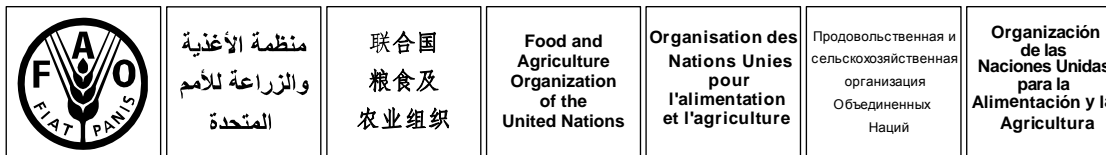


March 2012



FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific

Thirty-first Session

Hanoi, Viet Nam, 12 – 16 March 2012

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE 30th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

*Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, it is an honour and a pleasure for me to be here today to address the thirty-first FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) in this historic city of Hanoi.

As you know, the Republic of Korea had the honour of hosting the thirtieth APRC in Gyeongju two years ago (27 September–1 October 2010). The Regional Conference was attended by 28 delegations and 19 observers and chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of my country.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the fact that the thirtieth APRC was the first Regional Conference for this region to become part of FAO's Governing Bodies under the actions for reform that were approved by the thirty-sixth session of the FAO Conference. The change in the role of Regional Conferences in FAO's governance envisaged the Chair of the Regional Conference continuing as its chair until the next Regional Conference and reporting to FAO's governing bodies at the global level.

Accordingly, the representative of the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, concurrently Chairperson of the thirtieth APRC, presented the Summary of the Main Recommendations for the attention of the FAO Council during its hundred and fortieth session in Rome (29 November–3 December 2010). Likewise, the Minister and the thirtieth APRC Chairperson's representative had the honour to present the Summary of the Main Recommendations for the attention

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of the thirty-seventh session of the FAO Conference in Rome last June (25 June–2 July 2011). The FAO Conference endorsed the *Report of the Thirtieth Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific*.

The final report of the Conference was distributed by the Conference Secretariat to all APRC Member States and the actions taken on the recommendations was presented in the Senior Officers Meeting, so I need not repeat them here. I would, however, like to underscore that the Conference thoroughly discussed a number of policy and technical issues highly relevant to this region that provided guidance to the Secretariat on the priorities for activities in the next biennium. I will briefly mention these, starting with matters relating to FAO's policy, programmes, resources and the implementation structure in the region.

The Regional Conference emphasized that two-thirds of the world's poor and hungry live in the Asia-Pacific region and that governments face special challenges in addressing this issue. The delegates highlighted that the FAO budget allocated to the Asia-Pacific region was not proportional to the magnitude of undernourished people in the region. The Regional Conference called upon FAO to allocate budget resources that are commensurate with the challenges of achieving food security in the region, which is home to two-thirds of the world's poor and hungry, and requested that additional human and financial resources should be provided and progress on this matter reported during the thirty-seventh Conference in June 2011. I believe there has been no major progress in the region's food security situation since the thirtieth APRC 18 months ago; this recommendation is still relevant and deserves due consideration from FAO.

The Regional Conference also urged FAO and other development partners to give due consideration and adequate resources to address the needs of member countries in the Pacific and other small island nations, particularly with respect to their high vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Furthermore, the Regional Conference noted the progress in carrying out the Immediate Plan of Action and recommended additional measures to further increase efficiency and productivity through further strengthening of the technical capacity of the decentralized offices. In this regard, I would like to point out specifically the emphasis by the thirtieth APRC on ensuring provision of adequate technical support to country offices and developing a decentralized offices network with effective linkages within the Organization, as well as with concerned governments, other United Nations system organizations and development partners. It is heartening to note that some progress has already been made and it is one of the five priorities of the new Director-General. I believe the Director-General will have the full support of the membership of the Conference in fulfilling his vision in this regard.

The Regional Conference discussed the issue of integrating the Shared Services Centre (SSC) hubs in Bangkok and Santiago with the SSC hub in Budapest and requested that findings of the 2010 in-depth study of the functions of these SSC hubs, and of regional office administrative services in general, be provided, in full, to the Finance Committee and to all member countries. It also urged that the analysis of the SSC structure and functions be carried out in a deliberate manner and include criteria related to quality and effectiveness of services delivered, striking a balance with possible long-term cost savings. I am pleased to note that after substantial discussions in the FAO governing bodies, the thirty-seventh session of the FAO Conference decided to maintain the status quo, i.e. the SSC hub in Bangkok will continue to exist.

