

**REPORT**

**Kathmandu  
Nepal  
13-17 May  
2002**

**Twenty-sixth FAO  
Regional  
Conference for  
Asia and the Pacific**



**Food and Agriculture Organization of the  
United Nations**

*FAO Member Nations in the Asia Region*

Bangladesh	Japan	Pakistan
Bhutan	Kazakhstan	Philippines
Cambodia	Korea, Republic of	Sri Lanka
China	Laos	Tajikistan
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India	Maldives	Uzbekistan
Indonesia	Mongolia	Viet Nam
Iran, Islamic Republic of	Myanmar	
	Nepal	

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Cook Islands	New Zealand	Tonga
Fiji	Niue	United States of America
France	Palau	Vanuatu
Kiribati	Papua New Guinea	
Marshall Islands	Samoa	

*Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Asia and the Pacific*

First	- Bangalore, India, 27 July – 5 August 1953
Second	- Kandy, Ceylon, 20-25 June 1955
Third	- Bandung, Indonesia, 8-18 October 1956
Fourth	- Tokyo, Japan, 6-16 October 1958
Fifth	- Saigon, Republic of Viet Nam, 21-30 November 1960
Sixth	- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 15-29 September 1962
Seventh	- Manila, Philippines, 7-21 November 1964
Eighth	- Seoul, Republic of Korea, 15-24 September 1966
Ninth	- Bangkok, Thailand, 4-15 November 1968
Tenth	- Canberra, Australia, 27 August – 8 September 1970
Eleventh	- New Delhi, India, 17-27 October 1972
Twelfth	- Tokyo, Japan, 17-27 September 1974
Thirteenth	- Manila, Philippines, 5-13 August 1976
Fourteenth	- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 25 July – 3 August 1978
Fifteenth	- New Delhi, India, 5-13 March 1980
Sixteenth	- Jakarta, Indonesia, 1-11 June 1982
Seventeenth	- Islamabad, Pakistan, 24 April – 3 May 1984
Eighteenth	- Rome, Italy, 8-17 July 1986
Nineteenth	- Bangkok, Thailand, 11-15 July 1988
Twentieth	- Beijing, China, 23-27 April 1990
Twenty-first	- New Delhi, India, 10-14 February 1992
Twenty-second	- Manila, Philippines, 3-7 October 1994
Twenty-third	- Apia, Western Samoa, 14-18 May 1996
Twenty-fourth	- Yangon, Myanmar, 20-24 April 1998
Twenty-fifth	- Yokohama, Japan, 28 August-1 September 2000
Twenty-sixth	- Kathmandu, Nepal, 13-17 May 2002

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## **SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Ministerial-Level Session of the Conference**

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

1. welcomed the initiative of the Director-General in convening the upcoming WFS:*fyI* and noted the potential for a “Global Alliance Against Hunger” to further mobilise political will in combating hunger; delegates looked forward to further discussion of the concept at the WFS:*fyI*.
2. urged FAO to assist in building capacity in biotechnology, paying special attention to human and environmental risks.
3. encouraged the further strengthening of mechanisms promoted by FAO for exchanging technical knowledge and experience through South-South Cooperation, regional networking, and other partnerships.

### **Sustainable Mountain Development in Asia and the Pacific**

#### **For the attention of Governments and FAO**

The Conference:

4. urged member countries and international organizations to collaborate in addressing forest fires, illegal and reckless logging and forest encroachment.
5. recommended that member countries, with assistance from FAO and other partners, initiate specific studies to determine optimal and efficient systems for marketing mountain products and services in competitive markets.
6. recommended that member countries work with FAO and partner organizations to identify products and niches that command competitive and comparative advantages and strengthen the production capacities for those which appear most promising.
7. urged member countries and FAO to give increased attention to enhancing food security in mountainous regions.

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

8. urged governments and communities to establish and strengthen policies and strategies for protecting mountain forests, water, soil and biodiversity resources.
9. encouraged member countries to implement holistic, participatory, integrated watershed management programs that address the needs of local people and protect and enhance natural resources.
10. called on member governments to give high priority to establishing and improving transport, energy and communication links and services to mountain communities.

11. encouraged governments to support viable alternative income and employment opportunities in mountain regions, including innovative new options such as out-sourcing of tasks via modern electronic systems.
12. recommended that governments and national and local non-governmental organizations provide targeted “safety nets” and social programs to reduce hunger, increase employment, and enhance self-worth of vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

#### **For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

13. requested FAO to work with member countries to assess the likely positive and negative impacts of exposing mountain communities to more open economies.
14. requested FAO to strengthen its community nutrition programs in mountain areas.
15. recommended that FAO, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC) and other international organizations increase their support for research, development, promotion and capacity building aimed at developing ecotourism, consistent with sound environmental, social and livelihood objectives.
16. requested FAO to support improved networking and effective dissemination of development-related information to mountain areas, via modern as well as traditional mechanisms.
17. recommended that FAO identify and support effective approaches for decentralisation and devolution of natural resources management, assist governments and local communities in strengthening capacities for local resources management and help clarify associated rights and obligations.

#### **Livestock and Fisheries Development for Household Food and Nutrition Security and Poverty Alleviation in Asia and the Pacific**

#### **For the attention of Governments and FAO**

The Conference:

18. urged member countries, with support from FAO and other international organizations, to create favourable institutional and political environments that would enable the poor to share in the benefits from the surge in growth of the livestock and fisheries sectors.

#### **For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

19. called on countries to support and implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; the Asia Regional Guidelines for the Responsible Movement of Live Aquatic Animals; and other voluntary agreements, guidelines and international plans of action.

**For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

20. requested FAO to assist countries in developing appropriate policies to reduce the financial, technical and cultural barriers that limit small-scale producers' ability to benefit from the expansion of the livestock and fisheries sectors.
21. urged FAO to assist member countries in formulating appropriate legal and policy frameworks in support of the rural poor and to help build institutional capacity for implementing effective policies and programs.
22. Requested FAO to assist member countries in developing appropriate policy and legislation related to small-scale coastal fisheries.
23. requested FAO to support networks that encourage governments, national and international organizations, civil societies and the corporate sector to review livestock and fisheries policies and strategies vis-à-vis the poor.
24. requested FAO to assist countries in developing the necessary capacity to ensure food safety throughout the production and processing chain.
25. requested FAO to help countries build capacity for addressing food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary regulations of importing countries.
26. recommended that FAO formulate a plan of action for the livestock sector for supporting, among others, a regional emergency response system to deal with transboundary animal diseases, a regional program for the control of foot-and-mouth disease, a diagnostic information reference system and procedures for harmonising laboratory standards.

**Empowering the Rural Poor in Asia and the Pacific****For the attention of Governments and FAO**

The Conference:

27. endorsed empowerment of the rural poor as a key approach for sustained and rapid poverty reduction and enhancement of food security; there was consensus that devolution of decision-making authority and development resources to community levels is crucial to the empowerment process.
28. urged FAO and member countries to integrate gender considerations into the process of empowering the rural poor.
29. encouraged FAO and member governments to identify practical ways and means (both modern and traditional) to bridge information and technology gaps for the benefit of the rural poor.

**For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

30. urged countries to adopt public policies and programs to ensure that the rural poor have access to productive resources such as land, water and capital as well as support services like research, extension, marketing, credit, etc.

**For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

31. requested FAO to provide technical support and organize resources to assist member countries in conducting agriculture and rural sector reviews, including assessment of policy issues and options for food security and poverty reduction.
32. urged FAO to provide technical assistance and advice and to strengthen country capacities, in areas related to agri-business development and rural extension.

**Preparation for the WFS:fyI–Regional Dimensions**

**For the attention of Governments and FAO**

The Conference:

33. called for substantial increases in agriculture and rural development investments.
34. urged follow-up action to the International Conference on Financing for Development to enhance allocations of financial resources to the agriculture and rural development sectors.
35. urged national and international organizations to step up research efforts to identify sound approaches for adapting agriculture to meet the challenges of climate change.

