

REPORT

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Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

REPORT OF THE
SIXTEENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE
FOR EUROPE

Cracow, Poland, 23 - 26 August 1988

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

FAO Programme in the Region

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

1. agreed that the declaration on the policy implications of the FAO/ECE study "European Timber Trends and Prospects to the Year 2000 and Beyond" was valuable in drawing the attention of policy-makers and the public to key issues in the forestry and forest industry sectors, and invited Member Governments to take it into account in their policies (para. 48).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

2. suggested that ESCORENA continue keeping itself under constant review in order to allow for its own evolution, and to monitor advances in technology and changes in world economic realities (para. 37).
3. recommended concentration of activities on selected priority areas of European agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and stressed the need for cooperation with the UN/ECE and other international organizations (para. 38).
4. agreed with the suggestion made by the Swiss Delegation that regional programmes be included in the general review of the Organization (para. 39).
5. suggested that networks be evaluated on the basis of the criteria set out by the European Research Networks Advisory Committee (ERNAC) and those networks no longer necessary be phased out in order to allow for new activities within ESCORENA and CNRE (para. 40).
6. welcomed the initiative of the FAO Regional Office for Europe to transform the project on Development of Integrated Farm Energy Systems into a fully self-sustaining activity (para. 43).
7. supported fully the socio-economic programmes in the Region and proposed the establishment of a network in this field (para. 44).
8. recommended continuation of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Control Programme (para. 45).
9. expressed satisfaction with the forestry activities in the Region and underlined the need for strengthening these activities (para. 47).

Integration of Environmental Aspects in Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries Policies in the Region

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

10. recommended a reorientation of policies in order to reflect environmental considerations and noted a shift toward the greater integration of environmental and agricultural policies in recent years (para. 54).
11. recommended close cooperation and the sharing of policy experience in the field of environment and agriculture, forestry and fisheries (para. 56).
12. stressed that biotechnology could have a great potential for the development of agriculture (para. 62).
13. adopted unanimously a Declaration on agriculture, environment and cooperation among European countries (para. 64).

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

14. suggested that FAO could play a particularly important role in improving cooperation on environmental problems since it provides a meeting place for all interested countries (para. 56).
15. expressed the wish that higher priority be given to environmental matters in FAO. This should be reflected in more comprehensive methods and increased inter-disciplinary action (para. 58).
16. suggested that environmental issues be included on the agenda of the next Regional Conference (para. 63).
17. adopted unanimously a Declaration on agriculture, environment and cooperation and concluded that FAO activities in the Region should, as far as possible, be further strengthened and broadened along the lines set out in the Declaration (para. 64).

Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on
International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

For the attention of Governments

The Conference:

18. extended Portugal's term of office as representative of the Region on CGIAR until 1990 (para. 67).

Place and Date of the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe

For the attention of FAO

The Conference:

19. requested the Director-General to determine the date of the Seventeenth Regional Conference for Europe after consultation with the Government of Italy and other Member Governments of the Region (para. 71).

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Organization of the Conference

1. The Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, organized in cooperation with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), was held in Cracow, Poland, from 23 to 26 August 1988, at the kind invitation of the Government of Poland.
2. Delegations from twenty-eight Member Nations of the European Region participated in the Conference. Two Member Nations from other regions and four Member States of the United Nations not members of FAO participated in an observer capacity. The Conference was also attended by representatives of the United Nations system and observers of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
3. The list of participants is given in Appendix B to this Report.

Inaugural Ceremony

4. In welcoming the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, Jozef Koziol, to the official inauguration of the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, the Director-General of FAO, Mr. Edouard Saouma, also welcomed delegates and observers. He thanked the Government of Poland for having invited the Conference to Cracow and expressed his gratitude for its generous hospitality. He underscored that this Regional Conference was the first to be held in Poland.
5. In his inaugural speech, the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland welcomed the delegations and observers to his country and gave a brief account of the major programme on economic reform and of the agricultural situation in Poland. He commended FAO's activities for combating hunger, malnutrition and poverty in the world and expressed his country's support to and satisfaction with its efforts in the European region to improve cooperation. He stressed the importance of the coincidence of this Conference with a new way of thinking present throughout Europe which would lead to a peaceful world and greater possibilities for cooperation. He invited the UN system, and in particular FAO, to take advantage of this new atmosphere in promoting cooperation among European countries. He drew attention to the environmental problems since industry alone was not to be blamed for pollution, but also agriculture. In concluding, the Deputy Prime Minister expressed hope in the development of new creative ideas as an outcome of this Conference.

Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur

6. The Conference elected unanimously Mr. Stanislaw Zieba, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Economy of Poland, as Chairman.

7. The Conference also elected unanimously the following Vice-Chairmen:

Mr. Hüsnü DOGAN	Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs, Turkey
Mr. Reino URONEN	Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland
Mr. Michel PAPAGEORGIOU	Director-Coordinator for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece
Mr. Antoine SAINTRAINT	Permanent Representative of Belgium to FAO

8. Following a recommendation by the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe to appoint either a Rapporteur or a drafting committee for the preparation of the report, Mr. H. Popp (Switzerland) was elected Rapporteur.

Statement by the Chairman

9. In his statement, the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. Stanislaw Zieba, said that Poland was privileged to host the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe and welcomed the delegations and observers to the beautiful and historic city of Cracow.

Adoption of the Agenda

10. The Conference adopted the Agenda which is given in Appendix A to this Report.

Statement by the Director-General

11. In his statement, the Director-General drew attention to the new situation of political detente in Europe which had far-reaching consequences and to the favourable climate for cooperation. He stressed FAO's role as a forum for European agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

12. He stated that the evolution of European agriculture, particularly the spectacular increase in its productivity, represented both a risk and an opportunity for policy makers. Considerable surpluses in many countries in Europe were the result of the striking success of agricultural policies in the past in increasing production and productivity.

13. He considered that gains in productivity should provide an opportunity to promote more rational utilization of agricultural resources. He also made reference to the merits and the importance of the family farms in the countries of Europe.

14. The Director-General presented a new FAO study, "European Agriculture: Policy Issues and Options to 2000" which was submitted as an information document, to stimulate discussion and to assist the countries in considering the viability of their policy options.

15. The Director-General paid tribute to Mrs. Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, whose far-sightedness and courage were a driving force behind the report, "Our Common Future", prepared by the World Commission on Environment and Development. He referred to the joint communiqué by Mrs. Brundtland and the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, which highlighted the close connection between deterioration of the environment, poverty and the development crisis, and stated that growth and alleviation of poverty were prerequisites for the preservation of the environment and sustainable development.

16. The Director-General referred to the review of FAO which was underway as a result of Conference Resolution 6/87. He highlighted the steps already taken by the Programme and Finance Committees and explained the motives that had led him to propose the extended scope of the review.

17. He stressed the Organization's serious cash flow crisis which already jeopardized its activities and noted that if it continued it would threaten FAO's very existence, and appealed to all Member Nations to pay their outstanding contributions.

18. He underlined that the basic role of FAO action in Europe was to promote the exchange of information and recent technology between North and South, East and West. The FAO European programme should be judged mainly for its quality; he regretted that budgetary difficulties were limiting initiatives and made it difficult to respond to requests from many European countries. He hoped that the generosity and concrete solidarity of Europe with less privileged countries would continue to play an important role in the struggle against poverty.

19. The complete text of the Director-General's statement is given in Appendix D to this Report.

Statement by the Executive Secretary of the
UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

20. Mr. G. Hinteregger, the Executive Secretary, underlined the close cooperation between FAO and the ECE in Europe, evident over the past years. He confirmed his organization's determination to continue to work closely together with FAO in the interest of Member Nations. He referred to the economic integration processes in various groupings of countries in the ECE region; the most recent agreement between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) would give new impetus to economic relations between East and West. He underlined ECE's role in promoting cooperation since it was the only permanent forum for economic cooperation in which all countries of Europe and North America were represented.

21. The Executive Secretary informed the Conference of the activities of the ECE within the context of the existing committees and working groups, most of which were joint activities with FAO. Despite differing experiences and economic approaches to the agricultural and forestry sectors, Member Nations had derived particular advantages from this cooperation on mechanization, standardization, energy conservation and environmental protection. Since food demand in the ECE region was nearly satisfied, in quantitative terms, promotion of quality aspects had become a major policy in the Member Nations,

necessitating harmonization of national quality standards. In the area of forestry, he referred to the latest FAO/ECE Study on "European Timber Trends and Prospects to the Year 2000 and Beyond". The Joint Session of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission held in October 1987, had examined the study and had approved a declaration on the policy implications which had been endorsed by the ECE.

