

REPORT

Venice,
Italy,
3-7 April
1990

**FAO Regional
Conference
for Europe
Seventeenth session**



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

FAO Member Nations in the European Region (as of 7 April 1990)

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

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
Thirteenth	— Sofia, Bulgaria, 4-8 October 1982
Fourteenth	— Reykjavik, Iceland, 17-21 September 1984
Fifteenth	— Istanbul, Turkey, 28 April-2 May 1986
Sixteenth	— Cracow, Poland, 23-26 August 1988
Seventeenth	— Venice, Italy, 3-7 April 1990

ERC/90/REP

REPORT OF THE SEVENTEENTH
FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Venice, Italy, 3 - 7 April 1990

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 1990

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SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in Europe

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

1. noted the policy reforms under way in some countries of Central and Eastern Europe in their economies as a whole and in the food and agricultural sector in particular aimed at promoting an enhanced role for market forces in determining levels of agricultural production and trade (paras 24 and 28).
2. expressed its full support for these reforms and considered that other European countries and the international community as a whole should actively support them (para. 30).
3. stressed that assistance provided to support reforms in Europe should not diminish the resources available in providing development assistance to the developing countries (para. 37).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

4. considered that FAO, in close cooperation with ECE, could play an active role in supporting the reforms under way in the food and agriculture sector in East European countries and recommended that the subject be included in the agenda of the 98th Session of the FAO Council in November 1990 (para. 32).
5. expressed its hope that for this Council session, FAO, in cooperation with ECE, could provide an updated analysis of the situation on agriculture in Europe as a whole (para. 32).
6. concurred, in principle, with the ideas concerning FAO's role in the policy analysis area, by promoting policy dialogue among European countries, by channelling policy advice where requested and by contributing to invigorate the policy analysis capabilities in the countries undertaking reforms (para. 33).
7. considered that FAO's role could, in special circumstances, also include other forms of support, e.g. that provided by technical assistance projects (para. 33).
8. stressed that the existing cooperation and coordination arrangements with the ECE should be utilized to the maximum and strengthened in supporting an enhanced role for FAO/ECE in the ongoing reform process in East Europe (para. 35).

FAO Programme in the Region

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

9. considered that additional resources be made available to strengthen FAO activities in Europe and that this issue could be addressed by Member Governments during the preparatory process for the Programme of Work and Budget for the next and subsequent biennium (paras 34 and 42).
10. underlined the vital function that the new priority-setting mechanism and medium-term plan would play in this process (para. 34).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

11. expressed its appreciation for the wide range of activities carried out by FAO during the past two years (paras. 40 through 50).
12. requested that the ETTS studies which had made a valuable contribution to forestry policies continue to receive priority support from FAO and ECE (para. 46).
13. supported work carried out by the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee (EIFAC) particularly as regard the preservation of Mediterranean eel and the formulation of feeds for net-cage culture and land-based fish (para. 48).
14. welcomed the establishment of an (ad hoc) Working Group to examine the respective programmes of work of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture and ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems in strengthening cooperation and complementarity and in providing countries with the opportunity of expressing views concerning orientation and programme priorities, as well as proposals for the agenda of the Regional Conference (para. 51).
15. requested that the recommendations of the Seventeenth Conference concerning the future FAO Programme of Work in the Region be reported to the FAO Council then conveyed to the Director-General for his consideration in determining proposals for the Programme of Work and Budget in 1992-93 (para. 51).

Socio-economic Aspects of Environmental Policies in European Agriculture

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

16. noted that the transformation process of European agriculture in the past 40 years had been facilitated by technological advances and by policy decisions based on socio-economic objectives, that had seldom included environmental protection considerations (para. 54).

17. noted that the growth and extent of legislative and policy interventions to control agricultural practices which caused environmental damage depended on diversity of situations in Europe regarding food self-sufficiency, intensity levels applied in agricultural practices, and status of natural resources (paras 55 and 56).
18. noted that the lack of socio-economic analysis and information regarding producers' responses to the multiple socio-cultural economic and environmental policy objectives pursued was making optimal policy design more difficult (para. 57).
19. expressed the interest of member countries in cooperating with FAO and ECE on the exchange of experience, on aspects of transboundary pollution and on international standards relating to pollution abatement (para. 60).

For the attention of FAO

20. recommended that FAO undertake or promote, as appropriate, more systematic research on socio-economic aspects of various environmental regulations and controls on European agriculture, including their differential impacts on various social groups, and on the overall effect on regional and inter-regional competitiveness. ESCORENA should also pay more attention to these aspects (para. 59).
21. encouraged FAO to collect information and promote exchange of experience regarding development of appropriate regulations for agricultural practices designed for environmental protection (para. 60).

A Balanced Diet - A Way to Good Nutrition

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

22. expressed its full agreement with the recommendations designed to reduce the intake of undesirable diet components (para. 63).
23. stressed the importance of nutrition education at all levels (para. 64).
24. recommended that national food and nutrition policies be further developed and improved and stressed the opportunity to establish coordinating bodies responsible for monitoring the implementation of these policies (para. 65).
25. suggested that Member Nations proceed to carefully assess their own food and nutrition problems, thereby broadening the review of the issue of malnutrition in Europe as well as in the developing countries (para. 68).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

26. noted with satisfaction that food and nutrition were appearing as topics on the agendas of all FAO Regional Conferences in 1990 as initial contributions to the preparatory work for the International Conference on Nutrition to be held in Rome in December 1992 under the joint sponsorship of FAO and WHO (para. 67).

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

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

27. elected Mr A. Szeskin (Israel) as representative of the Region on the CGIAR for the four-year period 1991-94 (para. 69).
28. extended the term of office of Mr A. Wos (Poland) until the end of 1992 (para. 69).

Place and Date of the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

29. requested the Director-General to determine the date and place of the Eighteenth Regional Conference for Europe in consultation with the Government of Czechoslovakia and other Member Governments of the Region (para. 70).

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, organized in cooperation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), was held in Venice, Italy from 3 to 7 April 1990 at the kind invitation of the Government of Italy.
2. Delegations from twenty-six Member Nations of the European Region participated in the Conference. Three Member Nations from other regions and two European Member Nations of the United Nations not members of FAO participated in an observer capacity. The Conference was also attended by representatives of the United Nations system and observers of fifteen intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
3. The list of participants is given in Appendix B of this Report.

Inaugural Ceremony

4. The Director-General of FAO, Mr Edouard Saouma, in his opening address, welcomed the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr Calogero Mannino, to the official inauguration of the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe and also welcomed delegates and observers. He thanked the Government of Italy for having invited the Conference to Venice and expressed his gratitude for its generous hospitality in doing so. He described the role played by the Government of Italy as host to FAO since 1951 as one of true cooperation and unfailing hospitality.
5. In his inaugural speech, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Italy welcomed the delegations and observers to his country and drew attention to the historical role of the city of Venice as the crossroads of dialogue and trade over the centuries, between east, west, north and south, which had greatly contributed in shaping the Europe of today. He recalled that while the European continent had experienced the horrors of many wars, great prospects now appeared to be at hand for European unity and solidarity. He considered that Europe must strive to achieve economic integration and unity which would strengthen dialogue, trade and cooperation among industrialized countries and which would foster additional assistance to developing countries. He emphasized the strong involvement of the European Community in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and that the need for stabilizing measures for certain commodities. He noted that markets must be open, particularly to the agricultural producing countries, and that the Third World's debt burden must be solved. He emphasized that the transition underway in Eastern Europe toward the target of establishing free market economies would not be easy. He considered that the task would be twofold, to provide more food for people while increasing export trade to strengthen economies. In concluding, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry called for reflection on the responsibilities to be assumed by European countries in building unity and solidarity.

Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

6. The Conference elected unanimously, Mr Calogero Mannino, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Italy, as Chairman.

7. The Conference also elected unanimously the following Vice-Chairmen:

Mr Christodoulos Christodoulou	Director-General, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Cyprus
Mr Seamus Kirk	Minister of State for Agriculture and Food, Ireland
Mr Lawrence A. Gatt	Minister of Productive Development, Malta
Ms Anna Potok	Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Economy, Poland

8. In accordance with the practice established upon the recommendation of the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe to appoint either a Rapporteur or a drafting committee for the preparation of the report, Mr Frederik Ch. Prillewitz (Netherlands) was elected Rapporteur.