The Regional Conference endorsed the Regional Priority Framework (2010–2019). It noted the linkages between this Framework and the Strategic Framework, which embodies the Organization's three global goals and 11 Strategic Objectives and which were translated into regional actions with focused attention on key challenges and priorities of the region. It also considered the structural changes in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and stressed the importance of maintaining effective linkages between decentralized offices and headquarters staff and urged FAO to advance the decentralization process accordingly.

The Regional Conference considered the Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2010–2011 and Areas of Priority Actions for Asia and the Pacific Region for the Following Biennium and endorsed the five areas of regional priority action for FAO's work in the Asia-Pacific region for 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 and encouraged additional support to priority programmes through extrabudgetary contributions. It urged the Secretariat to focus more on the planned actions, with full

consideration to FAO's comparative advantages, and suggested that special emphasis be placed on the following areas of work: i) sustainable crop intensification and diversification to improve productivity; ii) transboundary animal/plant diseases and emergency response to natural disasters; iii) genetic resources; iv) climate change adaptation and mitigation; v) food safety and nutrition; and vi) agriculture diversification, with emphasis on livestock productivity, aquaculture and sustainable forest management.

The Regional Conference requested that the reports include indications of budget allocation and expenditure by regional results as well as progress on the utilization of Country Programming Frameworks in guiding FAO's work at the country level.

The Regional Conference deliberated on five technical papers that were presented by the Secretariat staff and provided its guidance.

After discussions on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation for Food Security and Sustainable Development in the Region, the Regional Conference requested FAO to i) continue assisting member countries in formulating and implementing sound climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and action plans, facilitating practical actions for technology transfer and building capacities; ii) provide advice to member countries and regional and subregional organizations in adjusting and harmonizing policies, programmes and institutions dealing with climate change adaptation and mitigation; iii) facilitate the formulation of a regional strategy for mainstreaming climate change adaptation and mitigation activities in the agricultural sectors and the establishment of regional cooperation mechanisms and networks, taking due consideration of differing subregional needs and conditions; iv) in collaboration with other relevant international organizations, assist member countries in collecting and analysing reliable data and information on climate change impacts, especially at the local level, and on emissions from different agricultural production systems to support planning and informed decision-making; v) provide targeted technical support to member countries and build capacities for implementing practical climate change adaptation and mitigation activities in the areas of crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, land and water management; vi) support member countries in efforts related to the restoration of degraded lands and forests through reforestation, forest rehabilitation and agroforestry, noting the increased demand for land and water resources; vii) continue support for initiatives in member countries to test and demonstrate the feasibility of various climate change adaptation and mitigation activities in the agricultural sectors, such as the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD); and viii) in conjunction with other relevant organizations, provide guidance to member countries for establishing and implementing technologically sound, robust and consistent methodologies for monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gas emissions, carbon stocks and other parameters related to climate change in the agriculture sector.

After discussions on Experiences and Policy Lessons from the Region in Dealing with the Global Food and Financial Crises, the Regional Conference recommended that FAO conduct analytical studies and engage in policy dialogue with concerned stakeholders with a view to developing policy options for a more stable global trading system for food, which can enhance food security while providing adequate incentives for food producers.

After discussions on Increasing Crop Productivity for Sustainable Food Security in the Region, the Regional Conference recommended that FAO work with member countries to: i) increase the productivity of crops that are of particular relevance to the diets of food- and nutritionally-insecure people, including starchy staples, pulses, coarse grains, vegetables, horticultural crops and oil crops and ii) speed up technology transfer in support of crop intensification. It recommended that FAO assist member countries in the following areas: i) facilitating public-private partnerships in research, extension and marketing; ii) better connecting of producers, particularly smallholders, to markets; and iii) building capacity in food safety and phytosanitary matters. The Regional Conference requested FAO to support member countries' efforts to make increased use of local diversity, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, integrated plant nutrient management and integrated water management.

Regarding FAO's Strategy for and Approaches to Disaster Preparedness, Response and Mitigation in the Region, the Regional Conference welcomed plans for establishing regional hubs for emergency operations and resource mobilization in the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Regarding Implementation of REDD and What it Means for Forestry and Agriculture in the Region, the Regional Conference urged FAO to work with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme to harmonize, simplify and speed up programme delivery and to prepare for the second phase of the programme.

I thank you for your kind attention and express my full confidence that this Regional Conference will meet with its objectives and provide policy guidance to FAO in the days to come.