

# REPORT

Rome  
Italy  
24 – 28 February 2014

## **Thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for the Near East**



## FAO Member Nations in the Near East Region

Afghanistan	Kuwait	Saudi Arabia
Algeria	Kyrgyzstan	Somalia
Azerbaijan	Lebanon	Sudan
Bahrain	Libya	Syrian Arab Republic
Cyprus	Malta	Tajikistan
Djibouti	Mauritania	Tunisia
Egypt	Morocco	Turkey
Iran, Islamic Republic of	Oman	Turkmenistan
Iraq	Pakistan	United Arab Emirates
Jordan	Qatar	Yemen

## Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for the Near East

First	- Cairo, Egypt,	2-14 February 1948
Second	- Bloudane, Syria,	28 August - 6 September 1951
Third	- Cairo, Egypt,	1-9 September 1953
Fourth	- Damascus, Syria*,	10-20 December 1958
Fifth	- Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of),	21 September - 1 October 1960
Sixth	- Tel Amara, Lebanon,	30 July - 8 August 1962
Seventh	- Cairo, Egypt**,	19-31 October 1964
Eighth	- Khartoum, Sudan,	24 January - 2 February 1967
Ninth	- Baghdad, Iraq,	21 September - 1 October 1968
Tenth	- Islamabad, Pakistan,	12-22 September 1970
Eleventh	- Kuwait, Kuwait,	9-19 September 1972
Twelfth	- Amman, Jordan,	31 August - 9 September 1974
Thirteenth	- Tunis, Tunisia,	4-11 October 1976
Fourteenth	- Damascus, Syria,	9-16 September 1978
Fifteenth	- Rome, Italy,	21-25 April 1981
Sixteenth	- Nicosia, Cyprus,	25-29 October 1982
Seventeenth	- Aden, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen,	11-15 March 1984
Eighteenth	- Istanbul, Turkey,	17-21 March 1986
Nineteenth	- Muscat, Oman,	13-17 March 1988
Twentieth	- Tunis, Tunisia,	12-16 March 1990
Twenty-first	- Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of),	17-21 May 1992
Twenty-second	- Amman, Jordan,	3-6 July 1994
Twenty-third	- Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco,	26-29 March 1996
Twenty-fourth	- Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic,	21-25 March 1998
Twenty-fifth	- Beirut, Lebanon,	20-24 March 2000
Twenty-sixth	- Tehran, Iran (Islamic Republic of),	9-13 March 2002
Twenty-seventh	Doha, State of Qatar,	13-17 March 2004
Twenty-eighth	- Sana'a, Republic of Yemen,	12-16 March 2006
Twenty-ninth	- Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt,	1-5 March 2008
Thirtieth	- Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan,	4-8 December 2010
Thirty-first	- Rome, Italy,	14-18 May 2012
Thirty-second	- Rome, Italy,	24-28 February 2014

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\*Known as the United Arab Republic from 01/03/1958  
\*\*Known as the United Arab Republic until 02/09/1971



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**REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND FAO REGIONAL  
CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST**

Rome, Italy, 24-28 February 2014

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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## SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

### Matters Requiring the Attention of the FAO Council

The Thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for the Near East:

#### Programme and Budget Matters

##### *Priorities for FAO Activities in the Near East and North Africa*

- 31 c) endorsed the priorities for FAO's work in the Region as outlined in paragraph 19 of document NERC/14/2, which drew on country priorities reflected in Country Programming Frameworks and recommendations of the Regional Commissions;
- d) supported the three Regional Initiatives in the Near East and North Africa: i) water scarcity; ii) building resilience for enhanced food security and nutrition; and iii) sustainable small-scale agriculture for inclusive development, as a means to further focus FAO's work for country-level impact and for resource mobilisation within the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2014-2015 and Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2014-2017;
- e) underlined the need for continuity in the strategic direction and leadership of the Organization in order to realize the full impact of the reviewed Strategic Framework;
- f) expressed concern with the level of extra-budgetary resources planned for the Region, and requested FAO to exert more efforts in mobilising the required extra-budgetary resources to support country-level actions and the three Regional Initiatives;
- g) requested FAO to formulate multi-country projects under the three Regional Initiatives that could be presented to Member Nations of the Region for funding;
- h) emphasized the need to mobilize resources in the Region and between Regions, including through South-South Cooperation and partnerships, in implementing the Regional Initiatives and the Country Programming Frameworks;
- k) urged Member Nations in the Region to contribute to the Regional Solidarity Trust Fund as a means of supporting the Regional Initiatives, and
- l) called on FAO and the Chairperson of the Regional Conference to take the lead in appropriate follow-up with Member Nations towards this end.

