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**REPORT OF THE
NINETEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA**

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16 - 20 April 1996



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Accra, 1996

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS	iii - iv
	<u>Paragraphs</u>
I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS	
Organization of the Conference	1 - 3
Inaugural Ceremony	4 - 10
Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Appointment of Rapporteurs	11 - 12
Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable	13
II. STATEMENTS	
Statement by the Director-General of FAO	14
Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council	15 - 16
Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region	17
Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-95	18
III. DISCUSSION ITEMS	
World Food Summit and Report of the Technical Committee	19 - 21
IV. OTHER MATTERS	
Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO	22
Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conference Reports	23
V. CONCLUDING ITEMS	
Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	24 - 25
Any other business	26
Date and Place of the Twentieth FAO Regional Adoption of the Report of the Conference	27
(including the Technical Committee Report)	28 - 29
Closure of the Conference	30 - 37

APPENDICES

- A. Agenda of the Technical Committee Meeting
- B. List of Participants
- C. List of Documents
- D. Contribution of the 19th FAO Regional Conference for Africa to the Draft World Food Summit Documents
- E. Technical Committee Report
- F. Opening Address by the President of Burkina Faso, H. E. Mr Blaise Compaore
- G. Statement by the Director-General of FAO
- H. Statement by Mr. Adama Ouedraogo, "Grand Passage", a peasant farmer from the Yatenga District of Burkina Faso.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region

For the Attention of Governments

The Conference:

1. recommended that the related necessary education programmes and policies be implemented by countries (programmes and policies that are related to increased women's participation in policy and decision making); (para. 17f)
2. recommended that neighbouring countries and the international communities cooperate in finding common solutions (solutions to the varied conditions that led to internal upheavals, internal and external migration which had adverse implications for food security) (para. 17h).

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

3. urged FAO to assist countries with their research and technology transfer/exchange in these areas, for example, in the use of draught power for irrigation (land preparation and water lifting); (para. 17g)

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-95 (ARC/96/2)

4. recommended that the Programme (Special Programme on Food Production in support of Food Security in LIFDCs) be expanded to cover more countries in the region; (para. 18a)

World Food Summit and Report of the Technical Committee

For the Attention of FAO

5. recommended that the document be revised to include the points listed in paragraph 20. (para. 20j)

**Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO
(ARC/96/8)**

For the attention of FAO

6. called for FAO's financial support to facilitate participation as required in such meetings. (para. 22e)

Any Other Business

For the attention of Governments

7. appealed to FAO member states to ratify the International Convention on Desertification so as to ensure the release of necessary funding for the programme. (para. 26b)

Date and Place of the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

For the Attention of FAO

The Conference:

3. noted the offer of Ethiopia to host the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference for Africa which would be conveyed to the Director-General of the FAO, who would decide on the date and place of the Conference in consultation with Member Governments (para. 27).

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held in the Conference Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 16 to 20 April 1996.
2. The Conference was attended by 148 delegates from 44 Member Nations of the Region, 29 of which were represented at ministerial level; 11 observers from Member Nations outside the Region, two observers from the Holy See, 15 representatives of the United Nations Specialized Agencies, 67 observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. A list of participants is given as Appendix B. The list of the documents is given in Appendix C.
3. The Independent Chairman of the FAO Council, Mr J.R. Lopez-Portillo also attended the Conference.

Inaugural Ceremony

4. The inaugural ceremony was held in the same venue and the Conference was formally opened by the President of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr Blaise Compaore. Opening statements were also made by the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, by the OAU Representative, Dr I.M. Nur, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the OAU, and by Mr. Adama Ouedraogo, "Grand Passage", a peasant farmer from the Yatenga District of Burkina Faso.
5. In his opening address, the President affirmed the relevance of organizing the 19th Regional Conference in Burkina Faso and reiterated the commitment of the Conference to provide solutions to the problems of hunger and poverty as well as to the struggle against under-development in the region.
6. He paid tribute to the Director-General of FAO for his efforts in championing the concerns of Africa at a time of difficult circumstances, particularly when multilateral cooperation was on the decline and commended him for his initiative to convene the World Food Summit. He expressed the hope that this Nineteenth Regional Conference would establish an enabling environment to highlight African dimensions of the problems of food in general, including the concerns of farmers, women and children. He referred to the experiences of Burkina Faso in solving food security problems through water control measures, prevention of youth migration and women's contribution to increased food production. He also thanked FAO for the confidence shown by inviting him to join the International Board of Patrons of the World Food Summit. The full text of the statement of His Excellency the President is contained in Appendix F.
7. The FAO Director-General, in his opening statement, expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of Burkina Faso and reiterated his concern regarding the agricultural situation in Africa. He enumerated the enormous difficulties confronting the continent and said that it was the reason why FAO decided to launch a large-scale operation to engender a solemn commitment at the highest level to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and to undertake concerted action at global, regional and national levels to ensure food security for all. He explained that this was the underlying aspiration behind the organization of the World Food Summit which would be held in Rome from 13 to 17 November this year.

8. He highlighted the attributes of the World Food Summit which would adopt a Policy Statement and a Plan of Action for Universal Food Security and mentioned the related preparatory activities. He said that the Summit would be the first time in the 50 years since FAO was founded that a meeting on this issue was being held at the level of Heads of State and Government. He recounted special programmes already initiated by FAO to offer solutions to the food insecurity situation and referred to brighter prospects in the aftermath of the Summit. The full text of the Director-General's statement is contained in Appendix G.

9. On behalf of the OAU Secretary-General, Mr Nur expressed his gratitude to the FAO Director-General for the invitation to the Organization to participate at this Conference. He further thanked the Government and people of Burkina Faso for their hospitality and for the excellent conference facilities made available. He drew the attention of the Conference to two resolutions adopted by the policy-making bodies of the OAU concerning an African Common Position on food security and agricultural development, and noted that pursuant to these resolutions a draft document had been prepared by the General Secretariat and was submitted to the Conference for consideration. He further mentioned that the proposed Common Position would be submitted to the forthcoming OAU Summit in Yaounde, Cameroun, scheduled for 8 to 10 July 1996 for consideration and endorsement prior to its transmission to the World Food Summit in Rome.

10. In his statement, Mr Adama Ouedraogo expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to address the Conference and commended FAO for inviting a peasant farmer to address such an august assembly. He elucidated the wisdom of utilizing farmers knowledge to solve problems of hunger especially as this was a basic concern to them. He opined that interaction between farmers themselves, from both the developed and developing world as well as between them and other actors, including donors, would be particularly productive especially in areas of water management, livestock rearing, processing and food preservation. He extended a warm welcome to all present. His full statement is contained in Appendix H.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Appointment of Rapporteurs

11. The Conference at its first working session elected Mr Michel Koutaba, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Burkina Faso as its Chairman. In a short acceptance speech, the Minister expressed his gratitude for the confidence placed in him and said that he was certain that with the cooperation of all concerned he would guide the Conference efficiently and successfully.

12. The Conference then elected the rest of the members of the bureau:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Vice-Chairman: | Mr Abraham Iyambo, Deputy Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources of Namibia |
| Second Vice-Chairman: | Mr Dennis Norman, Minister of Agriculture of Zimbabwe |
| Rapporteurs: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mr Mospshatla Mabitle, Minister of Agriculture, Cooperative Marketing and Youth Affairs of Lesotho b. Mr Robert Sagna, Minister of Agriculture of Senegal |

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

13. The Conference then considered and adopted the agenda and timetable (Appendix A).

II. STATEMENTS

Statement by the Director-General of FAO

14. The Director-General made his statement during the inaugural ceremony, which is reproduced in Appendix G.

Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council

15. In his statement to the Conference, Mr J.R. Lopez-Portillo recounted the intense preparatory activities undertaken at all levels for the organization of the World Food Summit and said that scrutiny of related reports and statements had led to the identification of interesting issues, problems and interactions which affected food security. He referred to some of these as problems associated with economic stress, extremely low incomes, inadequate economic development, low grain stocks, and qualitative changes in supply and demand which had pushed up prices. He mentioned that a fundamental interaction that had to be considered was the linkage between population growth, consumption patterns, inadequate technologies and resulting environmental degradation which was the basis for sustainable food production and food security. In its turn, this also affected social and political stability, triggered migration and resulted in security concerns at regional and sub-regional levels.

16. He noted that the World Food Summit would provide the right solutions for such linkage problems which would include self-reliance and more focused international effort. The Summit would give indications for very effective solutions, at all levels on, inter alia, the possibilities for better use of scarce water resources, adaptive use of indigenous plants, appropriate land tenure solutions, appropriate considerations relating to women in development, better terms of trade, focused aid and debt relief which would result in increased resources to countries of the region, and so on. He hoped that this Conference would provide the necessary inputs from the African perspective and wished the participants success in their deliberations.

Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region

17. The Conference heard the presentations of the various delegations under this agenda item as well as those from WFP, OECD, UNICEF, IGAD and the World Institute of Phosphate. The Conference congratulated the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, for his wise leadership and expressed satisfaction for the efficient way he had handled crucial issues affecting FAO and its Member Nations especially those of the African region. They agreed with and thanked him for his initiative to convene the World Food Summit (WFS) and hoped that its outcome would provide much needed solutions to their food and agricultural problems. Most of the countries intimated that they had implemented the necessary mechanisms to prepare for the WFS and that not only would their delegations to the WFS be led by their heads of state but that these heads of state had shown solidarity by accepting to join the International Board of Patrons of the Summit. The Conference reiterated the

usefulness of collaboration and cooperation to achieve common goals and enumerated impediments affecting the development of their countries for which solutions were needed. Some of these impediments were specific to individual states and sub-regions. In particular the Conference:

- a. reaffirmed that food security was particularly crucial to African countries as it was the key to political stability without which economic and social development would be difficult to attain;
- b. recalled the experiences by African countries from the worst food crisis ever which had resulted in escalating famine, hunger, suffering and death and noted the range of causes, both natural and man-made, including recurrent droughts, civil wars, poverty, debt crisis, excessive population growth, environmental degradation and hostile external economic environment;
- c. noted that the adverse environmental, climatic and other developmental constraints notwithstanding, there were significant success stories in which African countries and sub-regions had overcome such handicaps and recommended that these needed to be properly analyzed and brought to the attention of the Summit so that African countries could be considered equal partners rather than subordinates in the development process;
- d. realized the importance of food security strategies, improvement in household access to food, including increased food production, post-harvest handling, liberal credit facilities and improved food habits as approaches for controlling and preventing nutritional disorders including protein, calorie and micro-nutrient deficiencies;
- e. observed that development plans which favoured increased food security had been formulated and other special measures such as feeding in schools, establishment of definite food and nutrition enhancement policies had been instituted in countries and that these were showing positive results;
- f. acknowledged that strategies which involved increased women's participation in policy and decision making contributed to increased food security and recommended that the related necessary education programmes and policies be implemented by countries;
- g. realized that environmental protection policies such as afforestation, land reform and preservation, protection of water resources, adequate transportation, conservation and utilization of natural resources, soil revitalization, etc., contributed to food security and urged FAO to assist countries with their research and technology transfer/exchange in these areas, for example, in the use of draught power for irrigation (land preparation and water lifting); and
- h. noted the varied conditions that led to internal upheavals, internal and external migration which had adverse implications for food security and recommended that neighbouring countries and the international communities cooperate in finding common solutions.

