

Report of the

**FOURTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR AFRICA**

Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 2-11 September 1986



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

**FAO Member Nations in the African Region
(as at 11 September 1986)**

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Algeria | Gambia | Nigeria |
| Angola | Ghana | Rwanda |
| Benin | Guinea | São Tomé and Príncipe |
| Botswana | Guinea-Bissau | Senegal |
| Burkina Faso | Kenya | Seychelles |
| Burundi | Lesotho | Sierra Leone |
| Cameroon | Liberia | Sudan |
| Cape Verde | Madagascar | Swaziland |
| Central African Republic | Malawi | Tanzania |
| Chad | Mali | Togo |
| Comoros | Mauritania | Tunisia |
| Congo | Mauritius | Uganda |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Morocco | Zaire |
| Equatorial Guinea | Mozambique | Zambia |
| Ethiopia | Namibia | Zimbabwe |
| Gabon | Niger | |

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Africa

| | |
|------------|--|
| First | — Lagos, Nigeria, 3 - 12 November 1960 |
| Second | — Tunis, Tunisia, 1 - 10 November 1962 |
| Third | — Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3 - 15 September 1964 |
| Fourth | — Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 9 - 19 November 1966 |
| Fifth | — Kampala, Uganda, 18 - 29 November 1968 |
| Sixth | — Algiers, Algeria, 17 September - 3 October 1970 |
| Seventh | — Libreville, Gabon, 14 - 30 September 1972 |
| Eighth | — Rose Hill, Mauritius, 1 - 17 August 1974 |
| Ninth | — Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2 - 12 November 1976 |
| Tenth | — Arusha, Tanzania, 18 - 28 September 1978 |
| Eleventh | — Lomé, Togo, 16 - 27 June 1980 |
| Twelfth | — Algiers, Algeria, 22 September - 2 October 1982 |
| Thirteenth | — Harare, Zimbabwe, 16 - 25 July 1984 |
| Fourteenth | — Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 2 - 11 September 1986 |

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Rome 1986

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SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Country Statements and General Debate

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

1. recommended strengthening of triangular transactions in providing food aid through the World Food Programme and other multilateral agencies (para. 32).
2. recommended the promotion of cooperation in research on a sub-regional and regional basis and appealed for the support of regional research institutions by their member countries (para. 43).
3. emphasized the need for improving human resources through training of research scientists, extension agents and farmers (para. 43).
4. concerned by the adverse consequences of rapid urbanization on agricultural development, suggested that development of peri-urban agriculture be fostered (para. 44).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

5. requested FAO to promote triangular transactions in providing food aid, in addition to generally promoting intra-regional and inter-regional trade in agricultural commodities (paras. 32 and 68).
6. endorsed the action proposals prepared for combatting locust outbreaks and the coordination by FAO of the locust control campaign (para. 36).
7. requested FAO to continue providing assistance to member Governments in the Region in the processing, distribution and marketing of local foods (para. 44).
8. endorsed the four-point strategy presented by the Director-General and urged him to assist Member Nations in formulating concrete programmes at country level for their implementation and for the mobilization of required resources (paras. 50 and 92).

9. requested the Director-General to seek a mandate from the FAO Council to carry out a feasibility study of the input aid-in-kind programme, drawing on the expertise and experience of both donor and recipient countries (para. 55).

FAO Activities in the Region

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

10. stressed that regional cooperation should be expanded to include collaboration in research, training, planning and harmonization of policy in the Region (para. 69).
11. urged that the Centre on Integrated Rural Development in Africa (CIRDAFRICA) receive adequate political and financial support and appealed to African Member Nations to honour their obligations to the Centre, and to those African Member Nations who had not joined, to do so (para. 70).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

12. expressed the hope that the rinderpest campaign, for which the Director-General had deployed appreciable efforts in mobilizing resources, could be launched without delay (para. 59).
13. urged FAO to follow up on further pledges from donors in favour of the Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme for Africa (ARPA) (para. 60).
14. suggested that, in view of the degradation due to increasing pressure on land, FAO pay due attention to the development of the technical base for sustainable settled agriculture (para. 63).
15. called upon FAO to assist Member Nations in developing both small- and large-scale irrigation depending on local conditions (para. 64), and in developing cost-effective irrigation systems (para. 87).
16. requested FAO to continue supporting the expansion of organic recycling systems and the establishment of biogas digesters in rural areas (paras. 65 and 90).
17. requested FAO to continue monitoring closely the incidence of locust and other pests and support regional, sub-regional and national pest control organizations weakened by financial and management problems (para. 66).

18. stressed that FAO give balanced support to the development of roots and tubers, including plantains and bananas, as well as to cereal development (para. 67).
19. suggested that FAO play a catalytic role in expanding regional cooperation and in exchanging the varied experiences of the countries of the Region in research, extension, training, planning and harmonization of policy (para. 69).
20. appealed to FAO to assist in the establishment of Early Warning Systems at national, sub-regional and regional levels (para. 71).
21. expressed the wish that in the future the Regional Office be strengthened to effectively promote regional and sub-regional activities (para. 72).

African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

22. stressed the need for better management and conservation techniques (para. 85).
23. recommended, as a matter of urgency, the promotion of integrated action, particularly agro-forestry, as a means of increasing the acceptance by populations concerned of soil conservation measures (para. 91).
24. suggested that access to credit, especially for the small farmers, be substantially improved (para. 93).
25. recommended that additional national and international resources be devoted to increasing supply of agricultural inputs for the Region (para. 96).
26. agreed that training was required at all levels, including intermediate and farm-level training, as well as that for women and youth (para. 99).
27. observed that improved rural infrastructure and other measures to increase the attractiveness of agriculture for the youth could keep them on the land and accelerate productivity growth (para. 104).

28. stressed the need for sub-regional and intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities and emphasized that measures be taken to encourage food trade amongst surplus and deficit countries at sub-regional and regional levels (para. 107).
29. stressed the need for cooperation among countries of the region in, among others, such areas as production and distribution of seeds, fertilizers and other inputs at sub-regional or regional level, in order to take advantage of economies of scale (para. 113).
30. stressed that the findings and conclusions of the Study "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years" provided a strong basis for donors, bilateral and multilateral, for their analysis and recommendations on the agricultural policies of African countries (para. 114).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

31. requested that FAO continue giving particular attention to the integrated plant nutrition approach. To this end, efforts to promote activities on biological nitrogen fixation should be continued (para. 86).
32. encouraged the use of consultants from the Region, particularly in fostering TCDC activities (para. 112).
33. endorsed the measures proposed in and the conclusions of the study "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years", and the recommendations and specific proposals presented by the Director-General, and requested that a report on these be made to the FAO Council and Conference (paras. 96 and 115).

Representation of the Region on the CGIAR

For the Attention of Governments:

The Conference:

34. affirmed its support for the principle of rotating regional representation to ensure overlap between new and outgoing representatives (para. 119).

35. elected Mr N.E. Mumba, Director of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development of Zambia for the period 1987-1990 (para. 119).

36. recommended that at future Regional Conferences countries representing the Region of the CGIAR include in their delegation the representative to the Consultative Group in order to keep members informed of the outcome of CGIAR meetings (para. 119).

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held in Yamoussoukro, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire from 2 to 11 September 1986. The Technical Committee meeting which preceded the Plenary Session was held from 2 to 6 September 1986.
2. Delegates from 49 Member Nations, as well as observers from Member Nations outside the Africa Region, Representatives of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies and observers from inter-governmental organizations and representatives of National Liberation Movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), attended the Conference. A full list of participants is given as Appendix B of the Report.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

3. At its first working session, the Conference elected by acclaim Mr Gilles Laubhouet Vally, Minister of Rural Development of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, as its Chairman. In a short acceptance speech, Mr. Laubhouet Vally expressed his gratitude to the delegates for having confided in him to guide the deliberations of the Conference. He appealed for their cooperation.
4. The Conference then elected Mr S. Mombeshora, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land and Settlement of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Mr François Xavier Katali, Minister of Rural Development of the People's Republic of Congo, as its first and second Vice-Chairmen respectively. Mr Paul Bomani, Minister of Agriculture of the United Republic of Tanzania, was unanimously elected as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

5. The Conference considered and approved the agenda. The agenda, as adopted, is reproduced in Appendix A.

Inaugural Ceremony

6. In a brief welcome address, the Mayor of Yamoussoukro, His Lordship Konan Banny, on behalf of His Excellency the President, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, and the people of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, expressed the honour and privilege to host the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa. He recalled the pioneering role His Excellency, the President, played in the development of agriculture in the country. His main objective was to broaden the base for agricultural development through a programme of diversification of agricultural production. The President may therefore be credited for laying the foundation for

agricultural development of Côte d'Ivoire. One other credential of the President was his improvement programme for the economic and social infrastructure to extend the benefit of development to the rural population.

7. In concluding his statement, the Mayor recalled the dictum of the President that a "hungry man is not a free man". He therefore appealed to the delegates to face the challenge of agricultural development in the year 2000 with a resolute determination to rid the continent of the scourge of hunger, malnutrition and poverty.

8. In extending a cordial welcome to the delegates to Côte d'Ivoire, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Denis Bra Kanon, reminded the Conference that the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference was taking place after the Special Session of the UN General Assembly during which Africa reaffirmed its will to overcome the food crisis facing the continent. He reviewed some of the major constraints impeding agricultural development as being largely caused by endogenous and exogenous factors. The Honourable Minister singled out recurrent drought, locust and other insect pests, grain eating birds, animal diseases, all of which have undermined domestic agricultural production. He deplored unfair international economic relations, especially the deterioration in the international terms of trade and unstable markets for African commodities due to protectionist policy pursued by developed Nations.

9. The Honourable Minister observed the paradox of the existence of abundant natural resources and the deterioration in agricultural production. This situation had been attributed to the population problem. He observed that African demographic characteristics were not of size as such, but its explosively high growth rate outstripped food output and urbanization, which had been increasing at an alarming speed. The situation had resulted in heavy dependence on food aid and imports which absorbed a sizeable proportion of export earnings. The Honourable Minister also referred to international migration which could cause conflicts.

10. To extricate Africa from its current crisis, the Honourable Minister emphasized the need for policy reforms while taking note of the need to depoliticize economic and social structures and institutions, and to create conditions with sufficient inducements to spur agricultural production and productivity. Such measures would contribute to the stabilization of the rural population and would arrest rural-urban or rural-rural internal migration, and ultimately would lead to the realization of self-sufficiency in food supply.

11. These measures by themselves would be insufficient to lay the foundation for a sustained agricultural growth. They should be complemented by a healthy external environment. In this respect, the Honourable Minister appealed to African Governments to strengthen their collective bargaining position in order to secure better prices for their commodities in the international markets. He also advocated exporting processed products to improve export earnings. This objective could only be realized if the regional and sub-regional organizations

established for this purpose were strongly patronized. He cited several producer associations which required such patronage. As regards food aid, the Honourable Minister stressed that food aid should be used to improve and strengthen the resource base for agricultural production and rational management.

12. Before concluding his statement, Mr Bra Kanon referred to the Harare Declaration adopted at the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa. He expressed profound gratitude to the Director-General of FAO for having acted expeditiously in undertaking the in-depth study requested in the Declaration. He expressed confidence in the findings and conclusions of the study which would provide a sound framework for future food and agricultural development.

13. In his address, Mr Ide Oumarou, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity re-echoed the sentiments of the Mayor of Yamoussoukro in praising His Excellency, President Houphouët-Boigny for his efforts in pioneering agricultural development. He referred to Yamoussoukro as a "plantation capital". Regarding the OAU relationship with FAO, the Secretary-General paid glowing tribute to the Director-General of FAO for his support of the Organization. He acknowledged with appreciation the contribution FAO had made in preparing the OAU Priority Programme for African Economic Recovery which had been ultimately adopted by the recently concluded Special Session of the UN General Assembly on African economic and social crisis. He praised the Director-General for his vigilance, diligence and dedication, and especially his "militant" leadership, in mobilizing not only awareness of the ravages of drought and famine in Africa, but also the needed financial and material resources to combat these scourges.

