

March 2008



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

TWENTY-NINTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt, 1 - 5 March 2008

Report on FAO Activities in the Near East Region, with a Focus on the
Achievement of the World Food Summit (WFS) Target and the Millennium
Development Goals

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs
I. INTRODUCTION	1-2
II. ACHIEVEMENT OF WFS AND MDG TARGETS IN THE NEAR EAST	3-15
III. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAO ACTIVITIES DURING 2006-07	16-52
IV. ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF NERC-28	53-57
V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NERC-29	58

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Twelve years have passed since world leaders from 180 countries met in Rome at the World Food Summit (WFS) to discuss ways of ending world hunger and undernourishment. The WFS participants agreed on a Plan of Action to eliminate hunger and malnutrition and achieve sustainable food security for all people. World leaders set a WFS target of halving the number of undernourished by 2015. This global commitment was re-affirmed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) following the Millennium Summit in 2000, namely: MDG-1 which aims to reduce the proportion of the poor and hungry by half by the year 2015. A similar commitment was reiterated in 2002 when nations met again at the World Food Summit: *five years later* (WFS: *fyl*)¹ to check on progress being made.

2. Since then, FAO has undertaken many interrelated activities at global, regional and country levels in support of facilitating achievement of the WFS goal of eradicating hunger and of contributing directly and indirectly to achieving all eight MDGs.² This document looks at the progress made in the Near East Region towards achieving the WFS and MDG-1 targets. It provides an overview of trends in hunger reduction since 2001-2003, the years for which information was available at the last regional conference held in Sana'a in 2006. After this brief introduction in Section I, Section II summarizes the food security situation in the Near East Region (NE) with respect to the WFS and MDG-1 targets. Section III reports on the implementation of FAO's main activities in the Region during 2006-07. Section IV presents the regional actions taken by FAO on the main recommendations of NERC-28. Section V concludes with recommendations for NERC-29.

II. ACHIEVEMENT OF WFS AND MDG TARGETS IN THE NEAR EAST

A. Global trends

3. Globally, the number of the undernourished remains higher than it was in 1996, the year of the WFS. There were some 862 million people undernourished in 2002-04 as compared with 840 million in the 1990-92 base year, despite the WFS target call for reducing by half the number of undernourished people by the year 2015. Although no overall progress has been made on the WFS target, there has been progress towards achieving the MDG target. It is also worth mentioning that the WFS target is more ambitious than the MDG target.³

4. In developing countries, the total number of undernourished people declined by a mere 3 million people – from 823 million in 1990-92 to 820 million in 2001-03. Due to population growth, this small reduction in the absolute number of undernourished has however reduced the proportion of the hungry in the developing countries by 3 percentage points – from 20 percent in 1990-92 to 17 percent in 2001-03.

5. Progress in the global trends towards achieving the MDG-1 target thus continues at a fairly satisfactory level while achievement of the WFS target remains a cause of concern.⁴ Trends for both targets indicate a slower rate of progress in the most recent period as compared to progress in the earlier years. Undernourishment numbers in the developing countries declined at a faster rate in the 1970s (1969-71 to 1979-81) and 1980s (1979-81 to 1990-92). In fact, the number of

¹ World Food Summit: *five years later* can be seen at: <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsummit/english/index.html>

² All eight MDGs are described at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

³ The WFS target is to reduce the **number** of the undernourished by half by 2015; while one of the two targets of the MFG1 is to halve **the proportion** of the people who suffer from hunger by the year 2015.

⁴ See *The State of Food Insecurity* (SOFI) 2006. It is viewable online at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0750e/a0750e00.htm>

undernourished declined by 37 million in the 1970s, by 100 million in the 1980s, but only by 3 million since 1990-92. Similarly, the prevalence of undernourishment in the developing countries declined at a faster rate during the 1970s (9 percent) and 1980s (8 percent) than the period after 1990-92 (3 percent).⁵

6. The differential rate of progress between the MDG and WFS targets means that even if the MDG target is achieved by 2015, the WFS target may not be. A yearly reduction of 31 million people in the number of the underinsured is needed between now and 2015 in order to achieve the WFS target.

