

Report of the

**TWELFTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR EUROPE**

Athens, Greece, 22-27 September 1980



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

FAO Member Nations in the European Region (as at 27 September 1980)

Albania	Greece	Poland
Austria	Hungary	Portugal
Belgium	Iceland	Romania
Bulgaria	Ireland	Spain
Cyprus	Israel	Sweden
Czechoslovakia	Italy	Switzerland
Denmark	Luxembourg	Turkey
Finland	Malta	United Kingdom
France	Netherlands	Yugoslavia
Germany, Fed. Rep. of	Norway	

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Europe

First	- Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1949
Second	- Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1960
Third	- Rome, Italy, 8-13 October 1962
Fourth	- Salzburg, Austria, 26-31 October 1964
Fifth	- Seville, Spain, 5-11 October 1966
Sixth	- St. Julian's, Malta, 28-31 October 1968
Seventh	- Budapest, Hungary, 21-25 September 1970
Eighth	- Munich, Germany, Fed. Rep. of, 18-23 September 1972
Ninth	- Lausanne, Switzerland, 7-12 October 1974
Tenth	- Bucharest, Romania, 20-25 September 1976
Eleventh	- Lisbon, Portugal, 2-7 October 1978
Twelfth	- Athens, Greece, 22-27 September 1980

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(in cooperation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe)

Athens (Greece)

22-27 September 1980

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Rome, 1980

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
INTRODUCTION	
Organization of the Conference	1 - 10
Opening Ceremony	11 - 13
Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur	14 - 18
Statement of the Chairman	19 - 21
Adoption of the Agenda	22
Closing of the Conference	23 - 27
SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS	
Statement by the Director-General	28 - 32
Statement by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme	33 - 34
Statement by the Executive Secretary of ECE	35
General Discussion following the Statement of the Director-General	36 - 43
Review and Follow-up in the Region of Actions arising from the Programme of Action of WCARRD	44 - 51
Regional Implications of International Action to Strengthen World Food Security	52 - 64
Review of European Activities	65 - 86
Agricultural Manpower Problems and Policies in the European Region	87 - 109
Representation of Europe on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	110
ANY OTHER BUSINESS	111
VENUE OF FUTURE REGIONAL CONFERENCES	112 - 114
<u>APPENDICES</u>	
A. AGENDA	
B. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	
C. LIST OF DOCUMENTS	
D. OPENING STATEMENT BY Mr. EDOUARD SAOUMA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL	

INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Conference

1. The Twelfth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, organized in cooperation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe, was held in Athens, Greece, at the Zappeion Megaron, from 22 to 27 September 1980, at the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Greece.
2. Delegations from the following twenty-six Member Nations of the European region participated in the Conference:

Albania	Germany, Fed. Rep. of	Portugal
Austria	Greece	Romania
Belgium	Hungary	Spain
Bulgaria	Iceland	Sweden
Cyprus	Israel	Switzerland
Czechoslovakia	Italy	Turkey
Denmark	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Finland	Norway	Yugoslavia
France	Poland	

3. In addition, a Member Nation of another region sent observers, i.e.:
United States of America
4. The following Member of the United Nations, which does not belong to FAO but is a member of the Economic Commission for Europe, participated in the meeting as an observer:
German Democratic Republic
5. An observer from the Holy See was also present at the meeting.
6. The Conference was also attended by representatives of the following United Nations organizations and bodies:
United Nations Development Programme
World Food Programme
International Fund for Agricultural Development
International Atomic Energy Agency
World Food Council
7. Representatives of the European Economic Community also participated.
8. Observers of the following inter-governmental organizations attended the Conference:
Council of Europe
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
9. The following non-governmental organizations sent observers to the Conference:
International Commission of Agricultural Engineering
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
International Federation of Agricultural Producers
International Federation for Home Economics
International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers
International Union of Family Organizations
Trade Unions International of Agricultural, Forestry and
Plantation Workers
World Federation of Trade Unions

10. The list of participants is contained in Appendix B.

Opening Ceremony

11. In welcoming the Prime Minister of Greece, His Excellency Mr. George Rallis, for the official inauguration of the Twelfth Regional Conference for Europe the Director-General of FAO, Dr. E. Saouma welcomed also delegates and observers. He thanked the Government of Greece for having invited the Conference to Athens and expressed his gratitude for its generous hospitality. In asking Mr. G. Rallis to take the floor to inaugurate the Conference, Dr. Saouma noted that his presence at this ceremony bore witness to the special importance which the Greek Government attaches to the problems of development and to Greece's confidence in FAO's action.

12. After having welcomed the delegates to the Conference and thanked the Director-General for his creative activity in promoting the objectives of the Organization, the Prime Minister expressed the support of his country to the work carried out by FAO, which aims at the establishment of a new international economic order and a new system of world food distribution. He called for more generous economic and technical aid to the developing countries and stated that Greece is planning mechanisms for providing technical and scientific aid to the third world in a more organized form. The Prime Minister expressed his support for FAO's plan of action on world food security and emphasized the need to increase the resources of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, to ensure a high level of stocks of cereals and to improve food aid. He referred also to the problem of agricultural employment and rural exodus and pleaded for a more rational distribution of the population, based on a redeployment of non-agricultural activities in rural areas. As regards energy, he gave his support to the FAO initiative to create a European cooperative research network on new and renewable energy sources for agriculture, including integrated energy systems. Finally, he reiterated the interest of Greece in the activities of the 10 European Cooperative Research Networks.

13. Thanking the Prime Minister, the Director-General noted that this was the first time that a prime minister had inaugurated a meeting of the Regional Conference for Europe, and that it was therefore a great honour for FAO. He also thanked the Prime Minister for his interesting communication of major political and moral significance which would not fail to guide the discussions.

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

14. The Conference unanimously elected Mr. A. Kanellopoulos, Minister of Agriculture of Greece, as Chairman.

15. Mr. Kanellopoulos thanked the Conference for having elected him to the Chairmanship and asked for nominations to be submitted for the election of the Vice-Chairmen.

16. The following were unanimously elected as Vice-Chairmen:

Mr. P. Ishpekov, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry and Vice-President of the National Agro-Industrial Union of Bulgaria;

Mr. C. Batault, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to FAO;

Mr. I. Widen, Director-General of the Swedish Board of Agriculture.

17. Due to the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen on the final day of the Conference, it was necessary to appoint a fourth Vice-Chairman. Mr. N.K. Pattichis, Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources of Cyprus was elected unanimously as Vice-Chairman.

18. Mr. I. Ozorai, Secretary-General of the Hungarian National Committee for FAO, was elected Rapporteur.

Statement of the Chairman

19. The Minister of Agriculture welcomed the delegates of the different countries and organizations. He paid tribute to the dynamism and imagination with which the Director-General is leading the Organization and offered all the cooperation possible from Greece in support of FAO's activities.

20. He reviewed the state of the world at present and expressed anxiety at the deterioration of the living standard of the developing countries whose agricultural production is growing too slowly in the face of their population growth. He added that in the light of the interdependence of the world today the moral imperative of assistance to poor countries is fully justified by the common economic interest. This consideration should facilitate the adoption of decisions to develop the agriculture of the developing countries, assure food stocks and adopt programmes against hunger and malnutrition.