14. He lamented that it was indeed anachronistic for Africa, with abundant resources, to be suffering from poverty, hunger and disease. He recalled that the recent Special Session of the UN General Assembly concluded that it was the primary responsibility of Africa to extricate itself from the present crisis. He therefore concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of the FAO study.

15. In a brief statement, the Director-General of FAO, Mr Edouard Saouma, paid tribute to the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for its warm hospitality and for having agreed at short notice to host the Conference and provide such excellent facilities for the meeting. He paid special tribute to His Excellency, President Houphouët-Boigny for having played a sterling role in laying a firm basis for agricultural development in the Côte d'Ivoire which would serve as an example to others. He also welcomed the Secretary-General of the OAU and representatives of other regional organizations who had accepted the invitation to attend. He briefly referred to the FAO study and concluded that this Regional Conference could be regarded as a genuine summit meeting on agriculture.

16. His Excellency, President Houphouët-Boigny then declared the Conference opened.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Statement by the Director-General

17. Delivering his keynote address, Mr Edouard Saouma, the Director-General of FAO recalled that the Regional Conference was being held four months after the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly which recognized the primordial place of agriculture in the economic development of Africa. The Regional Conference provided therefore, the first opportunity to discuss the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, adopted by the Special Session.

18. The Director-General informed the Conference that following the recent food shortages, Africa enjoyed a good harvest this year, and in many areas, surpluses were sufficient to meet deficits in other areas. However, the Director-General regretted that the ravages of drought had been replaced by locust plagues and rinderpest outbreaks in many parts of Africa. Measures had been taken by FAO to halt further outbreaks. An FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations had been established to oversee and direct national and international campaign efforts; two donors' meetings had been held successfully and, so far, more than 20 million dollars had been mobilized to fight the scourge. As regards rinderpest, since its outbreak in 1980, FAO provided assistance to some 30 countries affected by the disease. Assistance had also been provided to the Organization of African Unity to launch a Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign. The Director-General also stressed the importance he attached to cooperation between FAO and other regional organizations, in particular OAU and ECA and other sub-regional organizations dealing with food and agriculture, in this endeavor.

19. The Director-General recalled that the last FAO Regional Conference for Africa had requested him to undertake an in-depth study of the African food crisis and to submit to the present Fourteenth Conference his conclusions and recommendations for action in order to rehabilitate agriculture in Africa. The study has confirmed that Africa has resources to attain food self-sufficiency, but this can only be realized if new development policies accord the highest priority to the agricultural sector. At the same time, strategies hinging on the protection of national resources may be adopted to prevent irreparable degradation of the continent's production base. The Director-General particularly emphasized that improvements were essential in the four "i"s of agricultural development: incentives, input supply, institutions and infrastructure.

20. The Director-General stressed that the success of these development policies would depend to a large extent on the improvement of the external economic environment. While African Governments had revolved to significantly increase public investment in agriculture, inadequacies in the Region's financial resources required exceptional donor assistance.

21. The Director-General therefore concluded his address by presenting a four-point programme of action: (i) institution of internal reforms that guarantee priority for agriculture; (ii) improvement in incentives, inputs, institutions and infrastructures; (iii) implementation of strategies for conservation of natural resources; and (iv) improvement of the external economic environment. In particular, the Director-General proposed to take full advantage of the under-utilized manufacturing capacities in the developed countries to bring about an increased volume of input aid. Should a consensus emerge among African Governments and donors on such a programme, the Director-General indicated that FAO would be ready to explore this proposal in detail.

Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agricultural Situation in Africa

22. Prior to delivering their country statements, delegations received a message from His Excellency, Colonel Denis Sassou N'Guesso, Président de la République Populaire du Congo and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, on the importance and urgency of improving the food and agricultural situation in Africa. In the general debate, the delegates focussed on the food and agricultural situation in Africa with special reference to their own countries. They also made observations on the FAO Study entitled "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years" and on the Programme of Action presented by the Director-General. For the sake of presentation, the debate is summarised under three headings.

(i) An Overview of Country Situations and FAO Action

23. In their country statements, many delegations noted that the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was once more meeting against the background of declining food production that presented serious and damaging implications for their economies. They recalled that since 1983/84 Africa has continued to face severe economic crises and natural calamities, and that millions of people faced the prospect of famine at the height of the drought. The Conference thanked the international community for its generous support in alleviating the African food crisis.

24. The Conference expressed concern that the natural resources underpinning the economy in African countries were being degraded throughout Africa, particularly through desert encroachment, deforestation and soil erosion. Damage to the basic life-support systems was leading to the loss of ecological balance and the undermining of food production. Continued ecological degradation could become self-perpetuating.

25. Delegations pointed out that African governments had acknowledged that many of their past policies and food production strategies were defective. Accordingly, they highlighted the various policy reforms their governments had embarked upon, including measures to conserve the environment through the rational management of natural resources, the expansion of agro-forestry and

afforestation and the achievement of soil conservation measures through the promotion of better farming systems. They also highlighted those institutional and policy reforms undertaken by their governments to improve access to basic services, as well as to improve incentives through the use of appropriate credit and price policies. These measures were designed to provide sufficient inducements to the farmers in raising agricultural production. Governments had acted to bring about a better balance between public and private sector activities in production and marketing. Many delegations informed the Conference that they had already allocated about 25 percent of their public investment to agriculture, as recommended in the OAU Priority Programme.

26. The Conference recognized that FAO had assisted Member Nations in the full range of agricultural activities, including support to natural resource management and environmental improvement, and especially in the control and eradication of crop pests and animal disease, improvement of institutional capabilities, etc. The Director-General's rapid response to requests for emergency assistance, particularly through the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, was commended.

27. The Conference appreciated Africa's large share in the FAO budgetary allocation and paid tribute to the Director-General for his persistent and continuous efforts in bringing the critical economic situation in Africa to the attention of the international community, in effectively launching the Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme for Africa (ARPA) in the aftermath of the 1984/85 food crisis, and in mobilizing resources for its implementation. It appealed to the international community to provide further assistance to FAO for the implementation of ARPA.

28. The Conference regretted that governments' efforts were frustrated by external factors, including decline in commodity prices, unfavourable terms of trade, unstable external markets, balance of payments difficulties, excessive costs in debt servicing and decline, in real terms, of external assistance. In this context delegations also referred to the destabilizing activities of South Africa and their deleterious impact on the food and agriculture sector. The Conference condemned these destabilization activities and appealed to the international community to promote all efforts in bringing peace to this troubled region.

29. The Conference also appealed for international action to expand and stabilize the export earnings of Africa and to increase, on a priority basis, external assistance to its agriculture.

30. In a bid to extricate Africa from its present predicament, some donor agencies advocated and recommended the adoption and implementation of structural reforms. Delegations pointed out that structural adjustments should be consistent with the overall national objectives of individual countries and should take full account of the social costs.

31. While discussing inputs, efficient water management was stressed and delegations recalled the conclusions and recommendations by the FAO Consultation on Irrigation, which emphasized that the type of irrigation (small- or large-scale) depended on local conditions, and that social and economic aspects should receive greater attention.

32. While the Conference appreciated contributions in food aid, it stressed that they should not undermine local initiatives to increase production by depressing producer prices or distorting internal trade, otherwise they could increase food aid dependency. Furthermore, the Conference recalled the paradox in the coexistence of food surplus in some areas of Africa and deficits in others. The Conference therefore recommended the strengthening of triangular transactions in providing food aid through the World Food Programme and other multilateral agencies, and FAO was requested to promote such transactions in addition to generally promoting intra-regional and inter-regional trade in agricultural commodities.

33. The Conference reviewed the recent grasshopper and locust outbreaks and expressed serious concern about the damage that they may cause. In the Sahelian zone, one million hectares of crops were threatened by grasshoppers, while four locust species endangered crops in various countries in eastern, central and southern Africa. The different aspects of the grasshopper and locust situation were discussed during two special working sessions, and addressed the grasshopper problem in the Sahelian region and the locust situation in eastern, central and southern Africa, respectively.

34. The Conference appreciated that the Director-General had alerted the international community in October 1985 to these potential developments. Subsequently, two donor meetings were held where full support was provided by the donors to control campaigns and to strengthening regional institutions responsible for pest control in the countries affected by grasshoppers and locusts. In addition, part of the requirements for the control of locusts in eastern, central and southern Africa had already been met. The Conference thanked the international community for its generous and timely help in this matter.

35. The Conference commended the Director-General for the establishment at FAO of the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLLO) to further strengthen the support and coordination provided by FAO. It noted that national coordinating committees had been established in most affected countries.

36. The Conference endorsed the action proposals prepared and the coordination by FAO for the control campaign.

37. The delegates also made reference to other important specific problems: the role of women in development; the importance of land consolidation and reform of land tenure in overcoming constraints on food production; the need for special

measures to expand the supply of agricultural credit, especially for small farmers, often at subsidized interest rates; and the need to strengthen regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa. The delegates also stressed the importance of integrated development of livestock and agriculture, as well as agro-forestry. With respect to livestock, the delegates commended the Director-General of FAO for the steps he has taken in the control of rinderpest.

(ii) African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years

38. The Conference underlined the dominant position of agriculture in national economies. Its recovery, therefore, was crucial to national economic recovery of African States. Although the return of good rains coupled with the implementation of policy packages had reduced the intensity of the present African crisis, delegations stressed that the structural weaknesses in African agriculture still made the continent crisis-prone.

39. The Conference recalled that the Harare Declaration requested the Director-General of FAO to undertake an in-depth study of the root causes of the African food crisis. The Conference appreciated that the Director-General responded expeditiously and produced a lucid, comprehensive and balanced study, both in content and perspective. The Conference commended the Director-General for this timely and valuable study and considered that its findings and recommendations constituted a permanent reference point for all technical issues in African agriculture. It provided a sound framework for the formulation of national, as well as regional, strategies to improve the performance of the agricultural sector.

40. The Conference noted with appreciation that the findings and conclusions of the FAO study contributed to and were in accordance with "Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990" by the OAU, and the "United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990". These programmes reflect a clear demonstration of the political will of the African countries to accord agriculture its primary role as a locomotive force in spearheading economic recovery. The Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference was therefore a logical follow-up to these regional and global initiatives for the development of African agriculture. The Conference concurred accordingly that the study could be taken as a springboard to meet the challenge of accelerating food and agricultural development in Africa.

41. The Conference endorsed the conclusions of the FAO study dealing with measures for increasing agricultural production and productivity, including conservation of natural resources, provision of inputs, incentives, institutions and infrastructure, and improvement of the international economic environment governing trade and development assistance. Delegates stressed the importance of initiatives in realizing the full potentials of the various incentive measures outlined above.

42. The Conference agreed with the study's emphasis on improving incentives, especially remunerative prices, efficient delivery systems and credit

accessibility. Incentives per se were regarded as being inadequate unless supported by improved rural infrastructure, institutions and consumer goods supply.

43. In discussing improvements in the institutional framework for agricultural development, delegates laid particular emphasis on adaptive research. The Conference recommended the promotion of cooperation in research on a sub-regional and regional basis. The Conference appealed for the support of regional research institutions by their member countries. The Conference also deplored the weak link between researchers, extension agents and the farmers. This weakness had slowed the pace of technology transfers from research stations to farmers' land. Accordingly, the Conference emphasized the need to improve human resources through the training of research scientists, extension agents and farmers.

44. Several delegations expressed concern about rapid urbanization that generates social tensions and that can have adverse consequences on agricultural development. In this respect, development of peri-urban agriculture should be fostered as this would reduce transportation problems and encourage crop diversification in the hinterland. The Conference also underlined the need for research to develop improved methods of processing local foods. The shift in dietary habits in favour of exotic foods could be attenuated if processed local foods were available. The Conference requested FAO to continue providing assistance to African countries in the processing, distribution and marketing of local foods.

45. Several delegations stressed that greater emphasis should have been put on a more detailed consideration of drought and irrigation, land tenure systems and inland fisheries.