B. Regional progress

7. Mirroring global trends, the Near East Region made no progress in achieving the WFS and MDG targets. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the Region's food security situation is highly variable given that it consists of 32 countries located on three continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. The Region includes some of the world's most undernourished countries as well as some of its better off countries. Also four countries in the Region remain under protracted conflict: Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. Due to the ongoing severity of these conflicts, data remains unavailable for these countries which perhaps may make the regional averages look better than they would otherwise be.

8. As indicated in Table 1 and Figure 1, there were 79.1 million undernourished people in the Near East Region during the 2002-04 period – 12 percent of the total population.⁶ The number of undernourished increased by 21 million people since the WFS benchmark period to 2002-04. Pakistan, with 37.5 million undernourished, accounted for almost half of the undernourished in the Region while Sudan, Yemen and Uzbekistan accounted for about 29 percent.

⁵ Proportion of the undernourished in the developing countries declined from 37 percent to 28 percent in the 1970s, and from 28 percent to 20 percent in the 1980s, and from 20 percent to 17 percent since 1990-91 (see SOFI 2006).

⁶ Please note that this proportion is for FAO member countries with data in the Near East Region as shown in Table 1. Some FAO documents such as SOFI 2006 state a 9 percent prevalence figure for the Near East and North Africa, but this figure is based on a smaller group of countries.

Table 1: Undernourishment in the Near East, 1990-92 – 2002-04

Country	Total population (millions)				No. of people undernourished (millions)				Undernourished as percent of total population			
	1990/92	1995/97	2001/03	2002/04	1990/92	1995/97	2001/03	2002/04 (preliminary)	1990/92	1995/97	2001/03	2002/04 (preliminary)
Afghanistan 1/	14.7	19.8	23.0	23.9								
Algeria	25.6	28.4	31.3	31.8	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.4	5	6	5	4
Azerbaijan 2/	7.7	7.9	8.3	8.4	2.6	2.6	0.8	0.6	34	33	10	7
Bahrain 1/	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7								
Cyprus	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	**	**	**	**	<=	<=	<=	<=
Djibouti	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	53	38	26	24
Egypt	57	62.8	70.5	71.9	2.5	2.2	2.4	2.6	4	3	3	4
Iran, Islamic Rep. of	58	63.3	68.1	68.9	2.1	2.2	2.7	2.5	4	3	4	4
Iraq 1/	17.9	20.8	24.5	25.2								
Jordan	3.4	4.4	5.3	5.5	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	4	7	7	6
Kazakhstan 2/	16.7	16.4	15.5	15.4	**	**	1.2	0.9	<=	<=	8	6
Kuwait	2.1	1.8	2.4	2.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	24	5	5	5
Kyrgyzstan 2/	4.5	4.6	5.1	5.1	1.0	0.8	0.2	0.2	21	16	4	4
Lebanon	2.8	3.2	3.6	3.7	**	0.1	0.1	0.1	<=	3	3	3
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	4.4	4.8	5.4	5.6	**	**	**	**	<=	<=	<=	<=
Malta	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	**	**	**	**	<=	<=	<=	<=
Mauritania	2.1	2.4	2.8	2.9	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	15	11	10	10
Morocco	25	27.3	30.1	30.6	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.8	6	6	6	6
Oman 1/	1.9	2.3	2.8	2.9								
Pakistan	113.7	128.4	149.9	153.6	27.8	24.8	35.2	37.5	24	19	23	24
Qatar 1/	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6								
Saudi Arabia	17.1	19.5	23.5	24.2	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	4	4	4	4
Somalia 1/	7.2	7.5	9.5	9.9								
Sudan	25.5	28.7	32.9	33.6	7.9	6.5	8.8	8.7	31	23	27	26
Syria	13.1	15	17.4	17.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	5	4	4	4
Tajikistan 2/	5.7	5.8	6.2	6.2	1.2	1.7	3.8	3.5	22	30	61	56
Tunisia	8.4	9.1	9.7	9.8	**	**	**	**1	<=	<=	<=	<=
Turkey	58.7	64.1	70.3	71.3	**	**	2.0	2.1	<=	<=	3	3
Turkmenistan 2/	4.1	4.3	4.8	4.9	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.3	12	13	8	7
UAE	2.1	2.6	2.9	3.0	0.1	**	**	**	4	<=	<=	<=
Uzbekistan 2/	22.3	23.2	25.7	26.1	1.7	1.8	6.7	6.5	8	8	26	25
Yemen	12.5	15.7	19.3	20	4.2	5.67	7.1	7.6	34	36	37	38
TOTAL NEAR EAST	536.8	597.1	674.0	687.9	58.2	56.4	77.5	79.1 ^{3/}	12	10	13	13