21. The Minister also mentioned the question of agricultural manpower and of agricultural and rural exodus, suggesting that instead of transporting the population released from agriculture to the urban sector, it would be more appropriate to transport activities of the urban sector to the rural sector. In the energy field he said that his country was prepared to become a meeting ground and place for the application of experimentation for the utilization of new energy sources in agriculture.

Adoption of the Agenda

22. The Conference adopted the Agenda which is reproduced in Appendix A.

Closing of the Conference

23. In closing the Conference, the Chairman said that the Greek Government had made through its delegation concrete proposals which actually adopted the suggestions of FAO's Director-General. Particularly:

- (a) Greece will contribute to the replenishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, raising its contribution to 200 000 dollars;
- (b) it will intensify its efforts and formulate mechanisms for the extension of technical assistance to the developing countries on both bilateral and multilateral levels;
- (c) it supports the plan for legal cover of the emergency food stocks and contributes to the FAO project for food security, allocating the amount of 200 000 dollars;
at the same time, it suggests that FAO could use the withdrawn quantities of perishable agricultural produce, on condition that this will not create any price and income problem to the producing countries;
- (d) it has decided to participate in the Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture, declaring its intention to become one of its members;
- (e) it proposes the establishment of a research network for the development of new energy sources such as aeolic and solar.

24. The Chairman went on to say that the 12th Regional Conference put special emphasis on the need for the continuation and extension of the European part of FAO activities and considered useful the rational coordination of the organizations and activities aiming at combating undernourishment and hunger. To this purpose, he said, the Director-General is entitled to examine the possibility of coordinating these efforts within the framework of FAO, so that higher economy and effectiveness could be realized within the respective activities. The Conference considered it necessary to study the possibility of cooperation of the "three worlds", the industrial, oil producing and developing countries, to ensure greater stability in the supply of capital goods, liquid fuels and raw materials, and protect the agriculture of developing countries from high fluctuations of prices and worsening of the terms of trade. The participation of all countries in the plan of action for world food security including its aid programme is essential to this end.

25. On behalf of all, the delegations of Belgium, Cyprus and Hungary expressed their appreciation to the Government of Greece for hosting the Conference, as well as for the hospitality and the excellent organization of the Conference. They thanked the Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur for their personal contribution to the success of the Conference. Finally, they commended the Secretariat for the excellent quality of the documentation submitted to the Conference.

26. On behalf of the Director-General, who had already taken leave of the Conference two days earlier in order to return to Rome, the Regional Representative for Europe, Mr. G.E. Bildesheim, reiterated FAO's thanks to the Greek Government for having held the Twelfth Regional Conference for Europe in the beautiful city of Athens. FAO was most grateful to the Government for its invitation. He expressed words of appreciation for the assistance the Greek authorities had provided in the form of excellent personnel and facilities. These had contributed greatly to the positive outcome of the Conference.

27. The Regional Representative also thanked the delegates for their strong support to the work of FAO and that of the European region.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Statement by the Director-General

28. The Director-General analysed the world food situation which, he said, was most disturbing. For example, in the course of the past decade the population growth rate of the developing countries was higher than that of their agricultural production. Per caput production declined in not less than 61 developing countries. Last year the agricultural production of the developing countries rose by only 1.3%, only half of the growth rate of their population. In 1980 the deterioration of food supplies was intensified further and emergency situations increased. The Director-General referred especially to the truly alarming case of Africa. He was compelled recently to sound a real cry of alarm and to call an emergency meeting of potential donors with a view to mobilizing massive and rapid assistance to that continent.

29. He also pointed out the growing dependency on abroad by countries obliged to make increasing food purchases. The Director-General thus launched an appeal for increased assistance by the developed countries to agriculture in particular, to accelerate the pace of production and cover the needs of the food deficit countries.

30. He also pleaded for better world food security and mentioned the initiative he had taken to propose a plan of action on world food security, as well as his proposal to the International Monetary Fund with a view to the establishment of an additional support for the payments balance of countries obliged to import large quantities of food. Furthermore, he stressed the need to increase food aid and recalled his proposal to transform the International Emergency Food Reserve into a true international convention, duly signed and ratified.

31. In referring to Europe, the Director-General expressed his satisfaction with the support it is giving FAO as a region, providing almost half of the Organization's regular budget and the main source of voluntary bilateral contributions. He noted that FAO has always maintained a certain level of activity in Europe and will continue to do so within the limits of its resources. As an example of the activities to be encouraged, he mentioned in particular the European Cooperative Research Networks. The Director-General also referred to the question of agricultural manpower in Europe and the work undertaken on energy in agriculture. On this last subject he mentioned the work being done in the Regional Office and his support to the recommendation of the European Commission on Agriculture for the establishment of a European Cooperative Research Network for the development of new and renewable energy sources for agriculture and the rural sector.

32. The complete text of the statement of the Director-General is reproduced in Appendix D.

Statement by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme

33. The Executive Director of the World Food Programme reviewed briefly the contributions pledged by the European region to the World Food Programme and mentioned that the Programme continues to assist a small number of projects with social or development aims, including a few cases of natural disasters in the European region. Pledges for the 1979/80 biennium had reached only \$802 million, or 84% of the target. Pledges for the biennium 1981/82, as of 31 August 1980, had reached only \$734.5 million, against a minimum goal of US\$ 1 billion.

34. The three main types of project implemented by the WFP were: firstly, emergency food assistance projects, in response to natural or man-made disasters; secondly, nutrition programmes to protect vulnerable groups; thirdly, projects designed to increase agricultural, and especially food, production. These development projects represent over half of the WFP activities. He then gave several specific examples of food aid as a manageable, flexible and controllable tool for development. Thus, food aid, in a number of ways, could help increase food production in the developing countries and food aid for development was not only needed but generally well used.

Statement by the Executive Secretary of ECE

35. A message from the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe was read by the Secretary of the Conference concerning the main items of the Agenda and recalling the recent major orientations of the activities of the Commission.

General Discussion following the Statement of the Director-General

36. In their interventions many delegates referred to the opening statement of the Director-General. In regard to the world food situation they indicated their agreement on the analysis given by the Director-General and expressed their concern at the progressive deterioration of the food supplies in the developing countries. This leads to excessive dependency on imports, burdens their payments balances and endangers their chances for development.

37. The participants were agreed in recognizing that the solution of the problem lies in a substantial increase of agricultural production in the developing countries themselves and, in the meantime, an increase of food assistance. The food deficit countries therefore must give agriculture highest priority and mobilize the available resources to the maximum. The developed countries, for their part, should increase their assistance to development, especially to the agricultural sector. Thus the basis of better food security can be laid down progressively. A number of delegations also communicated the intention of their governments to increase their aid to development in the future, especially in the agricultural sector and that of food aid.

38. Some countries also pointed out the problems they need to overcome to assure a harmonious development of their agricultural sector, and the progress they have made to that end.

39. Mention was also made of the FAO Resolution establishing a World Food Day, the first of which will be celebrated on 16 October 1981. It was noted that both in countries and in FAO preparations were advancing well. It was suggested that member countries of the European region could not only mount an effective celebration in their own countries drawing attention to the world food problem but also provide assistance to developing countries in their preparations for the first World Food Day.