22. Regarding environment, he referred to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and three international cooperative programmes to implement it, namely, monitoring and assessment of air pollution damage to materials, to inland aquatic ecosystems and to forests. He paid tribute to the pioneering work of the FAO European Forestry Commission which provided the basis for the ECE work on effects of air pollution on forests. He considered that there existed significant scope for further fruitful cooperation between FAO and the ECE in the environment field.

23. The complete text of the statement by the Executive Secretary of the ECE is given in Appendix E to this Report.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Country Statements and General Debate on the Food and Agriculture Situation in Europe

24. Member Nations representatives participating in the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, as well as several observers, took part in the general debate. They expressed satisfaction with the preparations for the Conference and their appreciation for the generous hospitality extended by the host country.

25. Most delegations who spoke reported on recent developments in their national agricultural situation, including the related policy issues and plans for the future. In addition, and in some cases almost exclusively, the interventions focused on a few major themes transcending purely national considerations. These included the policy issues and options for European agriculture until the end of the century, the issues related to environment and the achievement of ecologically-sustainable agricultures, the role of FAO in the European region, as well as a range of specific points such as the question of the ongoing review of FAO activities, the financial problem of the Organization and others.

26. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the background policy analysis contained in the document "European Agriculture: Policy Issues and Options to 2000".^{1/} They considered that the study was a valuable contribution to the current debate on needed policy reform. It presented an analytically valid, pragmatic and well-balanced assessment of European agricultural trends, the major factors that influenced them, the current state of policy-making and the broad objectives of needed policy reforms. In this context, the study surveyed and evaluated the individual country experiences with different policy approaches, and how these experiences could be useful in guiding policy choices for the future.

27. Several delegations indicated that the study demonstrated convincingly FAO's capability to carry out policy analysis work at a high level. Some delegations thought the study could be the basis for further work, including the formulation of operational recommendations, while others felt that it should be given wider distribution after some revision.

28. There was general recognition that progress towards policy reform was aimed principally at reducing or eliminating the prevailing and projected structural imbalances and associated market distortions in some key commodity sectors. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ministerial declaration and the policy reforms undertaken in some countries or country groups (e.g. the EEC) were pointing in the direction of assigning market forces a more prominent role than in the past in bringing about market balance. The same could be said in a broad sense of the policy reforms undertaken or contemplated in some centrally-planned economies of the region.

^{1/} ERC/88/INF/4

29. Notwithstanding the fact that the general thrust of efforts at policy reform was towards achieving more efficient use of resources in agriculture and the economy as a whole, it was widely recognized that agriculture performed a number of other functions, in addition to producing agricultural products, which could not be evaluated exclusively on the basis of the values given by the market to its output. Factors customarily taken into account included farm incomes, food self-sufficiency, environmental aspects of farming, preservation of rural social structures, and regional development. The relative weight of each of these factors differed widely among countries, reflecting differences in resource endowments, ecology, political considerations, cultural traditions, as well as purely conventional economic factors such as the level of development and the relative size of the sector in the economy and in the balance of payments.

30. Given the many functions attributed to agriculture, experience had demonstrated that purely conventional economic arguments for policy reform influenced policy-making only up to a certain point. For example, countries with unfavourable agricultural resource endowments but with strong non-agricultural economies were often prepared to balance the purely economic efficiency losses inherent in support policies with the gains in terms of their broader policy objectives. At the same time, in recognition of the interests of the agricultural exporting countries, a number of countries stated that they would moderate or modify their farm support policies so as to avoid the generation of surpluses which would have to be exported with heavy subsidies, or to prevent their self-sufficiency from increasing above certain levels.

