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REPORT OF THE

Held in Seoul,  
21 – 25 October 2002

**NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE  
ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION  
ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

**FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (RAP)  
BANGKOK, 2003**

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**REPORT**

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**FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (RAP)  
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
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## ACRONYMS

ABR	Australian Business Register
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AELOS	Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey, USA
AFSIS	ASEAN Food Security Information System
AGGIES	Agricultural Generalized Imputation Edit System, USA
AISB	Agricultural Information and Statistics Bureau, Korea
APCAS	Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics
APO	Asian Production Organization
APRC	FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific
ASIS	Agribusiness Statistical Information Systems
BAS	Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, Philippines
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BPS	Badan Pusat Statistik, Indonesia
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal
CLS	Crop and Livestock Survey, Nepal
DPSIC	Department of Planning, Statistics and International Cooperation, Cambodia
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOSTAT	FAO Statistical Databases
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping Systems
FNPP	FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme
GIS	Geographic Information System
GSO	General Statistical Office, Viet Nam
IAPG	Inter-Agency Planning Group, Malaysia
IAWG	Interagency Working Group
ICR	Intelligent Character Recognition
KNSO	Korea National Statistical Office
LAN	Local Area Network
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Korea
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture, Malaysia
MOAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand
MPI	Ministry of Primary Industries, Malaysia
NASS	National Agricultural Statistics Service, USA
NIS	National Institute of Statistics, Cambodia
NSO	National Statistical Office, Thailand
OAE	Office of Agricultural Economics, Thailand
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RDES	Regional Data Exchange System
SEAFDEC	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center
SIAP	UN Statistical Institute in Asia and the Pacific
SID	Statistics and Information Department, Japan
TFSCB	Trust Fund for Statistics Capacity Building
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture, USA
WFS:fyl	World Food Summit: five years later

## INTRODUCTION

1. At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Nineteenth Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) was organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in Seoul, Korea from 21 to 25 October 2002.

2. The Session opened with the inaugural address by HE Jung Ho Kim, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of Korea. In this address he expressed his happiness that by hosting the Nineteenth Session of the APCAS, his government became the first country in the new millennium to host a biennial session of the Commission. He pointed out that this was the third time that the Republic of Korea was hosting a session of the Commission. He expressed the hope that this Session would give member countries the opportunity to exchange ideas on how agricultural statistics might be used best at both country and regional levels. Further, he noted that the session would allow the countries not only to review preparations for the World Census of Agriculture 2010 but also to learn about the use of the latest technologies in the collection and tabulation of statistical data.

3. HE Kim added that agriculture was very significant for the countries in the Asia-Pacific region where more than 800 million people were malnourished and where more than two thirds of the world's population suffering from starvation and poverty lived. Accordingly, agricultural development was crucial for the region and it was important that close cooperation existed between the countries. He stated that countries faced the challenge of meeting the increasing demand for reliable and timely statistics in order to establish agricultural policies, implement decision-making for agribusinesses and carry out research to resolve problems related to agriculture. He foresaw requests for new kinds of statistics for specialized agriculture and an information-oriented society. In conclusion, he hoped that the session would be fruitful and that the delegates would have a pleasant stay in Korea.

4. Mr Slamet Mukeno, Deputy for Economic Statistics, BPS Statistics Indonesia, representing the outgoing Chair of the Eighteenth Session of APCAS, stated in his opening remarks that many developments in agricultural statistics had taken place since the Eighteenth Session. Because of the changing international environment, the dependence of policymakers on more

current and more comprehensive data had increased. He suggested that the Commission might like to look further into this aspect during the Nineteenth Session. He felt that this Session would further provide member states an opportunity to exchange ideas and help in developing statistical methods and tools.

5. Mr Frederick Baker read the statement of Mr He Changchui, Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific. In his statement, Mr He thanked the of the Republic of Korea for hosting and providing excellent facilities for the Nineteenth Session. Mr He stated that with the emergence of new methods of telecommunications, more efficient transportation, better marketing channels, higher yields for food production and innovative methods of processing, the flow of goods and services between and within countries had improved. In this changing environment, there was an urgent need to tackle existing problems like poverty, hunger and provision of nutritionally adequate and safe food.

6. Referring to the Twenty-sixth Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific held in Nepal in May 2002, Mr He stated that the member countries had recognized the importance of food security and extended support to the application of food insecurity and vulnerability information mapping systems (FIVIMS). FAO's support to the member countries in establishing and strengthening national FIVIMS was solicited. In this context, Mr He reported that with the help of the Italian Government, FAO and the Government of Viet Nam, a food security information unit had already been established in Viet Nam. Further, a regional FIVIMS project funded by the Government of Japan had been initiated in the five countries of Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

7. Mr He also mentioned that FAO had already initiated efforts to prepare the Programme for World Census of Agriculture 2010 and was pleased that the delegates of the Commission would participate in early discussions about this important activity. Mr He referred to the value of the latest technological developments for agricultural data collection and analysis and their contribution to providing more timely information for policymakers both in public and private sectors. Furthermore, Mr He encouraged the Commission to promote the use of more practical indicators for decision makers in the monitoring and evaluation of policies for the agriculture sector. Mr He recognized the importance of inland capture fisheries as a contributor to food security and indicated the need to obtain better information about them. Mr He

was encouraged by the efforts of the Government of Myanmar to include information on aquaculture and inland fisheries in its next agricultural census. Mr He also noted the shift in the responsibility for forest resource management from the public to the private sector and suggested that new methods might be necessary for collecting and disseminating forestry statistics.

8. Finally, Mr He expressed his gratitude to the donor community, particularly to the Government of Japan, which had responded promptly to the requests for regional projects to improve agricultural statistics in the region and facilitate the exchange of information. In conclusion, Mr He conveyed his gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the Session and acknowledged the hard work of government and FAO staff in organizing and conducting it.

9. Mr Haluk Kasnakoglu, Director of Statistics Division, ESS, FAO headquarters, briefly explained the role of the division. He stated that the division received various statistics on food and agriculture from countries, then compiled and disseminated them. He noted that the statisticians of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region had made an important contribution to the role of the Statistics Division and he lauded them for it.

10. Mr Frederick Baker, APCAS Secretary, presented the vote of thanks. He expressed his appreciation and thanks to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Korea for hosting the Nineteenth Session of APCAS in Seoul. He also thanked the delegates, observers and his colleagues working in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and in the Statistics Division in Rome for their assistance and contribution to the organization of the session.

11. Mr Lee Sang Kil, Director-General of Agricultural Information and Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of Korea, was unanimously elected Chairman of the Nineteenth Session. Mr N. Ekambaram (India) was elected First Vice-Chairman and Ms Rajana Netsaengtip (Thailand), the Second Vice-Chairman.

12. The Commission constituted a Drafting Committee. Mr Romeo Recide (Philippines) was elected Chairman of the Committee. Mrs Jirawan Boonperm (Thailand), Mr Allan Nicholls (Australia), Mr D.K. Trehan (FAO consultant), Mr

Hiek Som (FAO/ESS) and Mr Frederick Baker (APCAS Secretary), were co-opted to the Committee.

13. The Session adopted the agenda given in Appendix A. A list of delegates and observers is given in Appendix B, and a list of documents in Appendix C. Speeches of the dignitaries are in Appendices D and E. The list of member countries of the Commission, as of November 2002, is given in Appendix F.

### **FAO'S ACTIVITIES IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS DURING 2000-2002 IN THE ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

(Item 4 of the Agenda)

14. The Secretary of the Commission introduced the document on FAO's activities in food and agricultural statistics during 2000-2002 in the Asia and Pacific region. The Commission was informed that the Twenty-sixth Meeting of FAO's Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) was held in Kathmandu, Nepal in May 2002. Three weeks later, the World Food Summit: five years later (WFS:fyf) was held in Rome. Both meetings reaffirmed the importance of strengthening national and regional early warning systems and of collecting and analyzing data to identify food insecure and vulnerable people. The Commission was informed that the Programme for the World Census of Agriculture 2000 was a continuing activity, but that preparation of the Programme for World Census of Agricultural 2010 had already begun. Technical cooperation was being extended to member countries for the improvement of their national statistical systems

15. The Secretary informed the Commission that high priority was given by FAO to the maintenance and electronic dissemination of the database on food and agricultural statistics. He stated that efforts were underway to upgrade the scope and capabilities of FAOSTAT, which currently was unable to meet some requirements of users. The new system, FAOSTAT2, would utilize powerful software to facilitate more extensive analysis with access to more data sets. FAOSTAT2 would be designed to have four components, namely: the working system, the dissemination system, the reference data management system and the metadata repository.

16. The Commission was advised that an integrated statistical framework consisting of a supply and utilization database for food and agricultural commodities could be a powerful tool for making the best use of available statistical information in formulating plans for development of the food and agricultural sector. Establishing such an integrated system would also help to pinpoint many inconsistencies in the statistical series, leading to a better recognition of the need to improve statistics on food and agriculture. The Commission noted that FAO had implemented new data collection methods through utilization of the Internet and virtual questionnaires to collect and verify data on production of primary and derived agricultural products, livestock numbers and livestock products, land use, and many other basic agriculture statistics.

17. The Commission learned that, in addition to the FAO series of yearbooks and the RAP annual publication on *Selected indicators of food and agriculture development in Asia-Pacific region*, FAO had prepared handbooks on the compilation of environmental indicators for agriculture and on the preparation of economic accounts for agriculture. The methodology for the integration of time-use surveys with cost-of-production surveys as a means of deriving gender-disaggregated data had been updated.

18. The Secretary noted that at present, work on spatial information management and decision support tools was continuing. In addition, techniques had been developed for the calculation of the number of undernourished persons in a country based on food consumption statistics from household income and expenditure surveys and that a workshop on this topic, using data provided by the countries of the region, had been conducted in Bangkok in August 2002.