(iii) Director-General's Proposal for a Programme of Action

46. Taking as a basis the observations and conclusions of the study, the Director-General submitted for consideration by the Conference his proposal for a four-point strategy, as described in paragraph 21 above. He committed FAO to assisting countries in the formulation of national strategies in accord with his four-point strategy, and other recommendations of the study.

47. The Director-General stated that the study advocated a target growth rate for agricultural production of the order of three percent per annum, and emphasized the fact that this target could not be attained without an intensification of agriculture, primarily through the use of modern production factors. He then elaborated the aid-in-kind component of his four-point strategy.

48. This aid-in-kind would, according to the Director-General, be a catalyst for relaunching production quickly through, among other things, the exploitation of under-utilized capacities in the North to supply the inputs needed by countries in the South until the latter were in a position to produce them locally in sufficient quantities. This type of aid already existed, but the

international community could have recourse to it more often, both for the benefit of Africa and other regions of the world. This form of aid should complement, but not replace, other types of assistance. Its application would require extremely flexible mechanisms and precautions would be taken to avoid discouraging local production of inputs.

49. In conclusion the Director-General indicated that, if there was a consensus on the need for a deeper examination of this proposal, FAO would be prepared to undertake such an analysis in consultation with donors and recipients as appropriate, and to submit proposals to the Council and Conference of FAO for action.

50. The Conference endorsed the four-point strategy presented by the Director-General and urged him to assist the Member Nations in formulating concrete programmes at the country level for the implementation of this strategy and for the mobilization of the required resources.

51. It was recognized that improvements in institutions, incentives and infrastructure would fail to achieve the required increases in production without the provision of adequate inputs. On the other hand, increases in inputs alone would not yield an optimum return. An integrated approach was required.

52. As far as the proposal for expanding input aid-in-kind was concerned, delegates confirmed that it was timely and appropriate, given the foreign exchange constraints faced by African countries because of decreasing export prices and rising debt burdens.

53. The mutual interest of both donors and recipients in such a proposal was acknowledged by delegates. They agreed with the Director-General that any expansion of aid-in-kind should be complemented by measures to raise local production of inputs and to expand intra-regional trade including, wherever possible, the promotion of triangular transactions by donors. Suitable safeguards would have to be devised to ensure that inputs provided under aid-in-kind were appropriate to the requirements of, and the domestic capability for absorption, of the recipient countries.

54. While acknowledging that some countries already received to a limited extent, aid-in-kind from various sources on an ad hoc basis, the Conference welcomed the Director-General's proposal to use it on a more regular and sustained basis. It would help achieve a more balanced composition of external assistance to agriculture. It was clarified that while the detailed examination of aid-in-kind was under way, existing programmes would continue and did not need to await the result of the study.

55. In conclusion, the Conference commended the bold and imaginative initiative of the Director-General in launching the idea of a programme on input aid-in-kind by taking advantage of the prevailing surplus capacity in industrialized

countries. The Conference concurred that such an innovative and far-reaching idea required further examination of all its aspects and wide-ranging implications. The Conference therefore agreed that a feasibility study was required with a view to exploring its practicability, and acceptability, to all concerned. The Conference requested the Director-General to seek a mandate from the FAO Council to carry out such a feasibility study by drawing on the expertise and experience of both donors and recipients.

TECHNICAL ITEMS

Report by the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative on FAO Activities in the Region, including Action Taken on the Main Recommendations made by the Thirteenth Regional Conference and Programme of Work and Budget 1986-1987 for the Region

56. In presenting document ARC/86/2, Mr Nadir Doumandji, Deputy Regional Representative for Africa, highlighted FAO activities in the Region. He stated that, in keeping with the Harare Declaration, FAO activities were designed to provide a technical and socio-economic basis for sustained agricultural development in Africa. To this end, FAO focused on the improvement of the natural resource base, as well as the development of institutional capability and capacity to plan, formulate policies and implement programmes in all areas of food and agriculture.

57. Special attention was given to environmental improvement, especially the control and eradication of crop pests and animal diseases. Attention was also devoted to the improvement of institutional capabilities of member countries to solve the diverse problems of agricultural and rural development. These activities were funded through the Regular Programme, including the Technical Cooperation Programme, as well as through extra-budgetary resources obtained from bilateral and multilateral sources as a result of the close cooperation between FAO and the donors.

58. Mr Doumandji outlined the orientation of future FAO priorities and activities in the Region. In large measure, these priorities and activities would be those of the past programme, although greater attention would be paid to laying the foundation for the technical improvement of crop and animal production through research on systematic varietal and genetic improvements. Greater attention would also be paid to the improvement of agrarian structures in order to enhance the quality of rural life. Special efforts would be made on the implementation of the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development in conformity with the Action Programme adopted by the 1984 FAO World Fisheries Conference. As regards forestry, assistance would be provided to forestry management, fuelwood production and agro-forestry and afforestation programmes.

59. The Conference commended FAO for the comprehensive range of activities it had carried out in support of African agricultural development. The delegations highlighted the various forms of FAO assistance to their specific countries in the fields of basic resource development, in fishery, forestry and rural development, and in the strengthening of institutional and technical capabilities for achieving food self-sufficiency. Special mention was made of FAO activities in combatting desertification and ecological degradation in general, especially in countries prone to drought and climatic problems. The efforts of the Director-General of FAO to mobilize resources for the rinderpest campaign had been appreciated, and the Conference expressed the hope that it would be launched without delay.

60. Since the Harare Declaration in 1984, the Conference recalled that Africa suffered serious drought and famine. In this respect the Conference appreciated FAO efforts in formulating the Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme for Africa and in mobilizing donor support for its implementation. It called upon donor countries to provide additional support for this Programme and urged FAO to follow-up on pledges. It also commended FAO for its complete cooperation with OAU and ECA in the preparation of the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, approved in May 1986 by the UN Special Session on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa.

61. Many delegates noted that deforestation and desertification had increased rather than abated, and had reached alarming proportions. The Conference strongly recommended that measures be taken to improve forest resources management and conservation, including development of wildlife management. To this end, it emphasized the importance of the implementation of FAO's Tropical Forest Action Plan for Africa.

62. African countries benefited from a large share of FAO resources. Many delegations felt that in the future the document could provide a more detailed description of the full range of FAO activities in the Region, including an indication of their impact. They felt that in the future, information on the trends in FAO resource allocation could be provided in order to enable a better assessment of priority areas.

63. The Conference observed that basic natural resources were being degraded due to increasing pressure on land. Shifting cultivation, which provided an adequate foundation for food and agricultural production in the past, could no longer provide an adequate basis for sustainable growth in food and agricultural production. In this regard, FAO should pay due attention to the development of the technical base for sustainable settled agriculture.

64. Given the continuing degradation of the natural resource base, the Conference emphasized the need for FAO to continue its support for irrigation development. Some delegations favoured small-scale irrigation, as it was within the technical and managerial capability of farmers; others did not exclude large-scale irrigation, particularly in the Sahel. The Conference felt that the type of irrigation projects to be supported depended on local conditions and FAO was called upon to assist Member Nations in both types of irrigation.

65. It was felt that the establishment of biogas digesters and the promotion of other organic renewable sources of energy in rural areas could significantly reduce deforestation. FAO was therefore requested to continue supporting the expansion of organic recycling systems.

66. Regarding plant protection, the Conference expressed its appreciation to the Director-General for having established the Emergency Centre for Locust Operations. It observed, however, that the resurgence of locusts and other insect pests, as well as grain eating birds, especially Quelea Quelea birds, could not be fully controlled with the help of present institutions at the regional

and sub-regional levels alone. For this reason the Conference requested FAO to continue monitoring closely the incidence of locust and other pests, and to support regional, sub-regional and national pest control organizations weakened by financial and management problems.

67. The Conference stressed that FAO should give balanced support to the development of roots and tubers including plantains and bananas, as well as to cereal development. It also emphasized the need to create a balance between food and cash crops production. The weakening of the African balance of payments situation would seriously hold back its rehabilitation efforts, and increase its external indebtedness.

68. In the course of discussion on the FAO role in development cooperation, the Conference referred to the possible negative impact of food aid on production incentives. During periods of food surplus, prices of domestically-produced food commodities were depressed and, consequently, weakened farmers' incentives to increase production. Part of this problem could be averted through intra-regional trade in food commodities and through triangular transactions in food aid. It was felt that FAO should continue to promote such transactions on a priority basis.

69. The Conference stressed that regional cooperation should be expanded to include collaboration in research, extension, training, planning and harmonization of policy in Africa. It was observed that African countries had varied experiences in these areas which should continue to be shared, with FAO playing a catalytic role in their dissemination.

70. Regarding the institutional base for development, it was recalled that the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference recommended strengthening Member Nations' capabilities in monitoring the Lagos Plan of Action. The World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) Follow-up Programme also called for the strengthening of national capacities for monitoring rural development. The Conference noted that the UN Programme of Action on African Economic Recovery and Development required follow-up monitoring mechanisms. It was therefore emphasized that FAO should encourage and support member countries in establishing monitoring systems for their development programmes. The Conference urged that the Centre on Integrated Rural Development in Africa (CIRDAFRICA) receive adequate political and financial support from African countries, appealed to member countries to honour their obligations to the Centre, and appealed to those countries who have not joined, to do so.

71. It was further observed that, given the diversity of African physical and social conditions, there was no standard solution to the complex development challenge faced by Africa. In order to strengthen analytical and planning capability, and improve project planning and execution, it was necessary to strengthen (i) policy analysis and design; (ii) early warning systems and (iii) agricultural statistics. In addition, it was essential to focus on the training of farmers and extension agents and to develop the capabilities to identify

pest and disease outbreaks at an early stage. As regards the development of early warning systems, many delegations appealed to FAO to assist in their establishment at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

72. The Conference noted with appreciation Africa's large share in FAO's overall budgetary allocations. The Conference expressed the wish that in the future the Regional Office be strengthened to effectively promote regional and sub-regional activities in Africa.

African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years

73. The Conference Document ARC/86/3 - "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years" was introduced by Mr David Norse, the Coordinator of the in-depth study on African agriculture.

74. He emphasized that the study focused on staple foods because they were the most important component of African diets and their production had failed to keep up with population growth. The constraints on and the potential for food production in each of the six sub-regions were distinguished in the report. It drew heavily on the lessons learnt from FAO's 40 years of experience. It also benefited from a broad dialogue with African experts, notably from an expert consultation in late December 1985.

75. The five principal conclusions of the main report were: First, current per capita food production trends were unsustainable. Second, Africa had the potential to be essentially food self-reliant. Third, practical measures to develop and conserve natural resources were a pre-requisite for long-term economic and agricultural recovery. Fourth, urgent measures were required in respect of inadequate incentives, lack of production inputs, inappropriate institutions and poor infrastructure, all of which were holding back food and agricultural production. Finally, the foregoing measures should operate within a general framework for sustainable growth, with priority on agriculture, and were dependent on improvements in the external economic environment and increased donor assistance.

76. In their discussion, the Conference recalled that in the Harare Declaration the African Ministers of Agriculture had called upon the Director-General to undertake an in-depth study of the root causes of the food and agricultural crisis in Africa, and deeply appreciated the expeditious manner in which the Director-General responded to the request.

77. The Conference paid tribute to the Director-General for the high quality of the study. It provided a sound framework for the formulation of national agricultural development strategies.

78. The Conference noted that the conclusions of the study were in full harmony with the OAU's "Africa Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990" and the "UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990".

79. The Conference concurred generally with the main findings of the in-depth study and in particular, with the conclusion that the continent had the potential to substantially increase its food production and progressively reach a high level of food self-sufficiency. However, a few delegations felt that the study might be too optimistic regarding the rate at which this potential could be exploited. Although it was necessary to underscore the historical trend scenario in the study, it was to be noted that most African countries, in response to the crisis of the past few years, have already taken steps in line with the OAU "African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990", adopted by the African Heads of State and Government in 1985, in order to revitalize their agricultural sector.

