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	ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE	
	ORGANIZACION DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA Y LA ALIMENTACION	

Item III(a) of the
 Provisional Agenda

COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

First Session

Rome, 5 - 9 April 1976

STEPS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING

Special Assistance to Developing Countries

Introduction

1. One of the terms of reference of the Committee is "to review the steps taken by governments to implement the International Undertaking on World Food Security". Section IV of the Undertaking contains provisions for special assistance to developing countries to ensure the adequate availability of cereals as well as the acceleration of the rate of growth of their agricultural production. It provides for developed countries and other potential contributors as well as the concerned international, financial and technical organizations to give additional assistance in identifying and mobilizing the resources required by developing countries for these purposes as a means of strengthening their national food security. Section VI of the Undertaking provides for consultations among subscribing countries to review the progress achieved in accelerating cereal production in developing countries and the assistance provided for this purpose.

Food Production in Developing Countries

2. The World Food Conference supported the estimate that foreign aid to agriculture in developing countries should be raised from the 1975 level of US\$ 1 500 million to about \$5 000 million a year by 1980. Following its recommendation, a new Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment in Developing Countries (CGFPI) has been set up with the objective of encouraging a larger flow of external resources for food production in developing countries and to coordinate the activities of different unilateral and bilateral aid donors in this respect. It is jointly sponsored by the UNDP, World Bank and FAO. It is now in the process of examining priorities for investment, analyzing present resource flows and future aid requirements, and - as requested by the 7th Special Session of the UN General Assembly - will attempt to identify developing countries with potential for the most rapid and efficient increase in food production. Its second meeting will be held on 10-12 February 1976, and the Committee may wish to keep itself informed of its future work.

3. The World Food Conference also requested the FAO and other international development agencies to substantially increase their assistance for agriculture in developing countries. The Director-General is presently reviewing FAO's Programme of Work to determine what special steps should be taken to provide direct aid to developing countries to increase their food production and agricultural development. His proposals will be considered at the special session of the FAO Council in July.

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4. Other follow-up by FAO has been taken in the field of fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and post-harvest losses. As regards the reduction of post-harvest losses, the 7th Special Session of the UN General Assembly had called for a collective action by all concerned institutions to take, as a matter of priority, measures which would ensure that post-harvest losses are cut by half by 1985. In response thereto, FAO has taken steps to review and strengthen its many and long-standing activities in this field, in coordination with assistance by other institutions and bilateral agencies. It is also the intention of FAO to expand these activities on a global basis, since efforts to reduce post-harvest losses are needed in practically all developing countries.

National Reserve Programmes

5. The adoption by countries of purposeful national stockholding policies is a key element in the common objective of ensuring a minimum level of world food security. Although a number of countries already have national reserve programmes, the need became apparent for extra assistance in the light of the provisions in the Undertaking. The Food Security Assistance Programme (FSAP) was accordingly established by FAO to assist developing countries in the formulation of their national food security policies and programmes within this international framework, following the recommendation of the FAO Conference.

6. Of the initial list of 25 developing countries provisionally identified for priority consideration in food security assistance, nine ^{1/} were reviewed at the request of the respective governments by FAO inter-disciplinary missions, in association with other international development agencies, during the 1974/75 biennium. Another four country missions (Haiti, Indonesia, Tanzania and Tunisia) have been scheduled so far for 1976, while some 10-15 requests are at present pending. Besides studying the general food security situation in the countries and advising on stock policy plans and targets, the FAO missions also identify project proposals which could be financed from internal or external sources.

Mobilization of External Resources

7. FAO, through this programme, helps the countries concerned in mobilizing the required external resources. The formulated food security plans and projects are circulated in agreement with the government concerned to interested donor governments and bilateral aid agencies for financial and technical support. To establish a standing procedure, the Director-General in September 1975 issued special appeals individually to all potential contributor countries, inviting them to cooperate actively with FSAP and to contribute assistance, including technical aid, equipment, finance and food aid, so as to support projects on a case-by-case basis.