31. A number of other important points were made in the different interventions and the major ones are summarized below:

(a) Politically, Europe and the world as a whole had made some steps towards what might develop into a period of detente and relaxation of political tensions. This could be a propitious period for strengthening economic and technical cooperation and FAO could play an active role in promoting it, e.g. through closer cooperation with the CMEA since, notwithstanding differences in the political systems, there were significant similarities in many agricultural problems facing both the market and centrally-planned economies;

(b) many countries offered to share with others, including the developing countries, their experiences in the development and application of agricultural technologies. They advocated strengthening the existing systems of research cooperation both within Europe, as well as on a world-wide basis, e.g. through closer cooperation efforts with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). FAO should also play a greater role in promoting cooperation and diffusion of knowledge in the area of biotechnology;

(c) the role and responsibility of Europe in adopting policies that contributed to the economic and, in particular, the agricultural development of the developing countries was stressed. This was an important supplementary criterion to evaluate attempts at policy reform in European agriculture. Policies that would help developing countries increase their agricultural export earnings, as well as stimulate their economic growth, could indirectly benefit European agriculture by stimulating export demand for temperate zone foodstuffs;

(d) the Multilateral Trade Negotiations under the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) offered a unique opportunity for making progress towards improving the agricultural trading environment. Every effort should be made to conclude the negotiations successfully and at an early date. FAO was playing an important role in this process by providing technical support to GATT and other interested parties. At the same time, the sacrifices of the farming sector resulting from too abrupt a move towards trade liberalization should be fully recognized, as should the need for necessary gradualism. It was also recognized that in many European countries protection of agriculture would continue to be essential if the sector were to meet the many demands placed upon it by society, particularly those of a non-strictly economic nature;

(e) part-time farming was becoming a widespread phenomenon in many countries and the issues raised by it had to be faced in policy-making alongside the more traditional issues of full-time farming. Similarly, the special conditions and non-economic aspects of the family farms deserved full attention;

(f) the search for alternative non-food uses of agricultural products would continue to be a current issue, regardless of the fact that at the moment the economics of some of those uses, particularly regarding the production of energy, were unfavourable.

32. A great number of delegations made reference, and some devoted the major part of their interventions, to the issue of environment and the question of ecological sustainability of the agricultural development patterns that had emerged or that could still emerge in the region. The need to safeguard the environment and promote environmentally-benign agricultural policies was recognized by all, but with some significant differences. Countries in the lower-income range, heavily dependent on agriculture and with less intensive agricultural technologies, considered that they still had considerable scope for further prudent intensification. At the other extreme, countries which were operating at highly intensive production technologies and did not really need further increases in output, e.g. some Scandinavian countries, were leading the way in shifting to more environmentally-benign practices. Naturally, the hardest situations were encountered in regions which faced both problems, i.e. those which depended predominantly on agriculture for their incomes and, at the same time, their agricultural resource base could not sustain further intensification. These could be the case in very prosperous or very poor regions. These and other related issues were further discussed extensively under the specific Agenda Item 8 (see paragraphs 52 to 64 below). It was also noted that the policy on environmental aspects should be seen through a more global dimension.

33. Many delegations referred to the existing and planned FAO activities in the European region. Their interventions and the discussions under the separate specific Agenda Item 7 were summarized in the paragraphs 36 to 51 below. Within this context, it was worth highlighting the references made to the need for closer cooperation between FAO and the ECE with a view to enhancing coordination and avoiding duplication of work, particularly in the area of statistics and meetings.

34. Additional points raised during the general debate included the reference by a number of delegates to the review process in FAO initiated under Conference Resolution 6/87. They voiced their agreement with what the Director-General had declared within this context in his opening statement and expressed satisfaction with the steps taken by the Programme and Finance Committees, including the selection of experts as well as the cooperation of the Director-General and the Secretariat. They welcomed his decision to extend the scope of the review through incorporation of the field programmes and administrative, financial and personnel matters. Some expressed the wish to receive a progress report on this matter to be discussed at the Ninety-fourth Session of the Council in November 1988. Finally, they reiterated their views concerning the setting of future priorities and other measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Organization to meet future challenges. Many delegates also shared the concern of the Director-General with regard to the grave financial crisis of the Organization and emphasized that the root causes of these financial difficulties should be removed as soon as possible. In this connection, a number of countries referred with satisfaction to the exceptional contribution of Italy.

35. The Observer from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), speaking also on behalf of the observers from Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, underlined the importance of environmental problems and fully supported the Declaration presented by Poland. He looked forward to future development of a fruitful collaboration between the Soviet Union and FAO.

Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1986-87 including

(a) Action taken on the Main Recommendations of the Fifteenth Regional Conference and (b) Programme of Work 1988-89 in the Region

36. The Conference expressed appreciation for the activities carried out during the 1986-87 biennium and for the FAO 1988-89 programme of work in Europe, as presented in the document,^{1/} and observed with satisfaction considerable improvement in the presentation of this document in response to its recommendation made by the Fifteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe (Istanbul, Turkey, 28 April-2 May 1986).

