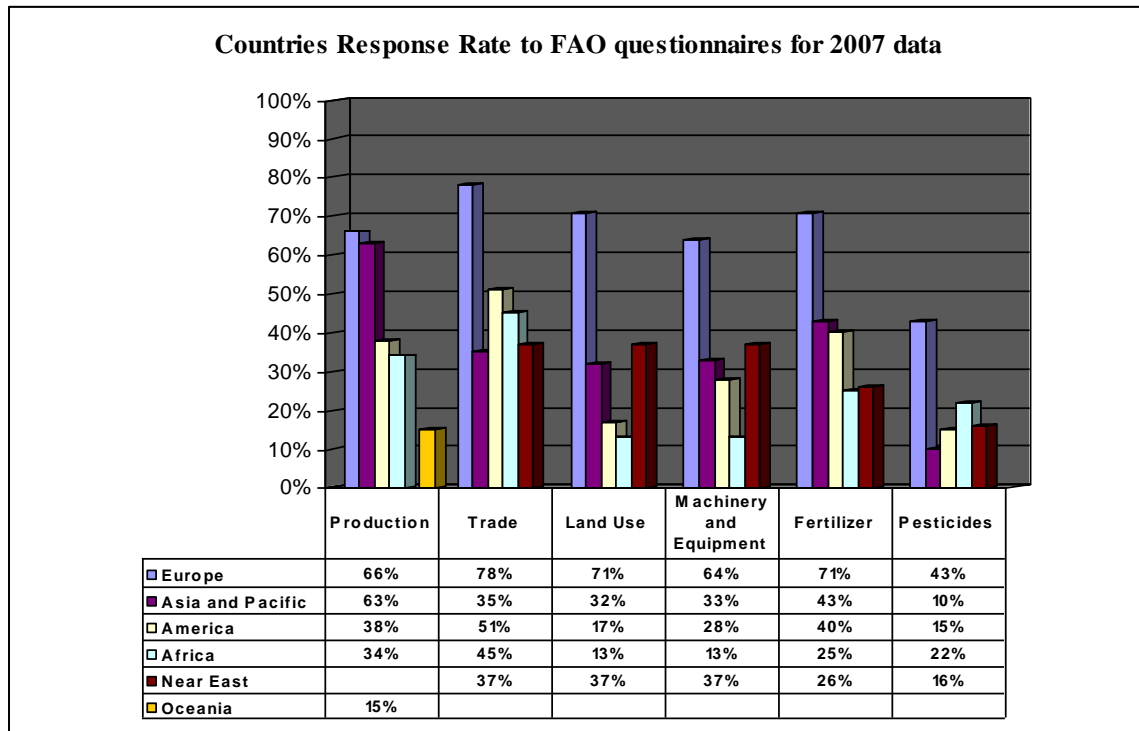
I. Introduction

1. Over the past five years, availability and access to food crops on international and national markets have been highly constrained by droughts in grain-producing nations, increased oil prices and utilization of food crops to produce biofuels. These factors have contributed to skyrocketing food prices and lower quantities of food reserves. In addition, climate change, greater demand from a growing world population as well as the global economy and the financial landscape have all contributed to a higher focus on global agricultural and rural development. These developments have renewed attention on agricultural performance and measurement of results, particularly for food crop and livestock production and related socio-economic context, including the gender dimension.

2. Against the growing requirement for data, the assessment of the current capacity of a large number of countries, particularly in the developing world, reveals that they are not able to capture and report on the most basic data requirements such as crop and livestock production data and related socio-economic data. An independent evaluation of FAO's work and role in statistics¹ concluded that "the quantity and quality of data coming from national official sources has been on a steady decline since the early 1980s, particularly in Africa" and that there is a widening gap between data requirements and data availability and quality in many developing countries.

3. The figure below shows the response rates to the questionnaires sent by FAO to countries by data domain and by region. It clearly indicates that in almost all domains, the proportions of countries responding to FAO statistics questionnaires (response rates) from the Pacific, Africa (except for trade and pesticides data) and the Near East are the lowest.