8. Positive responses have so far been received from eleven donor governments ^{2/} and the EEC. Some (Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands) have made available financial contributions in the form of funds-in-trust to be operated by FAO for financing food security projects in specified areas such as the Sahel. Such contributions received to date amount to approximately US \$ 10 million for 1976, while further contributions from other potential donors are under active discussion. On present indications, funds available for FAO's food security assistance programmes and projects from these sources may reach about US \$ 15 million for 1976 with perhaps a similar amount becoming available for 1977. A few donors have made or pledged contributions in terms of technical assistance and food aid, while others offer cooperation within the context of their bilateral aid programmes already operating in some of the concerned developing countries.

^{1/} Bangladesh, Botswana, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Niger, Nigeria, Philippines and Thailand.

^{2/} Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany Fed.Rep., Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom, and the United States.

9. One developing country (Nigeria) has found it possible to finance not only its own national stock programmes, but also the FAO technical support needed; furthermore, it intends to earmark part of its proposed strategic grain reserve for assisting neighbouring developing countries to overcome their short-term food security problems.

10. Close cooperation with other international development agencies, including Regional Banks, World Food Programme, the World Bank, UNDP, etc., will continue to be a cardinal principle of the FAO food security assistance programme.

Future requirements and decisions

11. FAO's food security assistance efforts, whether in the areas of policy planning and advice, in project development or in liaison with other donors, are being operated on a pragmatic basis. The limited progress to date has been obtained within the existing development aid systems with which FAO is connected. The additional sources of finance recently made available to FAO by several donor governments, however, provide the possibility of new initiatives.

12. The urgency of the food security situation in many developing countries is such that improvements in their national stock policies cannot await the establishment of a worldwide reserve system sponsored mainly by the major grain trading countries. At the same time, however, FAO's assistance efforts should promote stock systems in developing countries of a type which are consistent with the Undertaking and which can, at a later stage, be fitted in with other international grain arrangements, if and when these may be negotiated.

13. With these objectives in mind, the Secretariat considers that its assistance programmes should at this early stage primarily emphasize the establishment of basic reserve stocks, especially emergency reserves, in developing countries faced with severe problems of supply instability and climatic uncertainty, such as those in the Sahel-Sudanian zone, in Bangladesh and in other similar areas. As it is essential that such basic stock systems should be well managed, the main thrust of FAO's assistance will be concentrated on technical support and equipment, financing the purchase of local grains for stocks, and improvements in national early warning and related data systems which have a clear relationship to national food security.

14. Programmes and projects supported by FAO would thus have a strong technical component, involving precisely those capabilities which FAO is in the best position to provide, on the basis of its existing experience and manpower. At the same time, at least a beginning can be made with the management and utilization of actual grain stocks, such as those presently being established, in line with international recommendations, in the West African context.

15. Finally, it is recognized that a substantial part of the total FAO effort may be the provision of practically oriented management support as well as studies and planning advice in developing countries, aiming at equipping their national institutions with the necessary operating capability related to the preparation and implementation of national grain stock and reserve policies.

Role of the Committee

16. Delegates are invited to express views on the following questions:

1. Action has been taken to increase development aid, especially to the most seriously affected countries (the new OPEC fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the IMF Trust Fund, the increases in bilateral and multilateral food aid programmes) and also to coordinate such aid (CGFPI). Does the Committee consider sufficient progress is being made in this field to strengthen significantly world food security, in the light of its assessment of the food supply position of the MSA countries?

2. The FAO has taken steps to help implement national reserve programmes through its food security assistance programme. Can the Committee give guidance to the future orientation of FAO's operations in this field, as set out above?

3. A number of donor countries are now cooperating with this scheme. Delegates of countries which have not already done so are invited to inform the Committee of the form of cooperation which their governments will extend to developing countries in response to Conference Resolution 2/75 (operative paragraph 3) in order to prepare and implement their national reserve stock programmes and other measures required.