37. The Conference considered the evaluation of the European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA), carried out by the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) in 1987 and the recommendations for its adjustment and reorientation found general support and approval. Several delegates commended the achievements of ESCORENA and suggested that the system continue, keeping itself under constant review in order to allow for its own evolution, as well as for advances in technology and changes in world economic realities.

38. The Conference recommended a concentration of the activities on selected priority areas of European agriculture, forestry and fisheries. It stressed the need for cooperation with the ECE and other international organizations, in order to avoid duplication and overlapping. In this connection, cooperative research networks (both ESCORENA and the Cooperative Networks on Rural Energy (CNRE)), socio-economic activities (i.e. pluriactivity, women and the agricultural family in rural development, development of small industries, agro-tourism and macro-economic studies) were generally identified as priority areas.

^{1/} ERC/88/2

39. The Conference agreed with Switzerland's suggestion that the regional programmes should be included in the review of the Organization.

40. The Conference suggested that there was a need to evaluate the networks in accordance with the criteria to be set up by the recently established European Research Networks Advisory Committee (ERNAC). Those which were no longer necessary would be phased out in order to allow for new activities within ESCORENA and CNRE.

41. Several delegations suggested the following subjects for inclusion in the network system: biotechnology, non-food agriculture, low input agriculture, protection of environment, problems of young farmers, remote sensing in agriculture.

42. The delegate of Turkey conveyed his Government's offer to host an international conference on the socio-economic, ethical and political aspects of biotechnology.

43. The Cooperative Networks on Rural Energy and the FAO/UNDP project on Development of Integrated Farm Energy Systems (RER/80/001) were also generally supported. Several delegations reported on the positive results obtained from the project and welcomed the initiative of FAO's Regional Office for Europe in transforming this programme into a fully self-sustaining activity.

44. The socio-economic programmes of the region obtained the full support of the Conference. In this connection, several delegations proposed the establishment of a socio-economic network including the activities of the Working Party on Women and the Agricultural Family in Rural Development, management, extension and agro-tourism. Agricultural policy and macro-economic studies and related matters could also be included in such a network. The Conference appreciated the development of small industries in rural areas through a specific UNDP/FAO regional project.

45. Appreciation was expressed for the success of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Control Programme, and the Conference recommended its continuation. Greece suggested holding periodic regional seminars on FMD in order to improve the readiness of the Mediterranean countries.

46. The establishment of an animal genetic resource data bank was noted with satisfaction by some delegations.

47. Many delegations referred to the prime importance of promoting concerted actions for the protection of European forest resources from acid rain and fires. They expressed satisfaction with the forestry activities in the region and underlined the need for strengthening them. The Delegation of France expressed its willingness to organize the next World Forestry Congress in France, in collaboration with FAO.

48. The Conference welcomed the declaration on the policy implications of the FAO/ECE study, "European Timber Trends and Prospects to the Year 2000 and Beyond", which had been adopted at the joint session of the European Forestry Commission and the ECE Timber Committee in October 1987. Agreeing that the declaration was valuable in drawing the attention of policy-makers and the public to key issues in the forestry and forest industry sectors, the Conference invited Member Governments to take it into account in formulating their policies.

49. Some delegations commended the development of marine and inland fisheries activities. The delegate of Czechoslovakia informed the Conference of his Government's invitation to the Director-General of FAO to hold the Sixteenth Session of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission in 1990 in Czechoslovakia.

50. The technological programmes relating to land and water development, remote sensing, plant production and protection were generally supported, including the joint FAO/ECE and FAO/IAEA activities. One delegation proposed that food irradiation activities be deleted from the regional programme.

51. Some delegations also asked for more information on the financial impact of the activities in the region. The absence of detailed costing was noted by one delegation, which considered that without this information, it was not possible to make a full assessment of priorities. However, it was pointed out that the Secretariat had given this information during the debate.

Integration of Environmental Aspects in Agriculture,
Forestry and Fisheries Policies in the Region

52. The Conference unanimously expressed satisfaction with the timely inclusion of "Integration of Environmental Aspects in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Policies in the Region" in the agenda, and nearly all delegations and some observers spoke of its utmost importance. The document for this item provided a comprehensive and constructive basis for this discussion.