##### *Decentralization and the Decentralized Offices Network*

- 33 b, c) endorsed the measures pursued to reinforce capabilities within the Regional Office and the Decentralized Offices Network, as well as to secure the optimal utilization of existing capabilities at the regional, sub-regional and country levels and supported actions taken to strengthen the capacity of Country Offices, including a review of their current structures;
- d, e) agreed to support a methodical review of the organizational design of Country Offices to strengthen their capacity by aligning their respective programmes and structures; encouraged funding from Region-to-Region, including funding through the Regional Solidarity Trust Fund;
- f) recognized the importance of the Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) programmes as a means for bilateral collaboration between FAO and Member Nations, such as the cooperation programmes between FAO and Saudi Arabia and FAO and Libya;
- h) welcomed progress made in integrating emergency and development activities, appointing Deputies to the FAO Representative in some Member Nations, and the process of aligning Country Programming Frameworks with FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework;
- j) appreciated the role of FAO in supporting the resilience of Palestinian producers in agricultural sector, and called upon FAO to continue in providing its support for such programmes.



***State of Food and Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa Region***

- 16 f) reiterated its support for the Regional Initiative on "Building resilience for improved food security and nutrition in the NENA" as a vehicle through which the proposed framework for food security and nutrition at country and regional levels should be promoted, and called on FAO and Member Nations to exert efforts to mobilize extra-budgetary funding for this purpose;
- g) requested FAO to study with Member Nations options for their appropriation of the Food Security and Nutrition Forum proposed by the Thirty-first Session of the Regional Conference.

***Reducing Food Losses and Waste in the Near East & North Africa Region***

- 18 c) encouraged Member Nations in the Region, funding institutions, and the private sector to accord high priority to investments in improving food chain efficiency, as well as other actions crucial in reducing food losses and waste;
- d) requested FAO to assist Member Nations in developing advocacy and communication materials to address food losses and waste reduction in the Region

***Regional Water Scarcity Initiative: Towards a Collaborative Strategy***

- 20 h) requested FAO to undertake an assessment of institutional capacities in the Region dealing with climate change and its impact on agriculture and food security, and to establish a mechanism for promoting collaboration in this area, that would include combating drought and desertification, and

***Addressing the Gender Gap in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in the Near East and North Africa***

- 22 d) requested Member Nations to collect, analyze and disseminate statistics that allowed accurate assessments of the situation of women in the agriculture and rural sector, and requested FAO to provide technical support for Member Nations of the Region in these areas.

**Other Matters*****Multi-year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for the Near East***

34. The Regional Conference reviewed the previous document (NERC/14/8) of Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW), and approved the revised MYPOW 2012-15 for the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East.

***Family farming***

35. The Regional Conference appreciated the efforts made by FAO on promoting family farming and noted the recommendations of document NERC/14/INF/12 on Family Farming.

***The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)***

36. The Regional Conference noted the importance of the active participation of Member Nations in the upcoming FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), to be held in Rome in November 2014, in order to improve diets and raise levels of nutrition.

***Global Commission on Statistics***

37. The Regional Conference took note of the presentation made by the Secretariat on the proposal of the establishment of a global commission on Statistics to address the information gaps in food security, nutrition and Agriculture and coordinate global efforts in this area.

***Side Event on Yemen***

38. The Regional Conference expressed concern over the dire situation of food security and nutrition in the country and supported the Director-General's Initiative of establishing a Multi-Donor Programme for supporting Yemen in its effort to address food security and nutrition and welcomed the call of the Director-General to organize a pledge conference for this purpose.



### **Matters Requiring the Attention of the FAO Conference**

The Thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for the Near East:

#### ***State of Food and Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa Region***

- 16 b)** noted that conflicts and/or civil insecurity were major driving factors leading to increased food insecurity in the Region in 2012-13;
- c)** endorsed the Regional Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, and encouraged Member Nations to accelerate efforts to develop improved and coherent policy frameworks for food security and nutrition at the national and regional levels;
- d)** emphasized the potential importance of regional cereal reserves;
- e)** noted the utility of existing market information systems such as AMIS, and requested FAO to continue its efforts in supporting data, information and knowledge sharing on food security and nutrition;