**For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

36. urged member countries to give priority to sustainable, broad-based agricultural growth (including enhanced productivity) and rural development as cornerstones for reducing undernourishment.
37. encouraged all countries, that have not yet prepared national action plans, to do so as quickly as possible and to support their effective implementation.
38. recommended that countries pay special attention to the roles of women in agriculture and utilise the vast potential of community-government partnerships in combating hunger.
39. urged countries to ensure that the important principles adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Doha are implemented.
40. urged member countries to participate fully and effectively in the upcoming round of negotiations on agriculture to ensure fairness and equity in existing arrangements.
41. encouraged member countries to extend their full support to the application of food insecurity and vulnerability information mapping systems (FIVIMS).



**For the attention of FAO**

The Conference:

42. requested FAO to strengthen national capacities to analyse trade issues, assist countries in formulating and updating national trade legislation and facilitate regional and sub-regional information sharing related to trade negotiations.
43. requested FAO to provide support to member countries in establishing and strengthening national FIVIMS.

**Information on World Agricultural Information Centre (WAICENT)**

**For the attention of Governments**

The Conference:

44. urged member countries to participate in the upcoming Consultation on Agricultural Information Management (COAIM) in September 2002.

## **I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

### **Organization of the Conference**

1. The twenty-sixth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 13 to 17 May 2002. The Conference was organized in two parts, a Senior Officers Meeting from 13 to 15 May and a Ministerial-level Meeting from 16 to 17 May.
2. Representatives from 25 member countries participated in the Conference. Observers from two United Nations member states, 17 international non-governmental organizations and three intergovernmental organizations were also in attendance. Representatives of five other United Nations organizations participated. Representatives of 13 international non-governmental organizations and 19 local non-governmental and civil society organizations participated in a pre-Conference NGO/CSO regional consultation in preparation for the World Food Summit: *five years later*, convened from 11 to 12 May.

### **Inaugural Ceremonies**

3. The Senior Officers Meeting was opened with addresses by Dr R.B. Singh, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO and the Honourable Mahesh Acharya, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, His Majesty's Government of Nepal.
4. Dr Singh expressed appreciation to His Majesty's Government of Nepal for its excellent support in hosting the meeting. He noted the serious challenges of agriculture in the region over the past two years, particularly as a result of numerous natural and man-made disasters. However, he also expressed optimism as a result of steady progress in several areas of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. He urged the senior officers to seriously address the reasons for slow progress in reducing the numbers of undernourished in the region and to recommend immediate remedial action.
5. His Excellency, Mahesh Acharya, welcomed delegates and participants to Kathmandu on behalf of His Majesty's Government of Nepal and formally opened the Senior Officers Meeting. He highlighted economic growth, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability as the most critical inter-related aspects of development. He pointed out that agriculture in most of Asia and the Pacific is characterised by the prevalence of small farmers, landless labourers and resource-poor fisherfolk. Economic growth, therefore, must be pro-poor, broad-based and sustained. His Excellency noted that Asia and the Pacific had made reasonable progress in reducing the number of undernourished in recent years, but that the region still held nearly two-thirds of the undernourished population of the world. He urged developed and developing countries to join efforts in ensuring food security and promoting sustainable development for all.
6. The Inaugural Ceremony of the Conference was held on 16 May. Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, welcomed all participants of the Conference. He noted the timeliness of the Conference, coming just one month before the World Food Summit: *five years later* (WFS:*fyl*).
7. His Excellency Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister of Nepal, presented the Conference inaugural address. He commended the past and ongoing contributions of FAO in combating world hunger, but reminded participants of the challenges that remained.
8. Noting the high numbers of the world's undernourished, His Excellency the Prime Minister urged Conference delegates to redouble efforts to ensure that all people have access to adequate and safe food. He stated that, at a time when the global war against terrorism continues, the need to wage war on poverty and hunger is no less urgent.

9. His Excellency the Prime Minister proclaimed that considering the astounding progress and advancement mankind has made over the centuries, it is shocking that we are not able to feed ourselves and even more shocking when we know that we have sufficient food to feed all. The Prime Minister stressed that raising the level of nutrition, the standards of living of the people and enhancing agricultural productivity were more vital than ever before.

10. The text of the inaugural address of Prime Minister Deuba is given in Appendix D of this report.

### **Election of Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteurs**

11. Delegates unanimously elected Mr Surendra Kumar Shrestha, Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Nepal, as Chairperson of the Senior Officers Meeting. The senior officers also elected all the heads of delegations of Vice-Ministerial and Secretary of Agriculture rank as Vice-Chairpersons of the Senior Officers Meeting and Mr Frederick Muller, of the Republic of Marshall Islands, as Rapporteur.

12. His Excellency Mr Mahesh Acharya, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Nepal, was elected as the Chairperson of the Ministerial Meeting. Delegates also elected all of the other Ministers present as Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference and Ms Elsa Bayani, of the Philippines, as Rapporteur of the Conference.

### **Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable**

13. The Conference adopted the agenda, which is given in Appendix A. Documents submitted to the Conference are listed in Appendix C.

### **Statement of the Director-General**

14. In his statement, Dr Jacques Diouf noted that the Conference was taking place in a global economic, social and political context that is undergoing rapid change. As a result of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Doha in November 2001, globalisation and liberalisation of trade for agricultural products, the movement of capital and the transfer of technology should occur in ways that enhance the living of people in both developed and developing countries.

15. The Director-General pointed out there were still nearly 777 million undernourished people in developing countries, and that global efforts to reduce the numbers were falling far short of the targets that had been set at the World Food Summit in 1996. He stressed the need for increased rural investment to generate higher employment, income, productivity and production.

16. The Director-General noted that while global agricultural performance had been modest in the past two years, the record in Asia and the Pacific had been relatively strong. He highlighted, in particular, the outstanding growth in dairy, livestock, vegetables, fruits, aquaculture, oil crops and rubber in the region over the past decade.

17. Drawing attention to the upcoming World Food Summit: *five years later*, the Director-General urged delegates to prepare for WFS:*fyf* by focusing their deliberations on strategies and actions for accelerating implementation of the decisions taken in 1996. He drew particular attention to the concept of a “Global Alliance Against Hunger,” which could be a tangible expression of reinforced political will as well as an important step towards removing the despair and anger that are so favourable to extremism.

18. A complete text of the Director-General’s statement is given in Appendix E.

## II. MINISTERIAL-LEVEL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE

19. The Ministerial-level Session of the Conference was convened from 16 to 17 May. It involved the full delegations of all participating countries and organizations, including 11 Ministers of agriculture.

20. Dr R.B. Singh, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative (ADG/RR) for Asia and the Pacific reported on the major FAO activities in the region over the past biennium.<sup>1</sup> He emphasised the impact of FAO's work in relation to the thematic priorities discussed at the twenty-fifth Conference in Yokohama. These were sustainable agriculture and poverty alleviation; biotechnology and biodiversity; and follow up to the World Food Summit Plan of Action.

21. A detailed summary of the senior officers' discussions related to preparations for the WFS:*fy/l* was presented to the Ministers and other delegates. The summary highlighted the key elements of the deliberations and the recommendations made by the senior officers.

22. Mr Frederick Muller, Rapporteur of the Senior Officers Meeting, introduced the report of the Senior Officers Meeting to the Ministerial-level Session and summarised the key findings and recommendations resulting from the deliberations during that part of the Conference. The Ministers and other delegates endorsed the findings and recommendations of the Senior Officers Meeting, which comprise an integral part of this Conference report.

23. In validating and reinforcing the conclusions and recommendations made by the senior officers, the Ministers and other delegates unanimously expressed concern over the slow pace in reducing the number of undernourished in the world. They cited the urgent need for renewed political commitment, more effective policies and strategies and increased dedication in implementing programs to accelerate the progress of agricultural development and ensuring food security for all.

24. The Ministers and other delegates welcomed the initiative of the Director-General in convening the upcoming WFS:*fy/l*, to be held in June 2002. They also noted the potential for a "Global Alliance Against Hunger" to further mobilise political will in combating hunger and looked forward to further discussion of the concept at the WFS:*fy/l*.

25. Numerous challenges and constraints in the pursuit of food security were cited by the Ministers and other delegates. Particular attention was drawn to challenges arising from growing populations and food demand, globalisation and emerging trade arrangements, natural and man-made disasters, civil strife, lack of rural infrastructure, shrinking farm lands, degradation of forests and declining fish stocks.