Statement by the Chairman

9. In his statement, the Chairman of the Conference, Mr Calogero Mannino, stated that Italy was honoured to host the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe. He reiterated his welcome to the delegations and observers to the unique city of Venice and expressed his hope for a fruitful and positive Conference.

Adoption of the Agenda

10. The Conference adopted the Agenda which is given in Appendix A to this Report.

Statement by the Director-General

11. In his statement, the Director-General drew attention to the speed with which and extent to which ideological, political and economic changes were taking place in Europe, changes which had shattered long-accepted concepts and ideas and which had introduced an era of cooperation, of trade development, and of economic and technological collaboration between East and West. The emerging situation would necessitate a profound reshaping of FAO's role in the region, as well as a reappraisal of systems and options in the agricultural and rural world. In fact, the need for technical assistance also arose within Europe in relation to a serious debt problem. He drew attention to the ideal opportunity to indicate a constructive dialogue among officials of East and West as they worked side by side at the present Regional Conference, and he urged the Eastern countries to delineate their needs and aspirations to facilitate a meaningful exchange of ideas and information.

12. The continuing accumulation of arrears in the payment of contributions remained extremely worrying and seriously limited activities at a time when FAO should play an expanded role in Europe. The Director-General noted with encouragement the request by the European Economic Community for admission to FAO and the prospect that the USSR might join the Organization.

13. The Director-General drew attention to the major issues expected to dominate discussions during the Conference, namely, environment, nutrition and international trade. To promote ecologically-sound agriculture, producers needed to be informed and encouraged to participate fully in the search for solutions. Concepts and technologies needed to be modified to accommodate ecological principles, instead of concentrating efforts to increase agricultural productivity at any price.

14. FAO was ready to work to promote exchanges of experience between Eastern and Western Europe and to introduce ecologically-sound agriculture and environmental policies that took the vital interests of agriculture into account.

15. Europe was not facing the same nutritional problems as the Third World, namely, undernourishment and shortages. Instead it was experiencing a disturbing rise in cardiovascular diseases and metabolism problems brought about by unbalanced diets. He expressed that he had high expectations for the European contribution in preparing for the World Conference on Nutrition in 1992.

16. Developed countries were called upon to establish a multilateral system for international trade based on cooperation as protection against erratic market fluctuations that seriously affected developing countries struggling to overcome a host of trade obstacles. In many instances, the value of commodities exported by Third World countries was lower than in 1980 and had resulted in stagnation, decreasing purchasing power and increased indebtedness. In that respect, he drew the attention of the Conference to two special points, namely the drug and immigration problems facing Europe. He noted that the cultivation of plants from which narcotics were extracted offered impoverished growers far more income than they received from cultivating traditional tropical products like coffee and sugar, whose prices on the world market had collapsed. There was an urgent need for agricultural production to provide reasonable incomes and adequate living standards for Third World producers. The problem of immigration was, in most cases, one of work, income and security, that is, the search for a worthwhile and interesting existence. Again the solution lay in radical improvements in Third World socio-economic conditions.

17. The complete text of the Director-General's statement is given in Appendix D to this Report.

Statement by the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE)

18. Mr G. Hinteregger, the Executive Secretary, drew attention to the unparalleled historic changes taking place with the transformation of Eastern Europe countries and the Soviet Union from single to multi-party systems and from centrally-planned to market economies, which would have a profound impact on all aspects of East-West economic cooperation. He

underlined the long tradition of inter-agency collaboration between FAO and ECE and expressed the strong desire that the vast experience of both organizations be combined to provide assistance to countries confronting a wide range of agricultural, environmental and economic problems.

19. He informed the Conference of a number of activities carried out jointly with FAO in the fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and of the strengthening of ties between the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and the ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems. In particular, he noted a recommendation by the Committee on Agricultural Problems to establish a working group in conjunction with ECA whose task would be to examine the respective programmes of work of the two bodies in order to improve cooperation efforts, ensure complementarity and avoid possible duplication of efforts. Should this joint effort receive the support of the Executive Committee of ECA, he expressed the view that the working group would play a crucial role in identifying priority areas to promote East-West cooperation.

20. He informed the Conference of activities of the ECE Timber Committee which worked in close harmony with the European Forestry Commission, and noted that the part of the 1990 Global Forest Resource Assessment concerning the developed temperate-zone countries was being handled by the Joint FAO/ECE Division. European concern over the fate of tropical forests was fully shared by the Timber Committee, which had welcomed the incrementation of activities under the Tropical Forestry Action Plan coordinated by FAO.

21. He concluded by stressing the complementarity of ECE's work with that of FAO in the region, and the importance of benefits accruing to member countries from cooperation efforts between the two organizations, which were also of value to developing countries.

22. The complete text of the Executive Secretary's statement is given in Appendix E of this Report.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

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

23. Member Nations' representatives participating in the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, as well as several observers, took part in the general debate. They expressed satisfaction with the preparations for the Conference and their appreciation for the generous hospitality extended by the host country. Most delegations who spoke reported on recent developments in their national agriculture situation, including the related policy issues and plans for the future.

24. The Conference referred to policy reforms adopted in Europe in recent years which aimed at promoting an enhanced role for market forces in determining agricultural production, consumption and trade levels. In a number of countries such reforms had the objective of limiting or reducing the level of support and protection provided to agricultural production in order to control the structural surpluses generation and to make progress toward re-establishing and maintaining market balances.

25. In this context, it was considered that the tightening in the last two years of the demand/supply situation and the rise in international market prices for some temperate zone food commodities were particularly the result of the North American drought of 1988 and the production stabilization policies implemented by the European Community and some other European countries. It was also considered that in many countries the underlying production trend to develop faster than domestic and export market demand, caused essentially by strong productivity growth, was still present and likely to continue in the future. Therefore, the present situation did not justify any relaxation of policy reforms aimed at correcting support policies that encouraged surplus production.

26. The Conference considered that the objectives of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTNs) in agriculture provided an important guiding principle for agricultural policy reform. It was agreed that policies should not have trade-distorting effects. The Conference indicated that in evaluating agricultural policies and in considering progress toward the objectives of the MTNs, due account should be taken of the multiple socio-economic and environmental functions agriculture was called upon to perform in European societies.

27. In this context, it was indicated that it would be inappropriate to expect that European countries would be prepared to dismantle, in the name of trade liberalization, some key characteristics of their agricultural policies designed precisely to achieve objectives corresponding to the multiple functions of their rural areas.

28. The Conference referred to the rapidly evolving political and economic situation in certain countries of Eastern and Central Europe. It was noted with appreciation that some policy reforms were already introduced in their economies as a whole, and in their food and agriculture sectors in particular, and that other reforms were underway. Such reforms were not identical everywhere and reflected country specifics. However, all reform experiences involved movement in varying degrees toward forms of economic management which accorded a predominant role to market forces and limited

state intervention in the economy to what each country considered the minimum indispensable in achieving its objectives. The Conference, noting that such policy reforms were still in full evolution in some countries, felt that it was, therefore, too early to attempt to produce an evaluation.

29. Policies concerning farm structures and land tenure were still at initial inception stage and were proving particularly difficult to formulate. All countries concerned stated that, as a minimum, there would be no discrimination concerning forms of land ownership and exploitation. Some countries, however, expressed a strong preference for promoting private ownership and management.

30. The Conference expressed strong support for these reforms and considered that other European countries and the international community as a whole should actively support them. Some countries, as well as the Observer from the European Community, gave accounts of actions already undertaken or planned in support of the policy reforms in Eastern European countries.

31. Agricultural exports were an important earner of foreign exchange in some of the countries of Eastern Europe. It was noted that a number of these countries had the potential of becoming significant net exporters of agricultural produce. This was a factor to be taken into account in the policy debate concerned with limiting the generation of surpluses and the re-emergence of market imbalances in certain commodity sectors.

32. The Conference considered that FAO, in close cooperation with ECE, could play an active role in supporting the reforms underway in the food and agriculture sector in Eastern European countries. It was considered that this subject was of such importance that it should be included in the agenda of the 98th Council of FAO in November 1990. The Conference expressed its hope that FAO, in cooperation with ECE, could provide an updated analysis of the situation on agriculture in Europe as a whole.