Notes:

The proportion of undernourished for the Region has been calculated considering only countries for which estimates on undernourishment are available.

1/ Estimates on undernourishment are not available;

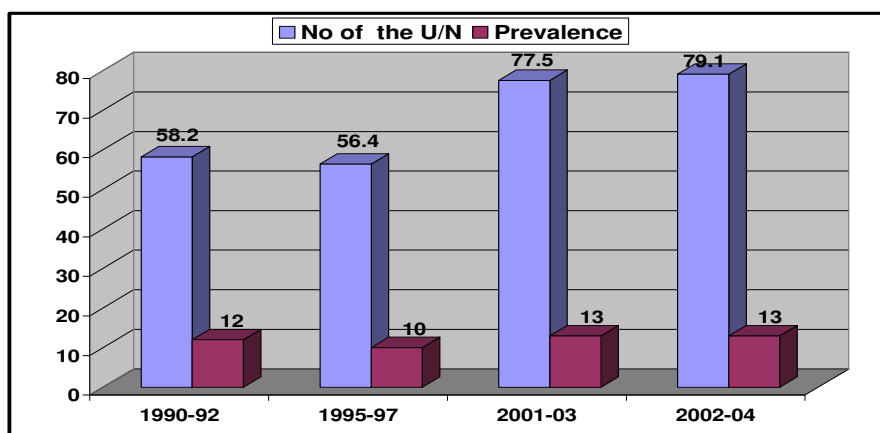
2/ data refer to 1993-95 instead of 1990-92

3/ this total number of undernourished in the Near East reaches **104 million** when estimates for Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia are included.

** Figure not statistically significant.

<= Less than 2.5%.

Figure 1: Status of Food Insecurity in the Near East: the number of the undernourished (# of U/N) and the prevalence of the undernourishment from 1990-92 to 2002-04..



9. In addition to the 79.1 million undernourished in the region, provisional estimates for Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq indicate that these three countries combined could add a further 25 million undernourished persons. Of the other countries, Tajikistan had the highest proportion of the undernourished in the Region (56 percent of the population), followed by Yemen (38 percent), Sudan (26 percent), Uzbekistan (25 percent) and Djibouti and Pakistan (both at 24 percent). If we exclude the Central Asian republics, Sudan and Djibouti, then the Region would have low levels of undernourishment – with prevalence figures below 6 percent.

10. There are indications that many countries could meet the 2015 target, though significant disparities exist in the region. For the WFS target on reducing the number of the hungry, available data indicate that in 2002-04 the majority of the Near East countries had very low levels of undernourishment both in absolute and in relative terms.

11. Eleven countries in the Region have reduced the numbers of the undernourished (Algeria, Azerbaijan, I. R. of Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). At the same time undernourishment increased for five countries (Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Yemen).

12. Similarly, nine countries reduced the prevalence of undernourishment, while the prevalence worsened in only three countries. Tajikistan achieved the highest drop in the proportion of undernourished, with a 5 percent drop (from 61 to 56 percent) between 2001-03 and 2002-04. Azerbaijan achieved a 3 percent drop in the prevalence during the same period (see Table 1). Among the countries in the region, Kuwait has achieved halving the proportion of the undernourished while the UAE, Syria and Egypt have made significant progress towards achieving the MDG target. The Kuwaiti achievement follows the significant reduction among the undernourished soon after the Iraqi occupation.