26. The Conference noted that many of the small island developing states face a number of challenges similar to those of mountain communities, such as their distance from markets, reliance on imports to supply many basic commodities, dependence on a narrow base of exports, susceptibility to natural disasters, lack of infrastructure and low levels of investment.

27. Ministers and other delegates recognised a broad range of strategies and mechanisms to enhance food security and alleviate rural poverty. Particular focus was given to the roles of domestic food production and stockholding; fair and equitable trade; sustainable management of natural resources; participatory approaches and partnerships with local communities and local organizations; empowerment of the rural poor including women; effective research and development; rural credit; appropriate application of biotechnology, indigenous knowledge and technologies, post-harvest and processing facilities; improved food distribution; and creation of off-farm employment.

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<sup>1</sup> APRC/02/5

28. The Ministers and delegates also highlighted the importance of capacity building in biotechnology, paying special attention to human and environmental risks from this advanced technology. The Conference urged FAO to provide assistance in dealing with this issue.

29. The Ministers and other delegates stressed the valuable roles of FAO in supporting member countries' efforts to achieve food security. Particular attention was given to the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS); Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping Systems (FIVIMS); early warning systems; codes and guidelines for responsible fishery and forestry practices; prevention and management of forest fires; strengthening of capacities for meeting sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements; and trade-related technical and policy assistance. The Conference encouraged the further strengthening of mechanisms promoted by FAO for exchanging technical knowledge and experience through South-South Cooperation, regional networking, and other partnerships.

30. A representative of the pre-Conference NGO/CSO consultation on preparation for the WFS:*fyI* presented a statement to the Conference summarising the results of the consultation. The statement is given in Appendix F.

### **III. SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

31. The Conference considered the key issues and opportunities related to sustainable mountain development, noting the timeliness and relevance of the topic in light of 2002 having been designated the International Year of Mountains.<sup>2</sup> The Conference acknowledged the tremendous importance of mountains in providing and sustaining supplies of fresh water, hydropower, biological diversity, agricultural and forestry products, minerals, and sites for recreation and tourism. At the same time, the great fragility of mountain areas was noted, along with the major challenges faced by mountain dwellers.

32. The delegates reviewed the wide range of environmental, economic, social and cultural issues confronting mountain regions. The vulnerabilities of mountain ecosystems, mountain cultures, and women and children in upland areas were highlighted. Delegates also acknowledged the ill-preparedness of most mountain people to compete effectively in open economies. The prevalence of food insecurity and poor nutrition among mountain dwellers was noted.

33. The Conference identified several opportunities for supporting and enhancing sustainable mountain development. These included the development of niche products and services where mountain communities have competitive advantage; improving marketing; enhancing environmental protection; strengthening legislative and policy mechanisms; accelerating the effective decentralisation and devolution of natural resources management; enhancing information dissemination; and expanding trans-boundary cooperation.

34. The Conference emphasised the need to adhere to the paramount principle of safeguarding mountain ecosystems and protecting the environment in all aspects of mountain development. The Conference urged governments and communities to establish and strengthen policies and strategies for protecting mountain forests, water, soil and biodiversity resources. Toward this objective, the Conference encouraged member countries to implement holistic, participatory, integrated watershed management programs that address the needs of local people and protect and enhance natural resources.

35. The Conference urged member countries and international organizations to collaborate in addressing forest fires, illegal and reckless logging, and forest encroachment.

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<sup>2</sup> APRC/02/2

36. Delegates stressed the need for governments to create an enabling economic climate conducive to growth and development in upland areas, coupled with targeted support to meet the unique needs of mountain people. The Conference recommended that member countries, with assistance from FAO and other partners, initiate specific studies to determine optimal and efficient systems for marketing mountain products and services in competitive markets. As a complement to such research, the Conference requested FAO to work with member countries to assess the likely positive and negative impacts of exposing mountain communities to more open economies.

37. Delegates recognised that some mountain products and services were likely to enjoy competitive advantages vis-à-vis those from the lowlands. The Conference recommended that member countries work with FAO and partner organizations to identify products and niches that command competitive and comparative advantages and strengthen the production capabilities for those which appear most promising.

38. Noting the prevalence of food insecurity and poor nutrition in mountain areas, the Conference urged member countries and FAO to give increased attention to enhancing food security in mountainous regions. It particularly requested FAO to strengthen its community nutrition programs in mountain areas.

39. Tourism, especially ecotourism, was recognised by the delegates as an area of growing importance for generating income and livelihoods in mountain areas, but which posed certain risks to fragile mountain ecosystems if developed carelessly. The Conference recommended that FAO, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre (RECOFTC) and other international organizations increase their support for research, development, promotion and capacity building aimed at developing ecotourism, consistent with sound environmental, social and livelihood objectives.

40. Delegates emphasised that sustainable mountain development was greatly hindered by the isolation and remoteness of mountain communities. The Conference called on member governments to give high priority to establishing and improving transport, energy and communication links and services to mountain communities. FAO was requested to support improved networking and effective dissemination of development-related information to mountain areas, via modern as well as traditional mechanisms, in collaboration with partner organizations and governments.

41. The Conference applauded the progress of some countries in the region in decentralising and devolving natural resources management responsibilities and benefits to local communities and organizations. However, it also recognised the risks of decentralisation and devolution if local authorities and communities are unprepared for new management responsibilities. The Conference recommended that FAO identify and support effective approaches for decentralisation and devolution of natural resources management, assist governments and local communities in strengthening capacities for local resources management and help clarify associated rights and obligations.

42. Delegates noted the need to expand livelihood opportunities in mountain areas beyond traditional agriculture. The Conference encouraged governments to support viable alternative income and employment opportunities in mountain regions, including innovative new options such as outsourcing of tasks via modern electronic systems.

43. The Conference recognised that some mountain areas and mountain-dwelling people are severely disadvantaged, with few, if any, comparative or competitive advantages at their disposal. The Conference recommended that, under such circumstances, governments and national and local non-governmental organizations provide targeted “safety nets” and social programs to reduce hunger, increase employment and enhance self-worth of vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

#### **IV. LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT FOR HOUSEHOLD FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

44. The Conference reviewed and discussed recent developments in the livestock and fisheries sectors and their implications for household food and nutrition security and poverty alleviation.<sup>3</sup> Delegates noted the phenomenal growth occurring in these sectors in Asia and the Pacific and considered FAO projections that the demand for meat and fish in South and East Asia would reach three times 1990 levels by 2030.

45. Delegates noted that small-scale producers currently still supplied the vast majority of protein consumed in the region. However, it was recognised that the main beneficiaries of the surge in demand, so far, had been large-scale producers and processors and the urban middle class, which had gained access to cheaper food. The overwhelming majority of the poor had yet to benefit from developments in these sectors.

46. Delegates noted that large-scale livestock and aquaculture had often been given preferential treatment in attempts to expand exports and to provide affordable supplies of food for urban consumers. They drew attention to the potential environmental risks associated with large-scale livestock and aquaculture systems, especially those located near urban centres. The Conference recognised several health risks associated with intensified production and trade of livestock and fish, including transmission of diseases and increased consumption of biological and chemical contaminants.

47. Translating the projected growth of the livestock and fisheries sectors into genuine and sustained opportunities for the poor was of paramount importance to the delegates. The Conference urged member countries, with support from FAO and other international organizations, to create favourable institutional and political environments that would enable the poor to share in the benefits from the surge in growth of the livestock and fisheries sectors.

48. FAO was requested to pursue action at local, national and international levels to assist countries in developing appropriate policies to reduce the financial, technical and cultural barriers that limit small-scale producers' ability to benefit from the expansion of the livestock and fisheries sectors. The Conference urged FAO to assist member countries in formulating appropriate legal and policy frameworks in support of the rural poor and to help build institutional capacity for implementing effective policies and programs. It specifically requested FAO to assist member countries in developing appropriate policy and legislation related to small-scale coastal fisheries.

49. The Conference requested FAO to support networks that encourage governments, national and international organizations, civil societies and the corporate sector to review livestock and fisheries policies and strategies vis-à-vis the poor.

50. The Conference emphasised the importance of sustainable fisheries and called on countries to support and implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; the Asia Regional Guidelines for the Responsible Movement of Live Aquatic Animals; and other voluntary agreements, guidelines and international plans of action.