33. The Conference concurred, in principle, with the ideas concerning FAO's possible role expressed by the Director-General in his opening statement and further elaborated in document ERC/90/INF/4, section V, as well as with the ideas expressed by the Executive Secretary of ECE in his opening statement. These proposals assigned FAO/ECE a role in the policy analysis area by serving as a catalyst in promoting policy dialogue among European countries, by channelling policy advice where requested and by contributing to invigorate the policy analysis capabilities in the countries undertaking reforms. It was also considered that FAO's role could, in special circumstances, also include other forms of support, e.g. that provided by technical assistance projects.

34. The Conference was aware of the fact that resources earmarked for FAO activities in Europe in the Programme of Work and Budget of the current biennium 1990-91 were very limited and could not support any significant expansion. This was an issue which could be addressed during the preparatory process for the Programme of Work and Budget for the next and subsequent biennia. The member countries would play an active role in this respect as well as in the preparation of the next Regional Conference. Member countries, as well as the Director-General of FAO, underlined the vital function that the new priority-setting mechanism and medium-term plan would play in this process.

35. In considering FAO's role in support of the reforms in the Eastern European countries, it was mentioned that many other bilateral and multilateral activities in the same fields were underway in Europe. The need was stressed to continue avoiding duplication. In addition, the existing cooperation and coordination arrangements with the ECE should be utilized to the maximum and strengthened in supporting an enhanced role for FAO/ECE in the ongoing reform process in Eastern Europe.

36. In many interventions, reference was made to the need to retain a broader perspective by placing agricultural issues in Europe, including those related to the reforms in Eastern Europe, within a world context. In food and agriculture, the global situation was characterized predominantly by the persistence of poverty, particularly in rural areas, and by undernutrition affecting a significant proportion of populations in developing countries. Decisions and policy choices designed to resolve agricultural problems in Europe should, therefore, also be evaluated as regard their impact on this wider and critical dimension of world food and agriculture.

37. In this context, it was stressed that assistance provided to support reforms in Europe should not diminish the resources available in providing development assistance to the developing countries. Several countries and the European Community Observer reported that this principle was already being fully respected and that the assistance in the food and agriculture sector provided to Eastern and Central Europe was in addition to, and not detracted from, resources earmarked for the developing countries.

38. It was expressed that the developing countries would ultimately benefit from a successful transformation of the economies of Eastern Europe, since they would provide new market outlets for their agricultural exports. This was particularly true for tropical products, for which there was a significant potential for increased demand in these countries.

39. All delegations referred at length in their interventions to the increasing importance they assigned to environmental factors and to health and nutrition aspects in their policies in the food and agriculture sector. Both these subjects were further discussed under the relevant specific agenda items 8 and 9, as reported below.

FAO Programme in the Region: FAO Activities in Europe and Programme of Work, 1988-1989

40. The Conference expressed appreciation for the wide range of activities carried out by FAO during the past two years, as reported in ERC/90/2.

41. The Conference considered that the European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA) had demonstrated its value for European agriculture. Attention was drawn to the significant number of scientific research activities being carried out in the fields of animal nutrition, waste utilization, cotton, soybean, flax, trace elements, pasture and fodder crops and energy throughout Europe with rather limited Secretariat funds. Regrets were expressed that funding for the European Cooperative Networks on Rural Energy (CNRE), which dealt with renewable energy, biomass production, conversion of energy, solar and wind energy, was being reduced.

42. When discussing the economic, agricultural and political restructuring taking place, the need for additional resources to be made available to strengthen FAO regional activities was considered. Given the scope and pace of ongoing changes in Europe, it would be necessary for FAO to react immediately in order to play a decisive role. As indicated in country statements during the General Debate (Agenda item 6), there should be close cooperation between FAO and ECE in addressing the needs of European agriculture. The Conference considered that FAO should play a catalytic role in agricultural restructuring, in prompting mutual assistance endeavours and in promoting cooperation efforts between East and West.

43. Support was expressed for the activities of FAO's Remote Sensing Centre (AGRT), which included the participation of several European organizations. This project, implemented in Europe and based on data collected from European METEOSTAT and US (NOAA) environmental satellites, had been of considerable benefit in assessing precipitation and vegetation trends in Africa (Artemis Project). It served as an excellent example of international scientific cooperation directly benefiting the Third World.

44. Attention was drawn to the significant role played by FAO in the International Conference on the Acceptance, Control and Trade in Irradiated Foods, which had been jointly organized by FAO, IAEA, WHO and ITC-UNCTAD/GATT in 1988. The Conference was informed that a concerted effort had been made by top officials of the international organizations involved to draw attention to and receive support for the benefits of technology and food irradiation in reducing food-borne parasites and post-harvest food losses.

45. The Conference expressed strong support for FAO activities, as well as those carried out jointly in the FAO/ECE Division in Geneva, concerning the five networks under the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions "Silva Mediterranea". Attention was drawn to the "Forestry Policies in Europe" published in 1988. The principal findings of the studies on national forestry policies were presented to the Twenty-fourth Session of the European Forestry Commission in 1989. Support was also expressed by some forest-producing countries for recommendations made during a Joint FAO/ECE Seminar on products of the Mediterranean Forest, which had included a review of non-wood products, including cork, resin, edible products and game.

46. The Conference's attention was also drawn to the valuable contribution made by the ETTS studies to forestry policies. They provided a good basis for coordinated international and national action, and should continue to receive priority support from FAO and ECE.

47. Countries which had suffered severe forest damage due to weather conditions during 1989 noted the timeliness of discussions by the European Forestry Commission on measures to be taken in the aftermath of major forest catastrophes.

48. The Conference noted that a number of countries were participating actively in several FAO/UNDP activities on aquaculture, including the MEDRAP Phase II Project and AQUAMED. General support was also expressed for the work of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC), particularly as regard the preservation of the Mediterranean eel, and the formulation of feeds for net-cage culture and land-based fish.

49. A number of countries expressed their willingness to host seminars, workshops and other such activities. In this respect, the Conference was informed about the Pan-European Forestry Conference organized by France and Finland, and about the Regional Conference dealing with the follow-up to the World Commission on Environment Report, "Our Common Future" (Brundtland Report), organized by Norway.

50. Concerning FAO activities to eradicate the Cochliomyia hominivorax New World Screwworm (NSW), the Observer of the United States announced that products and technology which had been successful in eradicating screwworms in North America would soon be made available to afflicted countries through FAO to confront this very serious threat.

51. In response to requests to increase FAO activities, especially in the field of socio-economics, it was reported that document ERC/90/INF/4, "Policy Changes Affecting European Agriculture" was under discussion within the ECA Executive Committee and that such requests would be taken into consideration by that body. The Conference welcomed the decision of the Executive Committee to accept the proposal by the ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems to form a joint ad hoc Working Group to examine the respective programmes of work of the two bodies in strengthening cooperation and complementarity. It was noted that the activities of this Working Group would provide countries with the opportunity of expressing views concerning orientation and programme priorities, as well as proposals which they wished to appear on the agenda of the Regional Conference. The recommendations by the Conference concerning the future FAO Programme of Work in the Region would be reported to the FAO Council, then conveyed to the Director-General for his consideration in determining proposals for the Programme of Work and Budget in 1992-93.

Socio-economic Aspects of Environmental Policies in European Agriculture

52. The Conference appreciated the comprehensiveness of the document prepared and the balance of its argumentation. It met in full the request made by the 16th FAO Regional Conference in Cracow and indicated that "FAO was on the right track" in terms of its analysis and proposals for follow-up action. The document's relevance was noted, both in looking back to the recommendations listed in the "Brundtland" Commission Report and in looking forward to the inputs necessary for the UN Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992.

53. The Conference noted the transformation that had taken place in European agriculture during the past 40 years as a consequence of agrarian policies, technological advances and significant changes in relative prices. The search for economies of scale had resulted in intensification, specialization and concentration of agricultural production. Profound changes had taken place in the structure of agriculture, with cropping becoming increasingly separated from livestock production and with a diminishing trend in crop rotations.