C. Key constraints in achieving WFS targets

13. The substantial increase in oil prices over the past few years has contributed significantly to the relatively high economic growth in many of the Near East countries. For countries with net oil exports, oil revenues account for the bulk of both export earnings and GDP, particularly in Algeria, Libya, countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Iran as well as in several Central Asian countries. Most countries with net oil imports have also witnessed economic growth in spite of the increase in oil prices. This was mostly driven by exports of commodities and labor to the oil producing countries and by large flows of Direct Foreign Investments (FDIs) from huge liquidity surpluses, mostly in the GCC countries.

14. However, there are no clear indications that the benefits from recent economic growth have trickled-down to the majority of the populations to reduce the levels of poverty and malnutrition, particularly in the net oil-importing countries and in the poorer and/or conflict-ridden oil

exporting countries such as Sudan, Yemen and Iraq. In addition, the recent sharp increases in the prices of grains and other agricultural commodities, in part due to rapid expansion of biofuel, might negatively affect the food security situation in the Near East Region where most countries are net food importers.

15. Wars, conflicts, socio-economic instability and natural disasters have also been among the setbacks influencing lack of progress in achieving MDG and WFS targets in the Region. A large part of the progress seen in Central Asia is the continued recovery from the economic instability and the breakdown of the social safety nets that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union

III. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FAO ACTIVITIES DURING 2006-07

16. During 2006 and 2007, FAO continued to fulfil its basic functions of providing technical assistance and policy advice to Member Nations in the Region and supporting capacity building activities in all fields related to food security and to rural and agricultural development, including forestry and fisheries. Highlights include the organization of the 28th Session of FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC-28); the 4th Session of the Near East Agriculture and Land and Water Use Commission (ALAWUC); and the 17th Session of the FAO Near East Forestry Commission (NEFC).

17. The Near East Region field programme during 2006 totalled about US\$20 million and is expected to remain at the same level in 2007. About 70 percent of delivery was of projects related to the agricultural sector of which 35 percent were directly related to plant production and protection. A milestone reached in 2006 was the signing of a new cooperation programme between FAO and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for a total of about US\$60 million for the period 2007-2011.

18. The specific major activities undertaken by FAO during this time period are described below.

Land and Water

19. Activities carried out in this area included studies on irrigation of date palm and associated crops covering ten Near East countries; a regional study on *Groundwater Management*; collection of data and information on *Wastewater Treatment and Reuse* in Algeria; a joint expert meeting on the *Role of Gender in the Management of Water Resources* with an emphasis on the agriculture sector in the Near East; and a project to formulate a *National Drought Mitigation Strategy* in Jordan.

20. New activities include projects in Saudi Arabia on *Sustainable Development for Irrigated Agriculture in Al-Hassa* and *Improvement of Irrigation Water Management*; two joint activities with the National Drought Mitigation Center in Nebraska, USA, including the preparation of a *Report on Drought Progress and Activities to Manage Drought* in the Near East Region and the development of a manual for assisting member countries in preparing plans and strategies for managing drought; and launching of pilot studies on *Climate Change and its Impact on Water Resources and Agriculture* in Morocco, Jordan and the I.R. of Iran.

21. Assistance was also provided to a World Bank project on groundwater and soil conservation in Yemen.

Animal Production and Health

22. Training workshops were organized on *Diagnosis of Avian Influenza* for the Near East Region; *Recent Advances in Goat Production under Arid Conditions* jointly with the Desert Research Center in Egypt; and *Good Practices for the Animal Feed and Livestock Industries in the Region of the Near East*.

23. An Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) has been established in Egypt which is mainly concerned with assisting the Egyptian Government in controlling highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Sub-regional Animal Health Centres have been established in Tunis, Tunisia, and in Beirut, Lebanon. International and national experts have been engaged by these units.