40. Concerning FAO's European activities themselves, the delegates indicated the importance they attach to them and invited the Director-General to maintain them at a certain level. They recalled that it is desirable that these activities conceived as designed to benefit firstly the European region, could also be of interest for the greatest number possible of developing countries outside Europe.

41. General support was expressed for the European Cooperative Research Networks which promote cooperation between the participating national institutions and facilitate technological transfer for the benefit of the European and non-European developing countries.

42. Many delegates also expressed satisfaction with the intention to establish a European Cooperative Research Network for the development of new and renewable energy for agriculture and the rural sector. They declared their willingness to collaborate in the launching and operation of this network.

43. Two observers, the representatives of the Holy See and the Vice-Chairman of the World Food Council, made a statement concerning the main items on the Agenda of the Conference.

Review and Follow-up in the Region of Actions arising from the Programme of Action of WCARRD

44. The Conference noted that in addition to responding to requests for assistance by member countries, FAO had launched an Intensive National Support Programme, supported by voluntary funds, to stimulate implementation of WCARRD's Programme of Action. Six countries had requested inclusion in the programme and three had received missions. By 30 July, the Conference target for extra-budgetary funds of \$20 million had reached about \$10 million and 96% of these had come from European donors. At the inter-country level, it was noted that ad hoc consultations had been held among countries in three of the developing regions, FAO Regional Conferences had considered the matter and three Regional Integrated Rural Development Centres had either been established or were in the process of establishment. Inter-agency cooperation was being actively pursued, in particular through the ACC Task Force on Rural Development of which FAO was the lead agency.

45. The Conference in debating Europe's actions in the follow-up of WCARRD expressed general satisfaction with the achievements to date. The Conference stressed that action was the prerogative of the country concerned and that outside aid and FAO assistance could only have a catalytic role or support national efforts.

46. In the debate, the member countries discussed national activities. They also expressed interest in inter-country cooperation. Other countries in the Region referred to their cooperation with FAO in the follow-up, comprising contributions of voluntary funds and consultations on substantive issues. The need for flexibility in modalities of cooperation was stressed.

47. The Conference stressed the need for integrated strategies in attacking the size and complexity of the world food problem, especially in reaching and mobilizing the less privileged groups of farmers and rural workers, and including the establishment of effective delivery and receiving machinery for assistance to the rural sector.

48. People's participation was affirmed by the Conference to be of paramount importance. Significant progress in this area was considered to be of primary urgency. The participation of rural women in full equality with men in production and development and in the benefits accruing was especially underlined. The creation of effective rural people's organizations and the need for them to play a primary role in agrarian reform and rural development were also stressed.

49. Training was considered by the Conference to be of basic importance and many countries mentioned the facilities they offer to trainees from developing countries in multilateral and bilateral assistance.

50. Many countries stressed the need for monitoring and reporting of progress in agrarian reform and rural development in the field. Note was taken of FAO's efforts to establish benchmarks for the study of developments, to develop appropriate indicators to assist countries to take action in monitoring progress, to set up operational guidelines and to report results. Some countries pledged active support for these endeavours through provision of experts and consultation with FAO on substantive problems.

51. The Conference endorsed the suggestion that the programme of European Working Parties and Study Groups operating within FAO's jurisdiction, including joint FAO/ECE bodies, should be geared to the support of follow-up action and recommended that appropriate action should be taken to enable them to reorder their programme of work accordingly.

Regional Implications of International Action to Strengthen World Food Security

52. The Conference in examining the regional implications of international action to strengthen world food security, agreed that the achievement of greater food security for all was a challenge and common responsibility for the whole international community.

53. The Conference agreed that food insecurity could only be fully removed by a wholehearted commitment by the developing countries themselves to increase their own food production. In particular, greater priority needed to be given to food production, integrated rural development and improved infrastructures in the national development plans of many developing countries. At the same time, donor countries and the international financial and technical organizations concerned should increase their assistance to these countries in support of their national efforts to feed themselves.

54. In consideration of the above, it was urged that European countries should:

- further the development of food production in developing countries, particularly in the low-income food-deficit developing countries, by increasing in real terms their investment and aid flows for agriculture including their contributions to the International Fund for Agriculture Development;
- provide, through bilateral and multilateral channels, increased fertilizer assistance to the LDC/MSA countries to help them meet their annual fertilizer requirements estimated at about 1 million tons;
- increase both financial and technical assistance to developing countries to enable them to expand their fertilizer and pesticide production and storage facilities;
- increase their voluntary contributions to FAO's Action Programme for the Prevention of Food Losses and to the Seed Improvement and Development Scheme so that these two programmes could reach their agreed funding levels;
- support FAO's programme to assist developing coastal countries in developing their fisheries economic zones.

55. The Conference agreed that measures were also necessary to enhance national and international preparedness to cope with acute and large-scale food shortages such as the present critical food supply situation in large parts of Africa which was the subject of a meeting of donors called by the Director-General on 19 September. In this connection, the Conference noted that an ad hoc working party had been set up to help prepare viable and practical proposals on national and international preparedness for policy consideration by the Committee on World Food Security at its next session.

56. The Conference recognized that one essential aspect of this preparedness was the availability of sufficient food aid to meet acute large-scale emergencies. It was regretted that the target for the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR) of 500 000 tons of grains annually had not yet been reached. It was urged that all governments who had not already done so should contribute to the IEFR or increase their contribution and should also pledge their contributions for a period exceeding one year. In this regard, the Conference particularly welcomed the recent decision by Finland and Greece, who had not previously participated, to contribute to the IEFR.

57. While the Conference recognized that the Director-General's proposal to turn the IEFR into a legally binding convention was to be considered by the October session of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA), some delegates indicated their government's support for the proposal.

58. Some delegates called for renewed efforts by the negotiating parties to include a new International Grains Agreement with substantive provisions contributing to world food security. Meanwhile, the Conference agreed that the implementation of the Plan of Action on World Food

Security whilst awaiting a new grains agreement should continue to be pursued, including the establishment and maintenance of food aid reserves or other measures designed to maintain continuity of food aid and to meet the exceptional needs of developing countries in years of widespread food shortages.

59. The insufficient level of cereal stocks in many developing countries and, more generally, the absence of an internationally coordinated system of national or regional food reserves was giving rise to particular concern, although it was recognized that many countries had adopted, and were implementing, national stock policies or targets. In this connection, the representative of the EEC emphasized that the policy of the Community was fully in line with the requirements of the Plan of Action also with regard to cereal stocks. 1/

60. As many developing countries needed assistance in formulating and implementing their national food security plans, the Conference recommended European countries to:

- substantially increase bilateral and multilateral assistance to the food security programmes of developing countries where appropriate;
- assist developing countries to establish food reserves, both national and regional or sub-regional.

In this connection, it invited those European governments which had not already done so to contribute to the FAO Food Security Assistance Scheme in 1979/80 with a view to maintaining the resources available through the scheme at least at an annual level of US\$ 10 million.

61. Recognizing the practical value of the services of the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture for facilitating early remedial action and timely arrival of aid supplies in food shortage situations, the Conference invited:

- countries which have not yet joined the system to participate in it and to provide relevant information to the Secretariat;
- developed countries to take steps to assist interested developing countries to set up or strengthen national early warning and crop forecasting systems; and
- governments to make full use of the services of the System in the preparation and execution of their bilateral food aid programme.