54. The Conference also noted that this transformation process had been facilitated by policy decisions based on socio-economic objectives that had seldom included environmental protection considerations. Thus while it should not be overlooked that modern agricultural practices in Europe had been of considerable social benefit in satisfactorily meeting food supply

and self-sufficiency objectives in most countries, they had also led to various forms of environmental damage. As a consequence, European agricultural producers were now subject to increasingly restrictive legislation and other measures to control agricultural pollution.

55. The Conference further noted that the growth and extent of legislative and policy interventions to control agricultural practices which caused environmental damage were in response to an increased environmental consciousness by European constituencies. These measures were also based on greater, although not yet complete, scientific understanding of agricultural pollution and its consequences. The desire to limit agricultural production was also a consideration in some situations and this had indirect benefits for the environment. Many interventions noted the impact of economic and financial policy measures such as taxes (the polluter-pays-principle), subsidies or management contracts; regulatory policy measures; and research, education, extension and policy advisory measures in this regard.

56. Many countries provided information on recent developments regarding the various interventions applied by their governments. It was widely acknowledged that there could be no panacea given the diversity of situations in Europe regarding food self-sufficiency, intensity levels applied in agricultural practices, and status of natural resources. Moreover, it was accepted that given the interdependence of environment and development, a careful balance was required if the multiple goals of sustainable agriculture were to be satisfied.

57. The Conference noted that policy-makers were searching for a combination of socio-cultural measures to improve rural areas, of economic incentives to improve the efficiency of resource utilization, and of environmental controls to protect soil, water, air and landscapes. However, the lack of socio-economic analysis and information regarding producers' responses to such actions was making optimal policy design more difficult. Fertilizer and pesticide problems in crop production could be reduced by altering the type and timing of applications and similar improvements could be made in input use efficiency. Livestock producers, however, would probably have to encounter additional radical changes in their production patterns.

58. The socio-economic impact of environmental measures depended on the type, intensity and scale of the production system; the quality of resources on which the system was based; and the skills and financial resources available to the farmer. Some countries stressed the application of the "polluter-pays-principle" to agriculture and the Conference felt that it was time for consumers to acknowledge that they must share the costs of environmental improvements. Production cost increases in response to progressively restrictive environmental measures had to eventually be borne by consumers, depending on the efficiency and competitiveness of the food marketing-processing chain.

59. The Conference recommended that FAO undertake or promote, as appropriate, more systematic research on the socio-economic aspects of various environmental regulations and controls on European agriculture, including their differential impacts on social groups (producers, consumers, rural workers, input suppliers, foreign importers, etc.). ESCORENA should also pay more attention to these aspects. This research should focus on the distribution of costs and benefits between such groups and the overall effect on regional and international competitiveness. The findings from this research would facilitate the search for appropriate measures in

achieving maximum environmental benefits with minimum adverse socio-economic impacts for the well-being of rural communities and the income of producers. They would also enable the Organization to further assist the countries by providing policy advice in these fields when requested.

60. The Conference agreed that appropriate regulation of agricultural practices for environmental protection depended on each country's specific agricultural and rural development objectives, as well as on local or regional differences. It encouraged FAO to collect information and promote the exchange of experience regarding the development of appropriate regulations. Member countries expressed interest and willingness in cooperating with FAO and ECE on the exchange of experience, on aspects of transboundary pollution, and on international standards relating to pollution abatement.

A Balanced Diet - The Way to Good Nutrition

61. The Conference expressed satisfaction with the inclusion of this item on its agenda, underscoring the increasing concern of all countries of the Region because of the rise in nutrition-related diseases. The Conference was generally appreciative of the objective review of the food and nutrition situation in Europe, and the vast range of possible actions that the background paper offered.

62. The rapid rise of urban lifestyles had made processed foods and alcohol increasingly popular. It was noted with concern that the increase in nutrition-related diseases was largely due to excessive calorie intake and imbalanced diets with too much saturated or very saturated fat, alcoholic beverages, sugar and salt, coupled with too few complex carbohydrates, vegetables and fresh fruits.

63. The Conference expressed its full agreement with the recommendations designed to reduce the intake of undesirable diet components and to increase beneficial ones in order to attenuate the substantial gap between current dietary patterns and the medium- and long-term nutritional targets suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO). Most countries in the Region had already implemented measures designed to inform consumers and to guarantee food safety through appropriate legislation.

64. The Conference stressed the importance of nutrition education at all levels, from elementary school through university, as well as for physicians, and indicated that both the mass media and product labelling had an essential role to play in informing adult consumers of the vital benefits of a diversified, balanced diet.

65. Food and nutritional policies had already been implemented in some countries of the Region. The Conference recommended that such policies should be further developed and improved in such a way as to more specifically meet the special requirements of the populations concerned. In this context, the Conference also stressed the opportunity to establish coordinating bodies responsible for monitoring the implementation of national nutrition policies.

66. Concerning measures related to agricultural policies, the Conference expressed general agreement with their reorientation toward a nutritionally-diversified and more beneficial supply side, but also pointed out that in free market economies demand determines supply. Therefore, the priority need was to motivate consumers in the direction of a balanced diet.

67. The Conference was pleased to note that food and nutrition were appearing as topics on the agendas of all of the FAO Regional Conferences in 1990 as initial contributions to the preparatory work for the International Conference on Nutrition to be held in Rome in 1992 under the joint sponsorship of FAO and WHO. In this context, the Conference was informed of steps which had already been taken and meetings which had been scheduled this year with the relevant United Nations, governmental, and non-governmental organizations to define the major themes of the Conference and to avoid overlapping and duplication of efforts among the organizations concerned.

68. The Conference, considering the need to broaden the review of the issue of malnutrition in Europe as well as in the developing countries, suggested that Member Nations proceed to carefully assess their own food and nutrition problems. A detailed examination of national measures necessary for attaining a balanced diet in their countries was necessary before strategies were proposed for review by the International Conference on Nutrition.

OTHER MATTERS

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

69. Mr A. Szeskin, Representative of Israel was elected for the four-year period 1991-94. The term of office of Prof. A. Wos, Representative of Poland, was extended until the end of 1992.

Date and Place of the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe

70. The Head of the Delegation of Czechoslovakia officially invited the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe to be held in his country in 1992, in the city of Prague. The Conference took note of this invitation with gratitude and requested the Director-General to determine the date and place of the Eighteenth Regional Conference in consultation with the Government of Czechoslovakia and other Member Governments of the Region.

71. Delegations of Cyprus and Israel offered to host the 1994 Conference for Europe in their respective countries.

Adoption of the Report

72. The Conference adopted its report.

Closure of the Conference

73. On behalf of the Director-General, the Regional Representative for Europe, Mr A. Bozzini, thanked the Government of Italy for the excellent organization of the Conference in Venice, and for the generous hospitality extended. He expressed FAO's gratitude for the constructive and forward-looking debates, as well as his appreciation for the high level of representation at the Conference and recalled that the European countries had always given their full support to the Organization. He paid tribute to the Chairman, Mr Calogero Mannino, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Italy, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, whose presence and experience had made the Conference a notable success.

74. On behalf of the participants, the delegate of Bulgaria thanked the Government of Italy for the excellent organization and hospitality offered during the Conference as well as for the highly interesting study tour, and expressed appreciation for the quality of the debates. He also thanked the Director-General of FAO and the Conference Secretariat for the efforts made in preparing the documents and for the smooth and efficient conduct of the meeting.

75. The Chairman then thanked the Director-General, his staff, the interpreters, the organizers and all those who had helped in preparing and servicing the Conference, and declared the Conference closed.

APPENDIX A

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTION ITEMS

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

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General
5. Statement by the Executive Secretary of ECE
6. Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in Europe
7. Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1988-89

III. SELECTED ISSUES OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

8. Socio-economic Aspects of Environmental Policies in European Agriculture

An assessment of environmental problems resulting from primary agricultural, forestry and fishery activities in Europe was presented at the 16th Regional Conference for Europe (ERC/88/3), together with policies to protect the environment from some of the negative impacts of such activities.

The purpose of this item is to present an inventory of the policy instruments adopted to control or regulate environmental problems and synthesize assessments of their potential or actual socio-economic effects on conventional agricultural policy objectives, such as farm income levels and distribution, farming structures, viability of rural economies and communities, food self-sufficiency, food prices, fiscal balance, etc.