80. The Conference stressed that the attainment of self-sufficiency would require bold policy reforms and concrete programmes to increase food production. It required that agriculture be accorded the highest priority. In this context, the commitment made by African countries to devote 20-25 percent of public investment to agriculture was recalled.

81. The Conference recognized the diversity of the continent and it further recognized that there were some critical issues which were common to the different sub-regions. However, some issues were more relevant to certain sub-regions than to others.

82. The Conference agreed that the population problem in Africa required attention. However, it was observed that the nature and intensity of the population problem differed widely amongst various countries of the region, and therefore each country would have to find a solution appropriate to its situation. While in a number of countries slower population growth was desirable, in others low population densities inhibited resource development. It was generally agreed that increased education and training, especially for women, could contribute to the slowing down of population growth. The Conference drew particular attention to the relatively high rate of rural/urban migration and urbanization in Africa, and its adverse consequences for agricultural development.

83. The Conference agreed that the natural resources in some parts of Africa were adequate to achieve food self-reliance, but that this was not the case everywhere. The Conference commended FAO for the diverse activities carried out in assessing these resources in relation to food and agriculture.

84. The Conference concurred with the findings and conclusions of the study that the natural resources that underpinned the economy were being degraded throughout Africa due to human and livestock population pressure and to the adverse effects of recurrent drought. It was therefore necessary to develop and implement a conservation strategy to protect the resource base of the continent.

85. The need for better management and conservation techniques was stressed. In this connection, some delegations provided information on the steps taken by their governments to conserve their resources through erosion control and better farming practices.

86. The Conference agreed that for agricultural intensification, it was essential to replace unsustainable shifting cultivation and bush fallow practices. This, in turn, would require, among other things, mineral fertilizer, as well as more widespread adoption of organic recycling. FAO was commended for its activities in the promotion of fertilizer use and was requested to give particular attention to its integrated plant nutrition approach. To this end, FAO should continue to promote activities on biological nitrogen fixation.

87. The importance of irrigation in raising productivity and food security was recognized and the need for an appropriate balance between small and large-scale irrigation was stressed. At present, many countries were placing a greater emphasis on low-cost, small-scale irrigation, but for some countries it was large-scale irrigation that warranted priority. Despite the high cost of irrigation in some instances, the Conference confirmed that irrigation should be expanded. Greater efforts were required to reduce the cost of irrigation development, operation and maintenance and to raise the efficiency of use. In this connection, the Conference requested FAO to assist Member Nations in developing cost-effective irrigation systems.

88. The Conference noted that the development of inland fisheries and aquaculture had not been sufficiently taken into account in the study. The work undertaken in harnessing water resources for irrigation could in most cases facilitate the development of inland fisheries, which contribute to food security.

89. The Conference recognized the reality of the environmental degradation threatening the very existence of large areas in many countries (deforestation, dune encroachment, decreasing soil fertility). The climatic fluctuations reflected in the recent major droughts should no longer be considered as occasional hazards, but as constraints. The current phenomenon of severe drought had become a permanent climatic feature.

90. The Conference emphasized the close relationship between forests, trees and conservation of soil fertility; attention was drawn to the need for urgent action to halt the widespread advance of sand in Sahelian zones. The establishment or revision of agricultural policies to include land resource use, silviculture and forest management, fuelwood, etc. was advocated. As an alternative solution to fuelwood problems and in order to improve soil quality, the Conference felt that the establishment of biogas digesters in rural areas should be encouraged. FAO was therefore requested to continue to support the adoption of these techniques.

91. Soil conservation required development projects which were not always readily accepted by the populations concerned; promotion of integrated action, particularly agro-forestry, was recommended as a matter of urgency.

92. The Conference recognized the importance of, and concurred with, the four main activities identified in the study as crucial elements of a strategy for increasing food production: providing effective incentives to production; improving input supply; strengthening the required institutions, and upgrading the basic infrastructure.

93. It was agreed that, although favourable producer prices were one of the most important incentives, others could be more or equally important. Particular emphasis was placed on favourable product to input price ratios, on the availability of consumer goods and on an effective marketing system. The availability of, and access to, credit, especially for the small farmers, should be substantially improved.

94. The Conference accepted that subsidies had an important role to play in the provision of incentives, though their benefits should be carefully monitored to avoid serious distortions, as well as to ensure that they were phased out when appropriate. It referred to the contradiction between the objections by some donors to the use of subsidies by African countries, and their own use of farm subsidies, which had created distortions in international trade and seriously damaged African agricultural production and exports.

95. The Conference expressed concern that structural adjustment programmes advocated by many international financing agencies entailed high economic and social costs. A few delegations expressed the hope that FAO could analyse the impact of such programmes on the food and agricultural sector, especially on the consumption and nutritional levels of the poor.

96. Increased application of modern inputs (fertilizers, improved seeds, pesticides and agricultural implements and machinery), among other things, was crucial for raising agricultural production in Africa. The Conference recommended that additional national and international resources be devoted to increasing the supply of agricultural inputs in Africa. In this respect, the Conference endorsed the measures suggested in the study to improve the supply of inputs for African agriculture, including, inter alia, expanding domestic production of inputs, promoting greater utilization of existing capacity in African countries, increasing intra-African trade in inputs, enlarging imports of inputs through long-term supply agreements, as well as increasing input-aid above current levels of official development assistance.

97. It was noted that measures to increase domestic production and import of inputs should be complemented by improvements in their distribution, transportation, marketing and storage.

98. The Conference underlined the necessity of placing greater emphasis on roots, tubers, plantains and bananas, and on the development of appropriate technology for the processing of staple foods.

99. As regards the institutional framework for agricultural development, the Conference underlined the importance of manpower development, research and extension, land tenure and people's participation. The Conference agreed that training was required at all levels, including intermediate and farm level training, and that for women and youth.

100. It was agreed that both basic and applied research was essential for increasing agricultural production. Special attention should be paid to research for rainfed agriculture and for non-cereal food crops, such as roots and tubers, especially adapted to the needs and capabilities of small farmers.

101. A number of actions on research were proposed: firstly, wider adoption of the farming systems approach to identify correctly farmer's technological needs; secondly, promotion of a two-way flow of information between farmers, extension workers and researchers; thirdly, greater involvement of social scientists in research formulation and evaluation, and fourthly, the promotion of sub-regional research cooperation and, where feasible, the involvement of the private sector.

102. It was agreed that present land tenure systems in some countries could limit agricultural investment and natural resource use. However, a number of delegations stressed that the constraint was not necessarily the land tenure system, but the poverty of farmers. The Conference noted the on-going in-depth studies on land tenure being conducted by FAO in a number of African countries, and the findings of the Round-Table on the Dynamics of Land Tenure and Rural Development held by FAO in Nairobi in 1985.

103. It was accepted that wider people's participation was essential for improvements in environmental conservation, for irrigation development and maintenance, as well as for the establishment of fuelwood plantation, etc... Both international and national NGOs had an important role to play in promoting people's participation.

104. The Conference stressed the importance of infrastructural development for inter-regional trade, communications and storage within countries. It was important to slow down rural migration because the attractiveness of towns was drawing young people away from rural areas and farming, and leaving behind ageing populations. It was observed that improved rural infrastructure, and other measures to increase the attractiveness of agriculture for the youth could help keep them on the land and accelerate productivity growth.

105. The Conference emphasized that the success of the efforts of the African countries to relaunch their agriculture and put it on a sound and firm basis largely depended on improvements in the international economic environment. In this respect, the Conference regretted that African efforts were frustrated by unfavourable trade conditions. Instability in export markets, declining commodity prices, deterioration in the terms of trade and increasing protectionism in developed countries had reduced the export earnings of African countries and their capacity to import essential requirements, especially production inputs. The Conference stressed that improvement in the world trade environment was indispensable for Africa's economic recovery. In this connection, the Conference expressed the wish that the forthcoming GATT Round of Negotiations yield positive results.

106. Acts of aggression and destabilization by South Africa, which impeded the economic development and food security of countries in southern Africa, particularly the front line States, were strongly condemned.

107. The Conference further stressed the need for sub-regional and intra-regional trade in agricultural commodities, emphasizing that measures should be taken to encourage food trade amongst surplus and deficit countries at the sub-regional and regional levels.

108. The Conference also noted the adverse effects of structural food aid and imports of subsidized food from developed countries which might hinder domestic production, local and intra-African trade. It called for the promotion of triangular transactions of food aid whereby donors would purchase food from surplus African countries for use by the deficit countries of the Region.

109. Heavy external debt burdens and debt services severely constrained Africa's capacity to finance economic development in general, and agricultural development in particular. The debt service payments constituted 25 to 40 percent of Africa's export earnings, and a resolution to the continent's debt problems was therefore an essential pre-requisite for Africa's economic recovery.

110. The Conference noted the decline, in real terms, of external assistance to agriculture. It underlined the necessity of increased external assistance to strengthen the efforts of African countries in implementing the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development in line with the recommendation of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly.

111. The Conference noted, with satisfaction, the role and activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa. Some delegations, however, expressed the desire that these activities take into consideration national priorities in the areas of food and agriculture.

112. The Conference, while recognizing the importance of technical assistance, emphasized the need to judiciously balance the use of foreign expertise with local expertise. The use of consultants from the Region was to be positively encouraged in view of its obvious advantages, particularly in fostering Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC).

113. Cooperation among African countries in various areas was stressed by the Conference. Such cooperation should include, amongst others, production and distribution of seeds, fertilizers and other inputs at the sub-regional or regional level in order to take advantage of economies of scale.

114. The Conference stressed that the findings and conclusions of the study provided a strong basis for donors, bilateral and multilateral, for their analysis and recommendations on the agricultural policies of African countries.

115. The Conference endorsed the conclusions of the study and requested the Director-General of FAO to make recommendations and specific proposals to the Plenary and report on these to the FAO Council and Conference.

Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

116. In considering document ARC/86/4 concerning Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the Conference noted the wide ranging research activities in the region of the International Research Centres (IARCS), and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the CGIAR and its co-sponsors (FAO, UNDP and the World Bank).

117. It took note, in particular, of certain studies completed in 1985: the TAC study on the effectiveness and impact of the IARCS training activities in the Region which recommended measures to further strengthen them; the TAC review of CGIAR research priorities and future strategies, which made a number of recommendations important to the Region, notably that of strengthening research activities in sorghum and millet, roots and tubers, plantains and bananas, and finally, the CGIAR study on the impact of IARC research on agricultural production, which included a number of detailed case studies on African countries.

118. The Conference acknowledged improvements in CGIAR activities in support of African agriculture, and thanked the Regions' representatives for their efforts in this respect.

119. The Conference affirmed its support for the principle of rotating regional representation to ensure overlap between new and outgoing representatives. Consequently Mr N.E. Mumba, Director of Agriculture in the Zambian Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development, was elected to replace Tanzania. Delegates thanked Tanzania and Guinea warmly for representing the Region's agricultural research interest diligently and effectively. It was recalled that the representatives, in their capacity as liaison officers between the CGIAR and member countries of the Region, should keep members informed of the outcome of CGIAR meetings. It was therefore recommended that at future Regional Conferences, the delegations of the countries representing the Region should include the representatives who would report to the Conference.

CONCLUDING ITEMS

Consideration of the Technical Committee Report

120. The Conference considered and approved the Technical Committee Report unanimously.

Any Other Business

121. In expressing its deep sympathy and condolences to the people of Cameroon, the Conference passed the following resolution:

Resolution 1/86

The Conference,

Moved by the tragedy which has just plunged Cameroon into mourning after the recent eruption of lethal gases of volcanic origin;

Grieved by the loss of human lives and damage to property;

1. Offers its heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Cameroon;
2. Requests the Chairman of the Conference to convey to the Government and people of Cameroon its sorrow and sympathy for the victims of this tragedy.