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-95 (ARC/96/2)

18. The Conference acknowledged the kind sentiments expressed by the various delegations, commending the good work of the Organization in the region during the past biennium. It noted that the greatest challenge facing Africa continued to be the steady decline in per caput agricultural production, with most of the countries, particularly the Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs), having very low and inadequate food production. The Conference further noted that food insecurity continued to be exacerbated by the high rate of population growth, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation (particularly desertification) and political instability, and in this regard, appreciated that FAO had redirected its efforts to promote food security in the region through increased food reliance. The Conference thus urged FAO to continue this good work in particular, and the other developmental assistance projects, in general. The Conference in particular:

- a. commended the implementation of the Special Programme on Food Production in support of Food Security in LIFDCs in ten African countries and recommended that the Programme be expanded to cover more countries in the region;
- b. supported the Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases and called for donor support for the implementation of the long-term programme for the control of Locust;
- c. observed that FAO's activities to promote Technical and Economic Cooperation among the member states of the region were being actively pursued and strengthened in cooperation with OAU and other Inter-Governmental Organizations, and was informed of the many and varied Technical Cooperation Networks that had been initiated as a major vehicle for promoting Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) in the region;
- d. acknowledged that FAO, through its Investment Centre had continued to assist members in the preparation of investment projects;
- e. appreciated that cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) had been strengthened and that in this regard, a database on NGOs had been established in RAF and noted the achievements of the FAO/NGO Regional Consultation on the World Food Summit (WFS) which was successfully organized prior to the Conference;
- f. welcomed the recent changes introduced to make the programmes and policies of FAO more effective especially the decentralization of its technical assistance to the region; it noted with appreciation the facilities offered by the Governments of Ghana and Zimbabwe for the expanded Regional Office for Africa and the new Sub-Regional Office for Southern and Eastern Africa, respectively; and
- g. endorsed the focus of the 1996/97 programme which included such innovative programmes as, conservation and rehabilitation of African lands; the expansion of irrigated agriculture; implementation of farmer participatory training in IPM; aquaculture and fisheries management; agro-forestry; improvement of access to economic and social services; supporting existing national and regional capacity building and promotion of technical and economic cooperation among African countries.

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

World Food Summit and Report of the Technical Committee

19. The following documents indicated on the agenda were considered by the Conference:

- ARC/TC/REP/1: Report of the Technical Committee
- ARC/TC/REP/2: Contribution of the 19th FAO Regional Conference for Africa to the Draft World Food Summit Documents
- ARC/96/3: World Food Summit: Policy Statement and Plan of Action
- ARC/96/4: World Food Summit: Food Security Situation and Issues in the Africa Region
- ARC/96/4.Sup.1: Food for All Campaign

Additional documents presented were:

- Draft OAU Common African Position on Food Security and Agricultural Development
- Report of the FAO/NGO Regional Consultation for Africa on the World Food Summit

20. The Conference examined the main document ARC/TC/REP/2 and its appendices which reported on the deliberations of the Technical Committee which had preceded the Conference. The Conference expressed satisfaction with the work done by the Committee in examining the related background documents and thereby providing the necessary additional inputs for enriching the contribution of the Conference to the draft World Food Summit documents. However, the Conference identified areas in the document which needed strengthening in order to improve its contents and focus for presentation as a true reflection of the concerns of the African region. In particular the Conference:

- a. requested and obtained clarifications on procedural difficulties regarding preparation and presentation of a Common African Position by the Conference as an input to the World Food Summit;
- b. recognized that indebtedness and the negative effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes, which were seriously affecting development efforts of African countries to improve food security (notwithstanding the fact that Africa had been left out of the benefits of the Marshall Plan and Green Revolution), were of primary concern to the countries and must be brought to the forefront of the document;
- c. acknowledged that migration and the related problems of refugees, were important factors that contributed to food insecurity (for example, mass migration within and between borders of countries resulting from search for food), and were thus of fundamental concern to the countries. Consequently, they needed to be very strongly emphasized in the document;
- d. recognized the harmful effects of trypanosomiasis and its contribution to food insecurity but was advised that the issue be considered within the ambit of animal

- disease prevention and control in general, since this would highlight more the basic concerns which embraced other livestock and crop diseases and pests;
- e. stressed the valuable contribution of irrigation improvement and expansion, aquaculture and sustainable fisheries and forestry development and management to food security and agreed that these be included in the document;
 - f. stressed the need to give priority to measures aiming at associating food security with improved nutrition at household level, especially for women and children;
 - g. admitted that deterioration in terms of trade was a major cause of impoverishment in countries and should be given prominence in the document as well as the development and management of internal markets and trade;
 - h. considered that environmental issues, such as soil fertility, erosion, deforestation, etc., were of great concern to the countries in their efforts to overcome food insecurity and should be highlighted in the document;
 - i. agreed that human rights and democracy needed to be emphasized because of their importance for food security in the countries of the region and should be inserted appropriately in the report; and
 - j. recommended that the document be revised to include the above points, and made specific proposals on areas where some of them should be inserted.

21. On the basis of its extensive discussion, the Conference amended the report of the Technical Committee and adopted it for transmission to the Committee on World Food Security. This document is contained in Appendix D.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO (ARC/96/8)

22. The Conference commended the Director-General of FAO for his timely initiative in convening meetings of Ministers responsible for fisheries and forestry in March 1995. It provided them the forum to exchange ideas and share national experiences, as well as the opportunity to offer appropriate guidance to FAO in its work programme pertaining to these two sectors. Considering the many significant events which had taken place since the Ministerial Meetings of March 1995 and/or were planned for the immediate future, and recognizing that Ministerial guidance would still be necessary to enable FAO channel its technical assistance appropriately to member countries in future, the Conference:
- a. endorsed the convening of meetings of Ministers by the Director-General in principle in conjunction with sessions of COFI and COFO;
 - b. agreed that the Director-General of FAO be given the flexibility for convening such meetings in future but opined that they should be held only when major issues pertaining to the sectors needed to be addressed;

- c. agreed that the FAO Director-General hold consultations with member countries as appropriate before convening future Ministerial meetings;
- d. advised that meetings of ministers would not be necessary in 1997; and
- e. called for FAO's financial support to facilitate participation as required in such meetings.

Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conference Reports (ARC/96/9)

23. The Conference took note of the recommendations adopted in 1995 by the FAO Council and Conference respectively, requesting the Director-General to implement cost-saving measures on governance of FAO and examined the details of a proposal for shortening Regional Conference reports. The Conference was informed that the Technical Committee meeting which preceded it had endorsed the proposal and the new format of reporting. The Conference therefore:

- a. agreed with the details contained in the proposal for shortening of Conference reports and approved the new format.

V CONCLUDING ITEMS

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

24. The Chairman presented the recommendation of the Technical Committee to the Conference for confirmation of the nomination of a country to represent the region on the CGIAR.

25. The Conference accepted the election of Burkina Faso to succeed Ghana as the region's representative to the CGIAR for the four-year term, commencing 1997.

Any Other Business

26. The Conference recalled two areas on procedures in which FAO guidance was necessary, namely: (i) how to obtain assistance for locust control, (ii) ratification of the convention on desertification. The Conference:

- a. was intimated of FAO's activities in connection with the EMPRES programme under which assistance for locust control was available;
- b. acknowledged that the convention on desertification had been approved by ministers from member states in the region and appealed especially to FAO member states to ratify the convention so as to ensure the release of necessary funding for the programme.

Date and Place of the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference for Africa

27. The delegation of Ethiopia offered to host the Twentieth FAO Regional Conference for Africa. The Conference:

- a. accepted by acclamation, this offer which would be conveyed to the Director-General of FAO, who would decide on the date and place of the Conference in consultation with Member Governments.

Adoption of the Report of the Conference (including the Technical Committee Report)

28. The Conference considered and approved the Technical Committee Report unanimously as given in Appendix E.

29. The Conference then considered and, after some amendments, adopted its report by acclamation.

Closure of the Conference

30. The closing ceremony was performed by the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, His Excellency, Mr. Kadré Désiré Ouédraogo, during which a closing statement was delivered on behalf of the Director-General of FAO by Mr. B. F. Dada, the FAO Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Africa, and a vote of thanks moved by Mr. Abraham Iyambo, Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources of the Republic of Namibia. In his closing statement, Mr. Dada recalled that the major part of the work of the Conference had been to review the various documents submitted by the Secretariat and other organizations in preparation for the World Food Summit. He pointed out that, in this regard, issues of particular relevance to Africa had been adequately addressed with a view to arriving at a common position and expressed his satisfaction that from the deliberations of the Conference, a report had emerged which would be forwarded to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as the Common Position of the Africa Region for the World Food Summit.

31. Mr. Dada highlighted some of the key areas which the Conference had identified for specific action to enrich and sharpen the focus of the Policy Statement and Plan of Action for the World Food Summit and recalled that this resulted from the highly-spirited debates on issues of primary concern to the region. He underlined that this demonstrated the commitment of the participants to the implementation of policies that would ensure the availability of adequate food and access to it by all concerned. The Conference had closely examined the relationship between food security and nutrition and had recommended that it be more explicitly indicated in the report. The important role of women in contributing to household food security also needed to be given more recognition in the report.

32. In conclusion the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative assured the Conference participants of the continued commitment of the FAO and its Regional and Sub-Regional Offices to assist countries of the region in their quest to achieve food security through increased self-reliance. He then expressed the sincere gratitude of FAO and all the distinguished delegates and observers to His Excellency the Prime Minister, Government and people of Burkina Faso for their kind invitation to host the Nineteenth Session of the FAO Regional Conference and for the excellent facilities provided as well as for the warm reception accorded the participants.

33. In moving the vote of thanks, Mr. Abraham Iyambo, Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources of the Republic of Namibia expressed, on behalf of all the delegates, deep appreciation and gratitude to the President of Burkina Faso for his kind words of wisdom at the opening of the Conference and for the warm reception accorded participants during the

period of their stay as well as for the excellent Conference facilities provided to ensure that the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference was successfully organized in Ouagadougou.

34. He thanked the Prime Minister most sincerely for sparing the time to give audience to Heads of Delegations and for his kind words of wisdom and presence at the closing

~~ceremony of the Conference. He also gratefully and thanked Mr. Michel Koutaba~~

Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Burkina Faso, for his patience and understanding in guiding the proceedings of the Conference as its Chairman. Similarly he expressed thanks to the FAO Director-General for his wise leadership and initiative to convene the World Food Summit and to the FAO Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Africa and his staff for all the arrangements and guidance in organizing the Conference.

35. In his closing remarks, the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso, Mr. Ouedraogo, on behalf of the President of Burkina Faso, congratulated all the participants to the Conference for their achievements in bringing the Conference to a successful ending. He remarked that the fact that they had produced such a good report after three days of intense deliberations was a testimony of their determination to solve the seemingly intractable problem of food insecurity in the countries of the region and to their untiring efforts to achieve equity, justice and solidarity. Recalling the wise words of the President of Burkina Faso during the opening ceremony, he said:

"We remain firmly convinced that only the unswerving determination of the Africans to do more and better, relying overwhelmingly on themselves and their own ability to shape their destiny, will release this continent from hunger, malnutrition and under-development".

In this regard the Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the good work being done by African countries to solve the problems of hunger and malnutrition.

36. Finally, he congratulated FAO, in general, and the Director-General, in particular, for the assistance in ensuring the successful outcome of the Conference and for the perseverance, determination and faith in assisting countries of the region to combat the problem of hunger. He thanked all those who had in various ways helped to make the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference successful and wished delegates and others travelling, a safe journey back to their respective countries.