#### ***Reducing Food Losses and Waste in the Near East & North Africa Region***

- 18 b)** endorsed the Regional Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Food Losses and Waste in the Near East and North Africa, and called on Member Nations in the Region to collaborate with FAO and partners in developing evidence-based national action plans for food losses and waste reduction, with clear objectives, baselines, indicators and targets;
- c)** encouraged Member Nations in the Region, funding institutions, and the private sector to accord high priority to investments in improving food chain efficiency, as well as other actions crucial in reducing food losses and waste;
- d)** requested FAO to assist Member Nations in developing advocacy and communication materials to address food losses and waste reduction in the Region

#### ***Regional Water Scarcity Initiative: Towards a Collaborative Strategy***

- 20 b)** endorsed the Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity and commended the efforts and actions undertaken by FAO and Partners to develop a Collaborative Regional Strategy on Sustainable Water Management for Food Security;
- c)** recognized this Regional Initiative as complementary to existing national and regional initiatives to create mechanisms in addressing water scarcity beyond national level and to provide an agricultural water lens through the 'Arab Water Security Strategy' (2010-2030) and other initiatives in the Region;
- e)** invited Member Nations to formulate National Action Plans and support the formulation of a Regional Action Plan to implement the Regional Collaborative Strategy;
- f)** urged FAO and its partners to assist Member Nations in developing their National Water Strategies by providing needed technical assistance, and by preparing relevant feasibility studies;
- h)** requested FAO to undertake an assessment of institutional capacities in the Region dealing with climate change and its impact on agriculture and food security, and to establish a mechanism for promoting collaboration in this area, that would include combating drought and desertification
- i)** called on Member Nations of the Organization to respect international treaties and agreements related to water resources, and to ensure individual rights of access to water.

***Addressing the Gender Gap in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in the Near East and North Africa***

- 22 a) recognized the importance of gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policies by strengthening rural institutions, developing the human capital of women and youth, and promoting the economic empowerment of vulnerable men and women;
- c) welcomed FAO's approach in mainstreaming gender in its programme of work and related activities in the Region, and
- d) requested Member Nations to collect, analyze and disseminate statistics that allowed accurate assessments of the situation of women in the agriculture and rural sector, and requested FAO to provide technical support for Member Nations of the Region in these areas.

***Recommendations of FAO Regional Commissions and Major Meetings in the Near East***

- 24 a, b) took note of the recommendations of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC) and noted the need for enhancing the work on valuation of forests' contribution to sustainable development; supporting countries in developing forest and rangeland-related policies, strategies and programmes; and strengthening the focus on capacity-building in areas comprised in the new Strategic Framework.
- 26 a) requested FAO to continue ensuring its technical support to the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI);
- b) encouraged RECOFI Members to ensure adequate funding to preserve the work of the Commission, as this was becoming increasingly essential for the sustainability of shared fishery and aquaculture resources in the Region;
- c) appreciated the joint efforts made by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Kuwait with the support of FAO to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in the northern area of RECOFI, and
- d) noted the offer of the State of Kuwait to host the Tripartite Committee under the auspices of RECOFI in the new FAO office to be established shortly in Kuwait.
- 28 a) acknowledged the role of Desert Locust Commission in the Central Region (CRC) in promoting effective collaboration between Member Nations, and requested FAO to continue ensuring technical support to the Commission;
- b) requested Member Nations to support Desert Locust Units to implement the Locust Prevention and Control Strategy;
- c, d) requested FAO and Member Nations to emphasize the implementation of sanitary and environmentally-friendly measures in combating desert locusts and consider the possibilities of utilising desert locust for human consumption and animal feed

***Decentralization and the Decentralized Offices Network***

- 33 f) recognized the importance of the Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) programmes as a means for bilateral collaboration between FAO and Member Nations, such as the cooperation programmes between FAO and Saudi Arabia and FAO and Libya;
- h) welcomed progress made in integrating emergency and development activities, appointing Deputies to the FAO Representative in some Member Nations, and the process of aligning Country Programming Frameworks with FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework;



## I. Introductory Items

### **Organization of the Conference**

1. The Thirty-second FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC-32) was held in Rome, Italy, from 24 to 28 February 2014. The Regional Conference was organized in two parts: a Senior Officers' Meeting from 24 to 26 February and a Ministerial-level Meeting from 27 to 28 February.
2. The Regional Conference was attended by 155 Delegates from 23 Member Nations, 7 Observer Nations, 3 UN Organizations, 1 Inter-Governmental Organization, 3 International Non-Governmental Organization and 1 Observer (see Appendix D for the List).