19. The Commission was informed that the Sixth Meeting of the Interagency Working Group (IAWG) on FIVIMS was held in June 2002 in Managua, Nicaragua. Among the constraints identified as obstacles to setting up FIVIMS were the low priority given by politicians to food security, lack of resources and under utilization of data. The IAWG had pointed out the importance of using the resources of universities and civil society organizations to overcome these obstacles. The Secretary mentioned that the indicators that had been proposed by the Millennium Summit of the UN were part of the FIVIMS databases; these 48 indicators were important measures of progress toward the goals of eliminating poverty and reducing the number

of undernourished. In this respect, it was noted that more accurate estimation of both fisheries and cereal stocks would improve the preparation and reliability of food balance sheets.

20. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Sixteenth Session of the APCAS held in Tokyo, the Government of Japan had funded two regional projects, one in 1998 and the second in 2001. A major objective of the projects was to establish a regional information exchange system among member countries. As part of the activities of these projects to improve food and agricultural statistics in the region, a workshop on agricultural surveys based on multiple frame sampling methods was jointly organized in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2000 by FAO and the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific. A workshop on improvement of fishery statistics in Asia and Pacific countries was conducted in August 2001. The first meeting of focal points for the second regional project was held in Bangkok in August 2002.

21. In recognition of the need to improve data on inland capture fisheries, several meetings on this topic were held and a workshop on new approaches for the improvement of inland capture fishery statistics in the Mekong Basin was organized in September 2002 by the Mekong River Commission, FAO and the Department of Fisheries (Thailand) in collaboration with the FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme.

22. The Commission learned that during an expert consultation on agribusiness statistics in Bangkok in September 2001, guidelines were developed on building agribusiness statistical information systems (ASIS) around entrepreneurs and focusing information on production and marketing centers. The expert consultation had recommended that countries should take advantage of data producer-user fora, national and regional level training programmes, workshops and symposia to identify user data requirements to ensure that users were aware of the ASIS, and that the information in ASIS would be used to the greatest extent possible. The expert consultation proposed that technical assistance should be directed toward building capacity on analysis and dissemination in national statistics offices and/or national agricultural statistics services.

23. In order to improve the quality and timeliness of forestry statistics, a workshop for Asian countries on forest products statistics was held in the FAO Regional Office in June this year. The workshop explored ways of

strengthening the capability of Asian countries to collect and analyze forestry data. It was noted that a similar workshop would be held for Pacific countries in December. It was explained that because many agricultural farmlands were formerly forestlands that had been cleared for agricultural purposes, current agricultural surveys could be used to gain information on the extent of this activity.

24. The Secretary also explained that FAO had continued to provide technical assistance to member countries. Direct assistance was provided to Indonesia on the improvement of livestock statistics, to Cook Islands, Myanmar and Tonga on the conduct of agricultural censuses and to Viet Nam on the analysis of agricultural census results. Continuing support was extended to long-term projects related to the development of programmes in agricultural statistics and early warning systems in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam.

25. The Commission learned that ESCAP sponsored four sub-regional workshops on environment statistics. The venues were Bangkok, Hyderabad and Port Vila, Vanuatu. In these workshops, FAO resource persons were invited to elaborate on statistics on land use, soil loss and deterioration and other environment-related indicators.

26. The Commission acknowledged and appreciated FAO's efforts in the field of agricultural statistics during the last two years, especially in the successful implementation of various projects in the Region.

## **REVIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE COMMISSION – COUNTRY STATEMENTS**

(Item 5 of the Agenda)

### AUSTRALIA

27. Mr Allan Nicholls presented a paper on Australian agricultural statistics. He mentioned that recent developments in agricultural statistics in Australia included the investigation and construction of a new frame for identifying agricultural businesses, investigation of options for geocoding agricultural data, and a broadening of focus to include environmental and social issues. A

recent review of these statistics revealed that better coordination among the different organizations collecting and reporting statistics, development of an information model which recognized the roles and responsibilities of different providers of agricultural data, and the updating of the frames were key points for improvement of agricultural statistics. The Commission was informed about the development of an Australian Business Register (ABR), which would provide an updated list of businesses operating in Australia, including the majority of agricultural businesses. The ABR would result in long-term cost savings in frame maintenance. Some work had also been undertaken in geocoding census data so that publishing of agricultural census results could be done in a more detailed and flexible manner.

28. Mr Nicholls also informed the Commission that recent statistical activities included the conduct of the Agricultural Activity Survey (2001-2002) and the generation of statistics on livestock slaughtering and environmental issues. He also noted that there had been some changes to the arrangements for collecting agricultural finance survey data. Lastly, he informed the Commission that the state governments and the Australian Bureau of Statistics had been working together to develop spatial databases for farm operators.

## BANGLADESH

29. Mr M.H. Rahman explained the status of agriculture and agricultural statistics in Bangladesh. He stated that about 84 percent of the population of Bangladesh depended directly or indirectly on agriculture. About 20 percent of GDP came from the agriculture sector, although this share has been slightly declining over the last few years due to structural changes in the economy. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the national statistical organization, provided all data for the country. BBS had recently been put under the Planning Division in place of a separate Division of the Ministry of Planning. BBS had 23 regional statistical offices and 483 upazila statistical offices. It had seven wings, one of which handled both agriculture statistics and the agricultural census. Other wings collect, compile and disseminate information and conduct surveys/censuses in their respective areas of jurisdiction. The production of major crops like rice, wheat and jute were estimated through sample surveys while those of other crops were estimated subjectively. Agricultural census operations were carried out by BBS under the Census Act. Mr Rahman noted that the Ministry of Agriculture brought out

a publication *Handbook of agriculture statistics* yearly. He shared with the Commission some statistics describing the agricultural sector in Bangladesh.

## CAMBODIA

30. The paper on agricultural statistics in Cambodia was presented by Mr Kith Seng. The main source of food and agricultural data in Cambodia was the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) while the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) also had a unit responsible for agricultural statistics. In MAFF, the Department of Planning, Statistics and International Cooperation (DPSIC) was the major agency for the coordination and production of agricultural data. Mr Kith explained that Cambodia had yet to conduct an agricultural census mainly because of financial constraints. In the year 2000, DPSIC initiated the use of probability sample surveys in six priority provinces to provide estimates of area and production of paddy and inventory of livestock. In 2001, the survey was extended to cover 14 provinces. In 2002 the plan was to include 17 provinces that accounted for 90 percent of area under paddy in the country. Mr Kith informed the Commission that the main problems in the field of agricultural statistics in Cambodia were inadequacy of financial resources and limited capacity of the existing data collection network to collect, supervise, manage, report and process agricultural data.

31. With reference to the quality of data, Mr Kith reported that results of survey estimates of crop area from 2000 and 2001 showed that the subjective assessment of paddy area was quite reliable. Areas reported by farmers at household level were also found to be reliable. Yields based on eye estimation, however, were found to be generally lower than the yields obtained by the interview method, which in turn were lower than yields from crop-cutting surveys.

## CHINA

32. Mr Zhang Tianzuo presented a paper on content, methodology and reform perspectives on rural statistics in China. He related that agricultural statistics in China were collected through an agricultural census and sample surveys. While the agricultural census had been carried out only once (in 1997), the sample surveys were undertaken more often. These surveys included: (a) rural household sample survey; (b) agricultural output and sown

area sample survey; (c) livestock survey; (d) rural society and economy statistics survey; (e) survey on statistics of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fisheries; (f) comprehensive statistics of agricultural production value survey; (g) basic information survey of counties and cities; and (h) ad-hoc surveys.

33. Mr Zhang also informed that data were processed basically in an electronic way and statistics were disseminated through various media: network, TV broadcasting, publications and others. The Commission was informed that indicators could not satisfy the demand of decision-makers and other users because of problems in measurement, timeliness and quality. Reforms were being proposed to address these problems. Future plans included the construction of economic accounts for agriculture and further strengthening of the current indicators system.

## INDIA

34. Mr N. Ekambaram presented the paper on agricultural statistics in India. He informed that the agricultural statistical system in India was decentralized. The Directorate of Economics and Statistics in the Union Ministry of Agriculture was the agency responsible for coordinating and disseminating most of the national level data on agriculture. These data were obtained from the states where data were collected and compiled according to the procedures prescribed by the Central Statistical Organization in the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation.

35. Data on crop area and land use emanated from village records and yield rates were obtained through crop-cutting surveys. Other agricultural data were generated from censuses, sample surveys and administrative mechanisms. Agriculture and livestock censuses were conducted once in five years.

36. Information technology was now being introduced for collecting and disseminating data. All data source agencies were proposed to be connected through a nationwide network in the near future. The Commission was informed that local area networks (LANs) were being established in all offices as part of the implementation of e-governance. In this respect, it was necessary to develop databases with a common data structure and software for agricultural statistics at the national and state levels.

37. Methods of forecasting crop production were being developed using remote sensing techniques and ground-based observations. Also, there was a need for supply utilization tables, food balance sheets and satellite accounts for agriculture in line with the System of Economic Accounts For Agriculture (SEAFAs) to be made part of the agricultural statistics compiled in the country.

## INDONESIA

38. Mr Slamet Mukeno presented a review of the present state of agricultural statistics in Indonesia. He reported that the national statistical system in Indonesia was centralized and that statistics collection was authorized by recently enacted legislation. The statistics for agriculture were collected through three sources, namely: (a) agricultural censuses; (b) surveys; and (c) secondary data collected by other institutions such as Department of Agriculture, Department of Forestry, Department of Ocean Affairs and Fisheries, and others. The agricultural census was conducted once every ten years and, at present, BPS Statistics Indonesia was preparing for the Fifth Agricultural Census to be carried out in 2003. This census would be done in three phases and would cover areas not included in previous censuses.