Crop Production

24. Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) projects were formulated on *Olive Industry Development* in Saudi Arabia and *Enhancing Organic Farming* in the United Arab Emirates. A Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) project was implemented on *Intensification and Diversification in the New Valley, Egypt*; and Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) projects on *Agronomic Practices for Rice Straw Management* in Egypt and *Training on Improved Rice Technologies for the Enhancement of Irrigated Rice Production in the White Nile State* in Sudan.

25. Regional project documents were prepared on *Peaches Fruit Fly Management* in Near East and North Africa countries and on the *Enhancement of Phytosanitary Systems* in the North Africa countries.

Range Management and Fodder Crop

26. Technical case studies were prepared on *Assessing the Impact of Civil War on Natural Resources in Somaliland* in North West Somalia; *System Approach to Improvement and Management in a Desert Ecosystem* in KSA; *Ground Monitoring Techniques to Evaluate their Adequacy, Efficiency and Problems* for Sultanate of Oman and Jordan; and *Problems and Prospects of Irrigated Forages* in Syria and Sultanate of Oman.

27. Collaboration with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) to prepare technical guidelines to *Improve and Maintain Seed Quality of Range Fodder Shrubs and Grasses*; and technical trials initiated in Syria and KSA on restoration ecology, specifically for the successful stand establishment of the key forage species "*Salsola vermiculata*" for degraded sites.

28. Initiated a detailed study on the management and use of oat and vetch genetic resources in Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria; and a regional review of the status and potential of halophytes in reclamation of salinized soils for forage production.

Plant Protection

29. Sub-regional workshop held on *Pest Risk Analysis* in collaboration with the Egyptian Plant Quarantine Directorate; a Regional consultation on *International standards for phytosanitary measures (ISPMs)* in collaboration with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat; and sub-regional consultation and national seminars in support of the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention.

30. On request by the GCC, executive regulations for the GCC pesticides law were prepared.

EMPRES (Locust)

31. Research studies finalized on the *Distribution of Desert Locust in Relation to Herbage Quality on the Red Sea Coast of Sudan*; *Effect of Green Muscle on Locust and Grasshoppers in Egypt*; and *Field Evaluation of Green Muscle against Grasshoppers in Ethiopia*.

32. Held national training courses on *Desert Locust Survey and Control Operation*; a sub-regional training course *Desert Locust Biology, Survey and Control Operations* in Qatar; and conducted annual joint border surveys between Yemen and KSA and between Egypt and Sudan.

33. Organized and conducted the 25th Session of the Commission in Qatar. The Commission together with EMPRES supported further national training courses on *Desert Locust Biology, Survey and Control Operations*.

34. A *Regional Aerial Training Course on Desert Locust Control Operation* was conducted jointly with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA).

Agricultural Extension, Education and Communication

35. A regional E-forum on Communication for Development in the Near East was conducted in preparation for the 1st World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD) held in Rome, Italy. Also a regional consultation was held at which output was presented at the WCCD.

36. Organized a regional workshop on *Reform of National Agricultural Extension Systems* in Tunisia; provided technical support to field projects on *Strengthening and Building Capacity of Extension Services* in Lebanon; the ongoing Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network (RADCON) project in Egypt; *Improvement of Agricultural Training Centres in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*; and *Mainstreaming Population, Environment and Food Security Issues into Agricultural Extension Programmes* in Egypt.

Nutrition and Food Safety

37. A sub-regional training workshop for French-speaking Near East countries was held on *Improving the Quality and Safety of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables* in collaboration with the *Agence Nationale de Contrôle Sanitaire et Environnemental des Produits*; organized a regional workshop on *Food Safety Risk Analysis* in Jordan; and organized two national workshops on *Codex Alimentarius* for senior officials in Jordan and in the I.R. of Iran.