### **Inaugural Ceremonies**

3. The Senior Officers' Meeting was opened with addresses by H.E. Mr Izzeddin Al-Dola, Minister for Agriculture, Republic of Iraq, and Mr Abdessalam OuldAhmed, Assistant Director- General and Regional Representative for the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa. His Excellency the Minister welcomed the participants and officially opened the meeting. Mr OuldAhmed welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of this meeting in light of the emerging and structural challenges faced by the Region and in light of the FAO transformation process.
4. The Inaugural Ceremony of the Ministerial Meeting was held on 27 February. Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, delivered the Inaugural Address. The Meeting was also addressed by H.E. Mr Wilfred Ngirwa, the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, H.E. Ms Gerda Verburg, Chairperson of CFS, and H.E. Mr Izzeddin Al-Dola, Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Iraq, Chairperson of the Thirty-first Session of NERC.

### **Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur**

5. Based on a recommendation made by Mr Yousef Juhail, Chairperson of the Near East Regional Group of Permanent Representatives to FAO, Delegates endorsed H.E. Mr Izzeddin Al-Dola, Minister for Agriculture, Republic of Iraq, to chair this Session.
6. The Chairperson thanked Delegates for the election of Iraq to chair the Thirty-second Session of the Regional Conference for the Near east and FAO for the excellent preparations in organizing the meeting, and requested Mr Faisal Rashid Naser to Chair the Session of the Senior Officers' Meeting.
7. The Regional Conference elected Mr Elamien Hassan Elamien (Sudan) as the Rapporteur.
8. The Regional Conference elected Lebanon as the Chairperson and Iran (Islamic Republic of) as the Vice-Chairperson of the Thirty-third Regional Conference for the Near East.

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

9. The Conference adopted the Revised Agenda and the Timetable for the Regional Conference including the elections of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons of NERC-33 at its closing session. The Agenda is given in Appendix B. Documents submitted to the Regional Conference are listed in Appendix C.

### **Statement by the Director-General**

10. Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, welcomed the participating Ministers and Dignitaries to the Thirty-second Session of the Near East Regional Conference. The Director-General highlighted the emerging challenges for food security and agricultural development in the Region, including conflicts, displacement, and the transboundary effects of these challenges on food security in the Region. In his address, the Director-General outlined the key achievements made by FAO over the last two years. The Director-General gave an overview on the FAO transformational change and its benefits for the region, highlighting reviewed Strategic Framework and the five Strategic Objectives and their alignment with the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) and the Regional Priorities. He also highlighted efforts made in providing the needed expertise and technical resources to FAO Representations in the Region, and encouraged Member Nations to engage in South-South cooperation and funding national, transboundary and regional programmes. The Director-General invited Member Nations of the Region to further engage with FAO on food security and nutrition issues, including land tenure, and to participate in CFS consultations on the Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investments.

### **Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council**

11. H.E. Mr Wilfred Ngirwa, Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, addressed the Conference, stressing the new role of the Regional Conferences as Governing Bodies reporting to the FAO Council and Conference. The Independent Chairperson highlighted the mandate entrusted to him, including implementation of the FAO Reform Plan.

### **Statement by the Chairperson of the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Regional Conference for Near East**

12. H.E. Mr Izzeddin Al-Dola, Minister for Agriculture, the Republic of Iraq, delivered the statement of the Chairperson of the Thirty-first Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East. In doing so, he reminded the Conference about the recommendations of the Thirty-first Session, and briefed the Delegates on activities undertaken by the Regional Office as a follow up to the implementation of these recommendations.

### **Statement by the Chairperson of the CFS on the Outcomes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on World Food Security**

13. The CFS Chair, H.E. Ms Gerda Verburg, reported on the progress made by CFS over the past two years and its relevance to the Near East Region. She also briefed the Conference on some of the on-going key CFS activities, and urged all stakeholders to implement CFS policy recommendations and guidelines.

### **Prioritization of Country and Regional Needs**

14. Following the Inaugural Ceremony of the Ministerial Meeting, brief statements were made by the Honourable Ministers from the following Members: Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kuwait, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen. Brief statements were also made by the Heads of Delegation of the following Members: Afghanistan, Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Oman. The Minister of Palestine also made a statement.

## **II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues**

### **A. State of Food and Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa Region**

15. The Regional Conference considered the document (NERC/14/4 Rev 2) on the State of Food and Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa Region (NENA).