122. The Conference in expressing its appreciation for the good work in Africa of the Director-General of FAO, passed the following resolution:

Resolution 2/86

The Conference,

Having had a very successful Fourteenth Session in Yamoussoukro from 2 to 11 September 1986;

Satisfied with the way in which its work has been conducted and the atmosphere of constructive cooperation which has reigned;

Persuaded of FAO's irreplaceable role in helping the countries of the region overcome the food crisis;

1. Congratulates the Director-General on the quality of the documents submitted for discussion, in particular the study entitled: "African agriculture: the next 25 years";
2. Expresses its satisfaction at the high priority accorded by the Director-General to Africa in FAO's Programme of Work and Budget;

3. Thanks the Director-General for the many steps he has taken in recent years to promote agricultural development and to mobilize the resources of the international community to combat the effects of the drought and other natural calamities, in particular the locust threat;
4. Requests the Director-General to continue to alert public opinion to the gravity of the food crisis in Africa;
5. Expresses its full confidence in the Director-General and hopes that he will be able to continue to give high priority to Africa in the years to come.

123. Having had an audience with His Excellency, President Houphouët-Boigny at the presidential palace, and having listened to his advice, the Conference agreed to send a message of gratitude for his inspiring address. His Excellency, the President, briefly reviewed the success story of Côte d'Ivoire under his leadership and added that, coupled with political stability and solidarity, Africa had the potential to emulate the success of the Côte d'Ivoire. A copy of the message sent to His Excellency the President is attached as Appendix E.

124. In appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to the delegates by the people of Côte d'Ivoire and Yamoussoukro in particular, the Conference passed the following resolution:

Resolution 3/86

The Conference,

Having had its Fourteenth Session in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, from 2 to 11 September 1986;

Having appreciated the admirable hospitality of the Ivorian authorities and people,

1. Thanks the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Félix Houphouët-Boigny, for his kind invitation to hold the Fourteenth Session of the Conference in Yamoussoukro;
2. Also thanks the Ivorian authorities for the excellent facilities provided for the Conference;
3. Congratulates the Minister of Rural Development, His Excellency Mr Gilles Laubhouët-Vally, on his exemplary guidance of the Conference.

Date and Place of the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

125. The Director-General informed the Conference that during his recent visit to Mauritius and before the departure of the Mauritian delegation, the Government of Mauritius had tentatively extended an invitation to host the next FAO Regional Conference for Africa, but this invitation had still to be confirmed.

Adoption of the Report of the Conference

126. The Conference considered the Report of the Plenary, and after a few minor amendments, the report was adopted.

Closure of the Conference

127. In a brief statement Commodore Steve Obimpeh, Secretary for Agriculture from the Republic of Ghana, expressed* gratitude to the Director-General of FAO and his staff for an excellent job performed in conducting the Conference. He paid tribute to the President and people of the Côte d'Ivoire for their traditional African hospitality. Commodore Obimpeh recalled that the 14th FAO Regional Conference for Africa could be taken as a milestone in the development of African agriculture. The in-depth study reports, he acknowledged, provided an excellent reference for laying down the framework for future agricultural development, and appealed to delegates to return home determined to tackle the problems which faced African agricultural development.

128. In his closing statement, the Director-General stated that the 14th FAO Regional Conference had had a fruitful and successful outcome. He expressed appreciation for the clarity of analysis of issues facing African agriculture, expressed optimism for the rebirth of agricultural development and pledged FAO's continued support. In this regard he noted with appreciation the overwhelming support he and the FAO received during the Conference. He reassured the Conference of FAO's continued vigilance against outbreaks of pests and diseases.

129. The Director-General stated that the priority charted by the Conference would be useful in the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget. He regretted, however, that the Programme of Work and Budget would be prepared at a difficult time because of financial resource uncertainties due to the depreciation of the dollar and the decline in member contributions. He concluded his statement by expressing appreciation for the cooperation FAO enjoyed with bilateral, as well as multilateral agencies, and African regional organizations.

130. Mr Gilles Laubhouet-Vally, Chairman of the Conference, in a brief closing remark, recalled that the people of Yamoussoukro, and the Côte d'Ivoire in general, would always remember that the "Food summit" was held on their land. Hence, the people felt honoured and privileged to host the Conference, which he termed was a meeting for the recovery of dignity.

131. The Conference was then declared closed.

* The vote of thanks was moved on behalf of the Sierra Leone Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

AGENDA

Technical Committee (2-6 September 1986)

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Opening of the Technical Committee.
2. Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur.
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable.

II. TECHNICAL ITEMS

4. Report on FAO Activities in the Region Including Action Taken on the Main Recommendations made by the Thirteenth Regional Conference and Programme of Work and Budget 1986-87 for the Region.
5. African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years.
6. Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).
7. Adoption of the Report of the Technical Committee.

Plenary Session (8-11 September 1986)

III. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Opening Ceremony.
2. Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur.
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable.

IV. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General.
5. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in Africa.
6. African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years.

V. CONCLUDING ITEMS

7. Consideration of the Technical Committee Report.
8. Any Other Business.
9. Date and Place of the Fifteenth Regional Conference for Africa.
10. Adoption of the Conference Report.
11. Closure of the Conference.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS

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BUREAU DE LA CONFERENCE

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Chairman Président | Gilles LAUBHOUET-VALLY (Côte d'Ivoire) |
| Vice-Chairmen Vice-Présidents | S. MOMBESHORA (Zimbabwe) François Xavier KATALI (Congo) |
| Rapporteur | Paul BOMANI (Tanzanie) |

OFFICERS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

BUREAU DU COMITE TECHNIQUE

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Chairman Président | Benoît N'DRI BROU (Côte d'Ivoire) |
| Vice-Chairmen Vice-Présidents | Gérard Phirinyane KHOJANE (Lesotho) Pedro Agostinho KANGA (Angola) |
| Rapporteur | Joshua Kimote MUTHAMA (Kenya) |

Independent Chairman of the FAO Council
Président indépendant du Conseil de la FAO

Lassaad BEN OSMAN (Tunisie)

MEMBER NATIONS IN THE REGION
ETATS MEMBRES DE LA REGION

ALGERA - ALGERIE

Délégué

Mohammed LARBI
Conseiller du Ministre de l'agriculture
et de la pêche
Ministère de l'agriculture et de la pêche
Alger

Suppléant

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Ambassade auprès de la Côte d'Ivoire
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Ministère des relations extérieures
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Technicien supérieur
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Adolphe BIAOU
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PAN-AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT -
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Alfred MONDJANAGNI
Secrétaire général
Douala

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS - FEDERATION
SYNDICALE MONDIALE

Philippe HOUNTONDI
Syndicat des travailleurs d'agriculture
du Bénin
Cotonou

CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT/SECRETARIAT DE LA CONFERENCE

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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| ARC/86/1-Rev.2 | Provisional Annotated Agenda |
| ARC/86/2 | FAO Activities in the Region, including Action taken on the Main Recommendations made by the 13th Regional Conference and Programme of Work and Budget 1986-87 for the Region |
| ARC/86/3 | African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years - Main Report Corrigendum to Main Report (English only) - A Programme of Action for African Agriculture - Executive Summary - Atlas of African Agriculture - ANNEX I: Socio-Economic and Political Dimensions - ANNEX II: The Land Resource Base - ANNEX III: Raising Productivity - ANNEX IV: Irrigation and Water Control - ANNEX V: Inputs Supply and Incentive Policies |
| ARC/86/4 | Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) |
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| ARC/86/INF/1 | Information Note |
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| ARC/86/TC/REP | Report of the Technical Committee |
| ARC/86/REP/1 | Draft Report of the Plenary - Part I |
| ARC/86/REP/2 | Draft Report of the Plenary - Part II |

EXTRACT FROM THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

(2 - 6 September 1986)

Organization of the Technical Committee

1. The Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire from 2 to 11 September 1986. The Technical Committee which preceded the Plenary Session was held from 2 to 6 September 1986.
2. Delegates from 41 Member Nations, as well as observers from Member Nations outside the Africa Region, Representatives of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies and observers from intergovernmental organizations and representatives of National Liberation Movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), attended the Committee. A full list of participants is given as Appendix B of this report.

Opening of the Technical Committee

3. In an introductory statement, Mr. R.S. Lignon, Assistant Director-General, Development Department, on behalf of the Director-General, Mr. Edouard Saouma, welcomed the delegates to the Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference. He thanked the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for the warm hospitality extended to the delegates and for the excellent facilities. He, in particular, expressed appreciation for the serene atmosphere at this central city of Yamoussoukro which would facilitate the work of the Technical Committee, despite the short time available for the preparations.
4. On behalf of the delegates, Mr. Lignon remembered the Cameroonians who had lost their lives in the natural disaster caused by the eruption of poisonous gases. He expressed sincere condolences to the people and Government of Cameroon at this tragic moment.
5. Returning to the subject before the Technical Committee, Mr. Lignon recalled the Harare Declaration adopted at the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference held in Harare, Zimbabwe. In this Declaration, the African Ministers of Agriculture had requested the Director-General of FAO to undertake an in-depth study of problems facing African agriculture, and indicating the best ways and means for agricultural rehabilitation, and to submit the result of that study to the present Fourteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa. In response to this request, FAO had undertaken an assessment of the root causes of Africa's food and agricultural crisis. In its preparation the Director-General of FAO had benefitted from the consultation and advice of some 50 top-level African experts.
6. Mr. Lignon informed the Technical Committee that the study entitled: "African Agriculture: The Next 25 Years" had been carried out at a time when Africa was facing a prolonged drought and severe famine and human suffering. The preliminary findings of the study provided a basis for some of the actions taken by the

Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Special General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa. FAO thus had contributed to the preparation of the UN Action Programme for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. This Programme of Action, adopted by the Special Session of the UN, was in fact in full accord with the findings of the FAO study.

7. Mr Lignon informed the Technical Committee that the Director-General would personally present a Programme of Action for consideration by the Plenary Session. After the Conference the Director-General would also present the results of the Conference to the current Chairman of the OAU, His Excellency Denis Sassou-N'Guesso, President of the People's Republic of Congo. Mr. Lignon also referred briefly to the menace of locust and other pest infestations and informed the delegates that FAO had established an Emergency Centre for Locust Operations (ECLLO) to coordinate and mobilize control campaigns. He expressed appreciation for the support provided so far by the international community. He then invited Mr Gilles Laubhouet-Vally, Minister of Rural Development of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, to inaugurate the Technical Committee.

8. Mr Laubhouet-Vally, in a statement, welcomed the delegates on behalf of His Excellency the President, Mr Houphouët-Boigny, the people of Côte d'Ivoire and the city of Yamoussoukro. He paid tribute to FAO and its Director-General for their work against hunger and malnutrition, and expressed appreciation for the proposals made by FAO in highlighting strategies for the recovery of African agriculture. He regretted that the food crisis in Africa had undermined the economies of many African countries already exacerbated by a hostile external economic environment, especially the persistent adverse terms of international trade and the debt burden. These external problems had further been aggravated by internal pressures, particularly those of increasing population. As agriculture would remain the basis of African economic development, he appealed to delegates to outline measures to be adopted during the next 25 years to rehabilitate and develop African agriculture. He emphasized the need to attain food self-sufficiency to relieve Africans from external dependency. He then declared the Technical Committee opened.

Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

9. At its first working session, the Technical Committee by acclamation elected Mr Benoit N'Dri Brou of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire as its Chairman. In a short acceptance speech, Mr N'Dri Brou welcomed the delegates to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and in particular to Yamoussoukro. He expressed his gratitude to the delegates for having confided in him the guidance of the deliberations of the Technical Committee and appealed for their support and cooperation.

10. The Technical Committee then elected His Excellency Ambassador Gérard Phirinyane Khojane of Lesotho and Mr Pedro Agostinho Kanga, Permanent Representative of Angola to FAO, as its first and second Vice-Chairmen, respectively, and Ambassador J. Muthama, Permanent Representative of Kenya to FAO as its Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable.

11. The Technical Committee considered and approved the agenda. The agenda as adopted is reproduced as Appendix A.

MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE
HIS EXCELLENCY MR FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY

On the occasion of an audience at the Presidential Palace, the Director-General presented to the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Félix Houphouët-Boigny, an FAO medal to honour the country's "First Peasant".

The Conference heard an important address by the President and decided this would form part of the Conference proceedings.