AGENDA**Technical Committee Meeting****16 - 17 April 1996****I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS**

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

II. TECHNICAL ITEMS

4. World Food Summit
5. Irrigation Improvement and Expansion: A Challenge to Food Security in Africa
6. African Agriculture and Natural Resources - Impacts of Recent Economic Reforms and Prospects to 2010
7. Representation of the Region on the CGIAR

III. OTHER MATTERS

8. Progress Report on the Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP)

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

9. Approval of the Report
10. Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting

**Plenary Session
18 - 20 April 1996**

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

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

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council
6. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in the Region
7. Report of FAO Activities in the Region 1994-95

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

8. World Food Summit

IV. OTHER MATTERS

9. Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO
10. Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conference Reports

V. CONCLUDING ITEMS

11. Date and Place of the 20th FAO Regional Conference for Africa
12. Adoption of the Report (including the Technical Conference Report)
13. Closure of the Conference

NINETEENTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16-20 April 1996

DIX-NEUVIEME CONFERENCE REGIONALE POUR L'AFRIQUE
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16-20 Avril 1996

LIST OF DELEGATES
LISTE DES DELEGUES

OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE
BUREAU DE LA CONFERENCE

PLENARY SESSION
SESSION PLENIERE

Chairman: Mr Michel Koutaba, Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources
 Président: of Burkina Faso

Vice-Chairmen: Mr Abraham Iyambo, Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Marine
 Vice-Présidents: Resources of Namibia
 Mr Norman Dennis, Minister of Agriculture of Zimbabwe

Rapporteurs: Mr Mospshatla Mabitle, Minister of Agriculture, Cooperatives,
 Marketing and Youth Affairs of Lesotho
 Mr Robert Sagna, Minister of Agriculture of Senegal

Independent Chairman of the Council: José Ramon López-Portillo
 Président indépendant Conseil:

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
COMITE TECHNIQUE

Chairman: Prof. Alassane Séré, Minister Delegate for Animal Resources of
 Président: Burkina Faso

Vice-Chairmen: Mr T.M. Taukobong, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of
 Vice-Présidents: Agriculture of Botswana
 Mrs Ayélé M. Gninofou, Director of Programme and Planning,
 Ministry of Agriculture of Togo

Rapporteur: Mr Moorosi V. Raditapole, Ambassador and Permanent
 Representative to FAO, Embassy of Lesotho, Rome

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

ARC/96/1	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ARC/96/2	Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1994-95
ARC/96/3	World Food Summit: Policy Statement and Plan of Action
ARC/96/4	World Food Summit: Food Security Situation and Issues in the Africa Region
ARC/96/4-Sup.1	Food for All Campaign
ARC/96/5	Irrigation Improvement and Expansion: A Challenge to Food Security in Africa
ARC/96/6	Representation of the Region on the CGIAR
ARC/96/7	African Agriculture and Natural Resources - Impact of Recent Economic Reforms and Prospects to 2010
ARC/96/8	Future Ministerial Meetings in Conjunction with Sessions of COFI and COFO
ARC/96/9	Proposal for Shortening of Regional Conference Reports

INF SERIES

ARC/96/INF/1	Information Note
ARC/96/INF/2	Provisional Timetable
ARC/96/INF/3	Provisional List of Documents
ARC/96/INF/4	Action Taken on the Main Recommendations of the 18th Regional Conference for Africa
ARC/96/INF/5	Director-General's Statement
ARC/96/INF/6	Progress Report on the Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP)
ARC/96/INF/7	Status of Control of Trypanosomiasis in Africa

CONTRIBUTION OF THE 19TH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA TO
THE DRAFT WORLD FOOD SUMMIT DOCUMENTS

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. 20 April 1996

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

CONTRIBUTION OF THE 19TH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA TO
THE DRAFT WORLD FOOD SUMMIT DOCUMENTS

1. Member countries of the Africa Region reiterated their unanimous support for the World Food Summit and the importance of ensuring a broad-based preparatory process at the national, regional and international levels. A number of ministers reported on their preparations, and drew on the conclusions of their national position papers to contribute to the regional debate.
2. Appreciation was expressed for the quality of the documents submitted in relation to the draft World Food Summit Policy Statement and Plan of Action (ARC/96/3, ARC/96/4 and ARC/96/4 Sup.1) and of the additional contributions provided by participants, which greatly enriched the debate and constituted a clear recognition by governments, other inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations of the importance of the World Food Summit for Africa.
3. The Regional Conference heard a presentation of the draft African Common Position on Food Security and Agricultural Development by the OAU Secretariat. The Regional Conference also heard a presentation of the recommendations of the FAO/NGO Consultation, which had taken place immediately prior to the Regional Conference. The Regional Conference welcomed these documents as valuable contributions to its own discussions and to the preparations for the World Food Summit, and noted that they would be considered, in further stages of the preparatory process.
4. In considering the draft of the Policy Statement and Plan of Action, contained in ARC/96/3, the Regional Conference endorsed the comments prepared by the members of the African Group in Rome (Annex I).
5. Particular stress was placed on the need to ensure the appropriate "political" tone in the Policy Statement, and to reaffirm the fundamental and inalienable right of access to food. It was emphasized that the commitment to ensuring the conditions necessary to the effective realization of this right required recognition of the ethical and moral imperative of meeting basic human needs.
6. With regard specifically to the Plan of Action, the Regional Conference emphasized the importance of building on the results of previous summits and conferences, and the relevance of the conclusions and commitments of the 1992 FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition, particularly with respect to the role of access to food, to health services and education and training in improving nutrition.
7. Considering the food security situation and issues in the Africa Region, the Regional Conference generally agreed with the analysis and conclusions contained in ARC/96/4. It stressed, however, that much more attention needed to be paid to the burden of Africa's external debt, to the deteriorating terms of trade experienced by so many countries of the region, to the major difficulties occasioned by the implementation of structural adjustment programmes, and to the impact of migration and refugee flows within and outside the region. While solutions to these problems also called for international solidarity, the Regional Conference affirmed the need to strengthen inter-country, sub-regional and regional cooperation, and to rely increasingly on the potential of the region's internal market.

8. The Regional Conference stressed that the contribution to the Summit preparatory process should recognize the urgency of action in the seven major areas identified in Part III of ARC/96/4 (Annex II). To sharpen the focus and supplement the text in those seven major areas, the Conference considered that particular priority should be given to the following:

9. Enabling political and economic environment for food security (paras. 52-55)

- ensuring policy frameworks and broad-based conducive to achieving food for all;
- according greater priority to agriculture and rural development in national programmes and budgets and mobilizing the necessary domestic investment, both public and private;
- the imperative need to involve civil society and small-scale producers' organizations in all efforts to improve food security;
- continuing the search for practical and effective solutions to the debt problem such as converting the debt into a fund to support the financing of agricultural development and food security programmes;
- recognizing the impact on African agriculture of market liberalization, globalization of economies and structural adjustment policies, and minimizing their negative effects, with a view to securing remunerative prices for primary agricultural commodities;
- securing the necessary external resources to support reforms;

10. Improving food access for vulnerable groups (paras. 56 to 58)

- the importance of ensuring access by the poorest, notably women and youth, to land and productive resources, and/or income-generating activities ;
- the need for priority attention to targeted measures aimed at ensuring household food security and better nutrition, especially for women and children;

11. Ensuring adequate and timely food aid and emergency assistance (paras. 59-61)

- the desirability of relying as much as possible on triangular food aid operations to stimulate food production regionally, and/or on monetization of food aid;

12. Enhancing domestic food supply capacity (paras. 62-65)

- the overriding importance of mobilizing domestic capacity to increase food production sustainability, and in particular of improving water management and control, and ensuring transfer of appropriate and affordable technology;
- the need to reconcile measures to increase production and productivity with those aimed at protecting and conserving land and water resources;

- promoting research and extension capabilities, development of and greater reliance on indigenous sources of food, paying adequate attention to storage and processing;
 - giving greater attention to aquaculture and fisheries, agro-forestry, livestock development, substitution of drug crops, programmes of integrated pest management (IPM) and integrated plant nutrition systems (IPNS);
 - addressing the problem of major livestock diseases particularly those of a trans-boundary nature, which curtail the development of sustainable mixed farming;
13. Enhancing export earning capacity to meet import needs (paras. 66-68)
- the need to take advantage of the special measures foreseen in the Uruguay Round agreement to assist the least developed and net food-importing developing countries, as well as measures concerning minimum access to the markets of importing countries;
 - strengthening of sub-regional and regional trade in agricultural and other products, and of national systems of food processing and food quality control;
14. Accelerating agricultural and rural development (paras. 69-72)
- according the requisite priority to improvement of land tenure systems;
 - improving infrastructure to open up isolated rural areas;
 - improving access to credit and mobilizing rural savings, including through private associations and rural financial institutions;
 - facilitating access by rural families to income-generating activities to supplement the revenue they earn from agriculture;
15. Enhancing human development and social participation (paras. 73-80)
- the urgency of implementing agreements reached in Rome, Cairo, Vienna, Copenhagen and Beijing to address the related problems of malnutrition, population growth, poverty, unemployment, social disintegration as well as human rights in general and the need to achieve democracy for all and the full and equal participation of women;
 - the special importance of programmes of education and training for both food producers and consumers, as well as of primary education particularly for girls;
16. Finally, the Regional Conference stressed the importance of clearly indicating responsibilities for implementing the plan of action, and time frames to facilitate monitoring of the follow-up. In particular, it endorsed the proposal to set up National Food for All Campaign Committees to achieve food security and ensure at national level the implementation of the Plan of Action (Annex II). It reiterated in this connection the need to fully mobilize the

efforts and resources of all actors, including governments, international organizations and financing institutions, the private sector, the civil society, women and youth, for concerted action to address the problems and realize the potential of Africa to ensure food security for its peoples.

17. In conclusion, the Regional Conference decided to transmit the present report and appendixes to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as the position of the Africa region for the elaboration of the documents to be submitted to the World Food Summit. It stressed that further refinements would be provided through the participation of the region's member countries in the work of the CFS, which was entrusted with the task of synthesizing contributions from all regions, as well as from a broad spectrum of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

18. Pursuant to OAU Resolution CM Res.1643 (LXIII) on the World Food Summit, the Common Position of the African Ministers of Agriculture as reflected in the report of the 19TH FAO Regional Conference will be forwarded by the Director-General of FAO to the Secretary-General of OAU for submission to the Sixty-fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and the Thirty-second Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity.

EXTRACT FROM DOCUMENT ARC/96/4
"WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: FOOD SECURITY SITUATION
AND ISSUES IN THE AFRICA REGION"

and

DOCUMENT ARC/96/4-Sup. 1
"FOOD FOR ALL CAMPAIGN"

presented to the Nineteenth FAO Regional
Conference for Africa

WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

Draft Political Declaration and Plan of Action
FAO Regional Conference for Africa
The contribution of the African Group in Rome

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
Political Declaration	The draft political declaration still contains too much technical descriptions to be suppressed and enriched by concepts showing an active and accurate political willingness	The new version of the Political Declaration is better than the previous one but: - lacks political willingness - the fundamental inalienable human food right should be reaffirmed as well as the commitment of every country including the LDP to ensure conditions for the effective achievement of this right

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
General Comments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the need to target areas suffering much more from hunger and malnutrition: defining causes and set up "an hunger map" in order to better apprehend the phenomenon and to face it. - to bring a solemn support to the special initiative launched by UNO together with the World Bank in favour of Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to continue to support FAO special programmes - the importance of the management of the natural resources, their conservation, for a sustainable development particularly Fishery - to turn into a good account the Agreements of Uruguay Round towards lower income and food deficit Countries. - the liberalization of the international trade (lifting of tariffs and non-tariffs barriers, access to LDC agricultural market products.) - mass participation (particularly women and youth) at every stage of the development including training, health, and the transfer of technology - the importance to commit solemnly to strengthen the international, regional, and sub-regional cooperation and the international solidarity including Bretton Woods Institutions and the Rome-Based Institutions, the leader of which is FAO- identify obstacles to the realization of food security in the LDP particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . poverty, the suppression of which in addition to the humanitarian duty it implies, will give the opportunity of an economic development for all countries. . unfavourable global economic environment . lack of research and transfer of technologies and poor level of national and international agricultural investments

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
Political Declaration		
		<p>Avoiding the temptation to re-write the draft declaration, it would be however important to make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to adopt wise approaches when defining the concept of food security not to fall into insurmountable difficulties - to reconsider the experiences acquired from previous Summits and Conferences particularly those of New York (on Child), Copenhagen (Social), Rio (Environment and Development), Beijing (Women), Cairo (Population).

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to deal with the Convention on decertification particularly the ratification of its funds in view of its implementation - settlement of the overall LPD debt problem - Uruguay round: compensatory measures; assistance to low income and food deficit countries; transfer of technology - to declare the forthcoming decade, "International Decade" with "Food and Health for all" - mobilization of appropriate financial resources in the scope of the existing mechanisms including the reconversion of a portion of the LDC external debt for the effective implementation of the commitments and the actions scheduled to take place, their follow-up and their execution - to deal with the food commodities processing and storage in the LDC, and the transfer of technologies - to improve the production, yield, and effective sharing out of all agricultural, forest and fishery products - the preliminary condition for a sustainable and harmonious development is and remains peace, and political stability to reaffirm the support for FAO principles and objectives, the political support to the Organization and other Institutions such as IFAD and WFP - the Commitment of all the Organizations in the United Nations System, Bretton Woods Institutions and other international, sub-regional, regional, national, financial organizations, private sector, civilian society, NGOs and the European Union to bring the necessary support for the achievement of global food security. 	