16. The Regional Conference:

- a) noted the high number of chronically-undernourished people in the Region, estimated at 79.4 million in 2010-13, or 11.2 percent of the population, and the high incidence of obesity estimated at one quarter of the total population;
- b) noted that conflicts and/or civil insecurity were major driving factors leading to increased food insecurity in the Region in 2012-13;
- c) endorsed the Regional Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, and encouraged Member Nations to accelerate efforts to develop improved and coherent policy frameworks for food security and nutrition at the national and regional levels;
- d) emphasized the potential importance of regional cereal reserves;
- e) noted the utility of existing market information systems such as AMIS, and requested FAO to continue its efforts in supporting data, information and knowledge sharing on food security and nutrition;
- f) reiterated its support for the Regional Initiative on "Building resilience for improved food security and nutrition in the NENA" as a vehicle through which the proposed framework for food security and nutrition at country and regional levels should be promoted, and called on FAO and Member Nations to exert efforts to mobilize extra-budgetary funding for this purpose, and
- g) welcomed the two Regional Multi-stakeholder Workshops on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) that had already taken place, and requested FAO to study with Member Nations options for their appropriation of the Food Security and Nutrition Forum proposed by the Thirty-first Session of the Regional Conference.

**B. Reducing Food Losses and Waste in the Near East & North Africa Region**

17. The Regional Conference considered the document on Reducing Food Losses and Waste in the Near East and North Africa Region (NERC/14/7).

18. The Regional Conference:

- a) noted the direct link between the proposed Regional Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Food Losses and Waste in the Region and FAO's "Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction", and recognized the unique characteristics of the Region in the recommended actions;
- b) endorsed the Regional Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Food Losses and Waste in the Near East and North Africa, and called on Member Nations in the Region to collaborate with FAO and partners in developing evidence-based national action plans for food losses and waste reduction, with clear objectives, baselines, indicators and targets;
- c) encouraged Member Nations in the Region, funding institutions, and the private sector to accord high priority to investments in improving food chain efficiency, as well as other actions crucial in reducing food losses and waste;

- d) requested FAO to assist Member Nations in developing advocacy and communication materials to address food losses and waste reduction in the Region, and
- e) noted the importance of including all stakeholders in efforts underway to reduce food losses and waste.

### C. Regional Water Scarcity Initiative: Towards a Collaborative Strategy

19. The Regional Conference reviewed the "Regional Water Scarcity Initiative: Towards a Collaborative Strategy" as one of the three 'Regional Initiatives for the Near East and North Africa'.
20. The Regional Conference:
  - a) recognized the critical importance of agricultural water management for sustainable development in the Region;
  - b) endorsed the Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity and commended the efforts and actions undertaken by FAO and Partners to develop a Collaborative Regional Strategy on Sustainable Water Management for Food Security;
  - c) recognized this Regional Initiative as complementary to existing national and regional initiatives to create mechanisms in addressing water scarcity beyond national level and to provide an agricultural water lens through the 'Arab Water Security Strategy' (2010-2030) and other initiatives in the Region;
  - d) stressed the importance of implementing priority areas for action under the Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity;
  - e) invited Member Nations to formulate National Action Plans and support the formulation of a Regional Action Plan to implement the Regional Collaborative Strategy;
  - f) urged FAO and its partners to assist Member Nations in developing their National Water Strategies by providing needed technical assistance, and by preparing relevant feasibility studies;
  - g) requested FAO to document and share successful stories, good practices and lessons learned from the Region;
  - h) requested FAO to undertake an assessment of institutional capacities in the Region dealing with climate change and its impact on agriculture and food security, and to establish a mechanism for promoting collaboration in this area, that would include combating drought and desertification, and
  - i) called on Member Nations of the Organization to respect international treaties and agreements related to water resources, and to ensure individual rights of access to water.



#### **D. Addressing the Gender Gap in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in the Near East and North Africa**

21. The Regional Conference considered the document on Addressing Gender Gap in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in the Near East and North Africa (NERC/14/6).
22. The Regional Conference:
  - a) recognized the importance of gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policies by strengthening rural institutions, developing the human capital of women and youth, and promoting the economic empowerment of vulnerable men and women;
  - b) underlined the importance of addressing the needs of rural women and men through gender mainstreaming;
  - c) welcomed FAO's approach in mainstreaming gender in its programme of work and related activities in the Region, and
  - d) requested Member Nations to collect, analyze and disseminate statistics that allowed accurate assessments of the situation of women in the agriculture and rural sector, and requested FAO to provide technical support for Member Nations of the Region in these areas.

