

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

Matters Arising from the Thirty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs
I. INTRODUCTION	1-2
II. SUMMARY OF MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED AND RELVANT OUTCOME PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET	3-27
III. OVERVIEW OF THE PWB 2008-09 AND DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE	28-30
IV. DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE IEE	31-36
V. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONFERENCE DIRECTIVES	37

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this document is to inform the FAO Regional Conferences about the substantive outcome of the Thirty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference held in Rome on 17-24 November 2007.
2. With the admission of the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of Montenegro as Members, and of the Faroe Islands as an Associate Member, FAO now has 191 Member Nations, one Member Organization (EC) and one Associate Member (Faroe Islands). In comparison, the UN has 192 Member States.

II. SUMMARY OF MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED AND RELEVANT OUTCOME PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET

3. The Conference considered the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for 2008-09 presented by the Director-General. It adopted Resolutions 3/2007 and 4/2007 (Annex I) in this respect. The PWB and the implications of the Resolutions are addressed in further detail in section III below.

Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE)

4. The Conference considered the Report of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO and the Management Response "In-Principle". It adopted Resolution 5/2007 in this respect (Annex II). The Resolution and its implications are addressed in further detail in section IV below.

Interim Report on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System

5. The Conference welcomed the Interim Report and its analysis of FAO's approach to the implementation of the TCPR and encouraged FAO to continue its active participation in the exercise, including the on-going Delivering as One pilot process.
6. The Conference emphasized FAO's role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – in particular MDGs 1, 7 and 8 and acknowledged FAO's extensive contribution to South-South Cooperation, emergencies and transition from relief to development as well as capacity building at the country level. The Conference noted FAO's strong commitment to the United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) and to the effective functioning of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system.
7. While noting that the coordination of development activities at the country level was needed, the Conference stressed that local level fundraising by the UN Resident Coordinator should not be the sole source of resource mobilization for Specialized Agencies, and that there should be room for fundraising for normative activities.
8. The Conference also acknowledged the challenges with which the Specialized Agencies were faced in the implementation of the TCPR, in particular as regards the adequacy, availability and predictability of funding. In this connection, the Conference recommended that FAO develop a coherent and dynamic resource mobilization strategy around priority themes related to its mandate. In addition, the Conference recognized the TCPR as the basis for enhancing cooperation among the Rome-based Agencies (IFAD, WFP, FAO).
9. Finally, in its Resolution on the TCPR, the Conference requested the FAO Secretariat to submit to the next regular Session of the Conference an Interim Report on the Implementation of Resolution 13/2005, taking into account the negotiated outcome of the 62nd Session of the

General Assembly on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations.

Review of the State of Food and Agriculture

10. The Conference took note with concern of the persistence of poverty, hunger and undernourishment in many countries and the insufficiently rapid progress towards the realization of the MDGs, especially MDG1, and the World Food Summit Target of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015. However, it noted with satisfaction the increasing recognition at the international level of the significance of agriculture for achieving these goals and for reducing hunger and poverty worldwide.

11. The Conference expressed concern over the impact of climate change and the increasing frequency of climate-related natural disasters. It stressed the need for strategies to avert and mitigate the effects of climate change and stressed the importance of FAO's early warning and emergency assistance programmes.

12. The Conference highlighted the need for sustainable management of water resources as well as fisheries and forest resources. The need for appropriate action for the preservation of biodiversity was also stressed.

13. The Conference requested the Secretariat to undertake analysis of the economic, environmental and food security implications of biofuel development and expressed concern over the impact of rising commodity prices on access to food and implications for food security.

14. Many Members also emphasized the importance of free and fair trade and the need for capacity building in many member countries for Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

15. Mention was made of other priority areas of FAO's work, such as Avian Influenza and other transboundary pests and diseases, the impact of HIV/AIDS, standard-setting in the context of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the International Plant Protection Convention, as well as collection and dissemination of statistical data and information.

16. The role of FAO as a knowledge organization was highlighted together with the importance of FAO technical assistance, *inter alia* through South-South cooperation.

17. The Conference reiterated the indispensable role of FAO and welcomed the Report of the IEE as a good basis for reforming FAO within the context of the overall UN Reform, with a view to strengthening its efficiency and effectiveness.

Progress Report on Implementation of FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action (2002-2007) and Review of the New Plan of Action on Gender and Development (2008-2013)

18. The Conference welcomed the Progress Report and commended FAO for its work in mainstreaming gender, while taking note of the remaining challenges. Members endorsed the report while stressing the need to enhance accountability among all senior-level management, ensure adequate human and financial resources for its implementation, together with monitoring and evaluation aimed at bringing about a better gender balance in the FAO workforce, especially in management positions.