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
para. 2	- keep only the last sentence " we confirm... deserving"	
para. 3	- change the first sentence as follows: nowadays 20 % of the World Population are affected by hunger and the LDC are much more affected than all	
para. 4	- after the second sentence, replace full stop by a coma and add " what is technically possible " - replace the last sentence by phrases pull out from UNCED.	
para. 6	- change the last sentence which should read as follows: "We give a strong priority to the development of rural areas and we recognize the various functions in agriculture". - in the last sentence after "rural zones" add " with the growth of food production", instead of "migration" put " rural exodus"	
para. 7	- cancel in the second sentence, permanent after dialogue	
para. 8	- in the last line, put "rural development and diversified food production "	
para. 9	- after "policy", add "programme"; on the last line but one after "system" insert "of production"	

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
para.10	- on the third line, the appropriate adjective coming after policies lines up English on French ; and cancel " and our constmptions"	

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
para. 12	<p>- If we admit that the Summit is not a conference of contributions announcement, it is however essential that the signatories of the declaration commit themselves to mobilize necessary resources for the implementation of acquired actions for the realization of food security, overcome hunger and poverty; introduce a paragraph translating this and recalling for the commitments undertaken in this view in Rio, Quebec, Copenhagen, Cairo and Beijing</p> <p>- in the second line, replace "multinational" with "international"</p> <p>i) first line, after "based", put "especially" (based especially...)</p> <p>ii) should be read as follows: "we cooperate and strengthen our assistance and solidarity in the achievement of the objectives contained in this Declaration, as well as the implementation and the follow-up of the Plan of Action of World Food Summit"</p>	

References	Comments and proposals for amendments	SYNTHESES
<p>Plan of Action and General Comments</p>	<p>More concrete proposals will come up with the African Regional Conference particularly for the identification and the quantification of the objectives and actions.</p>	<p>The Plan should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more concrete; - more accurate in defining and quantifying objectives and in determining the deadlines of realizations; - be subject to periodical evaluation concerning the concrete action to be decided which should be operational; - clarify the responsibility in the implementation of decided actions underlying especially, beside the role of the government and civilian society, the role of the International Institutions particularly FAO, IFAD, WFP, WHO, UNICEF, WTO, UNCED - deal with the issue on financing the action, and objectives of the Summit; - reconsider big issues on the suppression of poverty, external debt, drought and desertification (implementation of the related United Nations Convention, the agreement of the Uruguay Round, therefore the growth, diversification, storage, and processing of the agricultural products; - strengthen the international cooperation

III. ACTIONS TO ADDRESS REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

Draft contribution of the Africa Regional Conference to the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit

47. Africa, which accounts for more than half of the total number of Low-Income Food-Deficit countries (LIFDCs) is the one region where the food security situation has deteriorated, rather than improved, over the past decades. Apart from the growing numbers of chronically food insecure people, which would likely account for about one-third of the population of the region by 2010, the number of refugees and displaced persons, as a result of both man-made and natural factors, is growing. Immediate emergency needs are absorbing a considerable amount of national and international resources at the expense of longer-term development.

48. In order to reduce the extent of undernutrition in Africa much below what is currently forecast for the year 2010, a major effort must be made to increase overall food supplies as well as access to food through increased incomes and food assistance. To this effect strong action is needed to improve the general macroeconomic, institutional and infrastructural environment, with an emphasis on food and agricultural development, so as to raise levels of food production significantly above rates of population growth. The achievement of such higher levels of production growth will require significant gains in labour and land productivity, given the physical and environmental constraints to area expansion and the high rates of population growth and urbanization. Efforts will also be needed to enhance fisheries resource management and production, given the significant contribution of fish to food security in the region. At the same time, urgent measures will be needed to build the infrastructure and marketing systems that would enable a regular flow of affordable food to urban and rural populations.

49. To achieve food security for the continent, however, increases in food production must necessarily be complemented by efforts to ensure adequate levels of food supply. This implies, on the one hand, determined efforts to enhance the export-earning capacity of the countries of the region to allow for the financing of commercial food imports and, on the other, a readiness by the international community to provide sufficient levels of food aid. Access to food must be improved through overall economic development with a particular emphasis on rural development, but food access to poor and vulnerable groups must also be secured through special programmes.

50. It is estimated that, for a growth in primary agricultural production of 2.9 percent annually during the period to the year 2010, as currently forecast by FAO, an investment of approximately US\$10 billion (1993 dollars) annually will be required. With this rate of growth only seven countries would have over 2,700 calories per capita by 2010, all of which have already reached this target or nearly so. In order to raise average calorie intakes to 2,700 in the remaining 35 countries, and taking account of an accompanying increase in imports, their production growth rate would have to accelerate from 3.0 percent, as currently forecast, to 4.5 per cent yearly (and from 2.9 to 4-5 percent for the region as a whole). This would imply annual investment requirements doubling, from US\$10 to US\$20 billion, in the region. While such growth rates would engender immense difficulties, they give a measure of the efforts that would be needed to achieve a significant betterment of food security in Africa.

51. Within the framework of the global Plan of Action of the World Food Summit, the priority region-specific actions to achieve accelerated progress towards food security in Africa are as follows:

Enabling political and economic environment for food security

Basis for action

52. The region has been plagued by political tensions, wars, civil unrest and refugee problems that have been major factors of food insecurity. Achieving food security objectives will crucially depend on the ability of African leaders to bring an end to or at least significantly reduce, such problems as well as ensuring stable and participatory political institutions. In situations of violent conflict, safe passage and the refusal to use food as a political weapon are conditions of the right to food for the threatened populations.

53. Market-oriented systems of macroeconomic management have been widely adopted throughout the region, largely within the context of stabilization and structural adjustment programmes introduced with the assistance of international lending institutions. However, the degree of progress in implementing reforms has been uneven. Many countries have encountered major difficulties in reducing state intervention and liberalizing markets, and the initial process of reform has had negative repercussions particularly on poor food producers and consumers, without, in many cases, adequate safety nets. Furthermore, the record of macroeconomic achievements has been often disappointing.

Objectives

54. a) Ensure peace, stability and social participation to achieve food security in the region;
- b) Improve the economic environment for food security through macro-economic stability and increased reliance on markets and private agents, as preconditions for efficient resource reallocation in favour of agriculture and accelerated and self-sustaining growth and rural development;
- c) Pursue and intensify human-centered economic and sectoral reform that seeks stabilization and growth along with social and environmental objectives.

Actions to be taken

55. a) Ensure the participation of all segments of society in civil life through participatory and stable political institutions;
- b) Mobilize national, regional and international initiatives to prevent conflicts and to resolve emergency crises;
- c) Accompany market-oriented economic reforms with social safety nets to ensure access to food and, more generally, protect the most negatively affected groups;
- d) Identify and eliminate policies that discriminate against the agricultural and food sector;
- e) Further reduce distortive public intervention in marketing and prices;
- f) Provide market incentives for private sector investment and productive activities in agriculture;
- g) Assign public resources in appropriate proportion to ensure the needed priority for adequate infrastructure and support services to agricultural and rural development;
- h) Secure external resources for supporting reforms.

Improving food access to poor and vulnerable groups

Basis for action

56. There is a major scope for interventions assuring access to food for poor and vulnerable groups both in urban and rural areas. Many national food systems in Africa do not at present ensure adequate protection for the poorest and most vulnerable groups particularly in the countryside, but tend to favour the rich and the urban population. In addition, policies of generalized, non-targeted implicit or explicit food subsidies in favour of urban areas tend to be expensive. Indeed, experience has shown that the effectiveness of generalized food subsidies in ensuring an adequate diet for those in need is questionable (everybody benefits from such subsidies, they are distributionally regressive, they become expensive to maintain and, depending on the level of the subsidy, they may be a distorting factor in the economy). Cost-effective income transfer schemes are needed so that the limited resources that are made available reach those in need.

Objectives

57. Ensure access to adequate food also for the poorest and most vulnerable groups, both in rural and urban areas at a sustainable cost to society.

Actions to be taken

58. a) Identify vulnerable and food insecure groups in both rural and urban areas (such as smallholder farmers, nomadic pastoralists, households short of labour, households headed by women, the elderly and the disabled) and target direct food security intervention at these groups;
- b) Implement measures to increase production and the self-reliance of vulnerable groups;
- c) Implement employment and food-for-work schemes using the experience of similar schemes elsewhere within and outside the region.

Ensuring adequate and timely food aid and emergency assistance

Basis for action

59. Even with the favourable scenarios for economic and agricultural development and expansion of domestic food production, export earnings and incomes, in the short to medium term food aid will remain indispensable for food security on the African continent, both to counter emergency situations and the effect of seasonality on food supply and to ensure adequate supplies overall in domestic markets. In spite of this, in recent years, food aid deliveries by developed countries have been contracting.

60. a) Maintain adequate quantitative levels of food aid interventions to counter emergency situations and the effects of seasonality and to ensure sufficient levels of food supply to meet the needs of poor and vulnerable groups;
- b) Minimize the negative impact of food aid intervention on incentives to domestic producers.

Actions to be taken

61. a) Guarantee and provide sufficient quantities of food aid to meet the needs of importing countries both for emergency assistance and to ensure adequate levels of supply on domestic markets, particularly in favour of vulnerable groups;
- b) Promote triangular food aid operation, as appropriate, thereby contributing towards stimulating food production nationally and on the continent;
- c) Improve the design of food aid programmes in support of food security objectives;
- d) Devise national and international programmes for emergency preparedness and relief-to-development strategies at the national, regional and international levels;
- e) Strengthen early warning systems at the national and regional levels.

Enhancing domestic food supply capacity*Basis for action*

62. Of all developing regions, Africa suffers from food insecurity most extensively and 42 countries in the region belong to the LIFDCs' group. One root cause for this is the low productivity in food and agricultural production, but at the same time most countries have the physical potential for raising their food production significantly. Given the difficulty of reliably financing external sources of food, an urgent need exists to mobilize the domestic capacity to increase food supply quickly, especially in areas with high potential in terms of productivity, sustainable resources and marketing, to meet the requirements of rising populations in urban and food deficit areas.

Objectives

63. a) To increase rapidly food supplies by at least 90 percent by the year 2010 for the region as a whole, with priority given to staple foods, particularly from areas that have good potential with favourable agro-ecological conditions and with favourable infrastructure for distribution and marketing;
- b) To launch, by the year 2000 in all 42 LIFDCs of the region, strategically-conceived programmes for the above purposes so as to develop and expand the centers of reliable domestic food supply;
- c) To enhance sustainable management of natural resources in food and agricultural production through adoption of farming systems and production practices adapted to high potential and other areas.

*Actions to be taken***At the national level**

64. a) Formulate and implement strategies and programmes for rapidly increasing food and agricultural production in selected areas with high potential for cost-effective productivity improvements in a sustainable way, especially through an appropriate combination of specialization and diversification in food

production; by the year 2010 high potential rainfed areas should be expanded by some 20-30 percent and those under irrigation by at least 20 percent, with the emphasis on low-cost, small-scale, farmer-managed water-control systems; reclaim progressively areas suitable for agricultural production, especially in 5.6 million km² of the moist savanna, by control and eradication of diseases, such as river blindness, trypanosomiasis and malaria; improve fertility of suitable tropical soils through large-scale rock phosphate and/or lime application;

- b) Increase the yield levels of food crop production, especially for staple crops and where high potential resources can be sustainably mobilized, through the adoption of more productive technologies adapted to improved farming systems. In particular, raise cereal yields by 50 percent or more; expand the availability to farmers of quality seeds and planting materials, particularly cereals, roots and tubers, plantain and pulses. By the year 2010, improved quality seed should supply at least 15 percent of farmers' requirements (presently about 5 percent); enhance and preserve soil fertility and plant nutrition, including the promotion of integrated plant nutrition technologies;
- c) Upgrade the effectiveness of water management. In particular, enhance the efficiency of existing water control systems by 20 percent, through their modernization and rehabilitation, control of salinity and waterlogging and improved on-farm water management by farmers;
- d) Develop and introduce farming systems and technologies adapted to sustainable production in rainfed areas, including better water control, water conservation and soil moisture management by farmers; use more drought and disease resistant varieties of food crops to ensure a stable increase in production and to reduce instability;
- e) Develop and disseminate management practices for the protection and conservation of land and water resources, including appropriate cropping systems and integration of forestry and trees against desertification;
- f) Increase the productivity of livestock-based food (by at least 3-4 percent per year for meat and by 3 percent or more for milk) through better integration of livestock and crop production, veterinary care, breeds improvement and improved animal nutrition through more sustainable and effective management systems for grazing land, including the production of higher-quality fodders;
- g) Reduce food losses in the entire chain of production, marketing and processing, including post-harvest operation, through more effective and sustainable practices, beginning with IPM at the production level and throughout all levels;
- h) Strengthen adaptive agricultural research and extension and dissemination services to provide appropriate technologies for the variety of production systems, especially to enhance production stability under rainfed, low-input systems; strengthen production support services and rural finance mechanisms at the field level;
- i) Expand substantially fish production and supply to meet the increase in demand, which is expected to nearly double to 8 million tons by 2010, especially from aquaculture and inland fisheries. Improve the resource management of marine fisheries;
- j) Strengthen government capacity for planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring of policies and programmes for rapid and sustainable expansion in food production and supply.