39. Agricultural surveys, on the other hand, were being carried out to collect statistics on food and horticultural crops. One of the most important activities in agricultural data collection was the forecasting of food crop production. Five forecasts were provided each year for the main crops of paddy, maize and soybeans. Data on fisheries, livestock, estate crops, and forestry would be gathered from secondary sources. The Commission was informed of problems and obstacles in data collection, foremost of which were financial constraints and lack of trained personnel. It was also cited that timeliness of data dissemination needed to be improved.

## IRAN

40. Mr Alireza Hatami presented a paper that reviewed the present state of food and agricultural statistics in Iran. He informed that agriculture was one of the most important economic sectors of Iran. It employed 3.5 million people representing 23 percent of total employment. The Bureau of Statistics and Information Technology, Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture, was responsible for

compiling, processing, publishing and disseminating information on the agricultural sector. In addition, it carried out the following activities: (a) conducting the agricultural sample survey; (b) designing a system for compiling data from administrative records; (c) compiling statistical reports from other subdivisions of the Ministry; (d) applying GIS and Remote Sensing Technology; (e) computerizing operations and other computer services; and (f) designing and maintaining the home page of the Ministry. It also had an important role in designing and implementing general agricultural censuses, which according to regulation were the responsibility of the Statistical Center of Iran.

41. During the current year, nine sample surveys on important crops of Iran had been planned. The country was now preparing for its fourth agricultural census to be conducted in 2003. Through this census, information on the structural aspects of agricultural holdings, land use trends, crop production, livestock inventory and other related information would be collected. Census results would also serve as a frame for other agricultural sample surveys and provide data for small administrative units.

## JAPAN

42. Mr Masataka Hishiyama presented a paper on the present state of statistics and information on agriculture, forestry and fisheries in Japan. He informed that in Japan the statistics were collected through a decentralized system in which each ministry and agency individually undertook statistical surveys in the areas for which they were responsible. Statistics on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries were collected by the Statistics and Information Department (SID) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) through: (a) censuses of agriculture, forestry and fisheries; (b) annual surveys on the structure of the agricultural sector; (c) surveys on the actual state of economic activities of farmers, including surveys on management and agricultural household economy; costs, and prices; (d) surveys on actual state of resource utilization and production, including surveys on cultivated crop area, production and forecasting; and (e) surveys on distribution of agricultural products, including surveys on food supply system, prices at distribution stages and food losses.

43. In all, about a hundred different surveys on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries were conducted in Japan. The Government of Japan was using

information technologies for evaluation and processing of data. SID had implemented several steps to improve the survey methods by using the latest information and communication technology like remote sensing, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology and rural community mapping systems. SID had also made several reforms in agricultural statistics so as to meet the emerging policy requirements. Some of these reforms were: (a) making efforts to collect statistics which conformed to new administrative needs, and (b) enhancing the capacity to collect and disseminate information.

44. The Commission was informed about assistance being extended by Japan in the field of statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries to other countries of the Asia and Pacific region.

#### REPUBLIC OF KOREA

45. Mr Song Joo-Ho presented a paper on agriculture statistics in the Republic of Korea. The paper was divided into three parts, namely: the agricultural statistics organization, recent activities of agricultural statistics and future plans. The collection of agricultural statistics in the Republic of Korea was being undertaken by the Agricultural Information and Statistics Bureau (AISB) and the National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service (NAQS) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and by the Korean National Statistical Office (KNSO).

46. The Commission was informed that recent agricultural statistics activities included: (a) the conduct of a census on agriculture, fisheries and forestry, (b) improvement of agricultural statistics by redesigning several sample surveys and by developing new statistics according to changes in the agricultural sector, (c) generation of diverse and detailed statistics to meet new demands, (d) provision of agricultural information to enable farmers to better plan their production and (e) use of computer and information technology for compilation and dissemination of information. Future plans reported by Mr Song included the following areas: (a) compiling user-oriented high-quality statistics; (b) strengthening expertise in statistics; (c) improving the digitalization of agricultural sector and rural communities; (d) expanding and sharing agricultural statistics database; and (e) establishing agricultural statistics based on international standards.

## LAO PDR

47. Mr Samaychanh Boupha outlined the importance of agriculture to the Lao PDR economy and the consequent requirement by the government for comprehensive agricultural statistics. The statistical system had been originally designed to serve a centrally planned economy and subsequently was required to adjust to meet the needs of a market economy. This change caused problems because the decentralized and multi-layered collection system generally provided data of low quality.

48. The Commission was informed about the responsibilities of the Statistics Division within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. It was further informed about the organization of the first agriculture census in Lao PDR in 1998/99 and the 2002 Expenditure and Consumption Survey. The main problems with the statistical system were the quality of the data (because of inadequate training of field staff), communication problems, a general lack of standards, and data being largely based on administrative systems.

49. Future plans included expansion of the scope of agricultural statistics, introduction of more sample surveys, and improvement and upgrading of skills.

## MALAYSIA

50. Mr Amran bin Othman provided some background information on Malaysia, stressing the importance of agriculture to the Malaysian economy. The country's Third National Agricultural Policy was outlined, as were the main statistics pertaining to agriculture and the arrangements for collecting them. The sources of agricultural statistics in Malaysia were the department and agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI). Agencies under the MOA provided statistics relating to food crops and the smallholder sector while the agencies under the MPI provided statistics on industrial crops such as rubber, oil palm, cocoa and tobacco. Some of the major surveys undertaken in the agricultural sectors were Supply Monitoring Survey, the Cost and Marketing Margin Survey of Selected Fruits and Flowers, Cost of Production Survey, Total Working Hours and Survey on Attitude of Farmers, Fishermen and the Small Holders.

51. The Statistical System in the MOA, Malaysia, was decentralized with each agency collecting statistics pertaining to their specific concerns. Major crop statistics such as rubber, oil palm, coconut, paddy and cocoa were collected by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia, while statistics for other crops were collected by the respective agencies in the MOA. Collection of information pertaining to other crops was coordinated by the Macro and Strategic Planning Division, MOA and published separately in monthly and annual reports.

52. The Commission was informed that the quality of agricultural statistics over the years had improved; yet certain further improvements were required to meet future data needs. For instance, the Inter-Agency Planning Group (IAPG) on agriculture had identified data gaps in the statistics on agricultural operations and socio-economics. There was also a need to fine-tune statistics on support services such as farm financing, transport services, post harvest facilities and types of services needed by farmers. The Commission was also informed that the Ministry of Agriculture, Malaysia would conduct an agricultural census in 2004.

## MYANMAR

53. Mr U Win Kyi reported on the status of agriculture statistics in Myanmar. He gave some background information on Myanmar, noting that agriculture accounted for 63 percent of the labour force, 34 percent of GDP and 23 percent of export earnings. He informed the Commission that a distinctive feature of the statistical base was the large-scale cadastral maps (1:3,960) that were used as bases for compiling statistics by area. It was also noted that information on the crop areas was collected by complete enumeration using field staff familiar with the local area and conditions.

54. The Commission was informed that the statistical system of Myanmar was decentralized with a number of organizations providing data on agricultural statistics. It was further informed of the current work on crop forecasting, crop surveys and crop-cutting surveys. Reference was also made to previous agricultural censuses in 1953/54 and 1993, and to the preparations for the next agricultural census, which would be a complete enumeration during the period of February to April 2003. Every household would receive a short form with screening questions while a more detailed form would be completed for all agricultural holdings. For livestock and

aquaculture holdings a 20 percent sample would be used. Issues of concern included data processing and data analysis.

## NEPAL

55. Mr Rabi Singh presented a paper on state of food and agriculture statistics in Nepal. In Nepal the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) was the major statistical agency that collected, processed and disseminated data from primary and secondary resources. The agricultural statistics in Nepal were being collected through agricultural censuses and through sample surveys. The CBS had already conducted the agricultural census for the year 2001-2002 through which data from around 150,000 agricultural holdings were gathered. While census data were collected every ten years, data for intercensal periods were collected through sample surveys. In this regard, the Crop and Livestock Survey (CLS) was an important survey that provided current estimates of the area harvested and production for different crops and inventories of livestock during the reference period. Mr Singh reported, however, that the crop forecasting portion of the CLS needed to be improved to achieve better timeliness and accuracy.

56. Mr Singh informed that the Government of Nepal had received technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to improve the scope and quality of agricultural statistics. CBS was able to progressively decentralize data processing systems by installing computers in Branch Statistical Offices and providing training to the staff in those offices. Despite certain improvements achieved with the assistance of ADB, there was a need for some fundamental structural changes as the existing system lacked a comprehensive statistical development plan, resulting in several problems. To address these problems, a Consolidated National Statistical Plan had been prepared with the assistance from ADB. Approval and implementation of this Plan was still under study by the government.

## NEW ZEALAND

57. Mr David Lillis presented a paper on the state of agricultural statistics in New Zealand. He stated that New Zealand had conducted an annual agricultural data collection until it was ceased in 1996. Collection of agricultural statistics resumed in 1999 in response to serious problems that arose from the absence of the statistics. Agricultural statistics were needed

badly, not only for policy formulation and planning, but also for international trade negotiations. Reactivating the collection of statistics required a lot of work and considerable resources in order to finalize the frame and design the survey questionnaires. He informed that the statistics to be collected included: area and production of grassland, arable land, forest areas; numbers of dairy and beef cattle; grain production; seed production; and area statistics for fruits, nuts and vegetables. He added that provisional estimates in the form of summary tables and reports would be available in February 2003 and final estimates would be published in May 2003. In the future, for agriculture and forestry, a census covering key data items every five years would be supplemented by annual inter-censal surveys of particular industries or activities. Annual collection would help in the compilation of time series data for major agricultural activities and provide necessary assistance for policy formulation.

## PAKISTAN

58. The Commission received the report on the current state of agricultural statistics in Pakistan. In this report, the organization and management of statistical activities in Pakistan were presented. The existing system of collecting data on various aspects of Pakistan agriculture was also described in detail in the paper.