19. Members expressed satisfaction with FAO's increasing collaboration with other UN Agencies, especially with those based in Rome, in areas such as training under the Socio-economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA). In doing so, it highlighted emerging issues such as emergencies, climate change and bio-energy, diseases and globalization in the FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action. The need to link FAO's gender mainstreaming work to the One UN pilot country efforts and programmes was also highlighted.

20. The Conference endorsed the new FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action, 2008-2013.

**Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the
Multi-year Programme of Work of the Commission on
Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**

21. The Conference welcomed the outcomes of the Interlaken Conference, the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and the Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture as milestones in international efforts to promote the sustainable use, development and conservation of animal genetic resources.

22. The Conference also welcomed the Multi-year Programme of Work adopted by the Eleventh Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

23. In its related Resolution, the Conference appealed to all FAO Members, relevant international mechanisms, funds and bodies to ensure that due priority is given to the effective allocation of predictable and agreed resources for the implementation of activities within the Strategic Priority Areas of the Global Plan of Action.

Adoption of Russian as a Language of FAO

24. Considering that Belarus and the Russian Federation became Member Nations of the Organization in 2005 and 2006 respectively, the Conference decided to adopt Russian as a language of the Organization and to amend Article XXII of the Constitution accordingly. It also approved the authentic Russian text of the Constitution. An amount of US\$1,700,000 has been approved in Chapter 1 (Corporate Governance) of the PWB for the gradual introduction of Russian as a language of the Organization.

Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council

25. The Conference appointed Prof. Mohammad Saeid Noori-Naeini as the Independent Chairperson of the Council for a second two-year term of office, until the end of the next regular session of the Conference to be held in 2009.

**Equitable Geographical and Gender Distribution
in the Professional Staff Structure**

26. The Conference commended the efforts being made by the Organization to redress geographical and gender imbalances in the Professional staff structure and requested the Director-General to pursue actively efforts at further reducing such imbalances and at ensuring equitable geographic representation.

Date and Place of the Thirty-fifth Conference Session

27. The Conference decided that a special Session of the Conference should be held in Rome from 17 to 22 November 2008.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE PWB 2008-09 AND DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

28. The Conference agreed on a budget level of US\$867.6 million for the 2008-09 biennium at the 2006-07 US dollar/Euro rate of exchange (1€ = 1.19 US\$). The approved budget, which is established in Euros and US\$ under split assessments, is equivalent to US\$929.8 million when adjusted at the new US dollar/Euro exchange rate adopted for 2008-09 (1€ = 1.36 US\$).

29. The approved programme of work is that presented in the PWB 2008-09 document (C 2007/3), to be delivered after taking into account US\$22 million in unidentified savings and efficiency gains to be achieved within the proposed maintenance budget. A process needs to be put in place to allow the Organization to identify and achieve sustainable savings and efficiency gains concurrently with the implementation of the Programme of Work, including selective delayering of Director-level posts, reduced travel costs, and establishing efficiency savings targets for all managers so as to further institutionalize the search for efficiencies and productivity gains in the work of the Organization.

30. In addition to the PWB, the Governing Bodies reviewed proposals to restore the financial health of the Organization. The Conference decided to proceed in a phased manner: to continue with partial funding of the past service liability for After-Service Medical Coverage, rather than providing for full funding; and, to defer the replenishment of the Special Reserve Account by US\$6.4 million and to revisit the matter at the next session of the Conference.

IV. DECISIONS OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE IEE

31. The Conference unanimously welcomed the Report of the IEE as the most comprehensive, wide-ranging and forward-looking evaluation conducted of a UN organization. It also welcomed the Management Response "In Principle", expressed appreciation for the Management's statement to the Conference supporting implementation of "reform with growth" and Management's determination to immediately initiate those reforms and improvements which lay within the effective authority of the Director-General and which did not have incremental cost implications.

32. The Conference adopted a Resolution on the Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation (attached as Annex II) which detailed the development of an immediate plan of action and a Strategic Framework for FAO's renewal. The 2008-09 budgetary appropriation includes US\$4 million to implement this Resolution. The Conference also encouraged Members to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate early action on the recommendations within the authority of the Director-General.

33. A time-bound Conference Committee was established, open to all Members, whose functions are to recommend to the special session of the Conference in November 2008 proposals for the immediate plan of action and to provide on-going review and feedback on the implementation of actions being undertaken by the Organization.