At sub-regional and regional levels

65. a) Expand and intensify, in collaboration with the Consultive Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centres located in the region, cooperation in the exchange of appropriate technologies and approaches to food and agricultural production;
- b) Strengthen collaboration through joint programmes addressed to specific actions such as trans-boundary plant pests and animal diseases and early warning systems;
- c) Expand cooperation in the joint management of shared resources, especially shared water resources in common river basins and lakes, and in fishery resources;
- d) Improve and ensure maintenance of trans-border transportation infrastructure; collaborate in the development of communication and logistic infrastructure.

Enhancing export earning capacity to meet import needs

Basis for action

66. The need to revitalize the export sector, along with efforts to diversify its base, is particularly compelling since the region's five financial requirements for meeting import needs for subsistence and development are rapidly growing; the outlook for international-financial assistance and food aid is less than promising, indicating growing pressure for locally-based import capacity in the years ahead; market prospects are somewhat better for several major commodities exported by the region than during the disastrous past decade. At the same time, the liberalization of international markets resulting from the conclusion of the Uruguay Round may provide new opportunities for agricultural exporters. The policy emphasis on agricultural exports, however, should not be detrimental, but complementary, to the food crop development effort.

67. There is also the need to restore efficiency, dynamism and competitiveness to traditional export sectors, while also diversifying the export base, as a means of raising incomes particularly in rural areas, and of meeting growing import bills.

Actions to be taken

68. a) Pursue opportunities for enhancing regional trade, including: search for areas of complementarity and harmonization of support, taxation and marketing policies; cooperation in removing trade barriers across regional borders; development of collective strategies for global trade negotiations to ensure fair access to world markets and recognition of the need for special treatment to the poor, agricultural trade-dependent countries of the region;
- b) Provide infrastructural and services support for the increased efficiency, reduced costs and enhanced competitiveness of agricultural export crop production and marketing;
- c) Promote export diversification by incorporating both non-traditional high-value products and value-added products through agro-processing;
- d) Take advantage of the new opportunities that may arise from the liberalization of international markets following the Uruguay Round;

- e) Explore the development of exports to emerging markets where economies are rapidly expanding and/or per caput consumption of products exported by the region is low;
- f) Develop market outlook and information systems that provide accurate signals to farmers and exporters;
- g) Remove infrastructural, institutional and information obstacles to the transmission of changes in world commodity prices to producers of export crops;
- h) Introduce market-oriented mechanisms of price and revenue stabilization including forward and future contracts, option contracts and swaps;
- i) Establish national food control programmes to ensure the quality and safety of food sold in the region both for domestic consumption and for export.

Accelerating agricultural and rural development

Basis for action

69. Given the extensive nature of food insecurity and the severe resource constraints in many areas, it is necessary to complement actions aimed directly at increasing food production with efforts at more broad-based sustainable and participatory rural development. Whereas in high-potential areas rural development will have a strong agricultural production-oriented focus, in low-potential and marginal areas there is a need for economic diversification and for an emphasis on preservation of fragile resource bases.

Objective

70. a) To expand the effective participation of farmers and producers in the agricultural and rural development process;
- b) To improve self-reliant food security throughout rural areas incomes;
- c) To promote and facilitate broad-based and more self-reliant rural development, including improvements in infrastructure, better marketing arrangements, access to improved technologies and supporting services and inputs, and more secure land tenure arrangements.

Actions to be taken

At the national level

71. a) Promote and implement agricultural and rural development schemes targeted at increasing on-farm and off-farm employment, and infrastructure for improved services and marketing;
- b) Devise financial and participatory mechanisms for maintenance and repair of existing rural physical infrastructure;
- c) Improve the land tenure and other property security of farmers and producers, especially that of poor farmers and women farmers, not only for social equity but also as incentives for better productivity and towards the sustainable management of natural resources;
- d) Enhance self-reliant participation of farmers in the planning and implementation of development activities at the local community level by

promoting participatory organization of farmers and producers, particularly smallholders and women farmers;

- e) Monitor and review the environmental effects of agricultural and rural development, and incorporate lessons learnt in developing appropriate strategies and programmes.

At sub-regional and regional levels

72. Exchange and transfer lessons learnt on common problems in an effort to enhance agricultural and rural development among countries in the region.

Enhancing human development and social participation

Basis for action

73. The region is experiencing high rates of population growth which have led to growing need for agricultural production expansion, increasing stress on natural resources and greater demands for social services and human development resources. The region's levels of general education, access to information and health care have remained low. Inadequate structures for education and training hinder overall development and food security at all levels of activity, from basic farming to policy design and implementation. Large segments of the population have remained economically and culturally marginalized. Women, in particular, play a major role in agricultural production and household food security, but have inadequate access to work, training and production factors.

Objectives

- 74. a) Reduce the profound problems of overall rural poverty, unemployment and social exclusion affecting the region, in accordance with the principles defined by the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, as basic prerequisites for achieving food security;
- b) Integrate population concerns into development strategies so as to maintain rates of growth at levels compatible with possibilities for sustainably expanding production and ensuring the well-being of every person;
- c) Strengthen human resources for development and food security by improving education and health standards, and ensure an adequate role and empowerment of women in decision-making and operational activities.

Actions to be taken

At the national level

- 75. a) Develop national population policies consistent with the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Population;
- b) Reorient the allocation of resources for health, education and social services to redress the relative neglect of the rural areas;
- c) Promote broad participation in the formulation and implementation of food-security-related programmes and actions, through decentralization,

- transparency and resources for strengthening the abilities of civil society as well as in the development of local community organizations and activities;
- d) Strengthen policies and programmes to achieve the equal participation of women in all aspects of social life, particularly those contributing to the achievement of food security, and to this end improve their access to all resources required;
 - e) Reorient and design rural development policy and programmes to support women's health, education and financial needs as primary agricultural producers.

At the sub-regional and regional levels

- 76. a) Strengthen regional cooperation as a means of understanding the implications of trans-border migrations;
- b) Create the conditions for a voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin and their reintegration into their societies and activities in conditions of safety and food access adequacy.

Responsibilities for implementing priority actions

At the National Level

77. National governments have the primary responsibility for creating the conditions required for food security in their countries: first and foremost peace, and stable, participatory institutions, with the rapid abatement of situations of armed conflict and civil unrest that have been severe causes of food insecurity in most of the region. National governments are also responsible for creating an economic and social environment conducive to fast, sustainable and equitable growth, in which agricultural and rural development must play a central role. More specifically, national governments will achieve food security through strong policy commitment to the priority actions outlined above. This will require the provision of appropriate structures and mechanisms and the involvement, not only of all relevant public entities, but also of the private sector and of civil society in general.

78. National governments also have shared responsibilities with other countries within and outside the region, international and non-governmental organizations, in the pursuance of food security goals.

At the sub-regional and regional levels

- 78. The governments of the region should promote cooperation among themselves in:
 - a) Reinforcing regional cooperation mechanisms in agriculture and food policies for food security, including the strengthening of African intergovernmental organizations and research institutions;
 - b) Promoting the inter-exchange of technologies for food and agricultural production, especially those applicable to rapid development in high potential areas, including the establishment of technical cooperation networks;
 - c) Sharing experiences, technologies and resources for the development of sustainable systems of food and agricultural production in rainfed areas;
 - d) Instituting joint programmes to combat trans-boundary plant pests and animal diseases;

- e) Extending the scope of national information and early warning systems into regional networks that provide crop and market outlook information;
- f) Expanding cooperation in joint management of shared resources, particularly shared water resources and fisheries resources, *inter alia* through the strengthening of regional intergovernmental organizations;
- g) Strengthening transborder transportation and other infrastructures.

At the international level

80. The international community and its institutions will provide support to national Governments and relevant institutions in:

- a) Formulating and implementing macroeconomic and sectoral policies that improve the economic environment for food security;
- b) Securing adequate financial support to food-deficit countries in the region that face serious difficulties in financing their food needs;
- c) Planning, executing and reviewing programmes and projects for rapidly expanding food production and supply capacity in high-potential areas: accelerating rural development; and ensuring sustainable use of natural resources for food and agricultural production;
- d) Strengthening early warning systems at both the regional and international levels;
- e) Implementing the United Nations Convention on Desertification;
- f) Guaranteeing and maintaining adequate levels and the timely delivery of food aid to counter emergency situations and to ensure adequate supplies at the national level and seek to improve the design of food aid programmes in support of food security;
- g) Assist in devising, through appropriate cooperation with national governments, programmes for emergency preparedness and relief-to-development strategies;
- h) Implement the Uruguay Round *Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on Least-Developed and Net Food-Importing Developing Countries*.

Expected role of civil society

81. The policy emphasis on economic liberalization and a reduced role of the State in marketing and price formation implies a correspondingly greater role of the private sector in activities relating to food security including investment, agricultural production, marketing and trade as well as the provision of inputs. Then new emphasis on broad-based development implies greater involvement of previously marginalized segments of society, in particular women, smallholders and the poor.

82. In particular the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and interest groups have important roles to play in:

- a) Technology transfer, investment and skills development through commercial activities;
- b) Promotion of, and compliance with, major international agreements such as the International Plant Protection Convention;
- c) Sustainable resources management; in particular the private sector plays a key role in investing in irrigation development and water control;

- d) Providing farmers with inputs, services and marketing;
- e) Undertaking private investment and commercial activities for ensuring adequate and stable food supplies to urban areas;
- f) Promoting and supporting programmes catering for the development of rainfed areas. Non-governmental organizations, in particular, have many advantages in working with local populations towards their participatory development for food security.

83. Society at large, including community institutions and local government and non-governmental organizations, has the responsibility for ensuring the involvement and empowerment of women in decision-making and operational activities of importance in achieving food security.

NINETEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16-20 April 1996

FOOD FOR ALL CAMPAIGN

1. In deciding to convene a World Food Summit at the level of Heads of State or Government in Rome from 13 to 17 November 1996, the FAO Conference in its Resolution Z/95, adopted on 31 October 1995, reaffirmed the "inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition" as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition adopted by the World Food Conference in 1974. It also reaffirmed the need to achieve food security for all, as included in the Fiftieth Anniversary Declaration on Food and Agriculture. The Conference took into cognizance the fact that hunger and malnutrition could constitute a threat to the security of nations, regions and the global community. It also recognized that activities to ensure food security at all levels, in particular at the household level, should be carried out within the framework of sustainable development as defined in Agenda 21.
2. In deciding on the objectives of the Summit, the Conference stated inter alia that the World Food Summit would raise global awareness of the food security problem and promote the search for solutions, and would establish a policy framework and adopt a Plan of Action for implementation by governments, international institutions and all sectors of civil society to achieve sustained progress towards universal food security.
3. The Conference recognized the role of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions, the media and other groups in international conferences and initiatives. In this connection, while inviting countries to participate actively in the preparations and follow-up activities, the Conference encouraged the participation of these sectors of society in the preparatory process, in the Summit itself as appropriate, and in follow-up actions.
4. In order to make the Summit and its outcome a success and to ensure that "Food for All" is an achievable campaign, it is essential that follow-up actions to the Summit are carried out in a concerted and coordinated manner at the country level with the participation not only of the government, but also of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions, women, youth groups and civil society in general. Such participation by different segments of society could be promoted through a mechanism set up at the country level which would act as a mobilizing body in pursuing the goal of achieving food for all at national and international levels. This mechanism would function as a driving force of a "Food for All Campaign", which could be launched by the World Food Summit in order to sustain the momentum generated by it, support its work and ensure success of the follow-up activities.
5. The "Food for All Campaign" could strive to create a movement of informed public opinion about the key issues concerning food security and their solution; promote development and implementation of solutions to the food production and security constraints; and facilitate dialogue and collaboration among governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the civil society at large. The Campaign could play a key role in facilitating the implementation of the follow-up actions to the World Food Summit. This national mechanism, which would be an important vehicle for the "Food for All Campaign", could be led by the non-governmental sector in order to encourage flexibility and innovation, as well as to supplement the governmental FAO national committees with which it will have to

develop strong links.