62. The Conference was informed of the Resolution on Hunger in the World which had just been approved by the European Parliament. In this Resolution, the European Parliament endorsed to a large extent the Director-General's proposals on world food security, including a call for increased assistance to developing countries for rural development, the establishment and management of food stocks, food aid and emergency assistance, and the proposal to guarantee the IEFR by means of an international agreement. It also considered of particular interest the proposal by FAO and the WFC which calls for the use of IMF financing facilities to enable developing countries to finance exceptionally high food import bills.

63. The Conference noted that the IMF Executive Board had considered the proposal, but had not yet been able to reach a consensus. Several delegates supported the proposal and expressed the hope that the IMF would find a way to help meet these crucial needs.

64. The Conference noted that the resources of IFAD should be replenished.

1/ ERC/80/3 - paras 42-45

Review of European Activities

65. The Conference gave its full support to the orientations and implementation of FAO's European programme ^{1/} and to maintaining an adequate level of activities in Europe within the limits of the available resources. A number of delegates felt that an increase in resources for Europe would be justified.
66. The Conference endorsed the recommendations of the June 1980 session of the European Commission on Agriculture on energy and on the cooperative research networks.
67. As far as energy was concerned, the Conference gave its full support to the proposal to set up a cooperative network in the field of energy on the same basis as the other ten, within the framework of the Regional Office for Europe. The Conference appreciated the offer of the Italian Government to set up in Rome the necessary facilities for helping to start up this network and to ensure, together with interested participants, the coordination of its activities, with a contribution in the form of premises, staff and cash, for a global amount of about \$350 000 for the first two years. The Conference noted that the Director-General, while having to reserve his position at this stage, would study this offer carefully.
68. The Delegation of France, in supporting the creation of this network, offered to host its constituent meeting, in the first quarter of next year. France was also willing to provide additional financial resources in 1981 to launch the network and was ready to play an important role in the coordination of its activities.
69. The exact structure, modus operandi and programme of the network would be decided by the constituent meeting, after consultation with interested member countries. It was stressed that the scope and programme of work of this network should be worked out, during this meeting, as precisely and concretely as possible, in order to attract a maximum of participating countries.
70. The Director-General indicated to the Conference that energy in agriculture would receive high priority in the next programme of work and budget for 1982-83. The Conference welcomed his suggestions that a roundtable on this subject might be organized during the next European Regional Conference in 1982.
71. The Conference gave its full support to the European system of cooperative research networks in agriculture, the main aim of which was to undertake joint applied research programmes and an exchange of up-to-date experience and information on selected subject matters of common interest. Attention was drawn to the fact that there were presently more than 200 institutions from 50 countries participating in the networks of which 20 were developing countries.
72. The Conference recommended that, apart from the establishment of a network on energy, priority should be given to the strengthening and consolidation of the existing networks, in order to ensure that, notwithstanding the limited resources available for the networks, their programme of work could be fully carried out and any shortcomings overcome.
73. Due to the financial limitations under which the networks operate, it was recognized that financial assistance from the competent national authorities of the countries to which the institutions cooperating in the networks belong, would be of very high value. In this context, it was noted that some progress had already been achieved, as in the case of the networks on olives and pesticides, to which two governments had made contributions to improve their functioning; several governments had also contributed to the cost of network meetings and to the exchange of research results through publications. Nevertheless, further assistance in support of national participating institutions would be very welcome. The French delegation underlined that supplementary budgetary resources had been set aside in 1980 accordingly.
74. The observer of OECD mentioned that in its work on energy in agriculture, his Organization would concentrate on the economic implications of the rise in energy prices. It would

1/ ERC/80/5

not touch upon energy on the farm and in rural communities. No overlap was therefore to be feared with the activities of the future FAO network, nor with the project on integrated energy under normal farming conditions. This was in line with the wish expressed by the Conference to tighten collaboration with other international organizations or non-governmental organizations active in this field.

75. The Conference expressed its satisfaction with the increasing cooperation of FAO with other international organizations in Europe, in particular the Economic Commission for Europe, and the wish to enhance it still further, notably through the activities of the Joint FAO/ECE Working Parties. In this regard, several delegations stressed the importance they attached to the Working Parties on Agrarian Structures and Farm Rationalization and on Mechanization in Agriculture, and the need for a close integration of their activities with those of the Regional Office for Europe. One delegation regretted the present inactivity of the Working Party on Water Resources and Irrigation.

76. Several delegations expressed the wish to reinforce the European activities of FAO in the field of forestry.

77. The Conference approved the new title of the previous working party on home economics, which now reads "Working Party on Women and Agricultural Family in Rural Development". It welcomed the results of its recent session in Innsbruck, Austria, from 8 to 12 September 1980, under the auspices of the Austrian Government which it thanked for the organization of the meeting. The proposed programme of work, especially the programme of training for agricultural women in management, as well as on women and pluriactivity in agriculture, was supported.

78. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken by FAO against African Swine Fever and offered to collaborate in every effort to develop a vaccine against this disease.

79. A number of countries also supported the work done by the European Commission on foot-and-mouth disease to maintain a buffer zone preventing the dissemination of this plight in Europe. The interested countries expressed their thanks to the donor countries which contribute financially to this Commission.

80. A number of delegations underlined the importance of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

81. The representative of UNDP drew the delegations' attention to the UNDP Administrator's request to the Regional Conference to seek the collective views of Member Governments on sectoral priorities for the UNDP regional programme 1982-1986. In addition, the FAO Regional Office would provide sectoral analyses of regional trends and requirements in its area of competence.

82. The representative of UNDP mentioned the satisfactory progress of two on-going regional projects:

- Mediterranean Project for Olive Production Improvement (financed jointly from UNDP European and Arab Countries Regional Funds), 1/
- European Cooperative Programme on Conservation and Exchange of Crop Genetic Resources, 2/

and the Preparatory Assistance approved for the Mediterranean Aquaculture 3/ and the Black Sea Aquaculture projects 4/.

1/ UNDP/FAO Project No. RER/78/009 and RAB/79/009
2/ UNDP/FAO Project No. RER/80/005 and RER/75/035
3/ UNDP/FAO Project No. RER/78/004 and RAB/79/003
4/ UNDP/FAO Project No. RER/79/003

83. It was noted that the European Regional Unit in UNDP HQ was presently studying with interest two more pipeline projects on

- European Farm Energy Development, 1/ (see paragraphs 2-6), and
- European Agricultural Applied Research Cooperative Networks, 2/ (see paragraphs 7-11)

taking into consideration their possible impact on other developing countries outside the European Region. The UNDP contribution, however, could only come from the regional allocations for the Third Cycle (1982-86), since the present regional funds for the Second Cycle were already fully committed.

84. The UNDP Representative referred also to the accumulated UNDP holdings of funds in non-convertible currencies amounting to over \$45 million as of 31 July 1980, for the most part representing the voluntary contributions of a number of European Governments. He thanked FAO for its efforts in utilizing these funds during the Second Programming Cycle, and expressed the hope that FAO would take these funds similarly into account during the Third Cycle.