#### **E. Recommendations of FAO Regional Commissions and Major Meetings in the Near East**

23. The Regional Conference reviewed recommendations of the Twenty-first Session of the Near East Forestry and Range Commission (NEFRC).
24. The Regional Conference:
  - a) noted the recommendations of the NEFRC in: 1) properly positioning forests and rangelands in developmental policies and strategies; 2) recognizing the role of forests and rangelands and their role in enhancing synergies among the Rio Conventions; and (3) focusing FAO programmes on capacity-building and related education and training, and
  - b) noted the need for enhancing the work on valuation of forests' contribution to sustainable development; supporting countries in developing forest and rangeland-related policies, strategies and programmes; and strengthening the focus on capacity-building in areas comprised in the new Strategic Framework.
25. The Regional Conference noted the recommendations of the Thirty-sixth and Thirty-seventh Sessions of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), and the Seventh Session of the Regional Commission for Fisheries (RECOFI), as well as actions taken to establish a regional fisheries management organization/arrangement in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.
26. The Regional Conference:
  - a) acknowledged the role of RECOFI in effectively promoting cooperation among its Members for the development of fisheries and aquaculture, and requested FAO to continue ensuring its technical support to the Commission;



- b) encouraged RECOFI Members to ensure adequate funding to preserve the work of the Commission, as this was becoming increasingly essential for the sustainability of shared fishery and aquaculture resources in the Region;
  - c) appreciated the joint efforts made by the Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq and Kuwait with the support of FAO to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture in the northern area of RECOFI, and
  - d) noted the offer of the State of Kuwait to host the Tripartite Committee under the auspices of RECOFI in the new FAO office to be established shortly in Kuwait.
27. The Regional Conference noted the recommendations of the Desert Locust Commission in the Central Region (CRC).
28. The Regional Conference:
- a) acknowledged the role of CRC in promoting effective collaboration between Member Nations, and requested FAO to continue ensuring technical support to the Commission;
  - b) requested Member Nations to support Desert Locust Units to implement the Locust Prevention and Control Strategy;
  - c) requested FAO and Member Nations to emphasize the implementation of sanitary and environmentally-friendly measures in combating desert locusts;
  - d) requested FAO and Member Nations to consider the possibilities of utilising desert locust for human consumption and animal feed, and
29. The Regional Conference noted the outcomes and recommendations of the Third Regional Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Food Security and Nutrition, the Near East and North Africa Land and Water Days, the Fifth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (GB5) and the Ministerial Conference for the Near East and North Africa Region plus Brazil, Indonesia, Italy, Norway & Spain.

### **III. Programme and Budget Matters**

#### **A. Priorities for FAO Activities in the Near East and North Africa**

30. The Regional Conference acknowledged the impact of recent political and economic crises on food security and nutrition of countries in the Region, and stressed the need for capacity-building and resilience in dealing with future threats and crises.
31. The Regional Conference:
- a) acknowledged that there were shared challenges and common areas of development work despite the geographic and economic differences among the Member Nations of the Region;
  - b) appreciated the major actions implemented by FAO in addressing regional priorities during 2012-2013, including actions undertaken in response to the recommendations of the previous Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East;



- c) endorsed the priorities for FAO's work in the Region as outlined in paragraph 19 of document NERC/14/2, which drew on country priorities reflected in Country Programming Frameworks and recommendations of the Regional Commissions;
- d) supported the three Regional Initiatives in the Near East and North Africa: i) water scarcity; ii) building resilience for enhanced food security and nutrition; and iii) sustainable small-scale agriculture for inclusive development, as a means to further focus FAO's work for country-level impact and for resource mobilisation within the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2014-2015 and Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2014-2017;
- e) underlined the need for continuity in the strategic direction and leadership of the Organization in order to realize the full impact of the reviewed Strategic Framework;
- f) expressed concern with the level of extra-budgetary resources planned for the Region, and requested FAO to exert more efforts in mobilising the required extra-budgetary resources to support country-level actions and the three Regional Initiatives;
- g) requested FAO to formulate multi-country projects under the three Regional Initiatives that could be presented to Member Nations of the Region for funding;
- h) emphasized the need to mobilize resources in the Region and between Regions, including through South-South Cooperation and partnerships, in implementing the Regional Initiatives and the Country Programming Frameworks;
- i) highlighted the importance of also addressing issues of inter-regional nature at the Regional Conference, particularly with Africa on transboundary matters;
- j) welcomed and appreciated the contribution of Iraq to the Regional Solidarity Trust Fund;
- k) urged Member Nations in the Region to contribute to the Regional Solidarity Trust Fund as a means of supporting the Regional Initiatives, and
- l) called on FAO and the Chairperson of the Regional Conference to take the lead in appropriate follow-up with Member Nations towards this end.