59. The Commission learned that Pakistan had a history of conducting the agricultural census every ten years since 1960. The last census of agriculture was conducted in 1990. The report did not indicate plans for the conduct of another census.

60. The report emphasized that agricultural statistics were extremely important for an agrarian country like Pakistan. Among the critical users of agricultural data were government officials at all levels, farmers and the agribusiness community. The availability of adequate, timely and accurate statistical information had become even more important as Pakistan moved towards modernizing and commercializing its agricultural sector.

## PHILIPPINES

61. Mr Romeo Recide presented to the Commission the highlights of the developments in the agricultural statistics system in the Philippines since the

Eighteenth Session of the APCAS. The Commission was informed that a recently enacted law mandated the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) to be the central information server of the Department of Agriculture National Information Network and to provide technical assistance to farmers and fisherfolk on the analysis and utilization of production and marketing information.

62. To prepare itself for addressing these new mandates, the BAS had re-oriented its structure to improve generation of production statistics, enhance application of information technology, consolidate administrative functions, tighten internal audit/control and streamline coordination of field activities.

63. In response to higher expectations and greater demands for data, the BAS had implemented new or enhanced statistical activities. These included: (a) updating of food consumption data; (b) updating of costs-and-returns structures; (c) conducting studies on marketing costs and earnings and commodity utilization; (d) developing early warning systems; (e) generating details from the Labor Force Survey; and (f) compiling environment and gender-related data.

64. In addition, the BAS had been implementing the data analysis and utilization project funded by FAO, a rural sector statistical information system project with the World Bank and the grain sector development programme with support from the Asian Development Bank. The last programme aimed to assist the BAS to formulate corporate, human resource and statistical methods development plans.

65. The Commission was informed that the National Statistics Office, in close coordination with the BAS, had been preparing for the conduct of the next census of agriculture and census of fisheries in 2003 following the guidelines of the FAO Programme for World Census of Agriculture 2000. Both censuses would be large sample surveys.

#### SRI LANKA

66. Mr A.M.U. Dissanayake presented a paper on the national information system of agricultural statistics in Sri Lanka with special reference to the Census of Agriculture 2002. He explained that the statistical system in Sri Lanka was basically centralized. The Department of Census and Statistics

was vested with legal authority to carry out all types of socio-economic censuses under the Census Ordinance. The statistical programs undertaken by the Department included the implementation of annual/bi-annual surveys under the current statistical program and the conduct of censuses. The Census of Agriculture 2002 was carried out after a lapse of twenty years. In the planning of the census, special attention was focused on: (a) enhancing quality of data, (b) disseminating the data at lowest administrative division level and (c) reducing the time lag between census taking and dissemination of results. The data collection was undertaken by dividing the agricultural sector into two categories, namely, the estate sector or large holdings that were over 20 acres in extent, and the smallholding sector. Information pertaining to the estate sector or large holdings was collected through mailed questionnaires while personal interviews were used for smallholdings. A special feature of the census was the use of optical readers to process the main questionnaire so census results could be disseminated quickly.

## THAILAND

67. Ms Suraporn Issaradetkul presented the paper "Agricultural Statistics in Thailand". She informed that the statistical system in Thailand was decentralized with the National Statistical Office (NSO) acting as the focal statistical organization. Being responsible for conducting all censuses and surveys, the NSO had been preparing for the next agricultural census that would be conducted in 2003. This census would collect data not only on agricultural operations in all holdings but also on fresh water fishery structure. The agricultural census methodology would be a combination of complete and sample enumeration. In this method, the questionnaire would be divided into two parts. The first part would be used for collecting data on the basic structure of all agricultural holdings whereas the second part would be used for collecting other agricultural structure data from a 25 percent sample of holdings.

68. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) was another main organization responsible for producing and publishing all current statistics obtained from sample surveys or as by-products of administration. The Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), a department agency under the MOAC, was the office primarily responsible for the collection, compilation and dissemination of current agricultural statistics. The major surveys of the OAE included Major Crop Survey, Livestock and Poultry Survey, Socio-Economic

Agricultural Household Survey, Cost of Production Survey, Agricultural Commodity Registration, Farm-gate Price Survey, and Crop Forecasting. The MOAC had implemented a project on farmers registration and identification card system with the objectives of (a) establishing an agricultural database that would be useful to farmers for marketing and raising prices of agricultural commodities, (b) developing production systems that would improve the quality of agricultural commodities, and (c) assisting farmers in obtaining agricultural credit.

69. OAE had also started using remote sensing and GIS techniques for collecting agricultural data and preparing agricultural resource maps to assist policy makers to plan more efficiently.

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

70. Mr Larry Sivers presented a paper on agriculture statistics in the United States. He informed that the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) administered the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) program of collecting and publishing national and state agricultural statistics. The five functions of NASS which supported its mission were to: (a) provide accurate and timely estimates of current agricultural production and measures of economic and environmental welfare; (b) work with all 50 states to strengthen state-level programs of agricultural statistics; (c) provide statistical services to other USDA agencies; (d) provide consultancy and other services; and (e) improve statistical methodology through applied research.

71. The Commission was informed about the new endeavors of NASS. These were: (a) in August 2000, NASS staff established the cooperative agreement to support agricultural statistics in Puerto Rico; (b) NASS created an internal repository of historical microdata from more than 130 surveys, including the 1997 Census of Agriculture and selected surveys from 1997 onward; (c) developmental work was undertaken on an automated edit and imputation system called Agricultural Generalized Imputation Edit System (AGGIES); and (d) the results of 1997 Agricultural Census were made available.

72. In addition to the above, the following main reports were released: (a) on February 1, 2000, results of the first ever census of aquaculture which was conducted in 1998; (b) on March 31, 2000, results of the 1998 Census of

Horticultural Specialties; (c) on November 8, 1999, the report on the 1998 Farm and Ranch Irrigation Survey; (d) in August 2001, results of the Agricultural Economics and Land Ownership Survey (AELOS), providing detailed information on the financial health of agricultural producers and landlords; and (e) in 2001, the New Geographic Information System (GIS) Cropland Data Layer Release which provided detailed data on cropland for six major crop-producing States.

73. The Commission was also informed that NASS was developing a detailed Respondent Burden Tracking and Management System to identify, track, analyze, understand, and ultimately better manage or minimize respondent burden.

#### VIET NAM

74. Mr Pham Quang Vinh presented a paper on agricultural statistics in Viet Nam. He informed that the statistical system in Viet Nam was centralized with the General Statistical Office (GSO) as the main organization. GSO conducted surveys and censuses covering all sectors of the economy, including the agricultural sector. In regard to agricultural statistics, GSO was organized at four levels, namely: central, provincial, district and commune levels. GSO conducted the following major surveys in agriculture: (a) planted area and yield of crops; (b) livestock; (c) labour force, machinery, farm and cooperatives; (d) forestry; and (e) fisheries.

75. The Commission was informed that the first agricultural census in Viet Nam was conducted in 1994 and the second in 2001. The results of the 2001 census were still being processed. The FAO had been assisting GSO through the project "Analysis of the Rural, Agricultural and Fisheries Census". There were several problems relating to agricultural statistics. Because information had to be collected from a large sample and GSO had limited resources, it was unable to collect all the information needed, particularly at micro level. Because of concern about the quality of data reported by provincial statistical offices, surveys had been conducted to evaluate their accuracy.

#### ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION (APO)

76. Mr Kunio Tsubota from the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) informed the Commission that APO activities were undertaken with the

objective to increase productivity in the industrial sector in general, and the agricultural sector, in particular. Toward this end, the APO had been carrying out research studies and organizing seminars on various aspects of productivity. The APO had also been conducting a survey on agricultural productivity indicators. The APO worked through the respective national productivity organizations of member states. It had developed a questionnaire on productivity indicators that was sent to the national productivity organizations of member states. The Commission noted that APO shared concerns with the FAO in tackling the problem of food security, though APO was using a different approach. APO suggested therefore that the APO and the FAO should continue to coordinate their activities in the region.

#### UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)

77. Ms Lene Mikkelsen made a statement regarding ESCAP's contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). She reported that, as the Regional Commission for the UN in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP had re-structured its work programme to better contribute to eradicating poverty and ensuring that progress did not bypass the poor and disadvantaged in this region. Together with the UNDP, ESCAP had pooled resources to staff a Poverty Centre that had been given the mandate to promote the MDGs in the region and to ensure that the success stories in poverty reduction were being shared.

78. The Commission noted that ESCAP's work on poverty in the next years will focus on the following areas: (a) statistical capacity building in countries; (b) improvement and harmonization of methodologies for poverty measurement; (c) improved coverage and quality of poverty-related indicators; (d) reconciliation of data from micro and macro-economic sources; (e) generation of more accurate purchasing power parities (PPPs); (f) development of poverty maps and other analytical tools; and (g) advocacy for the use of statistics in policy and planning.

79. The Commission was informed that through these activities ESCAP expected to contribute to a strengthened statistical capacity in countries to enable them to design appropriate poverty reduction strategies. A tangible aspect of these activities should be an improvement in cross-country data that

were sufficiently comparable across time and space, as well as improved statistical tools for poverty analysis and measurement.

80. The Commission was further informed that ESCAP had an important comparative advantage in working in the poverty field. Being a Regional Commission rather than a specialized agency, allowed its statistical expertise to go beyond the direct measurement of poverty and related indicators to vital adjunct areas such as national accounts, PPPs, gender analysis, informal sector, environment and information technology.

#### SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SEAFDEC)

81. Mr Panu Tavarutmaneegul, Secretary-General of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) made a statement during the Session. Mr Panu said that SEAFDEC recognized the importance of fishery statistics in policy making and in management of the fisheries sector. Accordingly, SEAFDEC has developed several fisheries statistical programmes to assist the member countries in the implementation of national fisheries statistical systems. These include the compilation of fishery statistics at the regional level and organization of regional training workshops on the use of statistics. In November 2001, SEAFDEC and ASEAN in collaboration with the FAO organized a conference on sustainable fisheries for food security in the new millennium, "Fish for the People". Pursuant to the recommendations made in this conference, SEAFDEC had designed a program on capacity building for national fishery statistics systems in developing countries of ASEAN. Mr Panu invited Member countries to collaborate on areas of mutual interest to ensure accurate, reliable and timely provision of fishery statistics in the ASEAN region.

#### **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON COUNTRY STATEMENTS**

82. At the conclusion of the country statements, the Commission was pleased to learn of the initiatives being taken by the member countries for improving the quality, timeliness and comprehensiveness of data. These initiatives included the use of new tools like remote sensing and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology, upgrading of skills through training and updating of sampling frames.

83. The Commission also noted that with globalization of the economies, the member countries recognized the need for developing objective techniques of forecasting and for creating, at the national and sub-national levels, agricultural statistics databases with common data structures and software. Furthermore, the growth of domestic and foreign trades in countries had made it important for many countries to collect various types of prices and other marketing-related information.

84. The Commission recommended that its future Sessions should include a presentation on remote sensing technology for estimation of area and production and for early forecasting of crop production. The Commission also recommended that the definitions and methodology for collection of cost of production data be standardized so that the cost data could be compared more easily across countries.

85. The Commission appreciated the technical assistance provided by FAO and recommended that FAO continue to provide such support, especially in the conduct of agricultural censuses and electronic survey data processing and analysis.

86. The Commission observed that organic farming had become an important agricultural activity in many countries and requested that information about this type of farming be collected in future agricultural censuses and surveys.

87. The Commission was of the opinion that an external review of an agricultural statistics programme, such as that done for the Australian programme, was valuable and that a similar exercise could be useful to member countries for the improvement of their agricultural statistics systems.

**REPORT ON JAPAN/FAO COOPERATIVE PROJECTS “IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURE STATISTICS IN ASIA AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES” AND “STRENGTHENING REGIONAL DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEM ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN ASIA AND PACIFIC COUNTRIES” AND RELATED JAPANESE SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

(Item 6 of the Agenda)

88. Two papers were presented to the Commission under this agenda item. Document APCAS/02/6, Report on Japan/FAO Cooperative Projects “Improvement of Agriculture Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries” and “Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries” was presented by Mr Kimihiko Eura. He asked the Commission to note that Japan, as the donor of the Japan/FAO co-operative project, was very appreciative of FAO’s role in the implementation of the projects. The first phase project was successfully completed as a result of positive participation of member countries and assistance of the Regional Office of FAO.

89. The Commission was reminded that improvement of statistics in the entire region was indispensable for promotion of regional agricultural policies, including food security, although it might be noted that agricultural statistical systems were at various stages of development in different countries. In the first phase project, the state of agricultural statistics systems in participating countries was clarified through the organization of seminars and workshops.

90. The Commission was informed that the aim of the second phase project was to promote the sharing of statistics and information among the countries in the entire region, ensuring that such data and information were comparable and supportive of policy formulation. The project was expected to contribute significantly to the strengthening of food security and development of agriculture in this region.

91. In this context, participating countries and the Regional Office of FAO were asked to consider implementing the Work Plan, which was approved in the first focal point meeting in August 2002, including the setting up of the Regional Data Exchange System (RDES) on food and agricultural statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries.

92. The Commission was informed of another Japanese funded project, the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), which would commence in early 2003. The Commission was advised that technical assistance for this project would be sought from FAO.

93. The Commission had before it the document APCAS/02/7, "Improvement of Agricultural Statistics in Indonesia with Special Reference to Paddy". In response to its request during the 18<sup>th</sup> Session, the Commission was informed of the activities and recommendations of "The Agricultural Statistics Technology Improvement and Training (ASTIT) Project" that was implemented from 1994 to 2001 by the Government of Indonesia and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to improve statistical methodology and strengthen institutional capabilities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia. In the second phase of the project (1998-2001), it aimed to establish a reliable paddy production survey system for Indonesia.

94. The Commission learned about the main characteristics of the second phase of the project. First, the project was large-scale, as it covered the whole island of Java where 60 percent of the country's paddy was produced. Secondly, it drew the participation of a number of national agencies and local government units that coordinated and collaborated with each other to ensure smooth implementation of the project. Thirdly, it involved a large number of people. As many as two thousand personnel participated in project activities. Lastly, the project needed to introduce a campaign for a work management system that would alter the traditional ideas, attitudes and behavior that posed hindrances to statistical work.

95. Findings based on analysis of survey results had been formulated. In addition, recommendations for future action were also presented. The JICA-ASTIT team advised that the "National Implementation Plan on Rice Production Statistics" be carried out faithfully according to the work schedule agreed upon by collaborating institutions. The team also recommended that the paddy production survey design be improved with special attention given to increasing the accuracy and precision of estimates of paddy area and yield; survey results showed significant improvements in both aspects. Finally, the team emphasized the importance of having statistical personnel acquire a sense of responsibility and professional pride in their work. In this respect, the propagation of the 3T attitudes, i.e. (a) "Tanggung Jawab" or responsibility,

(b) “Tepat Waktu” or punctuality and (c) “Teliti” or checking, would go a long way to ensure that the data collected by statistical personnel were objective, transparent and reliable.

## **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

(Item 7 of the Agenda)

96. Ms Lene Mikkelsen presented the document APCAS/02/8, “Millennium Development Goals for Asia and the Pacific”. The Commission was informed that in the 1950s and 1960s the development goal was basically to increase growth through capital formation and that development was measured by indicators such as GDP and GNP. In the 1970s the emphasis slowly changed to poverty alleviation but the preferred indicators remained the same. During the 1980s and 1990s the focus shifted to people and human development. Development now meant development of the people, and was no longer equated to mere economic well-being, but covered a wide range of necessities including education, health and human rights. A number of UN global conferences had been held during the 1990s to spread awareness of this issue culminating with the Millennium Summit in 2000. A Millennium Declaration adopted by all UN members contained seven sections, namely: (a) peace, security, disarmament; (b) development and poverty eradication; (c) protecting common environment; (d) human rights, democracy; (e) protecting the vulnerable; (f) special needs of Africa; and (g) strengthening the UN.

97. The Commission learned that the eight millennium development goals (MDGs) were: (a) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (b) to achieve universal primary education; (c) to promote gender equality and empower women; (d) to reduce child mortality; (e) to improve maternal health; (f) to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (g) to ensure environmental sustainability; and (h) to develop a global partnership for development.

98. The Commission was further informed that to achieve the MDGs, the implementation strategy would be: (a) monitoring, both at the global and national levels; (b) analysis; and (c) campaign and mobilization. A millennium project had been established to advise on strategies and a millennium campaign had been launched to raise support for funding operation activities and partnership building.

99. The Commission heard details on two MDGs of special significance for food and agricultural statistics namely, Goal 1 (eradication of extreme poverty and hunger) and Goal 7 (environment sustainability). Regarding Goal 1, it was noted that at the global level, the percentage of total population below the poverty line had declined in developing countries from 29 percent to 23 percent between 1990 and 2000. The reduction was appreciable in East Asia and the Pacific region. The reduction in South Asia was marginal while no progress was made in Africa. Also in connection with this goal, it was reported that the percentage of malnourished children in the developing countries had declined from 32 percent in 1990 to 28 percent in 2000. In East Asia, the decline was substantial, while in Africa there was no change. Another indicator under this goal was the proportion of population consuming below minimum dietary energy requirement. Statistics showed that in East Asia, this proportion of population had declined from 16 percent to 10 percent between 1990 and 2000. For all developing countries, the decline was marginal from 20 percent to 17 percent. As regards the MDG Goal 7, the indicator on proportion of land area covered by forests revealed that at the global level, 9.4 million hectares of area under forest was lost each year between 1990 and 2000.

100. The Commission was informed of the limitations of statistics needed for preparation of indicators. Data needed for measuring poverty, nutrition levels, infection with HIV/AIDS, forest cover and environmental conditions had to be generated from surveys and were often difficult to obtain. In order to monitor the goals, statistical systems had to face the challenges of conceptualization, data availability, data quality, aggregation, and consistency of data over time.

## **IMAGE SCANNING TECHNOLOGY IN THE PROCESSING OF AGRICULTURAL SURVEY AND CENSUS DATA**

(Item 8 of the Agenda)

101. Ms Jirawan Boonperm presented the document APCAS/02/9, "Image Scanning Technology in the Processing of Agricultural Survey and Census Data". She told the Commission that an increasing demand for more timely release of statistical data had made it necessary for statistical organizations to improve their statistical data production capacity. Since data capture was the

most time-consuming stage of census data processing, it had been the focus of efforts to shorten the process.

102. The Commission learned that image scanning technology was a system used to capture data directly from a completed questionnaire or fax/internet message quickly with a minimum amount of human intervention. It utilized a scanner and a software application that automatically read and evaluated data or figures recorded on forms and transformed them into ASCII data files that could then be used for further data processing.

103. The Commission learned that the system of processing census questionnaires using Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) had many advantages. First, it shortened data capture time and decreased the risk of manual error at the data entry stage. Second, fewer staff were required, compared with the number of personnel required for other data capture methods. This point was an important consideration when it was difficult to recruit qualified temporary staff to do manual data entry. Third, with the ICR system, the image files of the census did not need a large storage area. Fourth, the cost of data capture using ICR system was much less than that of the manual procedure. In addition, the system can be used for other surveys and censuses with minimum additional requirements for maintenance and development.

104. The Commission noted that some important issues needed to be considered when using ICR. Strict controls on the quality of the accomplished questionnaire forms should be exercised before they were submitted to the scanner. Poor quality forms would prolong the scanning, evaluation and verification time.