The Conference also decided to send him a message of tribute for his inspiring words.

The text of the message sent by the Conference to the President was as follows:

HIS EXCELLENCY MR FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE
THE FOURTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA HAS ENTRUSTED TO ME THE PLEASANT DUTY OF THANKING YOU ONCE AGAIN FOR YOUR INVITATION TO HOLD THIS MEETING IN YAMOUSSOUKRO. IT ALSO WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS GRATITUDE FOR THE PRIVILEGE CONFERRED ON IT BY YOUR PRESENCE IN PERSON.

ALL MINISTERS AND DELEGATES, AS WELL AS THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO, VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THE RECEPTION YOU KINDLY HELD THIS MORNING IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE, AND WERE GREATLY MOVED BY YOUR ADMIRABLE ADDRESS. THE WISDOM AND DEPTH OF YOUR REFLECTIONS IMPRESSED THEM VERY HIGHLY. THEY WERE TYPICAL OF THE MAN THE CONFERENCE HONOURS AS THE FIRST PEASANT OF AFRICA.

IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT YOUR WORDS WILL FORM AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS.

THE FAO CONFERENCE EXTENDS TO YOU ITS SINCERE GOOD WISHES FOR A LONG AND HAPPY LIFE AND HOPES THAT YOU MAY CONTINUE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME TO WORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COTE D'IVOIRE AND AFRICA.

ACCEPT, MR PRESIDENT, MY DEEPEST RESPECT.

GILLES LAUBHOUET-VALLY
CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE
HIS EXCELLENCY MR FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
OF AN FAO MEDAL TO HONOUR "THE COUNTRY'S FIRST PEASANT"

YAMOUSSOUKRO, 9 SEPTEMBER 1986

Mr Director-General of FAO, Mr Secretary-General of OAU, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Heads of Delegations, my dear fellow-countrymen and my dear brother peasants of Côte d'Ivoire,

I cannot conceal from you my profound, immense joy at the holding of your conference in my village of Yamoussoukro; a Conference at which your reflections will lead to fruitful exchanges among all those concerned with the future of Africa. A future which will be built, at least to start with, on agriculture. Throughout my somewhat long political career, I have received many decorations, many medals, but I tell you frankly that the one offered to me today on behalf of FAO by the Director-General of that Organization goes straight to my heart. It does not reward one man, but rewards above all - or recognizes above all - the merits of the peasants of Côte d'Ivoire whom it is my mission to lead toward a better future.

People talk of the Ivorian miracle. If there is a miracle, it is not, I must confess, due to my humble self, but rather to these good peasants, of whom fifteen, winners of the National Cup for Progress, are seated among us. In Côte d'Ivoire we love the land. I want all Africa to love the land. Whoever loves it must also love those who work it. This is why the peasants are foremost in our thoughts.

You asked me to let you have the benefit of a few reflections: I will try to do so. After everything you said yesterday, and said so well, there is very little left for me to add. We have tried hard to give equal opportunities to our peasants. This means that we offer all our peasants the same prices for their cocoa, palm seeds, rice or cotton, wherever it may have been grown. The Government, through its Stabilization Fund, is responsible for transporting these commodities.

Equity is our constant concern. We make no distinction between the peasants and our children who represent the future; the same opportunities are offered to all. Whatever the social status of their families, all Ivorian children receive free education, from primary school to university. With this peasant-youth tandem, we can look to the future with great hopes.

The medal lists the main products of Côte d'Ivoire. But I want to stress - not in a spirit of vainglory, which is alien to us, but only so that our African brothers will never be discouraged - that everything is possible in Africa provided we love the land, and want to put all our trust in the land through work.

In fact, without a drop of petroleum, without a litre of petroleum, without a kilo of iron, of copper, of bauxite, of manganese or uranium, the little that we have achieved and of which we are proud, we owe it to our people's, our peasants', work. The basis of our economy is agriculture. And we have insisted that our technical officers do not distance themselves from the peasant masses, from which all of us spring. This is why I have asked Ivorian professionals, trained in our universities or returning from abroad after brilliant academic performances, not to cut themselves off from their parents. Each one of them is expected to plant a piece of land in his own village, just like the peasants. It is a double enrichment. There is a lot of talk about going back to the sources. Many indeed go back, but with empty pitchers. Our people come back enriched by the experience of their elders, who in turn are enriched by the learning of their young people. It is a double enrichment. I have, for example, asked some of our leading men in public life (the Chairman of the National Assembly, the Chairman of the Economic and Social Council, the Chairman of the Supreme Court, the Lord Chancellor) - I have asked them to cultivate a minimum of 10 hectares. Côte d'Ivoire is not short of land. Just imagine, this country covers an area three-fifths the size of France, and barely 19 percent of our arable land is at present developed. There is, therefore, plenty of room for those who want to work. And we have asked the deputies, the officers in our various political sections, to develop at least 5 hectares. In Côte d'Ivoire, we do not obey orders, but if someone in authority takes an interest in you, his recommendations become orders. And this is how, instead of 5 hectares, 10 hectares after a few years, we have reached a figure which brought us the greatest joy of our political career. The minimum cultivated by our government officers is 25 hectares; some of them have even made it 800!

I share the hopes, sufferings and anxieties of our peasants. Nothing discourages them, neither climatic hazards (we have perhaps had fewer than our brothers in the Sahel) nor the low prices of our products. They follow strictly the Party slogan: produce more and produce better. This is how this little country, which has only 7 million souls, together with 3 million of our brothers from outside, which brings us up to 10 million (when one thinks, in parenthesis, that in big countries with 50 or 60 million inhabitants, the presence of 4 million, at the most 5 million, foreigners troubles the sleep of the leaders, and we have welcomed ours as brothers!) is a country without passports: people come, people go, people stay; but usually they stay. Anyone that cultivates a plot of Ivorian land, whether or not he is a native of the country, becomes a landowner with full title which can be passed on to his heirs. This is how this little country - we have just been offered a medal - which 25 years ago was only the fourth world cocoa producer after Ghana, Nigeria and Brazil, has now become the number one world cocoa producer and number three world coffee producer.

With 6000 tons of cotton we are today the third producer of this valuable commodity, after Egypt and the Sudan with 212 000 tons. We are the leading exporter of palm oil in Africa, the leading banana producer and the leading pineapple producer. I am telling you, my brothers, that the land is only one asset, that Africa holds many trumps. We can succeed and we must succeed, all together in solidarity. Yesterday it was our elders who, with archaic tools,

achieved the results I have just mentioned, our performance in cocoa and coffee-growing. Soon, in 1990, we shall be the leading rubber exporter in Africa - all this was done with archaic tools: machetes. We must not ask this of our own youth. This is the point I want to stress this morning: the peasants; burden must be lightened. We must keep our young people in production, and keep their elders working. We have just accomplished this.

We cannot denounce the widening gap between the rich countries and the rest of us if in Côte d'Ivoire there are rich regions and poor regions. We have struggled against these regional disparities and the results are there to show it. We have cured our brothers in the North of the itch to leave (they are staying in the production areas by giving everyone the chance to own a nice little house and enjoy the conveniences of town life (not the luxuries): running water, electricity, social services (dispensaries) and even sports grounds. We have checked the exodus of our brothers toward the large towns. There are even some of them who have chosen to go back to the North.

So much for the old people: but for the young, with the development of electronics and informatics, it is becoming increasingly difficult for rural administration, industry or commerce to find workmen. We have made a big effort to provide schooling for children. In 1960 (on Independence) the school attendance rate in Côte d'Ivoire was 8 percent. Today, the rate for the whole country is 70 percent. In some centres, such as Abidjan and Yamoussoukro, it is more than 90 percent. What are we going to do with these young people? If training does not lead to employment, we shall ourselves have created the conditions for revolution. Well, we have said it before and we shall say it again: in the Ivorian reality, revolution has one "R" too many: evolution is the name of the game. This is why we have turned to our young people and asked them to make a great effort, a very great effort. We want the brightest ones to undertake scientific research, with the cooperation of experts from outside the country.

Yesterday, the Secretary-General of OAU said very eloquently: aid must be killed and replaced by work. I will add simply that assistance of any kind (whether in agriculture, in supplying commodities, or in training) - prolonged assistance tires both the assistant and the assisted. This is what we are trying to make our young people understand. It will be difficult for them to continue the work of their forefathers with the machete and the daba. But they will all be proud, with their degrees and their doctorates, to be at the wheel of a tractor. This is Africa's future.

Yesterday, as you pointed out - and I will pause a moment on this crucial point - the target date of the year 2000 is not going to be the moment of truth for energy. There will always be sources of energy. Even if tomorrow there were no more petroleum, other sources of energy would be found. But the problem, the serious problem facing all humanity - not Africa alone - is the problem of feeding human beings. At present, there are supposed to be about 800 million human beings who cannot eat their fill. It is thought that by the year 2000 the population will have doubled. If measures are not taken in time, we shall find

ourselves in far more difficult situations, as though Africa had not already suffered enough from so many disasters, with the drought in the Sahel.

We have said what a good thing it is that every year, or every other year, the developed countries very generously give us a helping hand and to come to our aid with their surpluses of wheat, maize or millet to feed our starving brothers; but there is something that would be even better, and this is the appeal I make to them, following OAU and the Non-Aligned: there is water everywhere. You have the resources to detect both the depth and the extent of underground water sheets. This is what satellites are for, studies too have made it easier.

Then, for goodness sake, give our brothers in the Sahel water! They will be more than grateful. They will cultivate their soil. The desert can flower again. It is resting land which is only waiting for water. With water, there will be agriculture and fodder for animals. The people will no longer go to swell the ranks of urban populations, who are not prepared to welcome them or offer them what they want: there is no work. They merely swell the ranks of the unemployed. And this seriously disturbs the social balance in Africa. Help us, it is the biggest service you can render Africa: provide the Sahel with water.

You said yesterday, and I fully agree - Africa is the continent of the future. Yesterday, the sparse population was a handicap. Today, on the contrary, it is an asset. Why? Agriculture cannot be mechanized in the overpopulated countries of Asia, where the peasant has barely one or two hectares of cultivable land. With the difficulties today in Latin America - that continent which is dear to all of us - after a century and a half of independence, chronic instability and fratricidal wars are jeopardizing the rational development of the American sub-continent. There remains Africa, an immense continent, which has everything: a sub-soil which has not yet been fully exploited, and which is very rich. But the soil itself is even richer.

The small experiment we are trying to make in Côte d'Ivoire with our young people might be useful by way of example. Ivorian people are going to take up scientific research. Scientific research on productivity. It is no longer the thing to say, "we have produced so many tons of cotton, so many tons of cocoa." This is out of date. What we have to say now with our young people is that we have produced so many tons of coffee per hectare, so many tons of rice per hectare, so many tons of maize per hectare. This will only be possible with scientific research.

But this production has to be kept somewhere. A group of young people will therefore be studying the specific problems of storing our agricultural products. And the other group, the one we are praying for with all our hearts, is the group that must process our agricultural products on the spot. About a dozen sub-products can be obtained from cassava. It is the same story for all our food commodities.

In Côte d'Ivoire, food self-sufficiency is an outdated concept. All Ivorians eat their fill. Yesterday, you remember, you were surprised because nobody was particularly thrilled about your meeting. That is because you have come here to talk about famine, which the Ivorians have never known. So our young people must produce not only for themselves but also enough to make a contribution, not only to other African countries but - why not? - to the whole World.

I said once (and a journalist misunderstood me; unfortunately there are some who do!) that the colonial experience was not an evil in itself. It is a debt of gratitude. All countries have passed through the stage of colonization. So let us not have any complexes about it, we Africans. The whole world has been colonized.

Unfortunately, we cannot repay this debt of gratitude because there is no longer the tiniest piece of land left to colonize. So let us repay this debt with our support, our contribution to the satisfaction of the food needs of humanity as from the year 2000. And we can do it. The small experiment on which we are embarking, and which in ten years - but what is ten years in the life of a people, when the world is thousands of years old? - in ten years our savannahs will give way to huge ploughed fields and factories.