51. Delegates highlighted the need for responsible production methods to minimise negative environmental impacts and to ensure food safety, including the importance of countries adhering to CODEX standards. The Conference requested FAO to assist countries in developing the necessary capacity to ensure food safety throughout the production and processing chain.

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<sup>3</sup> APRC/02/3

52. Given the growing importance of trade in livestock and fisheries products, FAO was requested to help countries build capacity for addressing food safety and sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations of importing countries.

53. The Conference recommended that FAO formulate a plan of action for the livestock sector for supporting, among others, a regional emergency response system to deal with trans-boundary animal diseases, a regional program for the control of foot-and-mouth disease, a diagnostic information reference system and procedures for harmonising laboratory standards.

## V. EMPOWERING THE RURAL POOR IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

54. The Conference considered the key issues affecting poverty reduction and food security with special reference to the significant role of sustained and broad-based economic growth.<sup>4</sup> The Conference acknowledged that countries that had recorded strong economic and agricultural performance over substantial periods of time had made impressive progress in addressing poverty and food insecurity.

55. Delegates noted that, notwithstanding decades of unprecedented growth, serious poverty and food insecurity remain. Nearly three-quarters of the world's poor reside in the region. The Conference was particularly disturbed by the adverse impacts of poverty and food insecurity on pregnant and nursing women, infants and children.

56. Delegates recognised the largely rural nature of poverty and food insecurity and emphasised that agricultural and rural development were the keys to poverty reduction and sustained food security. Successful experiences of countries in the region had illustrated the benefits of focusing on, and empowering, the rural poor. Delegates stressed that empowering the rural poor means bringing them into the mainstream of development and ensuring that they share in the gains. Delegates also stressed the relevance of the Millennium Development Goals.

57. The Conference endorsed empowerment of the rural poor as a key approach for sustained and rapid poverty reduction and enhancement of food security. There was consensus that devolution of decision-making authority and development resources to community levels is crucial to the empowerment process.

58. The Conference agreed that strategies, which rest on a comprehensive mix of complementary elements of empowerment, are far more effective than those which attempt to address problems independently. To further this approach, the Conference urged countries to adopt public policies and programs to ensure that the rural poor have access to productive resources such as land, water and capital as well as support services like research, extension, marketing, credit, etc. Delegates also stressed the importance of the social aspects of empowerment and the value of participatory involvement in policy and program decision making.

59. The Conference requested FAO to provide technical support and organize resources to assist member countries in conducting agriculture and rural sector reviews, including assessment of policy issues and options for food security and poverty reduction. The Conference particularly noted the need for FAO support in analysing options for overcoming market constraints, removing domestic distortions and inefficiencies, addressing market imperfections and improving competitiveness, both domestically and internationally.

60. The Conference urged FAO to provide technical assistance and advice and to strengthen country capacities, in areas related to agri-business development and rural extension.

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<sup>4</sup> APRC/02/4



61. Delegates urged FAO and member countries to integrate gender considerations into the processes of empowering the rural poor and drew attention to the FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action adopted at the thirty-first FAO Conference in November 2001.

62. Delegates noted with concern the potential risks associated with the widening information and technology divides between the rural poor and the non-poor, leading to poverty traps and greater inequalities. The Conference encouraged FAO and member governments to identify practical ways and means (both modern and traditional) to bridge information and technology gaps for the benefit of the rural poor.

## **VI. PREPARATION FOR THE WFS:*fyl*—REGIONAL DIMENSIONS**

63. The Conference considered regional implications and dimensions related to the upcoming World Food Summit: *five years later* (WFS:*fyl*).<sup>5</sup>

64. Delegates noted with concern that, although the total number of undernourished had declined since the World Food Summit (WFS), the global annual net decrease had been only about 6 million, or less than one-third of the number required to meet the WFS goal of cutting the number of undernourished in half by the year 2015.

65. The Conference noted that the rate of reduction of 10 million in Asia and the Pacific had also fallen short of the annual target of 13 million. About 16 percent of the region's population, or every sixth person in Asia and the Pacific remained undernourished, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the world's total.

66. The Conference reviewed the experiences of countries in the region in addressing food insecurity and the major factors underlying the differing levels of success. Delegates recognised that performance in reducing the numbers of undernourished improved with economic and agricultural growth and distribution, macro-economic stability, poverty reduction, population control, improved access to food, progress in health and sanitation conditions, conducive public policies and peace and order. The Conference acknowledged that many of these factors were significantly influenced by natural and man-made disasters as well as internal and external economic and political circumstances.

67. Delegates recognised the need to intensify efforts to reduce the undernourished population and discussed measures for strengthening action plans to achieve the World Food Summit commitments and targets. The Conference urged member countries to give priority to sustainable, broad-based agricultural growth (including enhanced productivity) and rural development as cornerstones for reducing undernourishment. It encouraged all countries, that have not yet prepared national action plans, to do so as quickly as possible and to support their effective implementation.

68. The Conference recommended that countries pay special attention to the roles of women in agriculture and to utilise the vast potential of community-government partnerships in combating hunger. Delegates stressed the significant benefits to be gained from collaboration between governments and non-governmental and civil society organizations in mobilising community-level actions and advocating agricultural and rural development.

69. Delegates stressed the importance of good governance and enhancing participation of the poor in policy making and implementation of hunger-eradication programs. The Conference also recognised that political stability and peace were essential conditions for increased private investment in food production.

70. The delegates noted with concern the declining flow of financial resources to the agriculture sector. The Conference called for substantial increases in agriculture and rural development

<sup>5</sup> APRC/02/6

investments. In this regard, the Conference was encouraged, by the recently concluded International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico and urged follow-up action to enhance allocations of financial resources to the agriculture and rural development sectors.

71. The delegates welcomed the positive outcomes of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Doha, Qatar, that supported fair and equitable agricultural trade regimes and urged countries in the region to ensure that the important principles adopted at Doha are implemented. Several delegates suggested that future trade negotiations and follow up should focus on improved market access, special and differential treatment for developing countries and on reducing subsidies and other trade distortions.

72. Appreciating the important role of international trade in enhancing food security and rural livelihoods, member countries were urged to participate fully and effectively in the upcoming round of negotiations on agriculture to ensure fairness and equity in existing arrangements. The Conference requested FAO to support such involvement by helping to strengthen national capacities to analyse trade issues, assisting countries in formulating and updating national trade legislation and facilitating regional and sub-regional information sharing related to trade negotiations.

73. Recognising the potentially serious implications of climate change on agriculture and food security, the Conference urged national and international organizations to step up research efforts to identify sound approaches for adapting agriculture to meet the challenges of climate change.

74. Delegates emphasised the importance of food insecurity and vulnerability information mapping systems (FIVIMS) for identifying and addressing chronic food insecurity. The Conference encouraged member countries to extend their full support to the application of FIVIMS. FAO was requested to provide support to member countries in establishing and strengthening national FIVIMS.

75. The delegates recognised FAO's efforts in improving food security at the country level through its multi-disciplinary technical support of the Special Programme for Food Security.

76. The Conference considered ideas for a "Global Coalition Against Hunger" and noted the potential for such a coalition to further mobilise political will in combating hunger.<sup>6</sup> Delegates acknowledged the need for increased political commitment, resources and action to reduce hunger and recognised the benefits of improved coordination of efforts. Some delegates requested further information on the potential form and functions of a possible global coalition, and clarification on how it would relate to existing efforts. Some other delegates expressed strong support for a "Global Coalition Against Hunger" and considered it a timely initiative to accelerate progress toward the target of halving the number of undernourished by 2015. In this respect, the Conference looked forward to further discussion of the concept at the next session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the WFS:*fy/l*.

## **VII. AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT: FAO-CGIAR LINKAGE**

77. The Conference was informed of the current state of agricultural research in Asia and the Pacific, and of linkages between FAO and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in addressing issues of agricultural research and technology development.<sup>7</sup> It was noted that the main issues and problems addressed by CGIAR are also at the core of FAO's work. Therefore, it is vital to ensure synergy and complementary actions between the two organizations.