Although empirical evidence on the impact of such policies is still limited, it is expected that the document will make an important contribution to improved coherence and transparency of environmental policies affecting natural resource use.

9. A Balanced Diet - The Way to Good Nutrition

The diet of the European population is increasingly based on carbohydrates and animal products rich in saturated fats. As a result, the occurrence of cardiovascular diseases and other metabolic disturbances is increasing at an alarming rate. In recent years, the results of research in this field and their implication for the economic and social development of the Region have clearly indicated the need for a healthier balanced diet. Such a diet would promote better physical and mental welfare of the mature older population and would decrease the high health cost to society of the present dietary pattern.

The paper discusses these issues and offers suggestions for the formulation of suitable food and nutrition policies, including consumer protection, nutrition education, and strengthening of food regulations and quality controls.

Discussion is also meant as a regional contribution toward the preparation of the International Conference on Nutrition proposed to be convened in 1992 in Rome.

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

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

11. Any other business
12. Date and Place of the 18th Regional Conference for Europe
13. Adoption of the Report
14. Closure of the Conference

APPENDIX B
ANNEXE B
APENDICE B

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ERC/90/5	Representation of the Region on the CGIAR

INF Series

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STATEMENT BY MR EDOUARD SAOUMA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chairman, Mr President of the Veneto Region, Mr Mayor of Venice,
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are delighted to find ourselves in this city, unique in the world, thanks to the very kind invitation of the Italian Government, which for nearly forty years has been offering our Organization unfailing hospitality. But our gratitude goes also to the Region of Veneto, which has generously contributed to the organization of this Regional Conference. I am therefore particularly pleased to greet Mr Gianfranco Cremonese, President of this Region, who has been good enough to attend this inaugural session.

You have just elected your Chairman in the person of His Excellency Mr Calogero Mannino, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Italian Republic. May I be permitted to extend to him my warmest congratulations: I am sure that, under his wise and enlightened guidance, the work of the Regional Conference will be conducted in harmony and will yield fruitful results.

Venice

The holding of the 1990 FAO Regional Conference for Europe in Venice is not without significance. So much has been written about this city, one of the loveliest ever built; but such is its splendour that we tend to forget that it sprang up against all odds, representing an astonishing victory for humanity over the forces of unkind and hostile nature, in a period when technology was fairly rudimentary. Since the early days of its history, Venice, facing outward across the sea, played a major role in the opening of Western Europe toward the East and the South, and became a veritable crossroads between civilizations. Marco Polo, who established so many ties with China and the Far East, could only have been a Venetian. As a cultural and trading centre, Venice was for centuries a particularly dynamic agent of the major economic and social changes which gave birth to the Europe of today.

It is, however, also true that Venice, among all the marvellous art cities in Italy, sparkles with its own special brilliance. Exquisitely beautiful, it offers us an ideal setting for this exceptionally important conference.

The great change

Europe is indeed undergoing a spectacular and unforeseen change. Only yesterday, this very developed part of the world seemed to us solidly anchored in stable structures, with ideological, political and economic systems that were considered fixed, or at least likely to evolve only slowly: a Europe separated into large and almost impenetrable compartments, where East and West were marked by a radically different system of agriculture and markets.

However, two centuries after the French Revolution, a veritable European Revolution has suddenly broken out. With surprising speed, the sun is rising in the East. Accepted concepts and ideas are being shattered, and the established order is giving way to a radical reappraisal which is difficult

to grasp, as ideas and events follow fast upon each other's heels. A few fundamental aspects, however, stand out clearly. It is above all the people's aspirations to freedom and a better life that have led to the crumbling of barriers and walls, the end of the Cold War, the political and economic opening. All this heralds the advent of an era of cooperation between East and West, of trade development, of economic and technological collaboration.

With the speed and extent of this change, everyone in authority must strive to be clear-sighted, energetic and cool-headed so as to avoid being overwhelmed, to keep a practical and intellectual hold on pell-mell developments, and to retain a sense of proportion and of the global picture. Much imagination and generosity will also be needed.

These comments are highly applicable to the agricultural and rural world, where the great changes in Europe are turning accepted notions upside down; throughout the region, a general reappraisal of systems and major options must be undertaken.

Place and role of FAO in Europe

The place and role of FAO in Europe can hardly fail to be profoundly affected by this transformation. Our Organization's programme in the region has so far been one of high quality but on a fairly limited scale. Basically, it provided Europe with information, statistics, support for the establishment and operation of various applied research networks, an intellectual contribution to policy-making (particularly with regard to the Third World), and a framework for coordination and channelling of aid to developing countries, for example in the case of locust plagues or other disasters.

Now, however, the need is arising in Europe itself for technical assistance; serious debt problems are appearing, and there is talk of structural adjustments that will involve austerity measures, but without provoking excessive social unrest. These conditions call for a profound rethinking of FAO's role in the region, and also greater readiness to participate more closely in developments in the economy and the agricultural sector, particularly by offering advice.

At the same time, Europe cannot remain closed in on itself; its international responsibilities are in line with its political, economic, agricultural and cultural power. FAO is willing to do everything possible to help it take up these responsibilities.

In this connection, we are very much encouraged by the current renewal of interest in our Organization in Europe, demonstrated first by the European Community's request for admission and secondly by the prospect that the USSR too will join.

How well is FAO equipped to take on its expanded role?

On the positive side, there are the decisions made recently by the FAO Conference following the Review of Certain Aspects of FAO's Goals and Operations. Reaffirming the validity, relevance and importance of the "objectives, strategies, roles and activities" of our institution, which

remains in its opinion "solid and dynamic", it set out in Resolution 10/89 new orientations that will enable us to establish more modern, more efficient structures and working methods, thus making our action more effective.

The negative aspect is that, for the same old reasons - namely, the accumulation of arrears in the payment of contributions, despite all the appeals launched by the Conference - our financial situation is still extremely worrying and seriously limits our activities, since we lack the means to provide our Member Nations with all the services they need.

The moral and material support of all Member Nations is, therefore, needed now more than ever if we are to meet our obligations, particularly those inherent in the new role that FAO will have to play in Europe.

Prospects for East-West cooperation

The prospects for cooperation throughout Europe in the field of agriculture and agricultural economics will require concerted and far-reaching study before they begin to take shape. This Regional Conference, where countries from both East and West are working side by side, provides you with an ideal opportunity to open a constructive dialogue, which is the only path to concrete achievement. It would surely be useful for Eastern countries to set out their needs and their aspirations at this European meeting on agriculture, so that Western countries can make known their reactions and their proposals. To facilitate your discussions, we have prepared a comprehensive background document on this item, which you have before you.

It is obvious that problems of organization and structure, production, agricultural trade, pricing policies, and so forth arise in different terms in each country. There is no standard answer, every country must make its own experiments and find the solutions best suited to its own situation. This in no way diminishes the benefits to be gained from exchanging ideas and information, or from seeking opportunities for providing mutual assistance on a European scale.

FAO only asks to be able to pursue, to strengthen and to expand activities that it is already conducting in this field. In addition to the cooperative research programmes and networks in which both Eastern and Western countries take part, covering subjects such as soybeans, olives, sunflowers, cotton, pastures and fodder crops, the use of animal wastes, and rural sources of energy, we are ready to take other initiatives on items of particular interest to Eastern countries. Many of them are concerned with the problems of rural ownership and land laws. Should agricultural land be decollectivized? How should this be done? And with what kind of taxation system? All of us, I believe, would like to know how other countries see these questions and what solutions they have found. FAO is, therefore, very willing to encourage an exchange of views and, if Member Nations so wish, to hold meetings for this purpose, for instance in the form of seminars, round tables, high-level consultations or expert missions.

Europe's attitude to the East and the South

European cooperation cannot be confined to its own territory. At your Sixteenth Regional Conference two years ago, I talked about the world dimensions of European agriculture, and its planetary repercussions on rural communities and the population as a whole. I emphasized interdependence, the

duty of solidarity and Europe's responsibilities. Recent developments have only strengthened the convictions I expressed then with regard to the effects of Europe's economic and agricultural policies on other countries, particularly those of the Third World.