34. The Conference appointed Prof. Mohammed Saeid Noori-Naeni as Chair of the Conference Committee with Her Excellency Agnes van Ardenne-van der Hoeven (Netherlands) and His Excellency Wilfred Joseph Ngirwa (Tanzania) as Vice-Chairs. The Conference Committee was requested to start its work in December 2007 and develop its working arrangements, indicative schedule of work and timetable of deliverables before the end of January 2008. The Conference Committee held its first two meetings on 14 December 2007 and 23 January 2008.

35. The Conference further requested the Conference Committee to provide a Progress Report by 1 May 2008 and its Final Report before the end of September 2008. The special

session of the Conference to be held in November 2008 will discuss and decide on proposals made in the immediate plan of action and make decisions on the budgetary implications.

36. The Secretariat is providing full support, as requested, to ensure the smooth and effective work of the Conference Committee and its working groups in preparing and presenting proposals for an immediate plan of action addressing FAO's vision and programme priorities, governance reform, and reform of systems, culture change and organizational change. The Director-General has also moved forward with early and rapid implementation of those IEE recommendations that are within his authority to implement, consistent with the Management Response "In Principle".

V. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CONFERENCE DIRECTIVES

37. **The Conference requested:**

- the Secretariat to undertake analysis of the economic, environmental and food security implications of biofuel development;
- the Secretariat to submit to the next regular Session of the Conference an Interim Report on the implementation of Resolution 13/2005 (TCPR), taking into account the negotiated outcome of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly on the revised (2007) Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations;
- the Director-General to report to the Finance Committee on-going adjustments to the Programme and Work for the further unidentified savings and efficiency gains amounting to US\$22 million;
- the Director-General to pursue actively efforts to redress geographical and gender imbalances in the Professional staff structure in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 3 of the Constitution, Resolution 1/99 "Correction of Geographical and Gender Imbalances in the Professional Structure" and Resolution 15/2003 "Methodology for Equitable Geographic Distribution".

Annex I.

RESOLUTION 3/2007¹
Budgetary Appropriations 2008-09

THE CONFERENCE,

Having considered the Director-General's Programme of Work and Budget in the light of Conference Resolution 5/2007;

Having considered the proposed total net appropriation of US\$ 867,628,000 for the financial period 2008-09 at the 2006-07 rate of Euro 1= US\$ 1.19 which assumes US dollar and Euro expenditure equal to US\$ 432,148,000 and Euros 365,950,000;

Having considered that the above net appropriation is equivalent to US\$ 929,840,000 at the budget rate of Euro 1 = US\$ 1.36 established for 2008-09 after translation of the Euro portion;

1. **Approves** the Programme of Work proposed by the Director-General for 2008-09 as follows:

a) Appropriations are voted at a rate of Euro 1 = US\$ 1.36 for the following purposes:

	US\$
Chapter 1: Corporate Governance	27,038,000
Chapter 2: Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems	266,474,000
Chapter 3: Knowledge Exchange, Policy and Advocacy	239,851,000
Chapter 4: Decentralization, UN Cooperation and Programme Delivery	234,553,000
Chapter 5: Management and Supervision Services	139,671,000
Chapter 6: Contingencies	600,000
Chapter 8: Capital Expenditure	20,378,000
Chapter 9: Security Expenditure	23,420,000
Further unidentified savings and efficiency gains	-22,145,000
Total Appropriation (Net)	929,840,000
Chapter 10: Transfer to Tax Equalization Fund	94,300,000
Total Appropriation (Gross)	1,024,140,000

b) The appropriations (net) voted in paragraph (a) above include in Chapter 1 an amount of US\$ 4,000,000 to fund the implementation of the Resolution on the Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (Resolution 5/2007) and an amount of US\$ 1,700,000 for the introduction of Russian as a language of the Organization.

c) The appropriations (net) voted in paragraph (a) above minus estimated Miscellaneous Income in the amount of US\$ 5,000,000 shall be financed by assessed contributions from Member Nations of US\$ 924,840,000 to implement the Programme of Work.

d) Such contributions shall be established in US dollars and Euro and shall consist of US\$ 428,258,000 and Euro 365,134,000. This takes into account a split of 46.5% US dollars and 53.5% Euro for the appropriations (net) and of 77.8% for US dollars and 22.2% Euro for Miscellaneous income.