85. Some delegations of European countries still benefitting from an Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) confirmed that for UNDP financing, they were giving first priority to both Farm Energy and Agricultural Cooperative Research Programmes.

86. In addition, the FAO European Member Governments also mentioned the following as priority project ideas:

- (i) Mediterranean sub-regional projects (in cooperation with Arab Bureau):
 - Mediterranean Aquaculture (see para. 17);
 - Development and Management of Fisheries in the Mediterranean;
 - Mediterranean Coastal Agriculture Development (following the new international marketing trends).
- (ii) Strengthening of cooperation between Balkan countries:
 - Strengthening of Veterinary Prevention Service
 - Soil Erosion Control
- (iii) Other project ideas:
 - Mass Catering (already under FAO/WHO/UNIDO/WTO study);
 - Animal Feeding (new alternative resources) as a European or Balkan countries regional project.

Agricultural Manpower Problems and Policies in the European Region

87. The Conference had before it a summary document 3/ prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of reports 4/ submitted by fourteen countries and various international governmental and professional organizations.

88. In their statements the delegates supplied additional information on the evolution of the working agricultural population (WAP) in their countries and on the respective policies applied.

1/ UNDP/FAO Project No. RER/80/001

2/ UNDP/FAO Project No. RER/79/021

3/ ERC/80/4

4/ A summary of the country reports is contained in document ERC/80/4(a).

89. The discussions showed that in spite of its sharp decrease, the present and future evolution of the WAP continues in general to be a factor of major importance for the balanced development of the economic and social life of the European countries. It is closely related to:

- (a) the continuing adjustment of the different sectors of the economy;
- (b) employment problems;
- (c) a balanced geographic distribution of population and activities.

90. The participants pointed out that the problems and policies concerning the WAP condition the very future of the agricultural sector and rural society. The role of labour and of the human factor in the agriculture of the next twenty years was examined.

91. The governments are especially concerned to maintain an adequate WAP level in order to preserve the production potential; to assure balanced agricultural and rural development so as to re-absorb under-employment or concealed unemployment in agriculture and to combat the rural exodus; to confront energy problems which cannot fail to influence the labour force of the agricultural sector.

92. Faced with the problems of inflation, energy, employment, regional imbalances and protection of the environment, the European governments have become aware that agriculture and the farmers have a new role to play. The governments' main task is to lay down new policy guidelines and to work out appropriate measures.

93. A number of delegations expressed the great interest they attach to the integrated rural development policy which by diversifying activities makes it possible to create non-agricultural jobs, raise income, stabilize population at the regional level and, finally, to break the tie between the agricultural exodus and the rural exodus. The equalization between the rural and urban sectors of living conditions and public, social and cultural services is also a decisive aspect.

94. The ageing of the WAP can be seen in many countries, although there is sometimes a tendency toward a return of young people to agriculture. For a long time some countries have applied policy favouring young farmers, linked to measures designed to encourage the termination of activities of elderly farmers. In recent years a number of countries have introduced legislation designed to facilitate the entry of young people.

95. The activity and growing role of women in agriculture was strongly emphasized. In certain countries their position is closely related to pluriactivity by farmers. Recent legislations tend to improve their economic, social and legal status.

96. The statements confirm that, in very different forms, part-time agriculture (PTA) and pluriactivity are a widespread and constantly expanding phenomenon in many countries including those of eastern Europe. In spite of their shortcomings we now realize their advantages better, especially in regard to population balance and regional development. That is why it is necessary to work out policy guidelines and measures for their application. In this field too we are witnessing a recent evolution of legislation designed to give part-time farmers access to the benefits of public assistance on the same basis as other farmers.

97. Some delegates drew attention to the relationships existing between agriculture manpower problems on one hand, and, on the other hand, the potential needs and production of energy for agriculture. In some countries there is now an attempt to evaluate additional jobs in agriculture and forestry which could result from new guidelines on national energy policy.

98. Social policies in the agricultural sector were not discussed in the study submitted. However they are the subject of special attention from many governments. This is obviously a decisive question, whether for maintaining farmers in their activity or for helping them to leave farming in satisfactory conditions.

99. The difficulties inherent in the differences between statistical definitions and methods were noted, particularly the divergencies between countries where family farming is predominant and those having a socialistic approach to agriculture. These obstacles are particularly marked in connection with certain aspects such as PTA and women's work. The Conference considered that FAO was well placed in Europe to work on the harmonization of the different definitions and methods regarding the agricultural and rural population.

100. The Conference considered that the study constituted an initial overall view of problems and policies regarding the WAP and provided a good basis for the pursuit of international cooperation in this field. Referring to Chapter XI of the study "Fields for International Cooperation", and especially to the proposals contained in paragraph 275, it expressed the wish that future studies at the European level would deal, depending on the available resources, with the following subjects:

- the role, condition and status of women in agricultural and rural life;
- part-time farming and/or pluriactivity;
- statistical definitions and methods concerning the agricultural and rural population;
- social policies in agriculture;
- links to be established between problems of agricultural manpower and the long-term perspective of production and food security.

101. The Conference recommended that the Working Party on "Women and the farm family in rural development" of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) grant high priority in its work programme to the study of women's work, role and status in agriculture, especially in relation to part-time agriculture.

102. Concerning part-time agriculture the Conference also recommended that the ECA undertake a study of PTA and pluriactivity in the countries of the European region with a view to examining the many respective forms, factors and role and establishing appropriate policy guidelines. The study should be designed in relation not only to an analysis of the role of women and of non-agricultural activity of men but also of the problems of the rural sector.

103. Such a study should take account of the work already executed at the international level, among others that done by the OECD. In particular, if the resources permit, it could consist of:

- drafting a summary report based on national contributions;
- analysing specific national cases in the field with a twofold objective of:
 - (a) promoting agricultural and non-agricultural activities at the local level;
 - (b) examining the capacity of pluriactivity as an instrument of agricultural and rural development.

104. For the execution of the study the Conference requested the European Commission on Agriculture to avail itself, as far as possible, of the cooperation of the FAO European Forestry Commission and the Committee on Agricultural Problems and the Committee on Wood of the Economic Commission for Europe.

105. The Conference asked that special attention be given to problems of statistical definitions and methods. It requested that the joint FAO/ECE/ESC Work Group for the study of food statistics and agriculture examine the possibility of including agricultural population questions at its next session where its medium-term work programme will be established.

106. In the social policies field a number of delegations expressed the wish that the European Commission on Agriculture consider to what extent it could bring up to date the work it has performed in the past.

107. Of course in view of the limited resources available, the proposed activities can only be executed as the necessary resources become available.

108. The Conference expressed the wish that the various future activities of FAO in Europe concerning the agricultural population take into consideration as much as possible the problems and experiences of the developing countries having characteristics fairly similar to those of some European countries.

109. The Conference also expressed the hope that professional organizations would participate in these activities.

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

110. The Conference unanimously re-elected Greece and Romania to serve in this Group for the 1980/81 biennium.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

111. At the time when Mr. G.E. Bildesheim, Regional Representative for Europe, is preparing to leave his post shortly the Conference wished to convey to him its full appreciation and its sympathy for the efficient work he has done in heading the Regional Office for Europe, and expressed to him its sincerest good wishes for the future.