105. The Commission agreed that the ICR system was a promising option for census and large-scale survey data capture but considerable advanced planning was required for full utilization of the system. Also, extensive testing of the performance of the system must be made before the launch of the census, to be able to fully exploit its strengths and compensate for its weaknesses. It can be noted that countries in the region that had experiences on the use of ICR system found it to be more accurate than the manual system.

106. The Commission recommended that FAO initiate an in-depth review and assessment of the performance of ICR systems as tools to improve data capture in large-scale censuses and surveys. It noted that the United Nations Statistics Division had experience with advanced information technology hardware and software and requested that FAO consult with that division.

## **AGRICULTURAL CENSUS: CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

(Item 9 of the Agenda)

107. Three papers were presented to the Commission under this agenda item. The document APCAS/02/10, "2000 Korean Agricultural Census and Future Plans for Agricultural Statistics" was presented by Mr Kim Tae Choong.

108. The Commission was informed that the Korean National Statistical Office (KNSO) conducted the 2000 Agricultural Census in March 2001 and the final report of the census was published in May 2002. Initially, the agricultural census was undertaken every 10 years. However, in view of the rapid changes in the agricultural sector, a census was undertaken in 1995 followed by another in 2000. Major changes were made in the conduct of the 2000 Agricultural Census compared with earlier censuses. First, the agricultural census and fisheries census were conducted simultaneously; Second, new items such as environment-friendly farming, participation of producer's organizations, e-information use, and housing and living conditions were collected in the 2000 Census. Finally, to reduce non-sampling errors, the questionnaire was revised substantially and supervision of fieldwork was tightened.

109. Mr Kim Tae Choong reported that the agricultural situation in Korea had changed. Earlier the country's main concern was food availability; greater attention was paid today to food quality and good health. To keep up with these changes, the government planned to implement the following measures in the future: (a) reducing the frequency of the agricultural census from ten years to five years; (b) developing and conducting ad-hoc surveys to address specific policy needs; (c) defining clearly the differences between household and industry or establishment sectors so they could be measured more accurately; (d) developing techniques for crop forecasting; and (e) collecting and compiling statistics on quality of crops.

110. In document APCAS/02/11, “The Impact/Consequences of Irregular Censuses: Australian Experience”, Mr Allan Nicholls presented the Australian experience with irregular censuses. After more than 100 years of annual agricultural censuses, a decision was made to reduce the frequency to every five years. From 1998 to 2000, large-scale sample surveys were conducted in place of an agricultural census. The agricultural census was again conducted in 2001. The paper described the positive aspects of this change, as well as the challenges it posed.

111. The Commission was informed of the reasons for the decision to reduce the frequency of the agricultural census, as well as the survey design for the large-scale sample surveys in intervening years. The main positive impacts of the change were cost savings and significant reductions in the paperwork load placed on farmers, the latter being an important issue that government agencies in Australia face in dealing with clients. Some of the cost savings were re-directed to data collection in a number of high priority areas that had not been adequately covered before, with the “service industries” being the main beneficiaries. The new situation provided an opportunity to review collection and processing methodologies and institute changes which resulted in more statistical rigour in data collection. The changes also resulted in a more flexible programme as modifications in the content of the questionnaire were quicker and cheaper to make in a sample survey environment. Additional items had been collected subsequently through the sample surveys. Finally, timeliness of outputs had improved.

112. The Commission was informed that the shift to five-yearly agricultural censuses also presented a number of challenges. Limited sample sizes in survey years did not allow the generation of reliable estimates of characteristics, either of less common commodities or at low levels of geographic disaggregation. Problems had also arisen in defining a suitable regional classification acceptable to a broad range of users. Users had found that the sample survey data were not always accurate enough to monitor structural, seasonal and other changes. The reduced accuracy of survey data had also impacted on the quality of indicators derived from production data such as those used to measure agriculture contribution to GDP and nutritional intake by Australians.

113. An annual agricultural census was a cost-effective and efficient method of maintaining the population frame. Without it, it was found that the frame had seriously degraded over the four years. Similarly, the proportion of “dead” units on the frame had increased, causing preliminary estimates to be overstated. Special studies were needed to determine the true death rate and the appropriate weights to apply, and similar studies would be needed each year. The lack of regular updating of frame information also impacted on the quality of information used for stratification and thus sample designs were not as efficient as they could be.

114. The lack of a regular census also had a significant impact on response rates. Despite a public relations campaign that achieved good response at the early stages, acceptable final response rates were only achieved after an intensive and very costly follow-up program.

115. In summary, the change to a five-yearly agricultural census had achieved the major benefits of saving on costs and reduction in reporting load placed on data providers, particularly small farmers. The change, however, had also resulted in a number of problems, largely related to frame maintenance. The extent of these problems was not fully evident until the conduct of the 2001 agricultural census. The ABS had learned important lessons from its experience with the first of the irregular censuses. Applying these lessons in the conduct of coming censuses and surveys should result in better-quality data in the future.

116. The Commission expressed interest on the various problems experienced, as well as some suggestions on how the problems may be addressed.

117. The Commission heard the presentation of paper APCAS/02/12, “Preparations for World Census of Agriculture 2010”. It was reported that many countries had undertaken their agricultural censuses since 1996, while others would carry out theirs by 2005 using the FAO Programme for the World Census of Agriculture 2000 (WCA 2000) and its two supplements, i.e. Guidelines on Employment and Guidelines on the Collection of Structural Aquaculture Statistics, as references. A number of issues had emerged from the execution of these country censuses. These were: (a) analysis of agricultural census data; (b) electronic dissemination of census results; (c)

identification of food insecure and vulnerable areas; and (d) more emphasis on livestock data.

118. The Commission was informed that many countries had spent resources and efforts to enhance the use and analysis of their agricultural census data. These initiatives were done through the organization of national seminars for the presentation of various analyses and studies based on the census data, involving different types of users and data producers.

119. It was also reported that more and more countries were disseminating their agricultural census data through electronic means, including posting data on a website or storing them on CD-ROMs. These methods greatly facilitated further tabulation and analysis of the census results.

120. The Commission was briefed on new trends observed in a number of countries where agricultural censuses were used to undertake studies for the identification of food insecure and vulnerable areas. A major study on this topic was done in China. A few other countries were including items relevant to food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS) in their agricultural censuses.

121. The Commission was informed that more attention had been given to obtaining livestock data from agricultural censuses in a number of countries in Asia as well as in Africa. In addition to including livestock items in their agricultural censuses, some countries had undertaken livestock censuses during intervening years.

122. The Commission was informed of the processes leading to the release of the new publication of the series of Programmes for the World Census of Agriculture. These included the identification of issues or topics for inclusion in the new Programme during 2002/2003, the preparation of documents on relevant issues, organization of an international expert consultation on agricultural census, and publication of the Programme and its supplements in 2005/2006.

123. The Commission was informed that the new Programme might be composed of the main "Programme for the World Census of Agriculture 2010 (WCA 2010)"; and supplements on: (a) agricultural census data for food security; (b) livestock; and (c) techniques for presentation and dissemination

of agricultural census results. A publication on horticulture statistics might also be issued to accompany the Programme for the WCA 2010.

124. The Commission was informed that India included items on infrastructure and on land in its agricultural censuses, which could be useful for food security policy. It agreed that a publication on structural livestock statistics would be useful for countries in their agricultural census planning, even as it pointed out that livestock should always be part of the agricultural census.

125. The Commission agreed that land use statistics from agricultural censuses should be consistent with other related classifications and noted that Geographic Information Systems (GIS) could be more widely used in presenting the agricultural census results.

126. The Commission agreed that guidelines on differentiating farm households from agricultural establishments would be useful. It also noted that time use surveys could provide useful complementary data to agricultural censuses. Finally, the Commission recommended that a list of minimum indicators for FIVIMS could be included in the supplement on agricultural census data for food security.

## **SHORTCOMINGS IN FISHERY STATISTICS AND A PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING INFORMATION ON STATUS AND TRENDS OF CAPTURE FISHERIES**

(Item 10 of the Agenda)

127. Mr Richard Grainger of the Fishery Information, Data and Statistics Unit of FAO introduced document APCAS/02/13, "Shortcomings in Fishery Statistics and a Proposal for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries". The document described the importance of information on the status and trends of fisheries as a basis for (a) fisheries policy development and management for sustainable use and food security; (b) monitoring the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; (c) describing the contribution and status of different components of the fisheries sector, including small-scale and subsistence fisheries; (d) supporting policy-making and management with a wider scope of fishery

information, including environmental and socio-economic information; and (e) helping countries fulfill their obligations under international agreements.

128. The Commission learned of the shortcomings in fishery statistics in the Asia-Pacific region as described by several recent meetings and reviews, including the Eighteenth Session of APCAS in 2000, an FAO/Mekong River Commission meeting on inland capture fisheries, an FAO Pacific Islands' workshop in 2001 on coastal artisanal fisheries, and an Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC) workshop in 1999 on marine and inland capture fisheries. Shortcomings identified at those meetings and in associated reviews included: (a) limited use of statistics for fisheries management and policy-making; (b) limited awareness of importance and role of statistics, especially for small scale fisheries; (c) lack of local ownership; (d) perceived lack of confidentiality leading to misreporting; (e) mistrust in the information; and (f) institutional weaknesses.