¹ C 2007/PV/9

e) An additional amount of US\$ 14,100,000 shall also be financed by assessed contributions from Member Nations to fund the amortization of After-service Medical Coverage (ASMC). The contributions shall be established in US dollars and euro, taking into account a split of 40% US dollars and 60% euro, and shall therefore amount to US\$ 5,640,000 and Euro 6,221,000.

f) The total contributions due from Member Nations to implement the approved Programme of Work and to fund the amortization of ASMC shall amount to US\$ 433,898,000 and Euro 371,355,000. Such contributions due from Member Nations in 2008 and 2009 shall be paid in accordance with the scale of contributions adopted by the Conference at its Thirty-fourth Session.

g) In establishing the actual amounts of contributions to be paid by individual Member Nations, a further amount shall be charged through the Tax Equalization Fund for any Member Nation that levies taxes on the salaries, emoluments and indemnities received by staff members from FAO and which are reimbursed to the staff members by the Organization. An estimate of US\$ 11,600,000 has been foreseen for this purpose.

2. **Requests** the Director-General to report to the Finance Committee on-going adjustments to the Programme and Work for the further unidentified savings and efficiency gains amounting to US\$ 22,145,000 referred to in paragraph 1(a) above which are currently not reflected in the Chapter structure, noting that both within Chapter transfers and transfers from one Chapter to another required to implement the proposals will be handled in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5.

3. **Reserves** the right at its Special Session in November 2008 to re-examine the appropriations (net) voted in paragraph 1 (a) above with a view to approving any adjustment that may be required as a result of decisions on the immediate plan of action in relation to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE).

4. **Encourages** Members to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate areas of early action arising from the IEE recommendations which fall within the authority of the Director-General.

(Adopted on 23 November 2007)

RESOLUTION 4/2007²
Replenishment of the Special Reserve Account

THE CONFERENCE,

Noting that one of the purposes of the Special Reserve Account, established by Conference Resolution 13/81 is, subject to prior review and approval by the Programme and Finance Committees, to finance unbudgeted extra costs of approved programmes due to unforeseen inflationary trends, to the extent that such costs cannot be met through budgetary savings without impairing the execution of such programmes;

Noting that the Programme and Finance Committees, at their Joint Meeting of September 2006, agreed to charging a portion of the unforeseen and unbudgeted General Service salary increase of 2006-07 arising from the Rome-based General Service Salary Survey results, in an amount of US\$ 6.4 million, to the Special Reserve Account, and that this was supported by the Council at its Session of November 2006;

Recalling that the Finance Committee, at its Session of September 2006, recommended that the necessary funding for the US\$ 6.4 million charged to the Special Reserve Account be secured through a replenishment of an equivalent amount through Member Nations' assessments for the Special Reserve Account at the time of the formulation of the Programme of Work and Budget for 2008-09;

Recalling further that the Council, at its Session of November 2006, requested the Finance Committee to review the funding of unbudgeted costs and to report the results to the Council;

Having considered, in line with the foregoing, the proposals submitted by the Director-General to the Finance Committee at its Session of September 2007, and to the Council at its Session of November 2007, for the replenishment of the Special Reserve Account in an amount of US\$ 6.4 million; the Conference in considering the matter further;

Decides to defer the replenishment of the Special Reserve Account, in the amount of US\$ 6.4 million, and to revisit this matter at the 2008 Conference.

(Adopted on 23 November 2007)

² C 2007/PV/9.

Annex II.**RESOLUTION 5/2007³
Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO****THE CONFERENCE,**

1. **Recalls** its Resolution 6/2005 in 2005 to undertake the Independent External Evaluation of FAO, with a view to “chart the way forward” for FAO.

2. **Welcomes** the IEE report which will provide the basis for Members’ decision making on an integrated package of reform with growth for the Organization. **Welcomes** also the Director-General’s Management Response “in Principle”, which will further assist Members’ decision making.

3. **Reaffirms** the global mandate of FAO for food, agriculture and the related natural resource bases and **welcomes** the renewed global emphasis on the important role of agriculture for the present and future wellbeing of all, **stressing** the importance of the Millennium Declaration and the major contributions which the Organization has to make in supporting the three agreed Goals of Member Nations as stated in the Strategic Framework:

- overcoming hunger and malnutrition;
- agriculture’s contribution to sustainable economic and social development; and
- conservation and sustainable use of the natural resource base.

4. **Reaffirms** its political will and determination to seize this opportunity and to undertake early and well considered action for a programme of FAO renewal, in the overall context of UN system reforms.