VENUE OF FUTURE REGIONAL CONFERENCES

112. The delegation of Bulgaria reiterated the invitation of its Government to hold the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe in Bulgaria in 1982. This proposal was supported by several governments.

113. The delegation of Iceland conveyed the invitation of their Government to hold, preferably the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, but otherwise the fourteenth, in their country. The delegation of Yugoslavia stated that their country was also interested in hosting a future Regional Conference.

114. The Regional Representative for Europe thanked these delegations for their kind invitations which he said would be submitted to the Director-General of FAO, who would take the necessary decisions in due course.

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
4. Statement by the Director-General of FAO
5. Statement by the Executive Secretary of ECE
6. Statement by the Executive Director of the WFP
7. Review and Follow-Up in the Region of Actions Arising from the Programme of Action of WCARRD
8. Regional Implications of International Action to Strengthen World Food Security
9. Agricultural Manpower Problems and Policies in the European Region
10. Review of European Activities
11. Representation of Europe on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
12. Any other business
13. Date and Place of the Thirteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe
14. Adoption of the Report
15. Closure of the Conference

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

		<u>Item of the Agenda</u>
ERC/80/1	Provisional Agenda	3
ERC/80/1(a)	Provisional Annotated Agenda	3
ERC/80/2	Review and Follow-up in the Region of Actions Arising from the Programme of Action of WCARRD	7
ERC/80/3	Regional Implication of International Action to Strengthen World Food Security	8
ERC/80/4	Agricultural Manpower Problems and Policies in the European Region	9
ERC/80/4(a)	Summaries of national reports	9
ERC/80/5	Review of European Activities	10
ERC/80/6	Representation of Europe on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)	11
 <u>ERC/80/INF Series</u>		
ERC/80/INF/1	Information Note to Delegates	
ERC/80/INF/2-Rev.1	Provisional Timetable	
ERC/80/INF/3	Provisional List of documents	
ERC/80/INF/4-Rev.1	Provisional List of Participants	
ERC/80/INF/5	Regional Projects for the Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Mediterranean	
 <u>ERC/80/CONF Series</u>		
ERC/80/CONF/1	Statement by the Director-General of FAO	4

STATEMENT BY MR. EDOUARD SAOUMA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Twelfth Regional Conference for Europe, meeting in this historic city of Athens, only a few steps away from the Acropolis, the very symbol of civilization and democracy.

First of all, I wish to express FAO's gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Greece for the unstinting hospitality they are showering on us, and also for the remarkable installations and facilities of this marvellous Zappeion.

My colleagues and I have been especially touched by the warmth of a welcome which bears witness to Greece's confidence in our Organization and her support for our objectives. The presence of His Excellency the Prime Minister, a few moments ago at the opening of this Conference, was a signal honour for FAO, and I thank him warmly for it.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate his Excellency Mr. A. Kanellopoulos, Minister of Agriculture, on his unanimous election as Chairman of this Conference. Having in this important post such an eminent and highly qualified leader promises well for the success of its discussions. Finally, I welcome and thank Their Excellencies the Ministers, Heads and Members of Delegations met here, as well as the distinguished observers and representatives of international and regional organizations with which FAO is cooperating very closely. In particular, I would like to express my satisfaction with the highly fruitful cooperation which has been developed with the Economic Commission for Europe, with whose assistance this Conference has been organized.

Mr. Chairman,

A stay in Greece is always more than just a simple pleasure. It is a return to one of the richest sources of our thought, one of the great centres in which Western culture was developed and where the first forms of democratic government saw the light of day. Here philosophers have emphasized the role of man and society, and that is why they still speak so clearly to the intelligence and the soul of our contemporaries.

Plato, in his "theory of forms", glorified the notion of justice. By this he was referring to the deliberate behaviour of individuals, but also to the wisdom of governing the State in the interests of her citizens. This would surely be the supreme virtue that he would advise us most strongly to seek out, but at the same time extending it from the city as he knew it to the international community as we know it today.

The question that he would ask would probably be: What progress have we made?

As Director-General of FAO, and referring to that greatest of all gifts which is the right to eat decently, I must confess with sorrow that we still have a very, very long way to go.

Innumerable masses do not enjoy that right. We estimate that 400 to 500 million men, women and children are suffering from hunger and malnutrition in the Third World, and this curse is spreading every day. The fact is that the world food and agriculture situation is extremely disturbing. How can this be so?

The World Food Situation

First, hunger is the direct consequence of poverty, which prevents its victims from buying the food they need. It thus reflects inequalities in the distribution of the national revenues that only serious structural reforms can remedy.

Hunger is also due to the weakness of agricultural production in the developing countries. Agricultural growth is not rapid enough to cover heavy demands, stimulated by population growth and the gradual increase in individual revenues, especially in urban areas. The tragic dimensions of the problem appear clearly when we think that by the end of the century, there will be two billion more human beings on the face of the earth than there are today, 90% of them born in the poor countries. Demand for food and agricultural products could therefore more than double within the next 20 years.

During the last decade, the rate of population growth in the developing countries was higher than the rate of growth of their agricultural production. Per caput production dropped in not less than 61 developing countries, and in 15 of these it even fell in absolute terms, that is, they produced less in 1979 than they did in 1970.

Last year, the agricultural production of the developing countries rose by only 1.3%, only half of the growth of their population. In 1980, food supplies have continued to shrink, and a sharp drop in cereal production, reaching about 14 million tonnes, is to be feared in the poorest countries.

Lastly, these structural deficiencies in the Third World's agriculture are often made even more serious by emergency situations which, alas, have become even more frequent in recent times. There have been not only the natural catastrophes, cyclones, droughts and floods to which the tropics are more subject than the temperate zones, but there have also been civil outbreaks and wars, bringing in their wake a miserable flood of refugees who, when the neighbouring countries assume responsibility for them, make their food situation even worse.

The Special Case of Africa

At this point, I would like to discuss with you the special and truly alarming case of Africa.

The food situation there has degenerated drastically during the last 20 years and is now extremely disturbing. Food production in Africa is growing at less than 2% a year while population growth is about 3%, so that per caput production is decreasing and the average African has 10% less food available to him today than 10 years ago. As a result, he is every day less well fed and his average food ration has fallen below the minimum required for survival. The gangrene of hunger is spreading, and local famines are always to be feared, particularly among the millions of refugees and displaced persons.

I have recently been compelled to sound the alarm and to call, on the 19th of this month, an emergency meeting of potential donors with a view to mobilizing massive and rapid assistance to the many African countries so terribly stricken by calamitous events.

A prolonged drought is severely affecting much of the Sahel, Djibouti and southern Ethiopia. Somalia is facing the double peril of late, irregular rains and the heaviest concentration of refugees in the world. The troubles in Chad and the flood of displaced persons into Sudan and Cameroon are creating a very difficult situation there. East Africa is suffering from a persistent drought and its 1980 crop outlook is a subject of grave concern. The press and television have informed the world of the tragic famine afflicting Uganda. Kenya and Tanzania, which had been self-sufficient in recent years, are threatened today with serious shortages. To the south, the supplies of Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe are also threatened by a severe drought. In short, in all parts of the continent the outlook is gloomy indeed.