53. The intensification of agricultural production on the one hand, and urban and industrial development on the other presented a threat to the environment. There had been growing concern with environmental degradation in almost every country in the European Region since the early 1970s. A number of delegations provided additional information on the environmental problems of their countries and also on national policies for the protection of the environment.

54. Most countries in the Region had recently introduced policies to protect the environment and had increased pollution penalties. There was now a widely shared opinion that it was useful to reduce the negative and encourage the positive effects on the environment of agricultural, forestry and fishery production. In this connection, the Conference recommended a reorientation of policies in order to reflect these environmental considerations and noted a shift toward the greater integration of environmental and agricultural policies in recent years.

55. The Conference agreed, in general, with the analysis contained in the document on the environmental consequences of agricultural, forestry and fishery development and the consequences of urban and industrial development for agriculture, forestry and fisheries. It concurred with the conclusion that there were four major environmental problems: pollution of water and soil resources, pollution of air, loss of genetic resources and land degradation.

56. In view of the regional or international dimensions of environmental problems, the Conference recommended close cooperation and sharing of policy experiences regarding environment and agriculture, forestry and fisheries. All competent international, governmental and non-governmental organizations should take part in this cooperation. In this connection, the delegation of Poland proposed the creation of a "European Council of Environmental Protection", composed of the environmental ministers from all European countries. The Conference suggested that FAO could play a particularly important role in this respect since it provided a meeting place for all interested countries.

57. Some delegations stressed the important role of education, extension services and volunteer programmes directed at improving the environment and fostering an environmental ethic, both in the farm community and throughout the general public. The preservation of small villages was important in maintaining the traditional landscape. Some delegations suggested that due consideration be given, in agricultural development plans, to the importance of rural communities and family farms. In this context, women would play a significant and important role.

58. The Conference noted with satisfaction several FAO initiatives listed in the document. Several delegations expressed the wish that a higher priority be given to environmental matters in FAO. It should be reflected in more comprehensive planning and a restructuring of working methods towards increased inter-disciplinary action. Some delegations referred to the European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA) and the Cooperative Networks on Rural Energy (CNRE) in the formulation of guidelines for environmental protection in their specific field of competence. The Nordic delegations proposed the establishment of an FAO/ECE working party on environmental matters.

59. Reference was repeatedly made to forest damage due to air pollution and to concerted actions required for reducing pollution. In this connection, the work of the ad hoc Working Group on the Impact of Air Pollution on Forests of the FAO European Forestry Commission was appreciated. This working group elaborated a manual on the assessment and monitoring of forest damage on a methodological basis. It was reported that levels of emissions of pollutants, including SO₂ and NO_x and hydrocarbons were being reduced considerably in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Switzerland.

60. Some delegations mentioned the negative influence of the emission of motor vehicles on agriculture and forestry, especially in those countries where there was high transit traffic. They also pointed to the very positive effects produced by the introduction of catalytic converters.

61. Some delegations emphasized the need to proceed with caution in introducing environmental measures which could raise agricultural as well as administrative costs.

62. The great potential of biotechnology in the development of agriculture was stressed. One delegation expressed the wish that FAO might help to establish a code of conduct with regard to this matter.

63. It was also suggested that environmental issues should be included on the agenda for the next conference, with a special emphasis on market-oriented policy measures, combined with an analysis of integrating environmental aspects with other policy instruments.

64. The Conference unanimously adopted the following declaration introduced by the Polish delegation:

DECLARATION

The Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, from 23 to 26 August 1988 in Cracow:

Conscious of the fact that agriculture is concerned not only with food production but is also a way of life for millions of farmers and their families, as well as the basis of agro-industry, rural development and the preservation of natural resources,

Aware of the fact that European agriculture is presently undergoing important changes as a result of the economic growth, scientific progress and social development of the countryside,

Gravely concerned that the level of pollution, which knows no political frontiers when endangering human life, is borne by European people as a whole,

Bearing in mind that food and the natural environment are indispensable for human welfare and therefore of utmost importance in any discussions on European economic and social cooperation,

Convinced that inter-European cooperation is a key element to enhance the Region's ability to assist other Regions to solve nutritional and socio-economic problems relevant to their development,

Warmly welcomes the present positive trend in international relations and considers that the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, with its emphasis on European agricultural development and environmental problems, could contribute to further progress in European cooperation in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. With this in view, the following actions are considered most important:

AGRICULTURE

- (a) Agricultural production levels should be adjusted, having in mind the needs of countries and regions;
- (b) Greater attention should be paid to national and international markets when making decisions on agricultural production and trade;
- (c) The socio-economic status of the farmer should be ensured and living conditions in rural areas be improved to keep pace with those of other social and professional groups;
- (d) Nutritional and health standards should be strictly observed in food production and processing.