¹ Independent Evaluation of FAO's Role and Work in Statistics (2008).



II. Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics

4. The urgent need to improve agricultural statistics was recognized by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) which at its 40th Session in February 2009 recommended the development of a Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics. The UNSC further recommended that a Friends of the Chair Working Group (FoC) be established to develop this Global Strategy for review and approval at its 41st Session in February 2010. The FoC group is led by Brazil and includes Australia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, Italy, Morocco, Philippines, Russian Federation, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and the United States of America; FAO and the United Nations Statistics Division both serving as observer and secretariat, Eurostat (observer) and the World Bank (observer).

5. The Global Strategy was developed following an open and widely consultative process which involved all major stakeholders from Statistical Offices and Ministries of Agriculture in developing and developed countries. The purpose of the Global Strategy is to provide a framework for national and international statistical systems to produce the basic data and information on agriculture to guide the decision making required in the 21st century. The Global Strategy is based on three pillars:

- a) the development of a minimum set of core data that countries will provide to meet the current and emerging demands;
- b) the integration of agriculture into the national statistical systems in order to meet the expectations of policy makers and other data users that the data will be comparable across countries and over time;
- c) the sustainability of the agricultural statistics system through strong governance and strong statistical capacity.

6. The Global Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Statistics was submitted to the 36th Session of the FAO Conference (Rome, November 2009) which expressed its strong support. The UNSC endorsed the technical content and strategic directions of the Global Strategy at its 41st Session (New York, February 2010).

7. The Global Strategy covers crop and livestock sectors which are essential in any agricultural statistics system. It includes a minimum set of data to be produced by each country, including gender disaggregated data.

III. Capacity Building for Crop and Livestock Statistics: FAO Programme

8. The Global Strategy provides a ground-breaking effort to improve agricultural statistics. At its 41st Session, the UNSC recommended that FAO take the lead in the preparation of an Implementation Plan for a comprehensive statistical capacity building programme to rebuild or improve the statistical systems in developing countries.

9. FAO Statistics Division has recently developed a Capacity Building Strategy and Programme, for Member Nations to operationalise the recommendations of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics. Through this Programme, FAO will focus its assistance to Member Nations on: (i) application of methodologies and tools developed by the Division, and (ii) strengthening the institutional coordination and capacity through the integration of agricultural statistics into the national statistical system, i.e. ensuring that agriculture is appropriately covered in the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS). The strategy will build on experiences and good practices in various domains, including mainstreaming gender dimensions in data collection and analysis.

10. The Capacity Building Programme will result in improved data on crop and livestock statistics as well as other agricultural statistics at country level and will contribute to improved decision making, monitoring and evaluation in rural development, sustainable management of agriculture, food security and poverty alleviation.

11. The Programme is aligned with FAO's Impact Focus Areas adopted by FAO Governing Bodies and which include Statistics as one of the priority areas. The programme will be complementary to FAO Regular Programme activities and contribute to achieving the following important Organizational Results outlined in FAO's Medium Term Plan 2010-2013:

- Organizational Result A01 and Unit Result A0152: Statistics on crops production for the design and monitoring of evidence-based policies on sustainable crop production intensification and diversification.
- Organizational Result B01 and Unit Result B0144: Statistics on livestock and livestock products for the design and monitoring of evidence-based policies on livestock production
- Organizational Result H04 - Strengthened capacity of member countries and other stakeholders to generate, manage, analyse and access data and statistics for improved food security and better nutrition.
 - Unit Result H0401 - Development of statistical methods and guidelines, and
 - Unit Result H0403 – Capacity Building and direct support to member countries and implementation of CountrySTAT framework.

12. This Capacity Building Programme requires mobilisation of extra-budgetary resources. For this purpose FAO is currently discussing with several Donor Agencies seeking funding for the implementation of the Programme in different regions. The support of the Committee on Agriculture in these efforts would be highly appreciated.