78. The Conference was informed of FAO's efforts to collaborate with CGIAR at the regional level on high priority areas such as rice-based livelihood systems; livestock intensification;

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<sup>6</sup> APCR/02/6/Sup. 1

<sup>7</sup> APCR/02/INF/5

biotechnology, bio-security and biodiversity; trade and WTO aspects; and disaster preparedness, disaster relief and global climate change concerns.

79. It was pointed out that informal linkages between FAO and CGIAR at the regional level are good, but could benefit by further institutionalisation of such linkages and improved interaction of FAO-supported regional commissions, associations and networks with CGIAR.

### **VIII. INFORMATION ON WORLD AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION CENTRE (WAICENT)**

80. The Conference was informed of recent developments of the World Agricultural Information Centre (WAICENT), FAO's strategic programme on information management and dissemination via FAO web site, CD-ROMs, multi-media, etc.<sup>8</sup> In addition, FAO works with member countries through its WAICENT Outreach program to improve the efficiency, quality and relevance of information exchange among the various groups involved in agricultural development and food security. In Asia and the Pacific, WAICENT Outreach assists member countries to improve the management of agricultural information. Member countries were urged to participate in the upcoming Consultation on Agricultural Information Management (COAIM) in September 2002.

### **IX. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

#### **Date and Place of the Twenty-seventh Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific**

81. The Government of the People's Republic of China graciously informed the Conference of its interest and willingness to host the twenty-seventh Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, in Beijing, in 2004.

#### **Adoption of the Report**

82. The Conference unanimously adopted the draft report as presented by the Rapporteur.

#### **Closure of the Conference**

83. On behalf of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, His Excellency Mr Mahesh Acharya thanked the participants for their constructive and positive contributions, which had contributed to the Conference's success. In closing the Conference, he noted it had succeeded in developing common understanding of the strategies, policies and actions needed to achieve the target of halving the number of undernourished by 2015 and encouraged member countries to further share these ideas at the upcoming WFS:*fyI*.

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<sup>8</sup> APRC/02/INF/6

**AGENDA**

**SENIOR OFFICERS MEETING**

13-15 May 2002

**I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

1. Opening of the Senior Officers Meeting
2. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur
3. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

**II. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

4. Sustainable Mountain Development in Asia and the Pacific
5. Livestock and Fisheries Development for Household Food and Nutrition Security and Poverty Alleviation in Asia and the Pacific
6. Empowering the Rural Poor in Asia and the Pacific
7. Preparation for the WFS:*fy*l – Regional Dimensions

**III. INFORMATION ITEMS**

8. Agricultural Research for Development: FAO-CGIAR Linkage
9. Information on World Agricultural Information Centre (WAICENT)

**IV. OTHER MATTERS**

10. Any other business

**V. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

11. Adoption of the Report of the Senior Officers Meeting
12. Closure of the Senior Officers Meeting

**PLENARY SESSION**

16-17 May 2002

**I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

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

**II. STATEMENTS**

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region
6. Report on FAO Activities in the Asia and Pacific Region (2000-01)

**III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

7. Report on the Preparation for the WFS:*fyI* – Regional Dimensions
8. Report on the Senior Officers Meeting

**IV. OTHER MATTERS**

9. Any other business

**V. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

10. Date and Place of the 27<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
11. Adoption of the Report (including the Report on the Senior Officers Meeting)
12. Closure of the Conference

**APPENDIX B****LIST OF DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS****MINISTERIAL MEETING**

- Chairperson: **MAHESH ACHARYA** (Nepal)
- Vice-Chairpersons: **MATIUR RAHMAN NIZAMI** (Bangladesh)  
**LYONPO KINZANG DORJI** (Bhutan)  
**AJIT SINGH** (India)  
**BUNGARAN SARAGIH** (Indonesia)  
**SIENE SAPHANGTHONG** (Laos)  
**ABOUL RASHEED HUSSAIN** (Maldives)  
**JOHN SILK** (Marshall Islands)  
**LEONARDO Q. MONTEMAYOR** (Philippines)  
**TUISUCALETAUA ALIIMALEMANU SOFAFA AVEAU** (Samoa)  
**HRH PRINCE 'ULUKALA LAVAKA ATA** (Tonga)
- Rapporteur: **ELSA M. BAYANI** (Philippines)

**SENIOR OFFICERS MEETING**

Chairperson: **SURENDRA KUMAR SHRESTHA** (Nepal)

Vice-Chairpersons: **IT NODY** (Cambodia)  
**HEMENDRA KUMAR** (India)  
**FUSI CAGINAVANUA** (Fiji)  
**DATO ABI MUSA ASAARI BIN MOHAMED NOR** (Malaysia)  
**FREDERICK MULLER** (Marshall Islands)  
**HAFEEZ RANDHAWA** (Pakistan)  
**AKAU'OLA** (Tonga)

Rapporteur: **FREDERICK MULLER** (Marshall Islands)

## MEMBER NATIONS IN THE REGION

### AUSTRALIA

#### Delegate:

Crispin **CONROY**  
Ambassador, Australian Embassy, Nepal

### BANGLADESH

#### Delegate:

Matiur Rahman **NIZAMI**  
Minister of Agriculture

#### Alternate:

Golam **SARWAR**  
Charge D' Affaires  
Bangladesh Embassy, Nepal

### BHUTAN

#### Delegate:

Lyonpo Kinzang **DORJI**  
Minister of Agriculture

#### Alternate:

Choni **DENDUP**  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Policy and Planning Division  
Ministry of Agriculture

### CAMBODIA

#### Delegate:

It **NODY**  
Undersecretary of State  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries

#### Alternate:

Sun **HEAN**  
Assistant to the Minister  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

### CHINA

#### Delegate:

**QI JINGFA**  
Vice Minister of Agriculture

#### Alternates:

**WU CONGYONG**  
Ambassador, Chinese Embassy, Nepal

**LI ZHENG DONG**  
Deputy Director-General  
Department of International Cooperation



**TANG SHENYAO**  
Vice Director  
Department of International Cooperation

**KONG LIANG**  
Secretary

**CHANG HAITAO**  
P.A. to Ambassador of Nepal

**YE TINGKE**  
Interpreter

**DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

**Delegate:**

Su Chang **YUN**  
Secretary-General  
National FAO Committee  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Alternate:**

Sun Won **JONG**  
National FAO Committee  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**FIJI**

**Delegates:**

Fusi **CAGINAVANUA**  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement

Mr. Sakiusa **TUBUNA**  
Principal Economic Planning Officer  
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**INDIA**

**Delegate:**

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Minister of Agriculture

**Alternates:**

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Special Secretary,  
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Prabhat **KUMAR**  
Personal Secretary to Agriculture Minister

Jayat **SRIVASTAVA**  
Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperation  
Ministry of Agriculture

Panjab **SINGH**  
Secretary (DARE) and DG (ICAR)

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 Deputy Commissioner  
 Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying  
 Ministry of Agriculture

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V.Venkateswara **RAO**  
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 Embassy of India, Nepal

C.G **RAO**  
 First Secretary  
 Embassy of India, Nepal

Ashok **KUMAR**  
 DCM  
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 Minister of Agriculture

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 Ambassador to Myanmar and Nepal

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Ishaka HAJI **MUSTAMIN**  
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Parliamentary Secretary  
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 Foreign Relations Officer  
 Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

**TONGA****Delegate:**

HRH Prince ‘Ulukalala **LAVAKA ATA**  
 Prime Minister  
 Minister of Agriculture and Forestry  
 Minister of Fisheries

**Alternates:**

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‘**AKAU’OLA**  
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 U S Department of Agriculture

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 Apostolic Nuncio in India  
 Secretariat of State  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Vatican City

Ante **JOZIC**  
 Second Secretary  
 Secretariat of State  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Vatican City

Jyoti **KHANAL**  
 Adviser Kathmandu

Silas **BOGATI**  
 Member  
 Secretariat of State  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Vatican City

**NETHERLANDS**

Arnold **PARZER**  
 Agricultural Counsellor  
 Netherlands Embassy  
 India

Subarna **RAI**  
 Project Coordinator  
 NV Nepal

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALISED AGENCIES****International Labour Organization (ILO)**