129. The Commission was presented with a draft "Strategy for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries" which had been developed by an FAO technical consultation in March 2002 and which would be presented to the FAO Committee on Fisheries for endorsement in February 2003. The technical consultation expressed the view that the issue of improving information on the status and trends of capture fisheries should have a high priority with regard to implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. It agreed that the draft Strategy was an appropriate instrument to address the issue because it would set forth objectives, policies, programmes, actions and decisions that defined who would do what and why. The draft Strategy could be used as a foundation for various policy instruments as it clearly established current commitments at national, regional and global levels. The draft specified actions required in the following nine areas: (a) capacity-building in developing countries; (b) data collection systems in small-scale fisheries and multi-species fisheries; (c) expanding the scope of information on status and trends of fisheries; (d) global inventory of fish stocks and fisheries; (e) structuring and capacity-building for participation in the Fisheries Global Information System (FIGIS) as an implementation mechanism; (f) development of criteria and methods for ensuring information quality and security; (g) development of partnership arrangements; (h) the role of working parties to assess the status and trends of fisheries; and (i) sustaining data collection for information on the status and trend of fisheries.

130. The Commission discussed estimation of global fishery production, forecasting and decision-support mechanisms. It recognized the need for the application of uniform standards and definitions in the Asia-Pacific and other regions as stipulated in the draft Strategy.

131. The Commission noted that many member countries indicated their intention to either undertake a fisheries census separately from the agriculture census or to include questions on fisheries or aquaculture in the agriculture census.

132. In order to build the partnership for the implementation of FIGIS and to develop standards for data exchange, the Commission stressed that the involvement of all key regional fishery organizations (e.g. SEAFDEC, SPC, IATTC, CCAMLR) and other relevant agencies (e.g. CEC/Eurostat) was essential. Public advocacy was also suggested to ensure the success of the system.

133. In conclusion, the Commission considered that the draft Strategy provided a useful framework for the development of standards and capacity building for the improvement of fishery statistics in the Asia-Pacific region and expressed general support for its adoption and implementation and requested FAO to ensure that the FIGIS be an integral part of the proposed FAOSTAT2.

## **INDICATORS FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICY ANALYSIS**

(Item No. 11 of the Agenda)

134. Mr D.K. Trehan, FAO consultant, informed the Commission in his presentation, "Indicators for Agricultural Policy", that policy analysis variables and the associated indicators could help both to formulate agricultural policy and also to evaluate it. The target rate of growth of agriculture was an important policy analysis variable and the actual rate of growth was the associated indicator. Another important policy analysis variable was investment that affected the rate of growth of agriculture. Associated indicators were the rate of growth of investment by the public and private sectors in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, the capital output and incremental capital output ratios in various types of investment and the share of public investment in agriculture out of total public investment.

135. Sustainable agricultural development was one of the most important policy analysis variables for measuring the long-term rate of growth of agriculture. The associated indicators were biodiversity in agriculture, fertility status of the soil, irrigation status, percentage of sown area depending on rainfall, and areas covered under watershed programs, drip irrigation and water sprinklers.

136. Technology diffusion and input management were also important policy variables that determined the efficiency of investment. Associated indicators were index of mechanization, seed replacement rate, the ratio of area sown with high yielding variety and biotechnology crops to total area sown, the fertilizer application rate, the rate of use of fertilizer nutrients, the frequency of contact of farmers with extension workers and the level of use of pesticides.

137. Among other policy analysis variables, subsidies to agriculture were of great importance. The Agreement on Agriculture under the World Trade Organization recognized the need for giving subsidies to agriculture. The associated indicator could be the de-minimis level of the aggregated measure of support as prescribed under this agreement.

138. It was pointed out that other important agricultural policy analysis variables were provision of farm credit, reform of institutional structures, risk management, incentives to agriculture, livestock and fisheries development and use of information technology for developing a sound database for agriculture. The associated indicators were also presented. The relationship between different policy variables was also shown.

## **DEVELOPING INFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

(Item 12 of the Agenda)

139. The Commission was informed in the document APCAS/02/15, "Development Information for Sustainable Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific" that the growing demand for a range of goods and services by different stakeholders had increased the complexity of sustainable forest management, especially when the varying demands were conflicting. Some important changes relating to forestry included: (a) changes in institutional ownership; (b) shifts in priority and objectives, (c) shifts in sources of wood

supply; and (d) processing and trade of forestry products. With these changes, forest management required new and more detailed data than in the past. Many countries, however, lack the capacity and resources to collect and process these data.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

(Item 13 of the Agenda)

### **a) Venue of the Twentieth Session of APCAS**

140. India and Iran offered to host the Twentieth Session of the Commission scheduled for 2004. The delegate from India confirmed the offer made by his country at the last session of the Commission in Bali in 2000 to host the 2004 Session of APCAS; this offer had also been reiterated in writing to the Secretariat of the Commission. The delegate from Iran expressed his country's availability to receive the Commission in 2004 rather than in 2006 as per the original intention reported two years ago in Indonesia. The FAO Secretariat will consider both offers and advise members of arrangements for the Twentieth Session of APCAS.

141. The Commission agreed to continue to have a medium-term indicative schedule of venues for its future sessions. For the sessions after 2004, the delegate from Thailand confirmed her country's availability as expressed in 2000 in Bali to host the 2006 Session. The delegate from New Zealand also expressed his country's willingness to host the Commission Session in 2006 or 2008.

### **b) PARIS21**

142. The Commission was informed of the launch in 1999 of the Consortium, Partnerships in Statistics for Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (PARIS21). The activities of the Consortium were described as well as those of its Task Teams, especially the Rural and Agricultural Statistics Task Team. Particular mention was made of the seminar on new partnerships for capacity building in agricultural statistics for monitoring poverty reduction and food security in Africa, which was held in Paris, France in September 2002.

143. The Commission was informed of the subsequent creation of the Trust Fund for Statistics Capacity Building (TFSCB) that was managed by the World Bank and was advised of the opportunity for countries to avail themselves of this potential source of funding for statistics capacity building.

### **c) Other Business**

144. The Commission agreed that countries in the Asia and Pacific region that had lately become members of FAO should be informed of the possibility for them to become members of APCAS. It was further informed of the recommendation proposed by the evaluation mission of the two regional projects funded by Japan that a newsletter be regularly issued under the aegis of the Commission.

145. The Commission was reminded of the format for country statements adopted at the 1992 Session. It agreed that presentations of the country statements should be focused, keeping in mind the Commission terms of reference. It noted that these statements were informative and useful for future reference. It recognized that adopting a theme for each of its sessions would help to achieve focus in the deliberations but it also considered the possibility that specifying a specialized subject might result in non-reporting of important developments in the statistics systems of member countries.

146. The Commission expressed appreciation and thanks to the host, the Government of the Republic of Korea, for arranging a field visit for the delegates to the National Horticulture Research Institute at Suwon.

### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING OF THE SESSION**

(Item 14 and 15 of the Agenda)

147. The Commission concluded the Nineteenth Session on 25 October 2002 after considering and adopting the report prepared by the Drafting Committee. It was followed by a vote of thanks.

**ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

**NINETEENTH SESSION**

**Seoul, Republic of Korea, 21 – 25 October 2002**

**AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Drafting Committee
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
4. FAO's Activities in Food and Agricultural Statistics during 2000 - 2002 in the Asia and Pacific Region
5. Review of the Present State of Food and Agricultural Statistics in Member Countries of the Commission - Country Statements
6. Report on the Japan/FAO Cooperative Projects, "Improvement of Agriculture Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries" and "Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries" and related Japanese Support to Agricultural Statistics
7. Millennium Development Goals and the Role of Agricultural Statistics
8. Image Scanning Technology in the Processing of Agricultural Survey and Census Data
9. Agricultural Census: Current and Future Developments
10. Indicators for Agricultural Policy Analysis
11. Shortcomings in Fishery Statistics and a Proposal for Improving Information on Status and Trends of Capture Fisheries
12. Developing Information System for Sustainable Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific
13. Other Matters
14. Adoption of the Report
15. Closing of the Session

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***Information Documents:***

APCAS/02/INF1	Information Note
APCAS/02/INF2	List of Documents
APCAS/02/INF3	Provisional List of Delegates and Observers

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY  
HE JUNG HO KIM  
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY  
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to have this opportunity to speak today at the opening ceremony of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Asia Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics in Seoul.

On behalf of the government and the people of the Republic of Korea, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all the distinguished delegation and participants from each member country, FAO headquarters, and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Korea has the honor to host this first session of the new millenium which is very meaningful. In fact, this is the third time for us to host the Commission in Seoul, following the 4<sup>th</sup> Session in 1972 and 11<sup>th</sup> Session in 1986.

Especially important is that, many experts of statistics on agriculture, including the representatives of twenty FAO Asia Pacific regional members and international organizations, and statistics related officials of the FAO have come to participate in this meeting.

The representatives and officials are expected to exchange ideas on the compilation and use of member countries' statistics. The experts will also present research results on measures to enhance the Asia Pacific regional countries' statistics on agriculture and strengthen the statistical data exchange system on food and agriculture.

And there will be a demonstration on the image scanning technology for processing the census data and statistics study on agriculture.

Last but not least, the participants will establish development goals for the Asia Pacific region and review the preparations for the World Census of Agriculture 2010. Such activities will help develop the Asia Pacific members' statistics on food and agriculture.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, agriculture has an extremely important economic, environmental, and social role in the development of a nation.

Also, agriculture has various important functions besides the function of providing food, such as developing rural villages, controlling floods, protecting the environment, preserving traditional culture, and maintaining rural viability.

Despite the efforts of countries around the world to achieve a level of food self-sufficiency, which is also the essential reason for carrying out agricultural production, more than 800 million people are suffering from malnutrition and more than 60 million are facing food shortages.

More than two thirds of the world's population suffering from starvation and poverty live in the Asia Pacific region.

In order to resolve the problems of poverty and malnutrition in this region, we must develop agriculture. And to this end, it is most important to have close cooperation between countries in this region.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need to provide reliable, up-to-date statistical data on agriculture in order to establish agricultural policy, to implement decision-making for farmers' agro-business, and to carry out research to resolve problems related to agriculture.

I truly believe that in Korea, our efforts to produce more reliable statistics have contributed greatly to designing adequate policy tools for agricultural development.