We missed the Industrial Revolution; we were not independent then. Today another era is opening: the era of informatics. We have to become part of it, so that we are not left like the Dead Sea, which receives water from the Jordan but allows none to flow out. What we have achieved must contribute something to the general enrichment in all fields. Whether it be science, agriculture, medical care or transport, Africa has its word to say. And we can do it.

I do not want to take up too much of your time. I just want to tell you in conclusion: have faith in the future of our continent. We have everything in our hands, if we can unite, if we can love each other, if we can practise true solidarity.

And above all, if we can achieve the prerequisite, namely, peace. Peace with justice. Peace in our hearts and in our souls. Not peace by force, which has no tomorrow. Throughout history, all those who have tried to impose peace by force have failed. But true peace is the peace of the heart.

And you know, this is something that we Africans have: a heart. This is why we say - it's a Nigerian proverb - the foot will not go if the heart is loath. Well, the heart is everywhere in Africa.

So let us go forward together, hand in hand, with confidence, to work for the rehabilitation of our continent, and thus put an end to our situation as beggars. We must have enough dignity to grow out of that, so that tomorrow, through work, dedication and this will for peace that we must cultivate, we may be the equals of other men, the brothers of all men.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR IDE OUMAROU

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF OAU

AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF THE
FOURTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Yamoussoukro, 8 September 1986

Honourable Ministers,

Mr Director-General of FAO,

I am sure it was not by chance that you chose Yamoussoukro for this meeting. I am equally sure that it was not merely as a formal gesture that President Houphouët-Boigny agreed, despite his many duties, to chair this opening session.

Everyone knows the love that binds together Yamoussoukro, Houphouët-Boigny and agriculture. And in saying this, I do not want to talk only about the proverbial and exemplary devotion of this Farmer-President to a heritage he has conserved and ennobled, but also about his deep conviction that the only thing that really matters is the land, from which man can expect the fullest return if he is prepared to devote to it time, creative patience and affection.

It is because he loves the land that President Houphouët-Boigny has remained faithful to Yamoussoukro and, starting from this village, his birthplace, which has always been for him a signpost to the accomplishment of a great destiny and a great ambition, he was able to inculcate in the whole of Côte d'Ivoire his love of realism, of quietness and work in harmony, which is, we must admit, a fundamentally peasant love. The result is that Côte d'Ivoire, since its accession to Independence, is doing well: economically expanding with, through, and despite all vicissitudes; and politically stable because always united in the performance of its duties and the defence of its interests.

I feel therefore, Honourable Ministers, impelled to congratulate you on the good fortune which has brought you here. To build solidly, one must choose the best places with the best conditions. African agriculture, which today needs more action and less erudite discussion, could find no better place to seek practical solutions than this plantation capital, so dear to Côte d'Ivoire and to President Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

But, speaking for myself again, I cannot fail to express my gratitude to President Houphouët-Boigny for the welcome and the generous hospitality afforded me since my arrival on Ivorian soil. I know that this regard and this kindness is addressed first of all to the Organization I represent, and of which - I need hardly remind you - President Houphouët-Boigny was one of the most enthusiastic initiators and most illustrious founders. But I see this also as an invaluable encouragement and support for my work as Head of the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity.

I should also like to address a word to you, Mr Edouard Saouma, Director-General of FAO: a word of gratitude and appreciation for all that you personally, and the Organization under your guidance - I should say, under your campaigning leadership - continue to do for our Africa. Without your sustained vigilance, your initiatives in every field and your vigorous action, many sons and daughters would today be dead, victims of famine, drought and desolation.

It is mainly thanks to your sharply focused reports, your urgent appeals, and the media interest you have thus aroused, that international opinion became aware of the tragedy which, three years ago, was being played out in our continent. The result was an unprecedented humanitarian movement, of which the memory will certainly never perish.

And here you are today, mainspring of this important Conference, which will be discussing the rehabilitation of African agriculture, and which is all the more welcome since it is the first of its kind after the United Nations Special Session on the critical economic situation in Africa, whose major concern was in fact the improvement of the continent's food situation.

How better could the Organization of African Unity demonstrate its support and solidarity with your efforts, than by the presence of its Secretary-General here today, in response to your invitation?

Honourable Ministers,
Mr Director-General of FAO,
Distinguished Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking just now of the United Nations Special Session on the critical economic situation of our continent, I felt a pang in my heart. Perhaps because, finding myself today so near to President Houphouët-Boigny, I perceived with a new clarity, and therefore with embarrassment and dismay, the scant attention our Governments have paid to the wise words he has addressed more than once to his fellow Africans, both as encouraging advice and as a warning, namely that "a hungry man is not a free man".

Indeed, in these days when our Africa wants so much to be heard, to be rehabilitated and respected, and deploys considerable efforts to protect its prestige and its credibility, what is the world view of a continent which, with only 560 million inhabitants scattered over 30 million km², is already considered by some people as economically overpopulated? What is the world view of a continent that cannot manage to feed itself because its production inputs are still desperately archaic; because production itself is always too dependent on climatic hazards; and because investment in the rural world is derisory and, as a result, the rate of population expansion and consumption far exceeds the growth rate of production? What is the world view of a continent which, with considerable natural resources, including 64 percent of world gold reserves, 97 percent of world chromium reserves, 85 percent of platinum reserves and 50 percent of manganese reserves - to mention only the products at present most highly prized - is still the continent of poverty, undernourishment, malnutrition, famine, epidemics and illiteracy; the continent which includes 18 of the 25 poorest countries in the world, and which often - too often - has to wait upon the generosity of other continents, even for the food needed for the survival of its populations?

And yet, this is Africa! An Africa whose young nations are so jealous of their independence and sovereignty, but which, for 25 years, in a world of progress, science and technology, has had difficulty in finding its feet economically, even becoming in the course of the years an easy prey for the advancing desert, for every crisis and every disaster!

When we were in New York, the world certainly noted, with hope and sympathy, our courageous "mea culpa". As can be seen from our documents, this was the starting point for a new determination which, since the Lagos Plan of Action, has inspired all peoples of the African continent. Unfortunately, in the present state of affairs, this does not hide our faults and, above all, does not excuse the endless delays. Be that as it may, the world told us in New York, Honourable Ministers, that it was up to us to take charge of our own development, by involving our people in it more fully; by reviewing our policies; by improving our management methods and by undertaking essential reforms to obtain the best performance from our resources, which are not inconsiderable but which, we must admit, are so often wasted.

There is therefore no point, Honourable Ministers, Mr Director-General of FAO, in your Conference devoting too much time to our obvious weaknesses; to re-assessing the damage and frustrations that our populations are undergoing or have already undergone; to preparing new programmes just to make us feel good, or to allow us mistakenly to lose still more time. Today, from OAU's point of view, it is more important to take stock of our resources, to release these resources and advance to the stage of practical achievement. We have to decide how we should act, individually and collectively, so that African agriculture may, in the next five years and beyond, measure up to the standards set for it in the OAU and United Nations Programme. To sum up, let us try to turn into reality the methodological and statistical commitments we made at that world gathering to rehabilitate our agricultural sector and to face our food problems.

Because if we want the international community, in its turn, to honour its own commitments to Africa, having unanimously recognized that Africa's present resources alone will not permit a rapid recovery, we have to convince it, by our actions, that our present determination is not just lip-service but also a matter of intelligence and mentality.

Speaking of mentality, Honourable Ministers, I think this is a particularly delicate, but crucial, field where fresh approaches are urgently needed. We should not be concerned so much with the problem of government agents, whose attempts at promoting rural development, made without consultation with the peasants, are often deplored. Here we should speak rather of our peasants themselves, who must be alerted, informed and convinced, so that they may be freed as soon as possible from the constraints and socio-cultural anachronisms that are preventing them from achieving success and full development as human beings.

Indeed, at a time when famine strikes and kills on our continent; at a time when, as I said just now, Africa is suffering both malnutrition and under-nourishment; at a time when the whole question of African development is seen increasingly in terms of closing the gap between production and consumption; at a time when population expansion in Africa is continually provoking some experts to urge us toward a drastic and widespread Malthusianism; at a time when, despite all the efforts of our governments, areas of shortage are spreading and cases of famine are multiplying, it is alarming to see that, among the obstacles to a balanced diet and agricultural development in Africa, there are also many taboos maintained by the mentalities of traditional societies where agricultural organization is profoundly interwoven with the social system, and frequently connected with a religious cosmogony.

No people, no nation can hope to attain food self-sufficiency by hanging on, as we have in Africa, to the practice of growing only one food crop, too often dictated by irrationally perpetuated eating habits. No people, no nation can hope to attain food self-sufficiency by allowing areas of shortage to spread, while the environment is full of plant and animal resources rich in protein but absolutely despised. No people, no nation can hope to attain food self-sufficiency by allowing peasants to degrade the land by outdated traditional practices, or by the reluctantly accepted, or badly assimilated, introduction of new techniques, new products and new equipment.

Honourable Ministers, the food problem in Africa is not only a problem of agrarian policies to be adjusted; of adequate resources to be injected into the rural world; of remunerative prices for production; of systems and means of distribution to be developed; of new agricultural methods to be taught; of agricultural inputs to be widely used. It is also a problem of societies. Hence the need to bring to the fore policies and investment for the rehabilitation of the rural world, including this essential work of changing mentalities which I mentioned just now. Because doing one without the other will lead to wastage or to revolution.

Honourable Ministers,
Mr Director-General of FAO,

We are grateful to the international community, to non-governmental organizations and to the United Nations System for their magnificent display of solidarity with our continent, and for their readiness to stand by us in implementing the United Nations plan for the rehabilitation of Africa.

But our Africa, and particularly we African leaders, must ensure that so much kindness and so much generosity do not finally convince our good peasants that it is possible for them henceforward to be fed without doing anything, merely by publicizing their poverty, by throwing away their tools and crying famine. This is why, while still insisting on the need for aid in the gradual process of recovery, our Africa must choose from among these aids, those that are compatible with its aspirations and its dignity; namely, aid to production, aid to development, aid which, after having relieved, encourages, fertilizes, educates, trains and, in the last analysis, "aids to do without aid". Because only this kind of aid will enable Africa, desirous of taking in hand the work of its own rehabilitation, to rebuild itself, to expand and to play its full role in the concert of nations, without any reservations or complexes.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This FAO Regional Conference falls at a crucially important moment. Just four months ago a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly spotlighted the critical situation in Africa and showed the consensus among African governments. It also unequivocally proclaimed that there can be no economic development in Africa unless priority is given to agriculture.

The new strategy thus defined puts you, the Ministers of Agriculture, very much in the front line. This Conference provides you with your first opportunity to discuss it.

By a happy coincidence, you will also be reviewing the study on the development of African agriculture which you requested me to prepare at the last Regional Conference, two years ago, and which provides you with a valuable basis for concrete discussions on how to implement the resolutions on agricultural development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Against this background, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire for inviting us to hold the Conference here. There could hardly be a better site in which to discuss the transformation of agriculture, since Côte d'Ivoire is one of several African countries to have already made great strides forward in this sector.

Mr Chairman, in electing you, the Ivorian Minister of Agriculture, to preside over its discussions, the Conference undoubtedly wished to pay tribute to your country as well as to your own personal qualities. If my congratulations, Your Excellency, are particularly warm, it is because I have much appreciated your dynamic approach on the occasions we have met.

I should also like to commend the splendid way in which the Conference has been organized. We have all recognized in this the signs of traditional African hospitality.

Respite from the drought

Mr Chairman,

This year we have been granted a respite from the drought. Here I must express my gratitude for the efforts deployed by African governments and the

international community to combat famine, as well as my thanks to all those who have enabled FAO to fulfill, once again, its humanitarian mission.

Unfortunately, the good harvests have laid bare other weaknesses. The shortage of transport and storage facilities prevents crops from being properly marketed, prices have nosedived, and the situation of small farmers remains critical.