## **B. Decentralization and the Decentralized Offices Network**

- 32. The Regional Conference considered the document on Decentralization and Decentralized Offices Network in the Near East and North Africa (NERC/14/3).
- 33. The Regional Conference:
  - a) highlighted the progress made in strengthening Decentralized Offices (DOs) in the Region;
  - b) endorsed the measures pursued to reinforce capabilities within the Regional Office and the Decentralized Offices Network, as well as to secure the optimal utilization of existing capabilities at the regional, sub-regional and country levels;
  - c) supported actions taken to strengthen the capacity of Country Offices, including a review of their current structures;
  - d) agreed to support a methodical review of the organizational design of Country Offices to strengthen their capacity by aligning their respective programmes and structures;

- e) encouraged funding from Region-to-Region, including funding through the Regional Solidarity Trust Fund;
- f) welcomed the actions taken to strengthen cooperation with regional organizations, particularly ICARDA, and enhanced collaboration efforts that would promote more coherent and integrated work on Food Security and Agricultural Development across the Region;
- g) recognized the importance of the Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) programmes as a means for bilateral collaboration between FAO and Member Nations, such as the cooperation programmes between FAO and Saudi Arabia and FAO and Libya;
- h) welcomed progress made on making the Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council States and Yemen operational, and thanked the United Arab Emirates for its generosity;
- i) welcomed progress made in integrating emergency and development activities, appointing Deputies to the FAO Representative in some Member Nations, and the process of aligning Country Programming Frameworks with FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework;
- j) stressed the importance of strengthening FAO Representations to enhance coordination and leadership and supporting Member Nations to strengthen information sharing on lessons learned and partnerships, and
- k) appreciated the role of FAO in supporting the resilience of Palestinian producers in agricultural sector, and called upon FAO to continue in providing its support for such programmes.

#### **IV. Other Matters**

##### **A. Multi-year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for the Near East**

34. The Regional Conference reviewed the previous document (NERC/14/8) of Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW), and approved the revised MYPOW 2012-15 for the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East.

##### **B. Family farming**

35. The Regional Conference appreciated the efforts made by FAO on promoting family farming and noted the recommendations of document NERC/14/INF/12 on Family Farming.

##### **C. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)**

36. The Regional Conference noted the importance of the active participation of Member Nations in the upcoming FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), to be held in Rome in November 2014, in order to improve diets and raise levels of nutrition.

##### **D. Global Commission on Statistics**

37. The Regional Conference took note of the presentation made by the Secretariat on the proposal of the establishment of a global commission on Statistics to address the information gaps in food security, nutrition and Agriculture and coordinate global efforts in this area.



### **E. Side Event on Yemen**

38. The Regional Conference took note of the Side Event on “The impact of protracted crisis on agriculture and food and nutrition security” in Yemen and expressed concern over the dire situation of food security and nutrition in the country. The Regional Conference supported the Director-General’s Initiative of establishing a Multi-Donor Programme for supporting Yemen in its effort to address food security and nutrition and welcomed the call of the Director-General to organize a pledge conference for this purpose.

### **F. Ministerial Declaration**

39. The Regional Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration in which Member Nations expressed their appreciation and support of FAO’s new strategic direction, the three Regional Initiatives, and the Director-General’s call to establish a multi-donor programme in support of Yemen (Appendix A).

### **G. Concluding items**

#### **Date and place of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference for the Near East**

40. The Regional Conference agreed on the venue of the Thirty-third Regional Conference for the Near East to be Lebanon.

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

41. The Meeting adopted the report of the Conference after introducing an amendment and by adding more items in the report.

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

42. Upon the conclusion of the Ministerial meeting, the Chairperson, H.E. the Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Iraq presented the Declaration unanimously adopted by the participating countries. The Chair of the Near East Group for Country representatives thanked all delegates for their active participation and pragmatic recommendations. Mr José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, thanked all participants and indicated that the Regional Conference ended with great consensus to move forward, and reconfirmed FAO commitment to support Member Nations to achieve food security. He also indicated that the Ministerial Declaration and the side event on Yemen endorsed the launching of a multi-donor programme to support Yemen in its effort to ensure food security and nutrition. The Minister for Agriculture of the Republic Iraq thanked all the delegations for their deliberations and participation in the Meeting, and the Director-General of FAO for addressing the inaugural and closing sessions of the Regional Conference and confirmed the support of the Conference to the Initiative of the Director-General to support Yemen. He also thanked FAO and its Regional Office and the Regional Conference Secretariat for preparing the documents and for the exceptional preparation and smooth running of the Conference.
43. H.E. the Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Iraq declared the Regional Conference closed at 11:00 am on 28 February 2014.