6. The Regional Conferences could consider recommending that the "Food for All Campaign" be launched by the World Food Summit itself with an indication of the mandate and objectives. The structure to sustain it would have to be adapted to the specific situation of each country.

**REPORT OF THE
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE
NINETEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA**

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 16 - 17 April 1996

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Irrigation Improvement and Expansion: A Challenge to Food Security in Africa

For the Attention of Governments

The Committee:

1. recommended that assistance be sought (by governments) under the new UN Special Initiative for Africa to fund special interventions for the development and management of water for irrigation; (para 14e)

For the Attention of FAO

The Committee:

2. recommended that FAO should assist member countries to explore the possibility of TCDC¹ assistance for the development of low cost irrigation systems as well as the transfer of adapted water lifting technologies; (para 14g)
3. recommended that FAO, in collaboration with the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, and other concerned organizations assist in setting up Sub-Regional Committees on Irrigation and Drainage with the view to:
 - (i) promote exchange of information and experience, inter and intra-regional TCDC;
 - (ii) promote irrigation development. (para 14i)
4. recommended that FAO continue its assessment of the African irrigation potential using different scenarios of water resources potential at river and lake basins. (para 14j)

African Agriculture and Natural Resources - Impacts of Recent Economic Reforms and Prospects to 2010

For the Attention of FAO:

The Committee:

5. urged FAO to continue with further analysis of the nature and impact of these programmes particularly on the agricultural sector; (para 15d)
6. stressed the urgent need for FAO to assist countries and collaborate with other relevant agencies (ECA, UNIDO, UNDP, World Bank etc.) in identifying and developing appropriate strategies, and also mobilizing resources in order to achieve national and sub-regional objectives in this regard; (para 15e)

¹ Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS	64 - 65
	<u>Paragraphs</u>
I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS	
Organization	1 - 2
Opening Ceremony	3 - 8
Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Appointment of the Rapporteur	9 - 10
Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable	11
II. TECHNICAL ITEMS	
World Food Summit	12 - 13
Irrigation Improvement and Expansion: A Challenge to Food Security in Africa	14
African Agriculture and Natural Resources - Impacts of Recent Economic Reforms and Prospects to 2010	15
Status of Control of Animal Trypanosomiasis in Africa	16
Representation of the Region on the CGIAR	17 - 18
III. OTHER MATTERS	
Progress Report on the Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP)	19
IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS	
Approval of the Report	20
Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting	21 - 22

7. urged FAO to assist governments in identifying strategies directed at improving balance of trade situations and finding solutions to indebtedness, improving investment opportunities in the sector and encouraging a strong private sector participation; (para 15f)

Status of Control of Animal Trypanosomiasis in Africa

For the Attention of FAO

The Committee:

8. agreed with the recommendation that the prevention and control of African trypanosomiasis be included as a component of food security in the documents related to the World Food Summit. (para 16b)

Representation of the Region on the CGIAR

For the Attention of Governments

The Committee:

9. acknowledged that the development and transfer of appropriate technology needed a strong cooperation between national, regional and international agricultural systems and the participation of farmers organizations; (para 17c)
10. decided on the establishment of a sub-committee to meet and select candidates for presentation to and approval by the plenary; (para 17d)
11. the two regional representatives were not adequate, and proposed an increase in the number of regional representatives who should be selected by sub-regional organizations in consultation with FAO; (para 18a)
12. proposed that each of the major sub-regional organizations i.e. CORAF, SACCAR and ASARECA should nominate a representative to the CGIAR. (para 18b)
13. recommended that Burkina Faso be elected as regional representative to the CGIAR to succeed Ghana for a four-year term effective from 1997. (para 18c)

For the Attention of FAO

The Committee:

14. requested FAO to review the current criteria for establishing the sub-committee so as to make it more acceptable to countries; (para 17b)

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization

1. The Technical Committee of the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held from 16 to 17 April 1996, in the Conference Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.
2. The Meeting was attended by 145 delegates from 47 Member Nations of the Region, 36 of which were represented at ministerial level; eight observers from Member Nations outside the Region, two observers from the Holy See, five representatives of the United Nations Specialized Agencies, 15 observers from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Opening Ceremony

3. The Meeting was addressed by the Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Africa, Mr B.F. Dada, and was formally opened by the Honourable Mr Michel Koutaba, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources of Burkina Faso.
4. Mr Dada welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Mr. Jacques Diouf and expressed the deep appreciation of FAO to the Government of Burkina Faso for accepting to host this meeting at very short notice. He thanked the Chairmen and all the members of the National Organizing Committees for their dedication and efforts and in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for putting at our disposal its Conference facilities for the meeting.
5. He affirmed that the Meeting was being held against the background of continued food insecurity in Africa and reminded delegates of the causes and pernicious effects of the incidence of hunger and malnutrition. He pointed out that it was time to stop rhetoric and implement bold initiatives to solve the problems of food insecurity in the region. He wished the Meeting successful deliberations.
6. In his opening address the Minister welcomed all the delegates on behalf of the President, His Excellency Mr Blaise Compaore, the Prime Minister and his Government and the People of Burkina Faso. He elaborated how the scourge of famine and malnutrition still continued to plague the countries in spite of their consistent and persistent efforts. He pointed out that this should make the African countries more determined to meet the challenges in order to ensure that the fundamental right to water and adequately nutritious diet was upheld.
7. He recounted the various efforts implemented at all levels of society under adverse conditions in Burkina Faso to meet these challenges, and invited other countries of the region to be united and to take the necessary measures in this direction.
8. He recalled the positive contributions of international organizations particularly the FAO towards solving the problems of food insecurity and hoped that the forthcoming World Food Summit would come up with definite policies, strategies and activities to be implemented for solving hunger, famine and malnutrition. He acknowledged that this Conference would contribute positively towards the preparation for the World Food Summit and wished the participants fruitful deliberations. He then declared the Meeting open.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Appointment of the Rapporteur

9. The Meeting unanimously elected Prof. Alassane Séré, Minister Delegate for Animal Resources of Burkina Faso by acclamation, as its Chairman.

10. The Meeting then elected the rest of the members of the bureau as follows:

First Vice-Chairman:	Mr T.M. Taukobong, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Botswana
Second Vice-Chairman:	Mrs Ayele M. Gninofou, Director of Programme and Planning, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Togo
Rapporteur:	Mr Moorosi V. Raditapole, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to FAO, Embassy of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Rome

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

11. The Meeting then considered and adopted the agenda and timetable.

II. TECHNICAL ITEMS

World Food Summit

12. The meeting had extensive discussions and noted with satisfaction the contributions of various groups, namely: the African Group of Permanent Representatives based in Rome, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the NGOs and the National Committees towards the preparation of the World Food Summit. The Meeting commended FAO for facilitating the work of these groups particularly in bringing NGOs to the FAO/NGO Consultation which had preceded the Technical Committee.

13. The meeting discussed and then adopted the attached report for presentation to the Plenary Session of the 19th FAO Regional Conference for Africa for consideration and possible adoption by the ministers.

Irrigation Improvement and Expansion: A Challenge to Food Security in Africa

14. The meeting reviewed document ARC/96/5 and recognized the need for irrigation improvement because of its high potential contribution to food security. The meeting acknowledged the importance of the theme and thanked FAO for the valuable work in promoting irrigation improvement and expansion as a means to overcoming food insecurity in Africa. In particular the meeting:

- a. agreed with the main areas elaborated in the document² under the subheadings "state of African irrigation", "contribution of irrigation to food security", "approaches to irrigation improvement and expansion", the "strategies for sustainable irrigation development" and endorsed the concluding recommendations, especially regarding the inclusion of the SPFP³ philosophy into national agricultural plans, the need for policy review and reform, capacity building, increased investment in irrigation, and irrigation management transfer to farmers;
- b. recalled that in spite of the long history of various food improvement strategies for Africa which incorporated irrigation as an important component, the situation has rather deteriorated;
- c. acknowledged that without irrigation the situation would deteriorate further, resulting in high social cost and damage to natural resources base;
- d. agreed that untapped important irrigation potential including inland valleys should be developed, taking into consideration environmental and socio-economic factors;
- e. recommended that assistance be sought under the new UN Special Initiative for Africa to fund special interventions for the development and management of water for irrigation;
- f. recognized the need for detailed cost-benefit analysis when planning and designing irrigation schemes and called for the use of least cost-effective machinery, inter alia food aid for irrigation;
- g. emphasized the need to encourage development of low cost irrigation systems as well as the transfer of adapted water lifting technologies; and in this regard, recommended that FAO should assist member countries to explore the possibility of TCDC⁴ assistance;
- h. recognized the potential of the private sector to assist in large and small-scale irrigation development in Africa and advised countries to set up local manufacturing of irrigation equipment;
- i. recommended that FAO, in collaboration with the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, and other concerned organizations assist in setting up Sub-Regional Committees on Irrigation and Drainage with the view to:
 - (i) promote exchange of information and experience, inter and intra-regional TCDC;
 - (ii) promote irrigation development; and
- j. recommended that FAO continue its assessment of the African irrigation potential using different scenarios of water resources potential at river and lake basins.

² ARC/96/5

³ Special Programme on Food Production in support of Food Security in Low-Income Food Deficit countries

⁴ Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries

African Agriculture and Natural Resources - Impacts of Recent Economic Reforms and Prospects to 2010 (Agenda Item 6a)

15. The meeting commended the preparation of document ARC/96/7 which reviewed agricultural development in Africa in the context of the new socio-economic environment. It noted with concern the declining performance of the agricultural sector in the region. In particular, the meeting:

- a. recalled that per caput agricultural production was declining while food imports were expanding, resulting in increasing dependence on food imports, the rising share of food aid in total cereal imports, low agricultural productivity, decline in real terms in export earnings from agricultural commodities;
- b. noted that a variety of fast growing alternative economic activities were developing in traditional agricultural areas as a consequence of the poor performance of the sector, and agreed that such developments should be studied more closely;
- c. stressed the importance of developing appropriate strategies that would ensure the improvement of the quality of available land, low-cost but effective water resources management, strengthening of capacities and development of human resources for the management and sustained supply of forest resources and products;
- d. recalled the adverse effects of Structural Adjustment Programmes and the far-reaching social and economic implications these programmes have, particularly on the agricultural and rural sectors; it urged FAO to continue with further analysis of the nature and impact of these programmes particularly on the agricultural sector;
- e. recalled the importance and priority of food security in the region and the complex social, political and economic factors that influence the achievement of such an objective in particular high population growth rate in the region, possible adverse effects of the implementation of the Agreement on Agriculture of the Uruguay Round, stressed the urgent need for FAO to assist countries and collaborate with other relevant agencies (ECA, UNIDO, UNDP, World Bank etc.) in identifying and developing appropriate strategies, and also mobilizing resources in order to achieve national and sub-regional objectives in this regard;
- f. urged FAO to assist governments in identifying strategies directed at improving balance of trade situations and finding solutions to indebtedness, improving investment opportunities in the sector and encouraging a strong private sector participation;
- g. agreed that improved agricultural performance offers the best chance for progress towards enhanced food security, poverty reduction and overall development, particularly in the sub-saharan countries.

Status of Control of Animal Trypanosomiasis in Africa (Agenda Item 6b)

16. The meeting noted that the information document ARC/96/INF/7 reviewed the current status of trypanosomiasis control and recognized the constraint imposed by the disease on the development of economic mixed farming. In particular the meeting:

- a. stressed the importance of the control of Animal Trypanosomiasis within the context of food security and rural development in Africa and supported the FAO initiative for the formation of an internationally-coordinated effort to combat the problem in a joint secretariat with WHO, IAEA and OAU/IBAR; and
- b. agreed with the recommendation that the prevention and control of African animal trypanosomiasis be included as a component of food security in the documents related to the World Food Summit.