Zahir **SADEQUE**  
 Chief Technical Adviser  
 ILO Kathmandu Area Office

**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

J. Bill **MUSOKE**  
 UNFPA Representative in Nepal

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

Michel Jacques **DUPOIZAT**  
 Representative, Branch Office, Nepal

**World Food Programme (WFP)**

Douglas **COUTTS**  
Country Director in Nepal

**World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**

Madan **SHRESTHA**  
Deputy- Director General in Nepal

**OBSERVERS FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**(i) Intergovernmental Organizations with formal relations with FAO**

**South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)**

Mahboob **ELAHI**  
Director-General

**(ii) Intergovernmental Organizations with no formal relations with FAO**

**Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)**

Mya **MAUNG**  
Director-General

**South East Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)**

**Panu TAVARUTMANEEGUL**  
Secretary-General and Training Department Chief

**OBSERVERS FROM INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**  
**(INGOs)**

**(i) INGO in Consultative Status with FAO**

**International Water Management Institute (IWMI)**

Dhruba **PANTA**  
Research Coordinator

**ICRISAT**

William **DAR**  
Director-General

Suresh **PANDE**  
Principal Scientist

**C.L.L. GOWDA**  
Project Leader

**International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)**

Brahma Dev **SHARMA**  
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**World Veterans Federation (WVF)**

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Dipta **P. SHAHA**  
Vice President

Hem **B. KARKI**  
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**International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**

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**International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**

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D.B. **BHADRA**  
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**World Association of Animal Production (WAAP)**

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**(iii) INGOs in Liaison Status with FAO**

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**International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)**

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**(iv) INGOs with no formal relations with FAO**

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M. R. **SATYAL**  
Executive Director

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Raghu Nath **SAPKOTA**  
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**APPENDIX C****LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

APRC/02/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
APRC/02/2	Sustainable Mountain Development in Asia and the Pacific
APRC/02/3	Livestock and Fisheries Development for Household Food and Nutrition Security and Poverty Alleviation in Asia and the Pacific
APRC/02/4	Empowering the Rural Poor in Asia and the Pacific
APRC/02/5	Report on FAO Activities in the Asia and the Pacific Region (2000-01)
APRC/02/6	Preparation for the WFS: <i>fy</i> l – Regional Dimensions
APRC/02/6/Sup.1	Note on A Global Coalition Against Hunger

**INF SERIES**

APRC/02/INF/1	Information Note
APRC/02/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
APRC/02/INF/3	Provisional List of Documents
APRC/02/INF/4	Director-General's Statement
APRC/02/INF/5	Agricultural Research for Development: FAO-CGIAR Linkage
APRC/02/INF/6	Information on World Agricultural Information Center (WAICENT)

**OD SERIES**

APRC/02/OD/1	Order of the Day
APRC/02/OD/2	Order of the Day
APRC/02/OD/3	Order of the Day
APRC/02/OD/4	Order of the Day
APRC/02/OD/5	Order of the Day

**INAUGURAL STATEMENT BY**  
**RT. HON. SHER BAHADUR DEUBA, PRIME MINISTER**

It is a privilege for Nepal to host the 26<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu. We are also happy that this meeting is taking place just before the “World Food Summit: five years later” to be held in Rome next month. It is, therefore, a pleasure for me to inaugurate this august gathering of distinguished personalities from the Asia Pacific region and to extend a warm welcome to you all in Nepal. I hope that all of you will have a pleasant and comfortable stay in Kathmandu.

The Regional Conference has important agenda before it. Raising the level of nutrition, the standard of living of the people and agricultural productivity has become vital now more than ever before. It is more so for this region, as it houses the majority of world’s hungry people. The fundamental objectives of FAO, set out at its inception some fifty years ago, remain as valid today as before. We must appreciate the collective efforts made by the international community and the salutary initiatives of FAO to reduce the number of hungry people in the world. But, we are saddened to learn that about 800 million people still go hungry around the world as we step into the twenty-first century. We should redouble our efforts and strengthen our resolve to ensure that all the people have access to adequate and safer food. At a time when the global war against terrorism continues, the need to wage yet another important war on poverty and hunger is no less urgent. The world community must recommit itself in all seriousness to get rid of hunger from the world. Despite the astounding progress and advancement mankind has been able to make over the centuries, it is shocking that we are not able to feed ourselves. This is all the more shocking when we know that we have sufficient food to feed them all. It pricks our conscience. I am sure that the deliberations here would also delve deeper into these fundamental issues.

Discussions on a host of issues relating to food security, alleviation of rural poverty, empowerment of the rural poor and sustainable mountain development in Asia and the Pacific, will add further significance to this meeting. These are important issues in this region, which has the largest concentration of the poor and hungry people. Upliftment of their quality of life is certain to change the face of the region as a whole. As a mountainous country, we are happy to note that sustainable mountain development will also receive special focus. It is a matter of satisfaction to celebrate the International Year of Mountains. We are starkly aware how mountains provide livelihood, biodiversity, a beautiful landscape and a sturdy culture, yet, their fragility demands utmost care and sustainable use. Our efforts should be directed towards finding a fine balance between them.

We have all committed ourselves to achieving food security for all and to reducing by half the number of undernourished people by 2015. While some countries in the region have made considerable progress, many have not been able to make much headway for various internal and external reasons. This is a worthy goal, which we should pursue together in earnest. There is a need for strengthening capacity within the countries with clear and firm solidarity and support from the international community. Ensuring equitable benefits of globalisation and early fulfilment of the commitment made by the developed countries to provide development assistance to the developing countries will go a long way towards ensuring food security for all and alleviating the burden of deprivation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Dr. Jacques Diouf, for the vision and strong leadership that he has provided in confronting the world’s food insecurity problems. I recall with pleasure that Nepal was among the first three countries in the region to be included in the Special Programme for food security. The leading efforts of FAO to organize a global coalition against

hunger and to mobilise the political will and resources in support of the World Food Summit goals deserve our sincere appreciation.

Secure supplies and access to safe and nutritious food by all is a national priority for Nepal. Food is basic to survival and the right to food is indeed a fundamental human right. His Majesty's Government is committed to the objectives of the World Food Summit and its Plan of Action. Food security also signifies a better livelihood for rural people and sustainable management of natural resources. Secure food also means alleviation of poverty and hunger. Enhancement of agricultural productivity and its proper distribution are crucial in our fight against hunger.

There is no doubt that economic injustice and other forms of deprivations also have their origin in poverty. And hunger is the extreme manifestation of poverty. I believe that the eradication of hunger is essential to attaining food security as well as enlarging the opportunities and choices in life for the poor people. It is with this conviction that, at the 11<sup>th</sup> Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in Kathmandu, the Member States expressed their firm resolve to combat the problem of poverty with a new sense of urgency. They have also given high priority to the development of the agriculture sector and early attainment of food security for the people in South Asia along the lines of the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Goals. As the current Chair of SAARC, Nepal is committed to seeing that these goals are translated into reality.

With these few words, I declare this conference open and wish a lively and productive deliberations on all the important issues in the next two days.

Thank you.

**APPENDIX E****STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

It is a privilege and a great honour for me to address you at this Twenty-Sixth FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu. Here in this 2000-year old “City of Temples”, the people’s hospitality is as warm as the mountains in the background are high. We are literally and figuratively speaking, “on top of the World” to reflect on the important issues of food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development. Our meeting, here in the Himalayas, is also highly symbolic in view of the fact that the United Nations has designated 2002 as the “Year of the Mountain”.

I wish to express my thanks to His Majesty’s Government of Nepal for having invited us to hold the Conference here. I am especially grateful to His Excellency Sher Bahadur Deuba, Prime Minister of Nepal. His presence at today’s inaugural ceremony testifies to the high priority His Majesty’s Government is giving to poverty alleviation and food and nutrition security.

*(State of food and agriculture in the world)*

This Regional Conference is taking place in a global economic, social and political context that is undergoing rapid change.

The Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Doha last November, has established the framework for more equitable terms of international trade of agricultural products. During the next years, the globalisation and liberalisation of trade for agricultural products, the movement of capital, and the transfer of technology should take place in such a way that both the developed and the developing countries will be able to enhance the living conditions of their people. For agriculture in particular, it is essential that the new negotiations under the WTO provide the developing countries with greater opportunities to participate in fairer international trade. FAO will continue to make available to its Member Nations the analyses and information needed to reinforce the technical skills of negotiators in agricultural trade.