Let me give you one example. The end of the Cold War and the prospects of disarmament, drawing closer every day, will probably lead to considerable physical and financial savings. It is to be hoped that the leaders of the great powers will have the wisdom to allocate a substantial part of the resources thus released to official development assistance, which has been stagnating or even dropping for several years, whereas needs are increasing. But we must be extremely careful; the new possibilities for technical and economic assistance opening up in Europe must not distract our attention from the needs of the Third World. Aid to the East should not diminish the solidarity we owe to the South. Fortunately, powerful voices have been raised in unequivocal and forceful support of this view. We certainly feel encouraged by these declarations by enlightened and influential Heads of State, and also by the highest moral and spiritual authorities.

The price to be paid

It is against this background that I propose to mention briefly some of the major issues that will dominate your discussions: environment, nutrition and international trade. However, in thinking about each of them I feel again a nagging anxiety, a sort of leitmotiv that I must share with you. There will be no lasting solution, no salvation for humanity (and therefore Europe) if individuals, groups and countries fail to attack not only the symptoms of the disease but also its roots, and if they do not agree to pay the price. As the wisdom of nations tells us, there is nothing to be had for nothing; everything has its price.

The environment

The first field in which vigorous action must be undertaken without sparing expense is that of the environment. The Sixteenth Regional Conference considered this problem, emphasizing the importance of ecological considerations in agricultural, forestry and fishery policies. Today your agenda invites you to go further and to envisage specifically the socio-economic aspects of environmental policies in Europe. You have before you a comprehensive paper on this issue.

Although it is true that awareness of the problem has considerably increased and many countries have already taken vigorous measures, the situation continues to become worse. Research is going on in an attempt to pinpoint the causes; some researchers are wondering whether - and to what extent - the unseasonable weather in Western Europe recently is connected with the "greenhouse effect".

It has been said over and over again that agriculture is both the victim and the perpetrator of pollution. Developments in cropping systems and technologies lead to complete reversals of situations. For example, we used to think that farmyard manure was the best fertilizer. Today, effluents from industrial farms, because of their quantity and their concentration, are contributing to nitrate infiltration, which is a serious threat to drinking water supplies.

The problem is terribly complex; since it involves the relationship between human beings and nature - and, in the last analysis, the survival of one or the other - there is no simplistic solution. To start with, we must be sure we know who the enemy is; to accuse farmers, whose thirst for profit makes them polluters (which is why some people claim they should foot the bill) would be too easy, and it would be unfair. The real culprit is a certain form of intensive agriculture, which is in itself the logical product of certain political, economic and social policies. Oddly enough, different approaches (but always pursuing the goal of productivity) have produced similar results in East and West.

If this is to be changed, the producers must be first informed and then encouraged to participate fully in the search for solutions. The economic and social cost must be divided equitably; in no case should the farmers bear the financial burden of this enterprise to save the environment, which concerns everybody.

In-depth studies will inevitably lead to a reorientation of concepts and technologies. I do not want to go into technical details here, but isn't it time that outdated and now dangerous methods gave way to more far-sighted management of our heritage? A complete set of measures will of course have to be envisaged for this purpose, but I should like to indicate one approach in particular. Instead of trying to raise productivity at any price, could not biotechnology accord greater priority to developing varieties which, while maintaining a high yield, would require less fertilizer and fewer pesticides?

Action on a vast scale to preserve the environment will obviously involve high costs. How will they be met? The answer will vary from one country to another, and in all cases the approach must be cautious and well-balanced; all the factors coming into play must be carefully weighed. I do, however, perceive one constant; without inflating producer prices too much (which would start another rush for high yields), the prices of agricultural commodities, particularly food, must be such as to provide farmers with reasonable profits even if production falls. Consumers must therefore accept that the cost of soil, water and air protection, and also that of maintaining the quality of agricultural produce, is reflected in the price of the food that they consume in such large quantities. In the most prosperous countries, the share of the household budget spent on food, which is now very small, will inevitably rise, at the expense of other items meeting less essential needs artificially stimulated by irresponsible advertising. Such a change of mentality will certainly not be easy to achieve in many of the rich countries of Europe but, if they want to ensure their survival and stop driving farmers to poison the land and the air, they must recognize the value of agricultural products which feed human beings and which, it is too often forgotten, are noble products.

As requested by the FAO Conference, we are strengthening our activities in this field. We are actively engaged in preparing for the FAO/Netherlands Conference on strategies and tools for sustainable agricultural development to be held in 1991. To coordinate the work, to advise me and to intensify our cooperation with other agencies, I have appointed a Special Adviser for Environment and Sustainable Development, with the rank of Assistant Director-General. This means we are ready to work with European countries and organizations, particularly in promoting, on the one hand, exchanges of experience between Eastern and Western Europe on the introduction of ecologically-sound agriculture and, on the other, environmental policies taking into account the vital interests of agriculture. We shall, therefore,

be keenly interested in the Regional Conference's recommendations on this point; in addition to solving its own serious environmental problems, Europe will undoubtedly wish to make a major intellectual, political and economic contribution to the solutions of these problems at world level, especially at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in June 1992.

Nutrition

Another issue of world importance is nutrition, which will be the subject of a big international conference organized by FAO and WHO, to be held in Rome in December 1992. In speaking of nutritional problems, we tend to think exclusively of undernourishment or shortages in the Third World. And yet even in Europe nutrition is a problem serious enough to figure on your agenda: not so much because of the factors I have just mentioned - and which also affect the poorest sectors of European populations - as because of the unbalanced diet. This is often too rich in animal products and thus in saturated fats, and is leading to a disturbing rise in cardiovascular diseases and metabolism troubles. The result is obviously a very heavy economic and social burden.

A return to a healthier diet will require measures which again have their price: consumer education and protection, stronger regulations and quality control. Admittedly, a reduction in health expenditure may be expected; but to turn back from the primrose path and reverse the trend requires strong political will. I firmly trust that your discussions will help to bring about a salutary change of course; they will also constitute the Region's contribution to the preparation of the world conference. In other words, our expectations are high.

International trade

If we turn now to the problems of international trade, we find the familiar elements reappearing on the scene: the serious and sometimes tragic situation in developing countries, Europe's worldwide responsibilities, the merging of the duty of solidarity and enlightened self-interest to make the richer countries accept the need to attack the evil at its roots; and the cost of the safety measures involved.

It is worth mentioning a few obvious facts, which nevertheless do not always lead to the positive attitudes that might be expected; Europe, both supplier and client of the Third World, has every interest in the solvency of its partners. This presupposes that equity and trade go hand in hand, but at present trade is struggling under a host of constraints, to the detriment of developing countries. Demand is almost saturated for their export commodities, whose prices, fixed in foreign markets, are depressed, and restrictions of every kind limit access to outlets in developed countries.

The value of many commodities exported by the Third World - particularly sugar, coffee, cocoa, tea, rice, jute and hard fibres - is lower today than in 1980, even in current dollars. Sometimes sale prices do not even cover production costs. What is the result? Stagnation, falling purchasing power, heavier indebtedness. It is hardly surprising that, for example, the volume of imports by sub-Saharan Africa dropped by 8 percent per annum between 1980 and 1986. Quite apart from the extent of the destitution covered by these cold economic statistics, would it not be better for the industrialized countries to be dealing with an Africa that was in a position to buy from them the capital goods it needs for its economic take-off? The recent

renovation and expansion of the EEC STABEX system provides a remarkable example of international cooperation to reduce the difficulties confronting staple commodity exports from developing countries. I urgently invite other developed countries to join together in setting up a multilateral system following fairly closely the same broad outlines, but on a larger scale, to provide some protection against erratic market fluctuations in the future.

Surely it is just common sense to eliminate protectionism and the other barriers to fair trading, and to stop the competition of subsidized products against exports from developing countries. I am therefore asking the industrialized countries to act on the important policy statement made at the end of last year by the Ministers on the Development Assistance Committee with regard to their pricing policy in the 1990s. I have in mind a few points in particular: the need to strengthen the world trading system for the benefit of all countries; the urgency of a solution to the problems of indebtedness and a revival of capital flows; lastly, the need for a strong quantitative and qualitative growth that will bring assistance efforts into line with the immense task of development that remains to be accomplished.