Representation of the Region on the CGIAR

17. The meeting considered document ARC/96/6 which reviewed the role of science and technology in achieving food security in the region, especially its role in increasing food and agricultural production and in enhancing natural resources conservation. The meeting:

- a. recalled the status of agricultural research in the region, recent developments in the CGIAR system and the criteria for selecting member countries, including their responsibilities and the effectiveness of representation;
- b. requested FAO to review the current criteria for establishing the sub-committee so as to make it more acceptable to countries;
- c. acknowledged that the development and transfer of appropriate technology needed a strong cooperation between national, regional and international agricultural systems and the participation of farmers organizations;
- d. decided on the establishment of a sub-committee to meet and select candidates for presentation to and approval by the plenary;

18. The Sub-Committee met, examined the report on the CGIAR activities in the region and observed that:

- a. the two regional representatives were not adequate, and proposed an increase in the number of regional representatives who should be selected by sub-regional organizations in consultation with FAO;
- b. proposed that each of the major sub-regional organizations i.e. CORAF, SACCAR and ASARECA should nominate a representative to the CGIAR.
- c. recommended that Burkina Faso be elected as regional representative to the CGIAR to succeed Ghana for a four-year term effective from 1997.

III. OTHER MATTERS

Progress Report on the Common African Agricultural Programme (CAAP)

19. The meeting noted that the Document ARC/96/INF/6 was an information document prepared in response to the request by the 18th FAO Regional Conference for Africa (Gaborone, Botswana 1994) that CAAP should be a standing item on its agenda, in order to ensure the Conference's continuing participation in monitoring the activities of CAAP. It welcomed the actions that had been taken, since the last Regional Conference, by the various organizations concerned viz:- the OAU Secretariat, Sub-Regional Economic Communities, FAO and Member States, and noted what needed to be done to accelerate progress in agricultural cooperation and integration in response to CAAP and the AEC. The meeting:

- a. noted that response by Member States to requests for observations and comments on the revised CAAP document had been slow but that the Secretariat would proceed with the process of finalizing the document immediately it received over 50 per cent of responses from Member States to its request of 9 February 1995 and to present such a document to a planned meeting on Food Security in 1997/98;
- b. appreciated actions taken by Sub-Regional Economic Communities in connection with implementations of CAAP recommendations so far and accepted suggestions intended to accelerate the process of adopting the CAAP framework;
- c. was informed that the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) had been completely revitalized while the Economic Community of East African States had established their Secretariat.

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

Approval of the Report

20. The meeting considered and adopted its report with some amendments.

Closure of the Technical Committee Meeting

21. In a brief closing speech to the Technical Committee, the Assistant Director-General/FAO Regional Representative for Africa Mr. B. F. Dada thanked all the delegates for their support in ensuring the successful outcome of the Technical Committee meeting. The final report of the meeting would be transmitted to the Regional Conference for the appropriate follow-up action. He thanked the Government of Burkina Faso for the excellent facilities made available for the smooth running of the Conference. Finally he wished those delegates who might be leaving 'bon voyage' and those who might be staying a pleasant stay.

22. The meeting was formally closed by the Chairman Mr. Alassan Séké, Minister Delegate for Animal Resources of Burkina Faso.

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF BURKINA
FASO ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF THE
19TH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA**

Ouagadougou, 16 April 1996

Mr. Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,
Mr. Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity,
Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Honourable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In convening the 19th FAO Regional Conference for Africa in Burkina Faso, a country considered a striking example of all the ills that impede agricultural development in Africa, you have deliberately chosen to place yourselves at the head of the food problem of Africa.

This conference, which is to serve as a springboard to define a common solution to the problems of hunger and poverty, will undoubtedly be seen an important instrument in our daily struggle against underdevelopment.

Mr Director-General of FAO,

I should like on this solemn occasion to pay tribute to all the work you have undertaken on behalf of Africa since taking up office at the head of the important organization that is FAO. At a time when human solidarity is crumbling dangerously and when multilateral co-operation is seemingly running out of steam, you have been able to attract the attention of the world to the food situation on the continent, while at the same time endeavouring to equip it with the means to develop its capacities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We cannot fail to observe that the goal set by the World Food Conference in 1974 of eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition "within a decade" has not been achieved. The world food situation is as worrying as ever. This is most certainly an appropriate occasion to commend the initiative taken by FAO to convene the World Food Summit in Rome from 13 to 17 November 1996.

This Regional Conference, which is one of the preparatory meetings for the World Food Summit, will, we hope, enable us to incorporate the African dimension of the problems and their solutions into the draft policy declaration and plan of action.

It is also an invaluable opportunity for the African countries to examine, without reserve, one of the fundamental problems of survival, namely rural poverty and destitution and their attendant hunger, malnutrition, disease and hate which in turn cause fratricidal and ethnic wars.

As we reflect on these unhappy circumstances, let us not forget those hardworking farmers who, day after day, strive to earn a living from agriculture, and let us also spare a thought for the multitudes of impoverished women and children. At the same time, let us bear in mind the paradox of the opulence, surplus and waste that exists in our world and which calls for stronger solidarity and collective responsibility on the part of the international community.

At this juncture, we pay special homage to those countries and international organizations which continue to significantly increase their assistance to agricultural development in Africa.

And let us not for a moment forget the inestimable role played by non-governmental organizations in the African rural environment. Their daily work among the rural populations makes them key interlocutors in the formulation of our agricultural policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African position that you are called upon to adopt here in Ouagadougou should no longer follow the well-trodden path of endless repetition but should, instead, engage in a concerted, dynamic approach, exploring new horizons that will combine technological progress, water management, agricultural and livestock research, improved land quality and rural organization in a better integrated collective environment.

It is on this basis that the issue of increased agricultural production and food security can be adequately addressed.

We, in Burkina Faso, consider food security an integral part of human security. With this perspective in mind, and taking into account our capabilities and experiences, we have placed agricultural and livestock production at the heart of our development policy.

The main thrusts of our approach include:

- the modernization and diversification of production through manageable technology;
- water management and protection of the environment;
- the involvement of the youth in the production process by encouraging them to settle on their own land;
- the mobilization of national savings to finance the agro-pastoral sector;
- the promotion of small-scale farming;
- the fostering of rural co-operation to facilitate the formation of producers' associations;
- the processing of our local produce and the promotion of their consumption;
- and finally, regional and South-South co-operation.

We remain firmly convinced that only the unswerving determination of Africans to do more and better, relying overwhelmingly on themselves and their own ability to shape their destiny, can release this continent from hunger, malnutrition and under development.

Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express the gratitude of the people of Burkina Faso to FAO for the confidence shown in appointing us to the International Sponsoring Committee of the World Food Summit.

We should like to take this opportunity to call on all African Heads of State and Government to participate actively in this Summit. On our part, we assure you that we will do all we can to ensure an effective African participation at this very important event.

With this hope, and wishing you every success in your work, I declare open the 19th FAO Regional Conference for Africa.

Thank you.

APPENDIX GSTATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE
NINETEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Mr Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not by chance that the Nineteenth FAO Regional Conference for Africa is being held in Burkina Faso, a land of free people where the three Volta Rivers - the Red, the Black and the White - come together to form a single mighty waterway. We all know how important the big river basins are for agriculture, development and African life itself: and water is somehow also symbolic of the Conference that opens today.

FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations and, as such, has a universal vocation, but its Director-General is well aware that he must draw on the deep-rooted values of his Continent to reach the wider dimension of a world response. Understandably, then, I feel particularly moved to be here in the midst of my African brothers and sisters, who have gathered together to review the state of food and agriculture in their region and to seek sustainable agricultural development and food security for the present and future inhabitants of this vast continent.

We meet again as a family, joined by our common love for Africa and I know that I speak for you all as I express our profound gratitude to the Government and people of this noble land for the warm and caring welcome that they have extended to the participants of this Regional Conference.

The subjective nature of my personal attachment is based, however, on the objective reality of the agricultural situation in Africa which is more worrying than that of any other region in the world and should therefore be given priority attention by the international community.

The difficulties assailing this vast continent are many: droughts and other whims of weather; plagues of locusts and pests; fragile and swiftly depleted soils; desertification; disease affecting or preventing husbandry over vast tracts of land; inadequate control and inefficient utilization of water; the unchecked rural exodus - all compounded by murderous conflicts and a refugee population wholly without historical precedent. This picture will, unfortunately, be all too familiar to you: your governments are doing all they can to prevent these acute problems from attaining disaster proportions.

That their efforts cannot always control sudden production slumps as a result of drought and floods, nor stave off the spectre of famine that reaps thousands of human lives is a tragic reality. Yet, awesome and appalling as these emergencies are, they weigh less heavily on the future of the African people than the chronic undernutrition and malnutrition rampant in so many countries of the continent. We should remember that of the current 88 low-income, food-deficit countries in the world, 42 - almost half - lie in sub-Saharan Africa.

Famines set off powerful bursts of solidarity in the world, but these tend to be short-lived. Meanwhile, the global level of development aid is falling, as is the share of this aid earmarked for agriculture.

What will happen if nothing is done to change the course of events? Population growth projections tell us that by the year 2010 (in less than 15 years) an estimated 300 million Africans will be suffering from chronic malnutrition.

Such a prospect is clearly unacceptable. That is why FAO decided to launch a large-scale operation to enlist a solemn commitment at the top level to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and to undertake concerted action at global, regional and national level to ensure food security for all. This has been the underlying aspiration behind the organization of the World Food Summit to be held in Rome this November.

The preparation of the Summit is one of the main items on the agenda of this Conference, which is being asked to take a common regional stance on this important question. Any solution to the terrible problems of today inevitably entails an unprecedented scale of policies and measures that can only be implemented after collective and profound reflection by all interested parties, including the public authorities, universities and researchers, the private sector, NGOs and, more particularly, farmers' organizations, women and the young.

You, with your responsibilities for the rural and agricultural sector in that part of the world most at risk from food insecurity, are surely in the best position to interpret for the international community the nature and scale of this dramatic situation, and to help frame the action so urgently needed to resolve it.

Reassuringly, this initiative has already been enthusiastically endorsed by the Organization of African Unity whose Council adopted a resolution in February this year inviting the African States to mobilize individually and collectively for the success of this initiative, and to make a particularly active contribution to the Summit and its preparation. This resolution follows in the wake of the June 1995 resolution by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU. Also as regards the Summit, the Secretariat of the OAU has drawn up a draft text defining Africa's common position on food security and agricultural development. I note with pleasure these renewed manifestations of the unflinching cooperation between the OAU and FAO- I see this resolute commitment on the part of the African community as a clear sign of hope. It also shows that Africa's leaders are fully aware of the implications, and are determined to respond singly and collectively to the challenge of food insecurity.

Such clarity of purpose will inevitably be countered by scepticism, here and there, questioning the need for the Summit. What, they may well ask, is the point, after so many initiatives of all kinds? Was not concern to feed the world the springboard for the establishment of FAO 50 years ago, followed by the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, the two World Food Congresses of 1963 and 1970, the World Food Conference of 1974 and, more recently, the International Conference on Nutrition in 1992? We can answer this on two levels. Firstly, this will be the first time in the 50 years since FAO was founded that a meeting on these issues is held at the level of Heads of State and Government. And the fact that the proposal was unanimously approved by the Conference of FAO and the United Nations General Assembly clearly attests that the world food problem has now become very serious. Secondly, while

FAO's mandate has not changed from that laid down by the founding fathers in its Constitution, the sheer size and the nature, even, of the problems at hand have evolved with a speed typical of the century in which we live. And lastly, it is FAO's fundamental responsibility to alert world opinion and world leaders to the deteriorating food situation before it attains catastrophic proportions.

There has undoubtedly been prodigious progress in the realms of technology and know-how, and there is no question that the transformation in plant and animal production, the knowledge and use of inputs, water management skills, progress in resource conservation, storage and processing techniques have revolutionized the rural and agricultural sectors in many countries.

And yet, at the same time, there are more than twice as many mouths to feed, and as their number continues to grow, available per capita farmland diminishes. Need we recall that Africa is the only region in the world in which average food output per inhabitant has fallen during the last 25 years? The intensive exploitation synonymous with some developed countries degrades the environment, while in the poor countries, forest cover is shrinking fast and increasingly marginal land is being brought under the plough, so accelerating the pace of erosion. Fishery resources are overexploited and in this as in many other domains, nature can no longer regenerate its resources as fast as people destroy them.