ENVIRONMENT

- (a) Further integration of environmental policies with those concerning socio-economic development, on a national and international level, where feasible;
- (b) Concerted action by all European countries in the scientific, technological, organizational and legal aspects of environment protection; in this context close cooperation between FAO and the UN Economic Commission for Europe seems desirable, considering the latter's potential and experience in the field of environment;
- (c) Adequate educational policies to ensure a healthy respect of the environment.

COOPERATION

- (a) The creation of more favourable conditions for economic cooperation through the improvement of the general trade conditions in the field of agriculture;
- (b) The broadening of the scope of European scientific and technical cooperation, taking into account the positive experience in this field already achieved by international organizations, especially FAO; cooperation should cover all basic areas of agriculture and food processing, as well as environmental protection, and should point the way towards technological changes, bearing in mind natural resources and the cultural values of agriculture;
- (c) The improvement and expansion of cooperation between FAO and ECE as well as between EEC, EFTA and CMEA;
- (d) The development of direct contacts between the various agricultural groups in the Region, such as national and international organizations of farmers, cooperatives, young farmers clubs, as well as the social and cultural organizations aimed at diffusing concepts of cooperation, protection of cultural values, traditions and the exchange of experiences on rural development programmes.

Concludes that

- FAO activities in the Region should as far as possible be further strengthened and broadened along the lines set out above;
- such action would benefit Europe as well as developing countries in other Regions;
- FAO should maintain its role as a catalyst for agricultural cooperation in the Region;
- due account should be given to the important role of Europe within the ongoing review process of FAO.

OTHER MATTERS

Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

65. Israel presented its candidature for the four-year period 1989-92. Portugal requested an extension of two years of its present term of office until 1990.

66. In the discussion that followed, it was stated that Finland, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland would support Israel's candidature if presented again, for the CGIAR in 1990, for the period 1991-94, whereas all other Member countries of the EEC and Cyprus promised to consider such a candidature very favourably. After these assurances, Israel withdrew its candidature.

67. Portugal would therefore continue representing the Region along with Poland on the CGIAR until the end of 1990.

Round Table Meeting of Journalists

68. During the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe, a "round table meeting" of journalists was held for the first time as an accompanying event. Journalists accredited to the Conference participated in the meeting. In the opinion of the participants, such meetings should be permanently included in the programme of events accompanying FAO Conferences for Europe.

Place and Date of the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe

69. The Head of the Delegation of Italy officially invited the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe to be held in her country in 1990, in the city of Venice.

70. The Minister for Agriculture and Food of Czechoslovakia, the Minister of Agriculture of Israel, as well as the delegate of Cyprus extended an invitation to hold the Eighteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe in their respective countries in 1992. The Conference thanked the delegations for their generous offers.

71. The Director-General was requested to determine the date of the Seventeenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe after consultation with the Government of Italy and other Member Governments of the Region.

Adoption of the Report

72. With some amendments, the text of the draft report was approved by the Conference.

Closure of the Conference

73. On behalf of the Director-General, Mr. M. Trkulja, Special Assistant, thanked the Government of Poland for the excellent organization of the Conference in Cracow, and for the generous hospitality extended. Mr. Trkulja expressed FAO's gratitude for the fruitful debates and also his appreciation for the high level of representation at the Conference and recalled that the European countries had always given their full support to the Organization. He paid tribute to the Chairman, H.E. Stanislaw Zieba (Poland), the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur whose presence and experience had made the Conference a notable success.

74. On behalf of the participants, the delegates of Greece and Belgium thanked the Government of Poland for the excellent organization and hospitality offered during the Conference as well as for the highly interesting study tour, and expressed appreciation for the quality of the debates. They also thanked the Director-General of FAO and the Conference Secretariat for the efforts made in preparing the documents and for the smooth and efficient management of the meeting.