Post-harvest technologies and agro-industries

38. Project on *Establishment of Post-harvest Biotechnology Research Centre* in the Region was formulated; an expert consultation meeting on *Strengthening Linkages between Post-harvest and Biotechnology* was organized to reduce post-harvest losses, improve quality and nutrition value; a UTF project for Egypt was developed on *Integrated Utilization of Agricultural Residues*.

Food security

39. Report on *FIVIMS Study on Food Insecurity and Undernourishment in Rural Damascus* was finalized and submitted the Syrian Government, and new FIVIMS project proposals prepared (Egypt, the I.R. of Iran and Yemen).

40. A TCP project on *National Drought Preparedness Strategy and Action Plan* prepared with the Government of the I.R. of Iran.

41. Supported the establishment of National Alliances Against Hunger (NAAHs) in the Region and encouraged the organization of regional and national alliances as well as the adoption of the Right to Food.

Forestry

42. Organized the 1st Inter-Sessional Meeting of the NEFC Executive Committee.

43. Prepared regional studies on *Forest Protection*, including forest health and fire control; *Integrated Management of Forests and Water for Desertification Control*; the *NEFC 50 Years on: Key Achievements and Shortcomings*.

44. Prepared draft project profiles on *Forest Protection Network for the Near East*; and *Integrated Forests and Water Management for Desertification Control* in selected Near East countries.

Fisheries

45. Organized a regional workshop on *Fishery Statistics*; provided technical assistance to individual countries in the Near East on the development of fishery statistics.

Policy

46. Conducted regional studies on *Agricultural Investment, Constraints and Prospects; Concerns and Priorities in the WTO Negotiations on Agriculture; and Livestock Sector in the Near East*.

47. Organized a regional workshop on *Agriculture in the Near East and North Africa – Towards a Vision for 2050*, in collaboration with the Near East and North Africa Regional Network for Agricultural Policies (NENARNAP) and the National Agricultural Policy Centre in Syria. A regional study was initiated on the *Near East Agriculture towards 2050*. A similar study was conducted on *Agriculture 2050 in Egypt*, as a pilot country study to be duplicated in other Near East Region countries.

48. Implemented a UTF project on *Policy Options and Alternatives for the Cultivation of Fodder Crops in Al-Batinah Region, Sultanate of Oman*. The project included a comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment of the fodder cultivation situation in Oman and detailed policy recommendations and an analysis of the socio-economic and natural resource implications associated with each policy scenario.

49. Extensive policy advice on highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) to countries in the Region. In Egypt, studies on compensation, market impact of HPAI and an assessment of its socioeconomic impact on rural households were completed. A detailed poultry sub-sector assessment was conducted in Egypt. In Jordan, a poultry sector analysis and an assessment of the socio-economic impact of HPAI were conducted.

50. Finalized the formulation of a TCP project on *Support to the Updating of the Agricultural Strategy and to the Preparation of a Plan of Action for Agricultural Development* in Egypt.

51. Provided direct policy advice and support on agricultural policy analysis in several NE countries, including: Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan (NPFS); Egypt (monitoring and strategic planning); Jordan (NAFS-policy analysis, and policy options to reduce the burden of feed subsidies); Kazakhstan (WTO-policy analysis); Saudi Arabia (WTO); Syria (agricultural policy analysis); UAE (country programme); Yemen (accession to WTO); and the North African countries (EUROMED workshops and technical meetings).

52. Formulated and negotiated ten food security-related projects for Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member countries within the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) and assisted in negotiating their funding through the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

IV. ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF NERC-28

53. **General Recommendations**

a. Palestine: FAO to move from emergency to more long-term rehabilitation and development projects

FAO is implementing several projects in Palestine. Although they are primarily of an emergency and rehabilitation nature, work is also being carried out in information and mapping-system development and capacity/institution building.

b. Emergency assistance to drought affected parts of Somalia

FAO Emergency projects are presently providing seeds, seedlings, tools, small pumps, carts and capacity building for farmers and destitute pastoralists in the most critical areas of Somalia. Activities in the livestock, agriculture and riverine fishery sectors are closely integrated and were funded in response to the 2007 UN Consolidated Appeal.

c. The establishment of the Animal Health Commission for the Near East countries

As a follow-up to the recommendations of the recent Regional Conferences, FAO continued its follow-up to establish a regional commission to be called “the Animal Health Commission for the Near East and North Africa (AHCNENA)”. Two meetings were organized for the twelve countries that have agreed, so far, to join the proposed Commission, and a draft Agreement for its establishment has been prepared and is being discussed. Upon its finalization and clearance the Agreement will be submitted to member countries for endorsement.