Additionally, even though there is now enough food to feed everyone in the world, its distribution remains terribly unequal, both within and between countries, and from one region to another. The poverty of certain social groups and nations is driving a terrible wedge, a situation further aggravated by political upheaval, conflict, and the growing numbers of refugees and displaced persons - And in this respect, too, Africa is sorely affected. In the developing countries, nearly 800 million people suffer chronic undernutrition and some 200 million children under the age of five are affected by acute or chronic protein and calorie deficiency. We are very far from the vision of FAO's founding fathers, and more than 20 years after the World Food Conference of 1974, the goal of "eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition within a decade" remains stubbornly beyond our grasp.

And yet, the right to food is the first and foremost of the human rights, without which the others have no meaning. How can a hungry person be expected to exercise his or her right to education, work and culture, or to participate fully in the political and social life of the community? Food and water loom prominently among the major world challenges as we enter the third millennium. The dimensions of the problem are ethical, political and strategic, and could lead to extremely violent and serious conflict unless we put things right.

FAO is so keenly aware of the need for strong, immediate action that it has launched a Special Programme on Food Production in Support of Food Security in Low-Income, Food-Deficit Countries without awaiting the world-level decisions that will be taken by the Summit. This Programme directed towards low-income, food-deficit countries is now being implemented. It is of direct concern to a number of African countries and you will be sufficiently familiar with it for me not to have to go into details. I should just like to underline, however, that its approach might serve as a source of inspiration in shaping the Policy Statement and Plan of Action that will be submitted for Summit approval.

This Programme addresses the challenge of food insecurity from several angles:

The main thrust is to work on a specific, day-to-day basis with farmers, livestock owners, forest workers, fishing communities and fish farmers, so that they can sustainably increase their productivity and thus combat poverty. The Programme's activities include demonstrations of improved techniques in the farmers' own fields. Identification, implementation and evaluation are all done by those most directly involved: the farmers themselves.

Additionally, the Programme strongly emphasizes people's participation, particularly that of women. Women indeed play a predominant, multifaceted and totally irreplaceable role in feeding the household and community. In many regions (and especially in Africa), women are the main providers of food, which they grow, prepare and store. They are responsible for the children's education and for handing down cultural values and know-how related to food. Without broad-based people's participation, particularly of the feminine population, there would be no momentum or spillover effect, no continuity, and no universal adhesion to a joint undertaking.

Lastly, there is the immense effort of cooperation and consultation at all levels: the recipient countries, FAO and donors; the recipient countries and developed countries offering bilateral aid; but also among the developing countries in the context of South-South exchanges.

The philosophy behind the Programme, now in its pilot phase in about 15 countries and showing promising results, will help to chart the major orientations of the Summit. The focus of the Summit will be on meaningful, sustainable action. In the spirit of UNCED's Agenda 21 Programme, rather than relentlessly pushing out agricultural boundaries and jeopardizing fragile ecosystems, efforts will centre on high-potential areas where productivity can be increased by intensifying farming practices with, in particular, the conservation, collection and harnessing - and hence better management - of water. However, where this is not a feasible option, as in several countries in your region, marginal lands will have to be developed sustainably without causing environmental damage. The aim, in both cases, is to increase output sufficiently to cater for population growth and raise nutritional levels where serious food deficiencies exist. However, increasing output is only part of the equation; we need to ensure that the benefits from national efforts reach all members of society and particularly its poorest members. Measures will therefore be needed for more equitable access to food for all, more efficient distribution and far fewer food losses.

Public opinion and the media will have to be mobilized, with world political leaders setting the guidelines for resolute and dynamic food policies and solid sustained action. The general debate on food will also address the problems of investment and trade, which are key issues for Africa.

Beyond the Summit itself, what is needed is a truly global campaign, with cooperation and consultation at all levels. Following in the footsteps of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, its theme would be "Food for All", which is the slogan FAO has adopted for the forthcoming years. The driving-force for this Food for All Campaign would be National Committees involving all segments of civil society, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, women's associations, and youth groups. To muster the support and mobilization necessary to ensure its success would demand long-term commitment

and sustained resources. The mandate and objectives of the Food for All Campaign would be determined by the Summit, and its structure adapted to the specific situation of each country. The mechanism established would supplement the governmental FAO National Committees already in place. You have before you a document on this topic, and you may wish to recommend that the World Food Summit launch this Food for All Campaign.

How will this Summit differ from the many past attempts to combat hunger and malnutrition? Is this initiative any more likely to succeed than all its predecessors?

One original concept in the preparation of the Summit is that no costly special meetings have been required, with all necessary consultations being held during the course of regular sessions of the Organization's Statutory Bodies. Thus, at its Twenty-first Session a few weeks ago, the Committee on World Food Security began its review of the draft Policy Statement and Plan of Action that the Summit is to adopt, formulating several proposals in this respect. The text before you is therefore more than just a first draft, and will be further refined in the light of your comments - The Summit will be held at FAO Headquarters. Every effort is being made to involve all sectors in its preparation and to promote all initiatives that will help ensure its success.

The World Food Summit differs in many respects from previous events addressing the problem of world food security.

In contrast to recent high-level meetings, the Summit has been convened by a body that was specifically set up to deal with food and agricultural development, and which therefore has a solid base and the human and material resources to implement its programmes. Furthermore, two key practical initiatives are already in train to achieve food security for all and the Summit will be able to take concrete decisions so that these are effectively and globally implemented. I am speaking of the Special Programme on Food Security, and the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases.

The challenge before the World Food Summit is unprecedented, however. Even though much has been done to overcome hunger and malnutrition, to bolster agricultural growth and to ensure that food is distributed more equitably, past actions have for the most part been one-off, uncoordinated efforts. What is now required are articulated actions that will target every country where the need to secure or consolidate food security is becoming increasingly acute. The many implications of this huge undertaking will have to be squarely faced: production, conservation of the resource base, investment and infrastructure, and social and economic policies to guarantee fair distribution of food and income, not to mention the thorny issue of international trade. This is indeed a momentous challenge: how are we to change everything that needs changing in the world food situation? How are we to ensure regular access to an adequate diet for hundreds of millions of our fellow human beings?

FAO has not stood still on the long journey towards success. It has done - and I believe done well - everything that it has been asked to do. It has accomplished much solid work, such as furthering the international standards in force on pesticides, plant genetic resources and other matters. In the process, it has devoted considerable human and material resources to Africa, particularly through its field programmes. But has all this really changed life for the better in the villages of the Third World? Has productivity increased in the least-developed countries?

Has the use of fertilizers and other inputs and the biological control of pests and diseases been enough to raise production to the required level without harming the environment? Has definitive progress been made against hunger, malnutrition and the poverty of individuals and nations?

Unhappily, the answer is all too clearly no. There must be a way of doing more and doing better, of pooling our random efforts and mounting an all-out attack on hunger from all sides, for the good of future generations and for the very survival of the human race.

The huge surpluses in the developed countries (which were also hard to manage, economically speaking) were long (and erroneously) seen as a global cushion against serious shortfalls. But even back in the 1970s, the food crisis brought home how easily these mountains of surplus goods could vanish like snow in the sun, leaving painful shortages. After a renewed period of bumper surpluses, we are now back to a situation where the world's grain reserves have fallen below the level considered necessary to guarantee global food security. World prices have soared and the low-income, food-deficit developing countries will have to pay out an additional 3 billion dollars this year for their food imports.

The poet Aragon wrote that man's work is never done; but it is precisely this state of uncertainty that inspires human endeavour. Has not impending disaster always driven people to come up with the energy and inventive capacity required for their survival? Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are all living today in a state of impending disaster.

Paradoxically, however, this could prove to be the salvation of this and future generations, if only we can read the signs of the times and rise to the occasion. Untold clarity of mind, imagination, courage, patience and tenacity will be required, as will concerted mobilization on a scale largely unparalleled in human history. Citizens of all countries and ranks, of all ages and religions; associations and groups of all kinds; professionals from all sectors; community leaders in all walks of life, whether intellectual, social, economic, political or spiritual; government officials and representatives of all levels, men and women from the smallest village to the largest international organization will have to marshal their forces and rally together for an all-out joint effort.

Are there sufficient resources for such a vast undertaking? Will the interdependence of our global village outweigh the narrow short-term interests that divide it? I hope with all my heart that this is so.

Today this hope is a growing conviction. Africa's problems and its myriad trials have only served to sharpen the vision and strengthen the resolve of those responsible for its development, agriculture and food security. The unity that characterizes this meeting betokens success both for the World Food Summit and for the planet-wide mobilization that will be needed. Africa is destined to play a lead role, and has already begun with the OAU decisions I mentioned earlier. The fact that so many nations have come together today at this meeting, out of solidarity and a desire for justice, can only reinforce my conviction that the harder and the more serious the situation is, the more we can depend on human ingenuity.

It is therefore with full confidence and from the bottom of my heart that I wish you every success in your meeting. Thank you.

APPENDIX H

**ADDRESS BY MR. ADAMA OUEDRAOGO, KNOWN AS "GRAND PASSAGE",
FARMER FROM YATENGA (BURKINA FASO), ON THE OCCASION OF THE
INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF THE 19TH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR
AFRICA,**

OUAGADOUGOU, 18 APRIL 1996

Your Excellency, the President of Burkina Faso, allow me to thank you for having made it possible for a farmer to address this august and honourable assembly on behalf of the farmers of Burkina.

I extend a warm welcome to all your guests. And I also welcome you to Burkina, Your Excellency, the Director-General of FAO. Honourable Ministers who have come from distant countries, welcome to Ouagadougou.

It is true that the world changes and it is also true that we have seen many things happen on this planet of ours, but this is the first time that I see that important leaders in their meeting have accepted to listen to what the farmer has to say, before beginning their work.

Here in Burkina, we always hold farmers in high esteem. In Africa, we know that intelligence and wisdom do not necessarily come only from those who can read. It is on this score that the old always have their place in our society. This means that the illiterate and poor can also contribute to the advancement of the world.

In Burkina there are more rural workers, by which I mean herders, craftsmen, and farmers. They are more numerous than wage-earners. We know that the rural workers constitute the backbone of the country. We know that a tree cannot live without roots. The water goes to the roots which produce the sap that feeds the branches and leaves.

If Africans are to find a solution to the problem of hunger, we all need to know how things stand between governments and producers, between donors and producers and, finally, between farmers themselves.

Governments should encourage farmers' associations and NGOS to join forces in the districts, departments and provinces. Donors should use the successes of past projects to carry out new projects, and the managers of projects should stand firmly with the farmers, giving them all the support they need. There are farmers in our villages who have good ideas and there are others who have found good solutions. These people need to be encouraged and used to train other farmers. Their advice needs to be passed on to other farmers.

Farmers need to meet together. If African farmers meet farmers from other countries, they will find solutions to hunger. Producers will always understand each other, wherever they come from. We can share our experiences as farmers.

Mr President of Burkina Faso,
Mr Director General of FAO,

Your meeting is a very important event. It is good that leaders should meet, it is also good that NGOs should meet, because hunger in the world is of great concern. But hunger causes more concern to farmers, especially to women and children, because hunger brings illness in its wake: which is why producers should also meet to discuss the problem of food.

Donors have enabled women from all over the world to meet on several occasions; they have also enabled the youth to meet; surely they can also help African producers to meet and discuss problems related to hunger. A meeting of producers would not be very expensive because farmers do not have the same expenses as wage-earners. If producers can meet to discuss the problem of hunger, they will bring forward ideas that will help the world.

The first thing that they would have to deal with is to find out ways to ensure that they do not always wait to receive from those who produce in excess. They also need to find out what to do so that nobody throws away food when there are people without enough to eat. They will discuss the problem of water, because thirst is more unbearable than hunger: we know we can find enough water for people and animals.

The rearing of livestock is becoming increasingly important in our villages and the problem of water has become serious. In countries like Burkina we know that solar energy can be used to pump water where the water table is very deep. Burkina has a wealth of experience in processing and preserving foods, while other countries have other skills that should be known. I think that farmers hearing this message will agree and will add many ideas of their own.

Mr. President,

Thank you for the honour that you have bestowed on me and on all the farmers of this country. In doing so, you have also honoured all the farmers of Africa.

May God Almighty bless your guests, may He bless your deliberations and may your guests return home in peace.