Two typical problems

Here again, this elementary truth must sink in: the difficulties of the industrialized world can only be overcome if those of the Third World are solved. This implies that not only the effects but also the causes of the evil are attacked, and that the means to attain the desired aim are available. Allow me to take from everyday reality two examples of painful and even agonizing problems arising in many European countries: drugs and immigration.

To control effectively the appalling scourge that drugs constitute today, it will hardly be enough to introduce harsher repressive measures in producer and consumer countries. It is time we realized that the hundreds of thousands of impoverished peasants who cultivate the infernal plants from which narcotics are extracted do not do it from choice but under the pressure of irresistible constraints. We must understand that these crops, even if they earn only a tiny fraction of the enormous profits made by the traffickers, bring in far more than traditional tropical productions such as coffee and sugar, whose prices have collapsed.

Of course drugs must be fought at all levels and with all our might, but, make no mistake about it, there will be no real eradication so long as the deprived peasant masses in the producing countries can find no other possibilities of agricultural production to provide them with a reasonable income and living standards. This is a gigantic enterprise, well beyond the means of the developing countries that are today the primary sources of drugs. The course is clear: large-scale aid from the wealthy countries to agricultural and rural development, and a substantial rise in the price of Third World exports. Citizens of the rich countries can no longer ignore the fact that drug control also involves higher prices for coffee and so many of the other commodities that they absent-mindedly consume.

Similarly, what causes the growing problem of immigration in the industrialized countries of Europe? Quite simply, emigration from developing countries. Why do people emigrate? In some cases, to escape oppression or murderous conflicts; but usually they want to leave their own homes because they cannot find work, income, security - namely, a worthwhile and interesting existence. I have yet to hear of any country where an inflow of

immigrants from a happy and prosperous country caused serious difficulties. Here again, the real solution to the problems of industrialized countries involves a radical improvement in Third World conditions. This is what interdependence means.

Conclusion

Europe cannot, therefore, limit the search for a new equilibrium to its own territory. It is said that Europe is at the dawn of a new age; but the dawn of a new age is the time for making choices. This region, so rich in resources and with its age-old civilization, will blossom anew if it takes the road of common sense, namely that of imagination, courage and generosity. As the President of the French Republic put it, in a question that was very much to the point:

"Will the rich nations understand in time where their interests and their duty lie?"

This Regional Conference could do much to answer this crucial question with the response the world awaits.

Thank you.

APPENDIX E

STATEMENT BY MR GERALD HINTEREGGER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

It is a great pleasure for me to address this opening session of the 17th Regional Conference for Europe as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The ECE is pleased to cooperate with FAO in convening the Conference. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to the Italian Government, and in particular to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, as well as to the authorities of this noble City of Venice, for the excellent preparations for the Conference and for the warm welcome which we have received.

I would also like to pay tribute to the dynamic leadership provided by you, Dr Saouma, in the field of European agriculture. All of us here recognize and support the over-riding importance in FAO's programmes to assisting the developing countries in their struggle to feed their growing populations and strengthen their farming sector. Nevertheless, thanks to your interest, Europe and its own concerns, which will be discussed here in the coming days, have not been overlooked, indeed have been benefiting in many ways from the activities of FAO.

At the 16th Conference in Cracow in the summer of 1988, I was able to share with you some thoughts on developments in the region and the role that FAO and ECE could jointly play in the fields of agriculture and timber. None of us at that Conference could have imagined just how fundamentally the architecture of Europe would evolve in the coming year and a half.

We meet here today at a truly historic moment when democratic changes in Eastern Europe are reshaping the basic structures of our continent. There are few historical parallels for the major transformation under way in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In particular, the move in these countries from a single- to a multi-party system and from planned to market economies and increased personal freedoms will have a profound impact upon all aspects of East-West economic cooperation, indeed, upon the very concept of East-West relations. While much has already been said about international trade and industrial cooperation, agriculture and the food sector also merit great attention as an essential part of the radical economic restructuring to which the eastern countries are committed.

The ECE is responding to changing European conditions in various ways. There is a wealth of experience within ECE, not only in the joint ECE/FAO Agriculture and Timber Division, but also in other parts of the organization that could be combined with the vast experience of FAO in the fields of food and agriculture, forestry and fisheries to provide a valuable package of assistance to the countries in need. For example, ECE initiated a project on economic reforms in East European countries and the Soviet Union as early as 1988. Our next symposium on the subject will take place at the end of August this year in Munich and will be devoted to the external aspects of reforms. In our analytical work we are going beyond traditional

analysis, addressing some of the major issues confronted by the economies in transition. The ECE Secretariat is now developing a concept for making available to countries the broadly-based expertise which it has accumulated over the past forty years. These expert advisory services are intended to be of direct benefit to countries requesting our assistance. At their recent meetings, ECE Committees in the area of transport, energy, environment and statistics have already reacted to the changing conditions, and assistance to Eastern Europe is likely to become a general priority in all ECE activities.

These questions also emerged clearly at the recently concluded session of the ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems, held in Geneva from 3 to 7 March this year, when it expressed its willingness to expand cooperation among all countries of the region, especially between East and West. The Committee discussed in considerable depth the orientation of its future activities, taking three issues particularly into account. These were the political and economic changes taking place in Europe, both in the East and in the West, where fundamental integration processes are under way within the ECE and EFTA; the ever-increasing importance of environmental factors in the field of agriculture and the scope for strengthening cooperation between ECE and FAO as a means of giving support to the food and agriculture sector in our European member countries.

At a time when many international organizations are initiating new activities to assist the countries of Eastern Europe in their transition to market-oriented economies, the ECE stands ready to make its experience and expertise available through close and intensive cooperation.

This question of cooperation, both at the Secretariat and the intergovernmental levels, between our two organizations is one to which I attach great importance. There has been a long tradition of collaboration between the ECE Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission of FAO, which has on frequent occasions been held up as an example of good inter-agency cooperation. I am pleased to observe also the strengthening of the ties, since the previous Conference, between the ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems and the European Commission on Agriculture through, inter alia, the participation of the Committee's officers in the ECA's Executive Committee meeting in Portugal last May.

Furthermore, at the recent session of the Committee on Agricultural Problems, a recommendation was approved to set up a working group, jointly with the ECA, charged with the task of examining the respective programmes of work of the two bodies with a view to improving their cooperation and their complementarity, and to avoiding possible duplication of effort. The Executive Committee of the ECA has been invited to consider this proposal when it meets here during the course of the Conference and I very much hope that it will support it. I see this joint working group playing a crucial role in identifying, among other things, priority areas for promoting East-West cooperation efforts and the appropriate means for dealing with them. In this connection, the Committee on Agricultural Problems also expressed the wish that this Conference would contribute to the strengthening of cooperation within Europe, notably East-West cooperation, and to identifying the orientation, priorities and methods to be adopted.

Regarding the prospects for expanded East-West cooperation, the Committee underlined scientific, technical and economic cooperation, development of statistical data and the inter-disciplinary approach. Among the topics of priority to them, the East European countries mentioned, for instance, market-oriented agricultural and food policies; pricing and income formation; environmental issues; standardization, processing and marketing. It remains now to define more precisely what can be done and how.

An item on the Conference agenda of particular interest to ECE is the one dealing with the socio-economic aspects of environmental policies in European agriculture. The member governments of ECE attach great importance to the Commission's work in the field of environmental protection. These activities cover a broad field ranging from air pollution abatement, transboundary water pollution, the impact of industrial accidents, environmental impact assessment to the protection of flora and fauna. It is an area where a number of important legal instruments have been adopted in the framework of ECE such as the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, and its protocols on SO₂ and NO_x reductions, and that under preparation on volatile organic compounds, the^xRegional Strategy for Environmental Protection and the Rational Use of Natural Resources, the Charter on Ground-water Management, the Code of Conduct on Accidental Pollution of Transboundary Inland Waters, and the Declaration on the Conservation of Flora, Fauna and their Habitats, to name just a few.