54. **Transboundary Animal Diseases**

d. Collaborate with OIE in implementing regional activities of the Global Framework for Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs)

Under the FAO/OIE GF-TADs, three Regional Animal Health Centres were established in Lebanon, Tunisia and Turkey.

e. Ensure that GF-TAD activities in the Region give adequate support to capacity building and upgrading of laboratories and equipment

The strategic initiative of OIE/FAO Regional Animal Health Centre for the Middle East includes networks for epidemiological and laboratory expertise and infrastructure.

f. Enhance the capacity of animal health laboratories in the Region

FAO provided support to Saudi Arabia on livestock quarantine; a programme for the restoration of veterinary services in Iraq under the umbrella of the UNDG; and verification of freedom from rinderpest under the GREP umbrella, as well as surveillance and control of other emerging diseases.

g. Support to countries who need rehabilitation of their agricultural sectors and veterinary services following wars and natural disasters, including training in animal health and monitoring of veterinary drugs and vaccines

FAO worked with the Palestine Authority to implement and maintain effective HPAI prevention and control strategies. The FAO emergency programme for Somalia includes livestock disease surveillance, vaccination and treatment.

h. Assist to control and ultimately eradicate avian influenza (HPAI) and to prepare non-infected countries for rapid detection and response to the disease

Two sub-regional TCP projects have been undertaken in North Africa and the Middle East to assist member countries in developing preparedness HPAI plans. Direct country support was also provided to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Palestine.

In Egypt, FAO provided extensive technical support and established a country unit of the Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) to assist the country’s efforts to control HPAI.

i. Regional coordination meeting on avian influenza

Sub-regional coordination meetings were held during the implementation of the TCP projects on HPAI preparedness plans.

55. **Drought Mitigation**

j. Assistance in formulating and developing national long-term action plans for drought mitigation

TCP projects in Iran and Jordan were completed in 2007 and produced national strategies and action plans on drought mitigation. In Syria, an ongoing TCP project includes the formulation

of a drought management strategy. Draft guidelines on “Best forestry practices in arid and semi-arid zones” have prepared and negotiated through a series of regional meetings.

k. Developing indicators for drought early warning

The drought management strategies formulated for Iran and Jordan included development of objectively verifiable indicators for drought early warning and monitoring and operational triggering mechanisms for drought management.

l. Collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in relation to climatic studies, drought forecasting and capacity-building activities

FAO collaborates with WMO and UNEP to promote national action plans for efficient water use for sustainable agriculture. In the Nile Basin countries, FAO collaborated with WMO in improving forecasting of floods and droughts.

56. Fisheries

m. Provide support for conducting stock-assessment surveys and preparing fishing and aquaculture databases

FAO has prepared guidelines for assisting countries in reporting resource exploitation and formulating stock-status indicators. A capture-fisheries database and a Regional Aquaculture Information System (RAIS) were implemented by the Regional Commission on Fisheries (RECOFI).

n. Provide support for institutional capacity building in fisheries protection and the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

The FAO programme for the Mediterranean and the Red Sea emphasizes institutional capacity building, operates in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and encourages the use of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries.

o. Assist countries to benefit from the Fish Marketing Information Services and establish national networks

A special item on Fish Marketing Information Services was included in the Agenda of the 4th Session of RECOFI (May 2007) and INFOSAMAK was invited to provide information material and guidelines on communications and information networks in the Region.