## **Appendix A**

### **Ministerial Declaration**

1. We, Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Near East and North Africa Regional Conference,
2. Conscious of the magnitude of the challenges of Food Security, and Nutrition, Water Scarcity, Land Degradation and Climate Change in the Near East and North Africa Region;
3. Underlining the intimate relationship between food security, stability and peace in the Region;
4. Recognizing the positive effect of the transformational changes put in place by the Director-General during the last biennium;
5. Express our appreciation of the renewed efforts and actions undertaken by the FAO through its Strategic Framework in supporting the Members;
6. Support the implementation of the three regional initiatives on: Water Scarcity, Building Resilience for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition, and Small Scale Agriculture for Inclusive Development;
7. Express our confidence and support to the new strategic direction of the organization and underline the necessity for continuity to achieve the full impact of these changes;
8. Reaffirm our commitment to work hand-in-hand with the Organization towards the achievement of the common goals and objectives in the Region;
9. We appreciate the efforts made in family farming in the framework of the International Year of Family Farming 2014.
10. With the support of FAO and Member Nations in the region for the initiative of the Director General for a multi-donor programme for Yemen, we request Member Nations to extend technical and financial support to Yemen and Somalia to rehabilitate their agricultural sectors to their full potential and mitigate natural and man-made crises.





## **Appendix B**

### **Agenda**

#### **I. Introductory Items**

1. Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
3. Statement by the Director-General
4. Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
5. Statement by the Chairperson of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Near East
6. Statement by the Chairperson of the CFS on the Outcomes of the 40th Session of the Committee on World Food Security

#### **II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues**

7. State of Food and Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa Region
8. Reducing Food Losses and Waste in the Near East & North Africa Region
9. Regional Water Scarcity Initiative: Towards a Collaborative Strategy
10. Addressing the Gender Gap in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in the Near East and North Africa
11. Recommendations of FAO Regional Commissions and Major Meetings in the Near East

#### **III. Programme and Budget Matters**

12. Priorities for FAO Activities in the Near East and North Africa
13. Decentralization and the Decentralized Offices Network

#### **IV. Other Matters**

14. Multi-year Programme of Work for the Regional Conference for the Near East
15. Family farming
16. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)
17. Global Commission on Statistics
18. Side Event on Yemen
19. The independent review of the IPA-related governance reforms
20. Presentation on the Blue Growth Economy
21. Ministerial Declaration
22. Concluding items
23. Date and place of the 33rd Regional Conference for the Near East
24. Adoption of the Report
25. Closure of the Regional Conference





## Appendix C

### List of Documents

NERC/14/1 Rev.2	Provisional Agenda
NERC/14/2	Priorities for FAO Activities in the Near East and North Africa
NERC/14/3 Rev.1	Decentralization and the Decentralized Offices Network Towards a More Effective Decentralized Offices Network in the Near East and North Africa
NERC/14/4 Rev.2	State of Food and Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa Region
NERC/14/5	Regional Water Scarcity Initiative: Towards a Collaborative Strategy
NERC/14/6	Addressing Gender Gap in Agriculture and the Rural Sector in the Near East and North Africa
NERC/14/7 Rev.1	Reducing Food Losses and Waste in the Near East & North Africa Region
NERC/14/8	Multi-Year Programme of Work 2012-15 (MYPOW) for the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East

### INF SERIES

NERC/14/INF/1	Information Note
NERC/14/INF/2 Rev.2	Provisional Timetable
NERC/14/INF/3 Rev.2	Provisional List of Documents
NERC/14/INF/5	Summary of the Progress made in the Implementation of the Recommendations of the 31 <sup>st</sup> Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East
NERC/14/INF/6 Rev.1	Summary of the Recommendations of Regional Commissions and Major Meetings in the Near East on: i) the Policy and Regulatory Matters, and ii) Programme and Budget Matters
NERC/14/INF/7 Rev.2	Joint FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)
NERC/14/INF/8	Update on the International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition
NERC/14/INF/9	Progress in the Implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics in the Near East Region
NERC/14/INF/10	The Third Mediterranean Forest Week
NERC/14/INF/11 Rev.1	Update on the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
NERC/14/INF/12	Regional Dialogue on Family Farming in the Near East and North Africa Region
NERC/14/INF/13	Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council



## Appendix D

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