The Conference decides to:

5. **Develop** an immediate plan of action and a Strategic Framework for FAO renewal after a systematic review of the IEE report and its findings and recommendations and the management response. The plan of action will address:

- a) an FAO vision and programme priorities:
 - i) priorities and programme adjustments for the period 2009-2011; and
 - ii) a draft covering the major elements of a long-term Strategic Framework and a draft Medium-Term Plan;
- b) governance reform;
- c) reform of systems, culture change and organizational restructuring:
 - i) institutional culture change and reform of administrative and management systems; and
 - ii) restructuring for effectiveness and efficiency.

In addressing each of the actions for reform, the immediate Plan of Action will specify: the financial implications; targets to be achieved; timetable for implementation; and implementation milestones over the period 2009-2011

6. **Convene** a special session of the FAO Conference in the latter part of 2008, immediately preceded by a shortened session of the Council. This special session of the Conference will

³ C 2007/PV/9

provide for the entirety of the membership to come together to discuss and decide upon proposals for an immediate plan of action and make decisions on the budgetary implications.

7. **Establish** a time-bound Conference Committee under Article VI of the FAO Constitution, mandated to complete its work with the presentation of proposals for an immediate plan of action to the Special Session of the Conference in 2008. This Committee will be open to full participation by all Members of the Organization. It will strive for transparency and unity in its work and will collectively decide the final recommendations of the Committee to the Conference, arriving at its decisions to the maximum extent possible through consensus. It will conduct its work in all the languages of the Organization. The functions of the Committee, without prejudice to the statutory functions of the standing committees of the Council, are to:

- a) recommend to the Conference proposals for the immediate plan of action as defined in paragraph 5 above; and
- b) provide ongoing review and feedback on the implementation of all actions, including *inter alia* quick wins, being undertaken by the Director-General, on those areas of the IEE follow-up lying essentially within his authority, recognizing that some actions are subject to the provision of the requisite budgetary resources.

8. In order to maintain the necessary momentum in reaching agreement on an immediate plan of action for FAO reform with growth, to request the Conference Committee to initiate its work in December 2007 and develop its working arrangements, indicative schedule of work and timetable of deliverables before the end of January 2008. Considering that the special session of the FAO Conference should be held no later than November 2008, the Conference **requests the Committee to Provide a progress report by 1 May 2008 and its final report before the end of September 2008,** and give early attention to:

- a) a detailed review of the IEE report, including each of the IEE recommendations, in order to develop preliminary conclusions to guide the further work of the Committee;
- b) development of information requirements for decision making, including requirements from the Secretariat to assist the Governing Bodies in arriving at conclusions on each of the areas referred to in clause 5 above;
- c) providing guidance for: drafting any agreed governance reforms requiring consideration by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM); such in-depth studies as may be required; and any immediate proposed adjustments in such areas as the programme of work and budget during 2009, administration, human resources and organizational structure; and
- d) agreement on draft major elements of a strategic framework and medium-term plan; development of suggestions for further follow-up to be undertaken during 2009 and beyond; and any special arrangements of the Governing Bodies required for further development and implementation of a programme of FAO renewal.

9. **Appoint** Prof. Mohammed Saeid Noori-Naeini as Chair and Ms Agnes van Ardenne-van der Hoeven and Wilfred Joseph Ngirwa as Vice-Chairs respectively of the Committee. The Committee shall appoint its Bureau and co-Vice Chairs respecting regional representation. The meetings of the Bureau will be open to non-speaking observers and will address exclusively administrative and organizational matters.

The Conference further decides:

10. In the interests of efficiency, the Committee of the Conference will establish such task-defined working groups as it requires to prepare individual inputs for its consideration. The working groups will be made up of a maximum of three member country representatives per region. Meetings of the working groups will be open to observers from the whole of the FAO membership, ensuring transparency, and will conduct their work in all languages of the

Organization. In order to assure that all Members may be present at Working Group and Bureau sessions, no meetings will be held simultaneously with the same timings nor will they coincide with Bureau meetings. The chairs of the Committee, the Bureau, and the working groups will ensure that aide-mémoires are available to the FAO membership following each session. The Chairperson of the Committee will present its final report to the Special Session of the Conference.

11. FAO management will provide full support, as requested, to the workings of the Conference Committee, its Bureau and its working groups.

12. In conducting its work, the Conference Committee will decide when necessary to call on the Committees of the Council to give their advice on aspects of the reform process within their mandates.

13. The Conference recognizes the need for additional resources for the 2008-09 Regular Programme Budget of the Organization to fund the implementation of this Resolution, amounting to US\$4 million and provided for in Resolution 3/2007.

(Adopted on 23 November 2007)