One of the outstanding events which took place in 1989 involving regional cooperation in the field of the environment was the Meeting on the Protection of the Environment, convened by the States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Sofia, Bulgaria from 16 October to 3 November 1989. At the invitation of the participating states, I attended the meeting and contributed a report containing recommendations for concrete action in each priority area: industrial accidents with transboundary impacts; potentially hazardous chemicals; and transboundary water pollution. A clear understanding was reached at the meeting that action should be taken by the ECE as soon as possible to elaborate a legal instrument for the prevention and control of the transboundary effects of industrial accidents, as well as for the elaboration of a framework convention on the use and protection of transboundary water courses and international lakes. At their third session the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems took up this challenge and decided in the light of the outcome of the CSCE Meeting to undertake the elaboration of a framework convention on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes and of a legal instrument on transboundary impacts of industrial accidents.

Environmental questions also received considerable attention at the March session of the Committee on Agricultural Problems, as well as at the February session of the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Agrarian Reform and Farm Rationalization. The latter adopted a resolution, which was endorsed by the Committee, on the impact of environmental restrictions and legislation on the economics of the agricultural sector. The resolution notes that increasingly severe ecological problems are forcing European countries to introduce progressively stricter environmental legislation, and that there are positive as well as negative consequences - better quality produce resulting from more balanced use of pesticides, for example, on the one hand, but reduced productivity and farm incomes, on the other. It requests European Governments to ensure that, in the formulation of future agricultural prices and structural and regional policies, the possible environmental impact be taken into account, while at the same time the

economic and social impact of environmental restrictions and legislation receive full attention. The resolution, which may be submitted to the coming session of the Commission for its approbation, provides a good basis on which the Committee intends to intensify its activities in the field of the environment. I am pleased to note that several projects of the Committee in this field are being developed jointly with FAO, for instance on the use of fertilizers and on the use of agricultural land for non-food purposes.

The World Commission on Environment and Development - the Brundtland Commission - succeeded in its Report "Our Common Future" in raising political awareness of the concept of sustainable development, its cross-sectoral implications, its global significance, and of course the imperatives inherent in it for the countries of this region which are responsible for 70 to 80 percent of world industrial output and a proportionate share of its pollution.

Sustainable development means the integration of environmental considerations into all aspects of economic activity. With that in mind, the ECE has reaffirmed its intention to cooperate closely with the Government of Norway in the convening of, and the preparations for, the Regional Conference at Ministerial level in Bergen in May to follow up the Report of the World Commission. While not denying the importance of other topics dealt with in the Brundtland Report, the Conference will concentrate on four basic issues of relevance to the work of ECE. These include, in addition to awareness raising and public participation, the economics of sustainability, the sustainable use of energy and sustainable industrial activity.

Since therefore the Bergen Conference may not discuss in full the key role of agriculture, fisheries and forestry in the debate on sustainable development, this week's Conference has an important responsibility to highlight these questions, so that they will be given the importance they deserve, including at the World Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. After all, sustainable development and the renewability of natural resources are precisely what agriculture, fisheries and forestry are essentially concerned with.

People must eat, drink and breathe to survive, and human existence ultimately depends on the soil, air and water being maintained in a state in which the necessities of life can be provided on a sustained basis. Sustainable economic development is dependent on conditions that will maintain the fertility and productivity of soils for agriculture and forestry as well as the quality of air and both fresh and salt water. In a heavily populated region like Europe, therefore, there must be policies to ensure, on the one hand, that these essential resources are maintained by appropriate agricultural, fishery and forestry practices and technologies and, on the other hand, are protected from negative external influences, such as pollution or disruptive changes in land use.

Turning to the question of trade facilitation, the Committee on Agricultural Problems expressed its continued strong support for the standardization activities carried out by the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Produce. It recognized that, as the Working Party broadens its scope to include additional types of perishable produce, for instance the elaboration of harmonized commercial standards for meat carcasses, duplication with other international standardization bodies must be avoided. The view was expressed that the Working Party's activities are closely oriented toward commercial trade practice and that consequently there is complementarity between the standardization activities of the

Working Party and those of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius. The activities of the Working Party are contributing positively to the further development of international trade as the standards are being applied to trade between European countries as well as to imports from other regions.

Apart from the issues I have commented upon, I can report that the Committee on Agricultural Problems has recently adopted a programme of work for 1990-94 that demonstrates its capacity to keep abreast of current developments in European agriculture, with new initiatives for instance on product quality in the agri-food sector and on the use of computers in farming.

This Conference, Mr Chairman, is also concerned with forestry questions, and I should like to draw your attention to a number of important aspects of the work of the ECE Timber Committee which, as I mentioned earlier, is working in close harmony with the European Forestry Commission. A major project currently in hand is the Global Forest Resource Assessment 1990. This is being tackled in two parts: the tropical and sub-tropical regions, as well as the developing countries in the temperate zones, are being covered by the Forestry Department of FAO; while for the ECE member countries and other temperate-zone developed countries, the assessment is being carried out by the Joint FAO/ECE Division in Geneva. For the ECE countries, the assessment will be an updating of the information collected for 1980 and published in 1985 and, as on that occasion, an important feature will be a survey of the environmental and other non-wood goods and services of the forest, the relative importance of which is expanding all the time and to which policy-makers are giving more and more attention. It was a source of satisfaction to us that the experimental work on evaluating the non-wood benefits in the 1980 assessment for the ECE region was considered to have been sufficiently interesting and worthwhile that it was decided to attempt a similar exercise in the FAO 1990 assessment of the tropical countries. Incidentally, it was in this very building that the final plans for the 1990 Global Assessment were finalized last September, at a joint FAO/ECE meeting that was a satellite to a Global Conference on Natural Resource Monitoring and Assessment.

The global nature and inter-dependency of the markets for forest products were highlighted at the Timber Committee's session last October, when particular attention was given to the place of Europe in the international trade in tropical hardwoods. The tremendous concern in Europe over the fate of the tropical forest is fully shared by the Committee, and it has been closely following and has welcomed the build-up of activities under the Tropical Forestry Action Plan being coordinated by FAO. Given the sometimes exaggerated impression that is publicized about commercial logging and the trade and use of tropical hardwoods as major causes of tropical forest destruction and degradation, the Committee felt it would be useful to make clear its position, and accordingly adopted a statement on the matter at its session last October. Its essence is that the causes of deforestation are many and complex and are mainly linked to social and economic factors; the relatively minor role of commercial exploitation has to be seen in this broad context. With regard to what European countries might do to alleviate the problem, the Committee is convinced that any unilateral measure to restrict the import and use of tropical timber would be counter-productive. Taking away an important economic incentive for conserving the forest would reduce its value and could lead to increased pressure for the transfer of such land to alternative uses, that is to say, to further deforestation.

Forest conservation is a major concern not only for tropical but also for temperate-zone countries and lies at the heart of the programme of the European Forestry Commission of FAO. The Timber Committee is working alongside the Commission in a number of fields, including forest damage attributed to air pollution, forest fires and storm damage. A series of storms hit many parts of Europe in the early months of this year, causing extensive damage to forests and raising fears for the stability of wood markets. We are currently undertaking an evaluation of the damage, tentatively estimated at between 75 and 100 million cubic metres, and this catastrophe adds importance to the work being undertaken by the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training to help countries to cope with the aftermath of sudden and acute forest damage.

Despite the energetic efforts of the countries concerned, forest fires continue to be a serious menace in southern Europe. The Joint Committee is joining up with the FAO Committee "Silva Mediterranea" in organizing a seminar next year to look at the sociological problems associated with fire prevention. It has also started to issue twice yearly the International Forest Fire News, which has been well-received by the forest fire community.

Mr Chairman, I believe the examples of the work being carried out by the ECE Committee on Agricultural Problems and the Timber Committee in Geneva will have demonstrated the complementarity of our work with that of FAO in the region, and the serious and continuing efforts that we are making, as much on the side of ECE as of FAO, to develop the symbiotic relationship between the two organizations for the benefit of our member countries. Our cooperation at the regional level is also of value to other regions, and I am convinced that our activities generate an "outreach" benefit for developing countries. I trust that this Conference will agree that good progress has been made in this direction, that our efforts have been worthwhile, and that the new circumstances which prevail in the region at this time call for even closer cooperation between FAO and ECE. It only remains for me now to wish the Conference every success in its important deliberations this week and to thank you very much for your attention.