The last two years have seen a relatively modest performance of the agricultural sector, the economic mainstay of the poorer regions that employs more than 70 percent of the economically active population in the least developed countries. The annual rate of growth of world agricultural production fell to 1.2 percent in 2000 and to 0.6 percent in 2001, the lowest level since 1993 and a sharp drop from the 2.6 percent of 1999.

World cereal production fell in 2001 to 1,850 million tonnes, 1.2 percent down from the previous year. A number of factors have contributed to this reduction: the natural disasters and low prices of recent years, and government policies to reduce surplus supply.

The projections are that world utilisation of cereals in 2001/02 should exceed output for the second consecutive year, amounting to 1,935 million tonnes, up 1.7 percent from the previous crop year.

Importantly, however, Australia, the European Union and North America have sizeable food surpluses for export (with a total value of US\$ 36,000 million) and are probably in a position to significantly increase their food production. On the other hand, food production in the low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs) is not enough to satisfy the needs of their populations, and these countries have neither the means nor the funds to offset the shortfall through imports.

Meanwhile, agricultural prices have continued to fall. Cereals have posted an accumulated price reduction of 43 percent. Prices of fats and oils have declined by 35 percent.

The world still has some 815 million undernourished people, including 777 million in the developing countries, 27 million in the countries in transition and 11 million in the industrialised countries. The improvement recorded in some countries and parts of the developing world, notably in East Asia, is thus neutralised by the worsening situation in other regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa, Central America and the Caribbean.

The gap between output and needs in the food deficit regions will continue to widen unless there is an increase in rural investment to generate higher employment, income, productivity and production. Until there is an abatement in hunger and malnutrition, it will be difficult, indeed impossible, to achieve appreciable and sustainable results in other vital domains of the fight against poverty, such as health and education.

#### *(Emergencies)*

Food shortages caused by natural disasters have continued to affect many countries. As of late last year, there were 33 countries and 62 million people facing food emergencies. However, data indicate that their relative frequency has changed over the last thirty years. Whilst in the 1970s and 1980s food emergencies were mainly the result of natural factors, in more recent years they have been originating from man-made disasters.

The role of FAO in such a context is more important than ever, primarily in assessing the food and agricultural situation, determining food aid needs and informing the international community, thanks to the Global Information and Early Warning System, which is working in particular with the World Food Programme.

#### *(Other crises)*

The long-term viability of intensive agriculture in the developed countries raises concerns and poses problems. The epidemics of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and foot-and-mouth disease, salmonella, and mutant drug-resistant *E. coli* infection have changed consumer perception of the consequences of unbridled efforts to intensify and maximise yields, and to cut costs.

Elsewhere, the genetic modification of food crops and animals has sparked off fierce controversy. While GMOs are not necessary today to achieve the objectives of the 1996 World Food Summit, they offer great potential for feeding a growing world population. Their development and application need to be monitored scientifically and in an international framework. This will make it possible to benefit from the positive aspects, while avoiding any possible detrimental effects on human health and the environment.

#### *(State of food and agriculture in the Region)*

In contrast to most of the world, the Region's agricultural sector continued to perform relatively well. In the past decade, its gross agricultural production index grew from 100 to 143: its food production index from 101 to 146. Both these were significantly higher than the rest of the world.

Outstanding accomplishments have been registered in dairy, livestock, vegetables, fruits and aquaculture. Regional output of these products grew at spectacular rates ranging from 4.0 to 13.0 percent per annum during the past decade. The Region has also performed quite well in the raw materials' group, including oil crops and rubber, with production growth rates in excess of 2.5 percent annually. Achievements in the beverage sub-sector have been mixed. Starting from a small base,

coffee production grew at the rate of 6.7 percent per annum in the past decade. Tea expanded moderately; but cocoa output stagnated. Output of cereals, roots and tubers and pulses has been higher than population growth in the past decade.

In forestry, trends have been mixed. Spread of fires lit for land clearance have destroyed vast areas. Progress towards improved forest management through such FAO-supported approaches as participatory action, product certification, reduced impact logging, and management codes of practice, have been steady though slow.

Fisheries plays an important role in the Region. In 1990, 84 percent of the world's full-time fishers lived in Asia. In that year, fishers represented more than 5 percent of the economically active population in agriculture in 38 countries; and in 15 of those, the figure was higher than 10 percent. Additional employment is increasingly being created in the expanding aquaculture sub-sector. The sector's role in nutrition is also significant in the Region, with Asia accounting for two-thirds of the world's total consumption of fishery products of 93.8 million tonnes. Overall, the fisheries sector has been growing by 4 percent per annum over the past decade, dwarfing by far the 1.4 percent growth rate for crop production.

Regional imports of agricultural products rose by an outstanding 5.1 percent annually. Exports increased in tandem by 4.5 percent per year over the past decade.

The proportion of undernourished in the total population fell from 20 to 16 percent - a reduction in the number of undernourished by 10 million per year. This, though, is two million short of the rate required to meet the World Food Summit target.

Five of the world's ten best performing countries in hunger reduction were in this Region. On the downside, the numbers of undernourished people actually increased in eight countries. Undernourishment and malnutrition in the midst of plenty is a highly visible characteristic of countries in Asia and the Pacific.

#### *(Main challenges and priorities for the future)*

Agriculture must return to its rightful position as the engine of growth of low-income food-deficit economies. The forthcoming World Food Summit: five years later, scheduled for June in Rome, and the Summit on Sustainable Development scheduled for August in Johannesburg, will give us the opportunity to convince stakeholders that agriculture, forestry and fisheries are, and will continue to be prime movers of least developed economies.

It is therefore crucial that we increase the flow of capital into the sector for water control and soil management, marketing infrastructure and services as well as agricultural research investments in farming. This will involve: reversing the declining inflow of foreign grants and concessional loans; raising foreign direct investment; increasing government allocations for public goods; and channelling more private domestic savings for agricultural investments. The challenge is in improving the cost-effectiveness of aid and raising returns to investments in farming. The International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in March has indicated some directions to take.

A high priority is to implement the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which will ensure equitable sharing and preservation of our genetic heritage.

Another big challenge is to implement comprehensive action plans combining legal and fiscal measures with effective enforcement to conserve forests and protect watersheds.

It is also urgent that developing countries increase their capacity for early warning, prevention and management of disasters, in view of their incidence and impact.



Globalisation and increasing trade liberalisation are bringing forth opportunities and threats; but so far there is no level playing field, particularly in agriculture. Issues of comparative and competitive disadvantage are posing threats to the resource-poor farmers and labourers at a time when OECD countries provide huge support (estimated at US\$ 311 billion in 2001) for their agriculture. The challenge is therefore to translate the Doha Ministerial Conference Statement advocating fair and equitable trade regimes, into action. We must ensure that any new trade agreements are pro-poor.

Finally, all income and food security improvements must eventually lead to eradication of protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. It will be necessary to overcome social, cultural and income constraints, in particular by implementing community-based action plans that would ensure improved nutrition.

*(Agenda Items)*

This Twenty-Sixth Regional Conference will examine the key issues relating to the fight against food insecurity. One of its major tasks will be to prepare for the World Food Summit: five years later, which will be held in Rome from 10 to 13 June this year to accelerate implementation of the decisions taken in 1996, and make it possible to reduce by half the number of people suffering from hunger by the year 2015. This important meeting, which was postponed because of tragic international circumstances, should help revitalise the fight against hunger. Progress made towards the objective set in 1996 of halving the number of undernourished people in the world by 2015 has been inadequate. At the present rate, this would only be achievable towards 2050. The Summit this June will be called upon to identify and adopt concrete measures to correct this delay. It is imperative to reinforce the political will at the highest level and to mobilise the necessary financial resources. This means forging strategic alliances and devising appropriate mechanisms and incentives for marshalling public and private funding, along two main lines of action:

- Strengthening political will through alliances for food security and rural development that should involve all sectors of society: the governments, the private sector and civil society organizations.
- Mobilising private and public funds for agriculture and rural development to reverse the negative trend of bilateral overseas development assistance which fell by 43 percent in real terms between 1990 and 1999, and the share of the portfolio of World Bank and regional financial institutions which fell by 40 percent during the same period.