Crop forecasts

How long will the lull last? An idea can be gained from that indispensable tool which FAO helped to set up: the Global Information and Early Warning System for Food and Agriculture. By and large the picture is reasonably encouraging, with only a few countries facing critical situations this year.

In North Africa, for example, Morocco has turned in a bumper crop; Tunisia, though, has been hit by drought. Favourable rains have fallen in East Africa and above-average harvests are expected, while in southern Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe have all enjoyed good harvests, with the last two producing a maize surplus big enough to meet their neighbours' requirements as well. However, four countries in this region - Angola, Mozambique, Botswana and Lesotho - have been much less fortunate and will definitely be requiring emergency food aid in 1986-87. Finally, the outlook in the Sahel is promising after the first rains.

The locust threat

However, the ending of the drought has been a mixed blessing. The rains have encouraged the breeding of locusts and grasshoppers - an age-old scourge which has made only fleeting appearances during the last 40 years, but which now threatens to assume catastrophic proportions in a number of regions.

In the Sahel, for example, the crops may be destroyed if the control campaign now under way is not successful. Aerial spraying of one million hectares was begun at the start of the month, mobilizing a whole squadron of planes. Ground support has been organized in close collaboration with the countries concerned. The situation in East Africa is potentially even more serious, and the outlook is little brighter in southern Africa, where the new agricultural season has only just begun.

It is the brown locust that causes most concern, as it is already wreaking havoc in Botswana and is threatening to spread to neighbouring countries, too. Moreover, Botswana has not yet received all the assistance it requires. East Africa is under threat from both the brown locust and the migratory locust, while the shadow of the red locust looms over Tanzania and Zambia.

Since October 1985, FAO has been stepping up its efforts to combat the locust peril. In particular, I have called a number of donor meetings, one of which the Secretary-General of the OAU did us the honour of attending in person.

There has been a gratifying response from many countries and donor organizations, and more than 20 million dollars have already been mobilized, but international cooperation must be strengthened if full use is to be made of these resources. I therefore appeal to donor countries to speed up their aid deliveries. I appeal, too, to African countries to streamline formalities and provide all the support they can.

For my part, I have set up a special unit in FAO to which I have given wide powers to help coordinate action. In view of the seriousness of the situation, I have requested the officer in charge of the unit, Mr Brader, to come here and inform the Ministers concerned of all that is being done.

I cannot stress too much how great a menace the locusts represent. Even if we act quickly, it may take two or three years to eliminate the threat in some areas; and afterwards, the situation will have to be monitored extremely carefully. I can assure you that I am taking a personal interest in this campaign; and I think it particularly important that close links be maintained with regional bodies and plant protection services.

Rinderpest, another scourge

Rinderpest is another African scourge which shows no sign of abating. Since the disease's appearance in 1980 FAO has been unstinting in its efforts to assist the 30 countries affected. These efforts, and those of governments and donors, are now beginning to bear fruit. In addition, FAO has provided the OAU with valuable assistance in preparing the Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign. Thanks to generous contributions, including 50 million ECU from the EEC, the Campaign now has the financial resources it needs. FAO's interest in preventive animal health care has been particularly demonstrated in the support it has given to the preparation of projects for improving animal health services in the CILSS countries.

Strengthening regional cooperation

I cannot mention this last body - the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control - without recalling the importance FAO attaches to regional cooperation. Organizations such as CILSS, for the Sahel, and IGADD (the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development) in East Africa, have a leading role to play in the fight against natural scourges.

Organizations for economic cooperation such as WAEC and ECOWAS in West Africa, SADCC in southern Africa and the Preferential Trade Area in East Africa, can be seen as providing a framework for future trade relations in Africa.

Two of these organizations - CILSS and WAEC - have done me the honour of inviting me to their Summits, thus allowing me to give personal expression to FAO's desire to cooperate.

African agriculture in crisis

Mr Chairman,

In addition to having to cope with its more immediate problems, Africa has been grappling with a major crisis whose full scale was revealed by African governments at the Special Session of the United Nations. It is now clear that the present African crisis is basically a crisis of the food crop sector and, if nothing is done to remedy matters, it will eventually become a food crisis tout court.

If present trends continue, then within little more than 20 years Africa south of the Sahara will have to import almost half the cereals it needs, and North Africa as much as two-thirds. The cost of these imports would be double the value of agricultural exports, and most countries would be unable to cope with such a situation. Chronic famine and unbearable poverty would be the result, and the political consequences, in Africa and the world at large, would be incalculable.

FAO Study on African Agriculture

How can we prevent this from happening? Two years ago you asked me to analyze the current problems facing agriculture and to examine possible solutions. I have pleasure in submitting to this Conference, the Study prepared by FAO in compliance with your request. Your Technical Committee has already examined it in detail and you will shortly be giving your verdict on its conclusions.

I should like to run over here some of the main themes of the Study and to invite you to discuss ways of implementing its proposals.

First, though, I must tell you this: however valuable our Study on African Agriculture may be to you, it has been no less valuable to FAO. It has given us an opportunity to mobilize our technical services on an unprecedented scale, and our collective experience is very much the richer for it.

This Study has already become a model, and the recent Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean asked me to undertake a similar study for that region. The Study on African Agriculture also provided an opportunity for some particularly fruitful exchanges. I take particular pleasure in recalling the sagacious observations of the Heads of State whom I had the honour of meeting during the course of the visits I made this year to African countries. Nor have I forgotten the pertinent advice given me by various African Ministers during meetings held in Rome. I would also draw attention to the substantial contribution made by the 50 African experts who met in Rome in December 1985 to discuss the preliminary results of the Study. Finally, I might add that it was thanks to the Study that FAO was able to provide the OAU with considerable assistance in drawing up its report for the Special Session of the United Nations.

Africa could produce more

Mr Chairman,

The FAO Study on African Agriculture reaches one fundamental conclusion: Africa could produce much more and could meet almost all its food requirements.

The key to progress lies in raising productivity - mainly by increased use of inputs and more efficient means of production. But if this is to happen, new development policies, new international trade relationships and, most of all, new financial and material resources will be needed.

New development policies

Trends in development policy are encouraging. African governments have, in fact, clearly recognized agriculture as a priority and have shown themselves firmly committed to the necessary reforms. These reforms, however, must directly address the problems that have to be solved. The FAO Study, which draws on a considerable fund of experience, highlights three broad areas of action:

- Changes have to be made in the structure of national economies if agriculture is to be given the priority it is agreed it warrants.
- Improvements are essential in the four "i"s of agricultural development: incentives, inputs, institutions and infrastructure.
- Strategies hinging on the protection of natural resources must be adopted to prevent irreparable degradation of the continent's productive base.

The success of these development policies depends to a considerable extent on improvements in the external environment. This is the fourth area of action identified by the FAO Study.

Unfavourable external economic environment

It is an area about which I am rather concerned. The international trade outlook is anything but encouraging. The terms of trade will remain unfavourable to Africa for a long time to come, for its exports face ever-higher protectionist barriers and damaging competition, and North-South negotiations are at a standstill. Yet more equitable trade is indispensable. Africa must become a full-fledged trading partner, not a mere stake in the commercial game.

As far as financial and material resources are concerned, the outlook is even more sombre. It is true that African governments have decided to allocate 20 to 25 percent of their investments to the agricultural sector, but their resources are extremely limited. Their borrowing capacity has also shrunk considerably, and international aid remains quite inadequate. Most of their foreign exchange is tied up in debt servicing, food imports and energy bills.

Exceptional assistance is indispensable

Africa cannot extricate itself from this situation single-handedly. I am convinced that exceptional assistance is needed to get agriculture back on its feet.

But let us make no mistake. Not just any kind of aid will do. If Africa is not producing enough, what it needs above all is help in producing more. The farmers do not need wheat. They need fertilizers, pesticides, agricultural equipment, tools, pumps, tractors and means of transport, not forgetting the indispensable spare parts.

What they need, in short, is everything that industry supplies for agricultural production - everything that African industries do not yet produce in sufficient quantity, everything that African countries are less and less able to buy for lack of currency or credit facilities.

More assistance in kind

Mr Chairman,

Would it be naive to ask the industrialized countries for assistance of this nature? Would it be unrealistic to send, in addition to the wheat ships which will be needed for a long time to come, further ships laden with all the inputs needed to relaunch production?

I do not think so, although at first sight the climate is not exactly favourable.

I believe this form of assistance would be in the long-term interests of the industrialized countries, since it would nurture future markets for them. Confronted with the destitution in Africa, I find it somewhat paradoxical that there should be many factories in the North lying idle for lack of markets when they could be manufacturing inputs. The costs of unemployment and industrial slowdown represent a terrible waste for the developed economies. Surely, a proportion of development aid could be mobilized to start these factories up again? Why not use the crisis of overproduction in the North to help fight hunger in the South? These are questions which merit reflection.

I myself believe this to be a realistic form of assistance; it has, indeed, already proved itself. It is already practised by a number of donor countries and financing agencies which grant import loans; FAO itself has acquired considerable experience in this field through its Fertilizer Programme and its Seed Programme. However, if such assistance is to address the needs of African agricultural development, it must be programmed over a sufficiently long period and mobilized on the basis of equitable, voluntary agreements. It must also concentrate on strengthening Africa's own industrial production capacity.

Difficulties to be overcome

I am well aware that there are difficulties to be overcome, and so before going any further, I feel we should take stock of what assistance in kind has achieved in Africa so far, assess the potential contribution of the industrialized countries, and look into possible ways of expanding such assistance in the future.

Should a consensus emerge among African governments and donors, I am more than ready to offer FAO's support, although I realize that this is hardly the ideal time to float such an idea. The North has big agricultural surpluses which will only be run down when their burden becomes intolerable. Consequently, food aid is likely to attract greatest attention in the immediate future.

But agriculture calls for patience. If Africa is to produce more in the future, we must start taking action today. This surely justifies paying attention to input aid now, without by any means calling into question the value of food aid. This, to my mind, is the voice of reason; I trust it will be heard.

A four-point programme of action

Mr Chairman,

Having outlined some of the main themes, I should now like to draw the conclusions together in a four-point programme of action:

- internal reforms guaranteeing priority for agriculture;
- improvements in incentives, inputs, institutions and infrastructure;
- implementation of strategies for conservation of the natural resources; and
- improvement of the external economic environment.

What becomes of this programme of action depends largely on Africa's governments; I hope that they will find the FAO Study useful in defining appropriate policies. It also depends, though, on the donor countries. I hope and trust that they will do everything in their power to provide the resources needed and to modify the external environment.

This programme of action has a long-term as well as a short-term perspective. There can be no possible doubt that long-term action must be started straight away if development is not to flag under the combined onslaught of population growth and environmental degradation. In the short term, I think the priority is clear: African agriculture requires exceptional input aid.

I see this as a practical way of circumventing the crisis in international financial aid. I have already announced this proposal to African Heads of State when I had the honour to make a statement at the last OAU Summit. It could be

acted on immediately, and FAO is ready to assist any African country that so requests in defining actions under this four-point programme.

Mr Chairman,

I see the Programme of Action and the proposals contained in the FAO Study as complementing the Programme for Economic Recovery that was adopted by the United Nations Special Session on Africa. In the short term, I believe that the most appropriate action is to expand assistance in kind, but this is just one of several ways of setting in motion a far more wide-ranging programme. Such a programme will need support from all quarters, and from international financing institutions, bilateral assistance, and non-governmental organizations in particular. As always, FAO will continue to provide technical backstopping.

I am sure you need no reminding that Africa takes pride of place in FAO programmes, with nearly half our budget being devoted to this continent. If everyone works together, I believe we can assemble enough resources to take effective action.

What is needed, then, is the will, imagination and perseverance to take up the challenge. I am convinced we can rise to the occasion, and I am sure that agricultural development could be relaunched swiftly to provide a solid foundation for broader progress.

The potential Africa can harness is enormous. It has a young and vigorous population which constitutes its richest capital. My most heartfelt wish is that we should succeed in unleashing this tremendous force. If the necessary assistance is forthcoming, it will then simply be a matter of standing back and watching the action!

On this note, I thank you for your attention and wish you every success in your work.

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