p. Assistance to help overcome pollution and disease problems associated with aquaculture, through the adoption of good management practices

A RECOFI project will promote regional aquaculture strategy and animal health and will include activities on management practices and an environmental impact assessment.

q. Technical and legal advice on illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing

An agenda item on IUU was presented at the 4th Session of RECOFI and FAO was requested to consider organizing a workshop for RECOFI members.

r. Encourage the provision of assistance to Iraq in rebuilding and rehabilitating its fisheries institutions and infrastructure

At its 4th Session, RECOFI expressed its support to all efforts taken to rebuild and rehabilitate the fisheries institutions in Iraq and welcomed further information from Iraq on immediate needs.

s. Assist Somalia to protect its fisheries resources from the extensive illegal fishing

FAO is collecting information on illegal finishing in Somali waters, with the view of suggesting measures to be taken collectively by countries and international bodies.

t. Facilitate the sharing of information on successful experiences in aquaculture, with emphasis on Egypt's experience

FAO has established aquaculture information systems in the Near East to facilitate exchange of information and expertise. Regarding Egypt, where aquaculture is almost exclusively based on brackish and fresh waters, FAO has been participating in technical consultations to ascertain the applicability of some methods in other parts of the Region.

u. Ensure a speedy approval funding for the regional project on Red Sea Fisheries

This project has received funding of US\$600,000 from the OPEC Fund, in addition to the US\$1 million already allocated by IFAD and the US\$500,000 approved by the IDB.

v. Countries with an important fisheries sector to have adequate technical support from FAO Headquarters and Regional and Sub-regional offices

FAO undertook several technical assistance activities at national and regional levels, including RNE-sponsored country missions and the organization of regional workshops on fisheries statistics (Cairo, November 2006) and food safety (Abbassa, Egypt, April 2007).

57. **Others**

w. Standing item on "Global and Regional Emergency Issues" to be introduced

Such standing item is included in the Agenda of the upcoming Regional Conference.

x. Secretariat to prepare note on procedures for the participation of Observers in the Conference

Advice will be sought from OCD, KCC and LEG on the preparation of this note.

y. Support in multilateral trade negotiations and regional trade agreements

Technical assistance on WTO-related issues was provided to Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen, focusing on strengthening national institutional capacities for effective participation in trade negotiations and in meeting commitments and trade agreements. Sub-regional capacity-building workshops were organized for North African countries to support negotiations with the EU in the context of the EU-Mediterranean Agreements.

z. Assess, upon completion of ongoing WTO negotiations, the potential impact of the Doha Round commitments on Near East countries

WTO negotiations on agriculture are still ongoing, so no impact study was undertaken.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NERC-29

58. Considering the recommendations made by the CFS in its June 2007 meeting in Rome, the following actions are recommended:

For Member Governments:

- pursue a twin-track approach to food security and ensure that food security is accorded priority in national development and poverty alleviation plans and strategies;
- enhance investments in agriculture and rural development and in all related institutions;
- implement coherent bioenergy policies and strategies with multi-sectoral perspectives (agriculture, trade, environment and energy) in the context of food security;
- improve national capacity in food security information analysis for more effective policy action and progress in achieving WFS and MDG goals and targets; and
- continue to promote the participation of women in decision-making processes and their access to resources to ensure food security.

For FAO:

- provide a more analytical overview of the variable performance among the countries in the Region in reducing food insecurity;
- identify the causes of the positive developments and trends of countries in the Region;
- include, more explicitly, the issues of economic growth and demographics and their impacts on food security in future assessment documents;
- continue to encourage the building of national capacity in food security information analysis and its use for policy action;
- pay due attention to the issue of stability of domestic food production in the face of recurrent droughts in the Region;
- develop a regional perspective for assessing the impact of bioenergy on the food security situation in different contexts, including consideration of the agricultural policies adopted by Member Nations, with particular regard to small, marginal and poor farmers; and
- provide guidance for governments, agricultural organizations and farmers to help them adapt to climate change and to the new challenges of bioenergy.