In this context, the personal participation of the Heads of State and Government of the Asia and Pacific Region at the World Food Summit is essential for its success. I therefore look forward to the pleasure of welcoming them in Rome in June. Besides the statements at plenary sessions, the Heads of State and Government will be able to exchange views at round tables and participate, if they so wish, in daily press conferences. Separate meetings of parliamentarians, private sector NGOs and Civil Society will give other stakeholders the opportunity to provide their input to the debate.

Another major item on your agenda is Sustainable Mountain Development in Asia and the Pacific. The mountain ecosystem is the source of most of the world's fresh water and is rich in biodiversity and other resources; but it is very fragile. In many parts of the world, the mountain is being degraded by over-exploitation of its forest, water and wildlife resources. Mountain peoples, among the poorest and most food insecure, are the first to pay the price of this unfortunate trend. Recognising the problems, the United Nations has designated 2002 as the International Year of the Mountain (IYM). The aim is to protect mountain ecosystems and to improve the livelihoods of mountain people. FAO was asked to be the lead coordinating agency. The Conference agenda provides an opportunity to exchange ideas, information and experiences in this initiative.

Poverty and food insecurity persist primarily because of inequity in resource distribution and low productivity. Over 70 percent of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas. The need to

empower the rural poor, especially farmers, through devolution of responsibility and resources, is therefore urgent. In this Conference, empowerment of the rural poor is a major topic for discussion. I might mention here that this is what FAO's Special Programme on Food Security is trying to achieve in LIFDCs, helping the rural poor to increase productivity, raise incomes and enrich their food sources.

In Asia and the Pacific, livestock and fish are important sources of food and income, means of risk diversification and ways of asset accumulation. In the past decade, fishery and livestock sectors have been increasing by 3.3 and 4.0 percent per annum, respectively, compared with 1.4 percent per annum for crop production. Their growth rates in Asia as a whole, outpace those of other regions of the world. The risks associated with growth in production, such as resource degradation, must be mitigated and the potentials tapped to benefit the rural poor. How aquaculture and livestock can contribute more to poverty alleviation and improved nutrition is also a subject for consideration during this Conference.

*(Other issues)*

Let me mention two other important issues. On the occasion of World Food Day, last October, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Mr Johannes Rau, called for an International Alliance against hunger and poverty. This concept was subsequently widely supported at the FAO Conference in November 2001. Such an Alliance, the support for which was also expressed at the FAO Regional Conferences for Africa, the Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean, could be the tangible expression of reinforced political will and an important step towards removing the despair and anger that are so favourable to extremism.

Also, the Organization last year set up a Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety. It will play a catalytic role in increasing investment in agriculture and rural development, through:

- Pilot projects of food production and income generation in poor rural communities.
- Programmes for eradicating transboundary pests and diseases of plants and animals.
- Transfer of technology, in particular through South-South Cooperation.
- Strengthening of capacities to prepare feasibility studies of bankable projects.

The success to date, with 20 percent of the initial sum of US\$ 500 million already secured, would be even greater if further pledges could be made before the Summit.

Both developed and developing countries are expected to participate, in accordance, naturally, with their means and political commitments to ensure that this fund is truly universal.

This is the first FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific to be held at the dawn of this Century. I am confident that you will contribute to the efforts of preparing agriculture, at national and regional levels, for the challenges of the Twenty-First Century. I trust you will spare no effort in giving due consideration to these vital issues and propose the most required actions for accelerating the progress of agricultural development and ensuring food security for all men and women of this Region.

I eagerly await the results of your deliberations and I wish you a very successful meeting.

Thank you all for your kind attention.

**APPENDIX F**

**ASIAN NGOs and CSOs STATEMENT**

We thank you for the opportunity to address this conference of the FAO. We also welcome the address of the Director General of FAO and some of the countries who have emphasised the need to have NGOs and Civil Society organizations in Rome in order to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input into the debates on this crucial issue of hunger and malnutrition.

The Chairperson and all others present here might be aware that the NGOs and CSOs had a consultation as part of the preparations for the World Food Summit: *five years later* with the support of the FAO on the 11-12 May 2002 at Kathmandu, Nepal. The 120 participants from 13 countries<sup>9</sup> in Asia represented a wide diversity of NGOs, CSOs, peasant movements, women's organizations, fisherfolks, landless labourers and plantation workers. Being observers we have closely followed your discussions and suggestions and would like to add our perspectives and suggestions to these urgent issues facing us today.

We would also like to take this opportunity to share with you the outcome of our deliberations and lively debates during the participation of the Consultation. We held our deliberations keeping in mind the UN Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 15 February 2002 on the Right to Food. We would like to reiterate our support towards the Resolution on the Right to Food together with the various countries in Asia and the Pacific who have time and again committed to all citizens on their Right to Food and Life.

Given this scenario, we unanimously call for a Code of Conduct on the Right to Food and Resources taking into consideration the need for genuine agrarian and fisheries reform among other rights to be adopted by the FAO and all governments.

We appreciate the Director-General for bringing to the fore the threats to resource-poor farmers and labourers in Asia and the Pacific of the globalisation process particularly owing to the huge support provide by the OECD countries for the agriculture. Similarly, we are also very concerned about the impact of the globalisation process and particularly the dumping of subsidised food and agricultural products in Asia which is adversely affecting the hundreds of thousands of peasants, women fisherfolk and indigenous people's communities who even as we speak are being displaced and threatened on the issue of life and food.

Only a handful of Transnational Corporations and big businesses have benefited from these policies and programmes. The NGOs, CSOs and people's movements believe that food is not only a commodity of trade but essential for sustenance, crucial to sustainable livelihood and is an important expression of our culture. Food and agricultural production therefore cannot be left to the whims and fancies of a handful of exploitatively profit oriented corporations, but should instead be decided by the very people who are producers of our food.

Therefore, in order to ensure that our rights are protected and dignity restored and respected, we need to recognise food sovereignty as the basis and principle for food production and consumption and in implementation of food and agricultural policies. Food sovereignty has to be realised at all levels with global recognition and commitment by governments through the adoption of an International Convention on Food Sovereignty.

The crucial promise of the 1996 World Food Summit to halve poverty and hunger by the year 2015 has been declared impossible to achieve by the same institutions that adopted it. The programmes and practices aimed at reducing hunger and malnutrition have failed miserably, needless to say owing to the lack of political will.

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<sup>9</sup> Countries represented including Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Korea, Indonesia, India, Japan, Nepal, Malaysia, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand

Our concerns are of those whose lives are threatened by the loss of livelihood, land, water, forests and other resources, who have little or no access to food resulting in hunger, starvation and famine, unemployment and vulnerability to exploitation and oppression.

Corporate agriculture that continues to promote hazardous technologies including pesticides and Genetically-Modified Organisms (GMOs) threaten health, food safety and the environment. The dominance of corporate control is further entrenched by patents on lifeforms. In short, we see the loss and intensive erosion of rights and dignity of people in Asia.

The struggle for right to food, food security and sovereignty is intrinsically linked with the struggle for political empowerment and participatory democracy.

This struggle must give special focus and emphasis to women's empowerment. The invisibility of women in agriculture, non-recognition of women in food production and their exclusion and discrimination in decision making, has led to the erosion of their rights and their participation in policies and programmes.

Food security and sovereignty is an integral and fundamental part of social justice and genuine national development. Priority must be given to policies and programmes that protect and support agriculture as a sustainable livelihood with agro-ecologically based food production systems. These systems should lead to elimination of agro-chemicals and a moratorium on GMOs.

Representatives of NGOs, CSOs and people's movement present at the Consultation expressed their deep concern regarding GMOs, because even in the absence of independent and extensive health and environmental safety information, the companies benefiting from this technology have produced and commercialised GMOs. Environmental contamination, increase in the use of certain herbicides and consumer boycotts have been reported in those countries where GMOs have been commercialised. Thus, it is clearly evident that GMOs is and will be a major area of concern for our health, environment, culture and biodiversity.

Finally, we would like to urge the governments present here together with FAO to join us in the struggle to protect our rights, crucial for the realisation of our aspirations for food sovereignty and security, which can only be achieved through commitment and coordinated efforts in Asia.