It is true that Africa is highly aware of the situation, and it was comforting for me to observe, at the extraordinary summit meeting of Heads of State of the Organization for African Unity in Lagos at the end of April last, Africa's determination to face it, counting on herself first of all and assuming her own destiny. The countries that have made progress up to now are those which have defined a clear line of conduct and established precise priorities for themselves and for external aid. In any case, I observed with pleasure that the African countries have clearly stated their determination to give top priority to agriculture from now on. This political affirmation at the highest level should henceforth serve as a reference base for bilateral and multilateral assistance in allocating a larger share of the available resources to the agricultural sector.

Food Dependency

Mr. Chairman,

The general weakness of agriculture in the Third World, which I have just described briefly, not only leads to individual suffering but also has another result that is extremely threatening for the future: dependency on abroad by countries obliged to increase their purchases of food that, worse yet, their climate often does not let them produce. According to FAO forecasts, the developing countries in 1980 will have to import about 88 million tonnes of cereals, of which nearly 90% will come from a small number of developed countries on which they could quickly become dependent. Their freedom of action is at stake. When we consider that the Third World countries were overall net exporters of cereals before the Second World War, we can see how greatly the situation has degenerated.

In 1979, their cereal imports cost them almost \$17 billion, representing one third of their receipts from agricultural exports. How can they finance such amounts without compromising their economic development for many years? Action is urgent, because without easy borrowing facilities, many of the poorer food-deficit countries will just not be able to buy the cereals they need, and this in turn will aggravate frighteningly the conditions of malnutrition of their peoples. That is why I recently suggested to the International Monetary Fund that they grant additional support for the balance of payments of the countries that are forced to import food in large quantities. I am thinking of a food financing facility along the lines of the facility set up for oil imports.

Supplementary Assistance for Agricultural Development

In speaking in this way, I have not been exaggerating in order to make an impression. I have thought it necessary to describe clearly the disturbing short-term outlook for the world's food supply.

The fault does not lie in our stars alone. It is fundamentally political: it lies in the fact that many Third World countries have under-emphasized agriculture and the advancement of the rural world, in the inadequacy of official development assistance and food aid from the rich countries, and in the rebirth of protectionism, hindering the expansion of the developing countries' foreign trade.

We know that the developing countries can increase their food and agricultural production substantially provided that they give it high enough priority. They will need to mobilize enough resources for investment, apply the right policies, take the right encouragement measures and reform their institutions in the right way in order to integrate the rural masses into the development process and improve the fate of the poorest among them. But such a recovery requires massive investment, that the poorer countries cannot cover from their own resources alone, and assistance from abroad is therefore indispensable. According to our study Agriculture: Toward 2000, investment in agriculture should double in the next 20 years, and foreign aid for this sector, which stood at about \$4.3 billion in 1977, should be tripled in real terms by 1990 and quadrupled by the end of the century.

A glance at the latest statistics of the Development Assistance Committee is not reassuring. If the official development aid of the Western world in 1979 increased in real

terms by 2%, reaching \$22.3 billion, even so it decreased from 0.35% in 1978 to 0.34% as a percentage of gross national product - less than half the unanimously established target of 0.70%! Only Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have honoured their commitments to reach this target.

Let me mention another fact which seems to me to be particularly revealing and disturbing. According to preliminary estimates, the total flow of financial resources from the DAC countries to the developing countries including official aid, public and private non-concessional assistance and contributions from the private sector reached in 1979 about \$70.4 billion. But compare this figure with the total cost of servicing the developing countries' debts to all their creditors: in the same year, it was estimated at \$72.3 billion. Thus, the total financial assistance to the Third World from the DAC countries was completely cancelled out by its debt servicing costs for the year.

I know that all the developed countries are preoccupied today by inflation, the economic crisis, the recession, and that they have imposed severe budgetary constraints on themselves. I believe however that it would be a tragic error of judgement to let their austerity policies affect unduly their assistance budgets, even if they are the most weakly defended of all budgets in Cabinet meetings. Your countries are heavily dependent on raw material imports and on export markets, and you cannot guarantee your future if the countries providing your raw materials and purchasing your finished products slip gradually into chaos and anarchy. Interdependence has today reached the stage at which an expanding Third World economy is one of the conditions for a dynamic overall world economy.

I plead with you therefore for a massive increase in assistance for developing the agricultural sector in order to speed up production and cover the needs of the food-deficit countries.

Greater World Food Security

Thus, by the joint efforts of the developing countries, mobilizing increasingly their own resources, and the developed countries, increasing their assistance to agriculture, it would be possible to lay the groundwork for an improved world food security, so cruelly lacking today.

You will recall that in 1978 I proposed a Plan of Action for World Food Security which was adopted by the FAO Conference in 1979 and subsequently approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations. I earnestly hope that all the countries of your region will take the steps that are needed to implement it without delay. And let me emphasize here two points that are of capital importance in the present circumstances: food aid and emergency aid. It is essential that food aid be increased not only to reach the target of 10 million tonnes of cereal agreed on more than 6 years ago and never attained, but above all to adjust this target gradually to the real needs. In particular, it would be necessary to increase World Food Programme contributions to meet the target of one billion dollars for 1981-82.

At the same time, the means available at the multilateral level for meeting emergency situations must be adjusted to the requirements. Without even mentioning Kampuchea, I have received since January 1980 emergency aid requests from more than 25 countries.

How could I meet these requests fully when I have available to me only the scanty credits of the World Food Programme and the uncertain amounts turned over to the International Emergency Food Reserve, set up in 1975 with a target of 500 000 tonnes which has never been reached?

The fact is that the entire world community is unprepared to meet these catastrophes. FAO has been doing what it can to assist the stricken countries directly and to encourage and mobilize all possible bilateral and multilateral assistance. But this assistance is uncertain and unpredictable. Needs have reached such a point that it is no longer possible to deal with them on a stop-gap basis as more or less rapid individual decisions may dictate.

What is needed is a multilateral facility, well known and well established, on which we can count. This explains why I recently proposed that the International Emergency Food Reserve be transformed into a true international convention, duly signed and ratified, so as to guarantee an agreed level of resources and increase them gradually in order to meet the real requirements. This question will be discussed next month by the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes and I hope that you will support it there.

Mr. Chairman,

Just a word now on international trade, which also contributes to food security, in that export receipts of the food-deficit countries enable them to finance the imports of the food they need.

At the recent multilateral trade negotiations under GATT, the tariff concessions were much more impressive for industrial products than for agriculture. Many trade barriers still exist against agricultural products of major interest to the developing countries, and escalating tariffs continue to paralyze the exportation of agro-industrial products. What is more, the growing practice of "orderly marketing arrangements" is strangely similar to measures for the closing of frontiers.

This being so, it is not surprising that the developing countries consider that their interests are not sufficiently taken into account, and they made this clear at the FAO Conference last November. The removal of protectionist measures that still hinder the developing world's exports is for them a vital necessity.

The agreement that was finally reached at UNCTAD for a common Fund for Commodities can however be pointed to as a positive development.