However, we need to further expand the role and function of agriculture-related statistics in order to develop agriculture in this knowledge-based information society.

There will be an increased demand for various kinds of statistics following the specialization of agriculture and the diversification of agro-businesses.

Therefore, we need to meet the growing demands of the information-oriented society by producing quality statistics and developing new techniques.

In this respect, I sincerely hope that the Session in Seoul will contribute greatly to the development of agriculture in each country.

In conclusion, I hope all of you will have a truly fruitful session and a pleasant stay here in Korea. I would also like to wish you all health and happiness.

And now, I would like to declare the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Asia Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF MR HE CHANGCHUI  
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC REGION**

Mr Chairman,  
Your Excellency, Vice-Minister of Agriculture,  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply honoured, on behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Mr Jacques Diouf, and on my own behalf, to welcome you all to this beautiful country of the Republic of Korea on the occasion of the Nineteenth Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics.

With your indulgence, allow me first to extend my deep appreciation and thanks to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting and providing us with excellent facilities and an environment for a productive and fruitful Session. I am personally grateful to you, Mr Vice-Minister, for sparing some of your very valuable time to inaugurate the deliberations of this Commission.

This is the third time that the Commission, which has regularly met every other year since its first session in 1966, is benefiting from the generous hospitality of the Republic of Korea. The Commission's Fourth meeting in 1972 and Eleventh meeting in 1986 were also held in Seoul.

I am pleased that delegations from 20 member countries are participating. I am also delighted that three United Nations and international organisations are also present. I welcome you all to this Nineteenth APCAS Session. Your active involvement and continued interests in the activities of FAO, particularly in the field of food and agricultural statistics, is a good sign for efforts to strengthen and maintain strong national statistical systems in Asia and the Pacific rim.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The world is changing rapidly as we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. New methods of telecommunication, more efficient transportation, better marketing channels, higher yields for food production and innovative methods of processing have improved the flow of goods and services between and within countries and have increased the amount of food available to feed the world's growing population. It is an exciting and challenging environment.

Unfortunately many of the same problems still exist. We are still living in a world where many persons are unable to find enough nutritionally adequate and safe food. We are working in a world that is seeking ways to adjust to globalization and to find the keys to the alleviation of poverty and to reducing hunger.

As the largest UN specialized agency with the mandate to fight hunger and rural poverty, FAO is committed to working with governments, civil society, development partners and donors in the region to realise the goals of the World Food Summit which were reconfirmed at the World Food Summit: five years later (WFS: fyl).

I am pleased that the Commission will have an opportunity to learn how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), targets and indicators adopted at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in September 2000 apply to agricultural statistics programmes. Meeting these targets is feasible but far from assured; the indicators are required to measure the progress made.

During the 26<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific held in Nepal in May 2002, member countries recognized the importance of food security and encouraged member countries to extend their full support to the application of food insecurity and vulnerability information mapping systems (FIVIMS) and requested FAO to provide support to member countries in establishing and strengthening national FIVIMS

During the WFS: fyl in June 2002 there was an agreement to evolve a set of voluntary guidelines to assist countries in promoting the right to food for their people. The urgency of this entitlement is most evident in Asia where more than 10 million people die each year as a result of hunger and diseases caused by undernourishment. And sadly, three out of four of these deaths are children.

In this connection, I am pleased to report that through the concerted efforts of the Italian Government, FAO and the Government of Viet Nam, a Food Security Information Unit has been established to provide reliable information to support national food security and poverty eradication programmes. This unit disseminates through the Internet current information about factors (such as weather, prices, estimated production, etc.) influencing production of various crops in Viet Nam.

And it is also gratifying to report that a regional FIVIMS project funded by the Government of Japan has been initiated in the five countries of Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. FAO technical staff from Rome and Bangkok are involved in building national awareness of FIVIMS and in the development of national FIVIMS action plans.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

I am also pleased to note that many APCAS member countries have already conducted their respective agricultural censuses during the last decade. And it is even more encouraging that efforts have been started to analyze these results (especially in China) so that a more complete picture of the structure of the agriculture sector can be determined. I know that the Governments of Australia, Bhutan, the Cook Islands, Korea, New Zealand and Viet Nam have

recently completed agriculture censuses and I understand that the Commission will be informed about some of their experiences.

FAO has always been at the forefront of promoting and providing technical assistance to member countries to establish and develop a strong national agricultural statistical system. Since 1950 FAO has been the leading advocate for the Programme for the World Census of Agriculture. The Programme encourages standardisation of a minimum core programme for the agricultural census and a complementary relationship between the agricultural census and more frequent food and agricultural sample surveys, all of which should have a recognised role within the overall national survey programme. FAO is continuing to look for better ways to assist countries to meet the demands of the users of these data and has initiated its efforts to make the Programme for 2010 more useful to the countries in their efforts to collect these data. I am delighted to see that this Commission will have the opportunity to participate in the early discussions about this important activity.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

The Technology revolution has continued since the Eighteenth Session of APCAS was held in Bali in November 2000, and has made a strong mark on the processing and dissemination of agricultural sector data. Not only the public sector, but also the private sector has become more reliant on “instant information” and is demanding timelier and more reliable statistics to use in their decision-making. Advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) now provide policy makers and economists and researchers with direct access to data about production, markets and policies of most countries in the World.

Thus, I am glad to see that the Commission will have the opportunity to learn about the use of one aspect of this technology to facilitate the processing of census and survey data. In this connection I should like to mention that although Thailand is not the only country that has pioneered the use of image scanning technology, the development of this technology is of special interest to us in the Regional Office of FAO.

Good and accurate food and agriculture statistics will provide immeasurable support in our battle to overcome the link between poverty and food insecurity. Policies are formulated from available information. Programmes and projects aimed at increasing agricultural productivity, at stabilising food supply and at developing and improving agricultural services and infrastructures for a more equitable access to food will only succeed if backed up by timely and reliable statistics.

With these objectives in mind it is important also to understand the role of these data in making decisions. Given the increased availability of statistics about the agriculture sector, policy-makers have more information to evaluate their policies and to monitor the progress in achieving their goals, but it is necessary to know how to apply these statistics so that the effects of the policies can be properly interpreted. It is especially gratifying to me to note

that the Commission will be informed about key indicators for policy analysis and guidelines for using them.

Recently FAO, the Mekong River Commission and the Government of Thailand organized an "*Ad hoc* Expert Consultation on New Approaches for the Improvement of Inland Capture Fishery Statistics in the Mekong Basin" in Udon Thani, Thailand, as a way to obtain inputs from countries with a large number of inland fisheries. The improvement of information about inland capture fisheries is an important issue and it is good to see that the Commission will be informed about the latest approaches and can assist in finding ways to evaluate this important contributor to food security. It is also encouraging to see that the Government of Myanmar is preparing to conduct an Agricultural Census that will include some questions on Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries in order to try to capture this important information.

Achieving sustainable management of forests and tree resources and enhancing the supply of goods and services that forests provide are the goals of most forest policies in the Asia-Pacific region. The growing demand for a range of goods and services by different stakeholders has increased the complexity of sustainable forest management, especially when the varying demands are conflicting. An important institutional change in most countries is the diminishing role of the public sector in forest resource management and a corresponding increase in private sector efforts, especially as regards production of wood and non-wood forest products. Information needs will increase, as stakeholders and objectives of forest resource management diversify. It is opportune for the Commission to learn about the importance of developing new methods for collection and dissemination of relevant forestry statistics.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Despite limitations of budgetary and manpower resources, FAO has continued to sustain its efforts to support requests from member countries in a number of areas: strengthening national statistical systems, developing methodologies, organising agricultural censuses and surveys, human resource development, project formulation and donor identification.

In this regard, I will be remiss if I fail to acknowledge the continuing support from the donor community which has been our enduring partner in the field of international co-operation. The Government of Japan deserves special mention for their efforts to immediately respond to the Commission's requests for regional projects to establish an information exchange among APCAS member countries that is leading to further improvement of food and agricultural statistics in the region. The progress of these efforts will be reported to the Commission. It has also been extending, since 1994, continuous support to Indonesia, in improving its agricultural statistics, particularly in the area of rice statistics. And a new initiative to provide support to the ASEAN countries has just been approved.

Finally, let me reiterate and convey my sincerest gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting this Commission Session and for its support to FAO in the areas of nutrition and policy analysis.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the Secretariat staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Korea and the COEX team for organising this meeting. I also thank my colleagues from FAO headquarters and the Regional Office for their dedication to their tasks.

I wish you success in your deliberations and a pleasant stay in this delightful country.

**ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

**Members as of October 2002**

Australia	Lao PDR
Bangladesh	Malaysia
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**DATES AND PLACES OF SESSIONS OF THE  
ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

First	-	Tokyo, 26 September - 3 October 1966
Second	-	New Delhi, 9 - 14 December 1968
Third	-	Bangkok, 26 - 31 October 1970
Fourth	-	Seoul, 6 - 12 October 1972
Fifth	-	Kuala Lumpur, 16 - 20 July 1974
Sixth	-	Manila, 25 - 31 March 1976
Seventh	-	Bangkok, 17 - 23 August 1978
Eighth	-	Kathmandu, 26 - 31 October 1980
Ninth	-	Dhaka, 2 - 7 December 1982
Tenth	-	Jakarta, 26 July - 1 August 1984
Eleventh	-	Seoul, 29 May - 3 June 1986
Twelfth	-	Colombo, 10 - 16 August 1988
Thirteenth	-	Bangkok, 29 October - 2 November 1990
Fourteenth	-	Beijing, 8 - 13 June 1992
Fifteenth	-	Manila, 24 - 28 October 1994
Sixteenth	-	Tokyo, 28 October - 1 November 1996
Seventeenth	-	Hobart, 2 - 6 November 1998
Eighteenth	-	Bali, 6 -10 November 2000