Global Negotiations

Mr. Chairman,

Everything that I have said until now has been pointing in one direction: to affirm the absolute necessity of a new world food order that will allow the Third World countries to feed themselves and to reduce their food dependency on the industrialized world. Otherwise, it can be feared that the New International Economic Order of which we hear so much will be nothing more than a sham.

I hope therefore that the necessary technical and financial means will be made available for the effective implementation of the agriculture chapter of the new International Development Strategy, and that food and agriculture will receive the attention they deserve in the coming North/South global negotiations. The recent Special Session of the General Assembly has just discussed the matter, but, more than the declarations of good will we heard from all sides, the need is to apply decisions and to move into action. I note with satisfaction that the Heads of State of the seven most industrialized countries have decided to devote their next summit meeting in Ottawa in 1981 to development questions. I hope that there again, the problems of food and malnutrition will receive due attention. Concrete decisions should be taken, in the light of the "Survival Programme" suggested by the Brandt Commission - and let me express in passing my regret that this report has not received the attention it deserves and that it is being swallowed up in general indifference and neglect.

European Problems

Mr. Chairman,

I will not take up your time going through the various points of your agenda. A few minutes ago, sketching out the broad lines of the world food situation, I dealt to some extent with the questions of food security and the Action Programme of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

Similarly, I need not introduce the study before you on agricultural manpower in the European region. This paper seeks to outline the probable evolution of the rural sector in Europe during the 1980s and points up certain basic tendencies, such as part-time agriculture and other productive activities. You will be called upon to indicate whether such studies can lead to concrete forms of cooperation at the level of your region and beyond, for the benefit of the developing countries that are already running up against problems of the same kind.

I would however like to say a few words on the role of Europe within FAO and on the European activities of our Organization.

Above all, I am proud of the support that your region has never ceased to give us. Your countries cover nearly half of our regular budget and are also the main source of voluntary bilateral contributions. In particular, the Scandinavian countries, several Member States of the EEC, Switzerland and others, are making substantial extrabudgetary contributions to FAO's special action programmes, allowing us to act directly in the field in favour of the poorest countries.

I would also like to emphasize the excellent working relationships that have grown up between FAO and the EEC, especially in the field of development assistance, through annual high-level meetings. This cooperation is already well developed in the field of emergency aid. Last April, I had the pleasure of attending the hearings of the European Parliament on hunger in the world, and of seeing to what an extent my concern about the food situation was being shared. I hope that the discussions in the European Parliament will contribute to mobilizing public opinion and stimulating governments to increase their assistance to the Third World.

On 1 January next, as Greece enters the EEC, we will be talking about a Community of Ten, and in a few years, probably, as Spain and Portugal join, it will be a Community of Twelve. For the new members and for Western Europe in general, this is an historic event of great importance. Here in Athens, the least I can do is to express my best wishes for the happiness and prosperity of Greece within an enlarged EEC. Certainly, Greece will have to solve difficult transitional problems, but she will also be gaining new possibilities of access to a market of nearly 270 million people. Enlarging the Community to ten, and then to twelve, will have repercussions within it as it now stands, and also on other European and non-European countries, owing in particular to the competitive nature of Mediterranean-type products. I hope that every precaution will be taken to smooth out its effects as much as possible.

By their position in the production and consumption of agricultural products, the socialist countries can and should play an important role in solving the problem of agricultural and rural development, and that is why I am glad to observe their active participation in FAO's efforts. They are making a particularly significant contribution in training supervisory staff of many developing countries, taking full advantage of the diversity and wealth of their expertise in very different fields. I should also mention their productive collaboration in the European Cooperative Research Networks.

But Europe also includes a number of less-developed countries that still need assistance. The recent decision of the Board of Governors of UNDP, approving a new European indicative programme for the cycle 1982-1986, is clear proof of this fact.

Although it is concentrating first of all on the developing regions, FAO has always maintained a certain level of activity in Europe, and we will continue to do so within the limits of our resources. This action is taken in particular through the European Commission on Agriculture and its groups, the effects of whose work are often felt beyond the strictly European context. It acts as an executing agency for national projects or sponsors cooperative projects at the regional and sub-regional levels, and your countries should value and support this last type of cooperation, because it permits the spread of knowledge, the strengthening of scientific potential of regional institutions, the training of staff in various fields at low cost and the transfer of technologies. The work of the Codex Alimentarius is also of great importance for your region. Lastly, mention should be made of training in favour of the Third World: it is not generally known, for example, that through FAO, in 1979 alone, not less than 520 citizens of developing countries began training periods in Europe.

The European Cooperative Research Networks are another original form of cooperation that should be encouraged at the level of the region and which continue to stimulate increasing interest outside it. Thus far, 200 institutions in 50 countries, 20 of them developing countries, are cooperating within the ten existing networks, and the experience they have accumulated is beginning to serve as an example for other regions. Latin America has recently decided to set up a similar network, demonstrating that a regional project of this kind can benefit not only the European countries but also other, developing, regions.

Energy

In reviewing our European activities, you will also assess the work undertaken on energy in agriculture. I would like to discuss this point briefly with you, because energy is of primary importance to agriculture, whether as producer or consumer. The need for severe revision of policies because of the price levels reached by oil is no longer questioned. The governments of the industrialized countries, including Europe, and the governments of the developing countries are now all aware of the urgency of structural changes in the energy sector, with a view to more rational utilization and to developing new and renewable energy sources.

How will all this affect agriculture? Will it be the victim of increased prices and possible future restrictions, darkening even more the outlook for food and agricultural production in the world? There lies the danger.

That is why energy is a matter of serious concern for all of us. Three aspects of the problem are of special importance: ensuring that agriculture and the rural sector can cover their needs in energy; promoting the best possible utilization of energy available, through economy measures and improved production methods; encouraging new and renewable sources of energy, particularly from biomass. I hope that FAO will be able to intensify its work in this area under field programmes or through technical divisions in Headquarters and the Regional Offices, developing gradually a global strategy capable of assisting governments to overcome this grave problem. Our next programme of work will foresee an adequate share for this sector of our activities.

With more particular regard to Europe, I may remind you of the work being carried on within our Regional Office. It aims above all at facilitating technical cooperation among the research institutes concerned in the region and beyond it. I fully support the recommendation that the European Commission on Agriculture made last year for the establishment of a European Cooperative Research Network to develop new and renewable energy sources for agriculture and the rural sector. Further, the project now being discussed with UNDP on integrated energy systems also deserves your strong technical and financial support.

Mr. Chairman,

It is time to bring my remarks to a close. I have been speaking to you about Europe, a continent of extremely varied natural resources, levels of development, economic and social systems. It is this diversity which makes regional cooperation so important, and FAO is bound to encourage it.

But your region is also highly developed, with a considerable scientific and technological potential, and it is for this reason that I spoke to you first of all about the great misery of the poor countries. The world can no longer tolerate that a multitude lives in absolute poverty, beating desperately at the gates of abundance. Europe can and must contribute to solving the problem. Without underestimating what has been done until now, I have called for still more generous assistance. May my call be heard, for nothing but a more just, more fair new order can not only satisfy the moral imperatives of a developing society, but also guarantee the future and the stability of the world. Let us, then, be the artisans of interdependence, linking in brotherhood the peoples of the earth in the awareness of their common destiny!

I wish you great success in your discussions and thank you for your kind attention.

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