75. In his closing statement, H.E. Stanislaw Zieba, Chairman of the Conference, reiterated his warm thanks to the Director-General of FAO, to the Executive Secretary of ECE and to the FAO Regional Representative for Europe for their sustained efforts in strengthening cooperation among all European countries. He said that it had been an honour and a pleasure for Poland to host the Sixteenth FAO Regional Conference for Europe which provided a unique forum for meetings of high level decision-makers in agriculture and an enhanced dialogue between East and West. He noted that the Conference had been able to discuss in-depth agricultural policy issues and options, FAO activities in Europe and the integration of environmental aspects in agricultural, forestry and fishery policies and had been able to reach constructive recommendations and conclusions. He thanked all delegates for their support in adopting the Declaration introduced by the Polish delegation.

76. The Chairman then thanked the Director-General, his staff, the interpreters, the organizers and all those who had helped in preparing and servicing the Conference and declared the Conference closed.

AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. Inaugural Ceremony.
2. Election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur.
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable.

II. STATEMENTS

4. Statement by the Director-General.
5. Statement by the Executive Secretary of ECE.
6. Country Statements and General Debate.
7. Report on FAO Activities in the Region 1986-87 including (a) Action taken on the Main Recommendations of the 15th Regional Conference and (b) Programme of Work 1988-89 in the Region.

III. SELECTED ISSUES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

8. Integration of Environmental Aspects in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Policies in the Region.

The document reviews national strategies and policies on environmental protection and rational use of natural resources, with particular emphasis on issues and options stemming from the growing awareness of the interdependence between environment and economic activities. Special attention is paid to the problems related to the protection of European forests from air pollution and fire as recommended by the 15th Regional Conference for Europe. The impact of industrialization and urbanization on agriculture, forestry and fisheries is also analyzed. The need for further development of appropriate agricultural, fisheries and forestry technologies and practices based on rational use of national resources and protection of the environment is emphasized.

The role of FAO in supporting national action and in enhancing international cooperation in the field of rational use of natural resources and protection of the environment is highlighted.

9. Representation of the Region on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

IV. CONCLUDING ITEMS

10. Any other business.
11. Place and Date of the 17th Regional Conference for Europe.
12. Adoption of the Report.
13. Closure of the Conference.

LIST OF DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS
LISTE DES DELEGUES ET OBSERVATEURS
LISTA DE DELEGADOS Y OBSERVADORES

Chairman	:	
Président	:	Stanislaw ZIEBA (Poland)
Presidente	:	
Vice-Chairmen	:	Antoine SAINTRAINT (Belgique)
Vice-Présidents	:	Reino URONEN (Finland)
Vicepresidentes	:	Michel PAPAGEORGIOU (Greece)
	:	Hüsni DOGAN (Turkey)
Rapporteur	:	Hans POPP (Suisse)

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ETATS MEMBRES DE LA REGION
ESTADOS MIEMBROS DE LA REGION

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Tirana	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Suppléants	Vienna
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Chargé d'affaires	Ernst STRASSER
Ambassade de la République populaire socialiste d'Albanie	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Varsovie	Vienna
Fadil LLUBANI	Ernst ZIMMERL
Directeur, Centre albanien de recherches forestières	Permanent Representative of Austria to FAO
Ministère de l'agriculture	Rome
Tirana	

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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STATEMENT BY Mr. Edouard SAOUMA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is, as I recalled just now, the first time the Regional Conference for Europe has been held in Poland. But the novelty of the setting for your work is not only a matter of geography: the political scene in Europe itself is now experiencing a genuine renewal, with far-reaching consequences.

Panorama of Europe: détente, dialogue and cooperation

The new situation is marked by political détente, a growing trend toward openness, and a favourable climate for cooperation and the conclusion of agreements among the various groups to which the countries of Europe belong. To cite just one example, there is the joint declaration recently signed in Brussels on cooperation between the European Community and Comecon; I need hardly stress the historic importance of this event.

Europe, from the four cardinal points, is gathered here today. Certainly, as we all know, neither the USSR nor the German Democratic Republic is a member of the Organization. These two countries are, however, closely interested in our activities, as may be seen from the presence at this Conference of high-level observers, whom I am happy to greet; the USSR has, moreover, decided to be represented in FAO by permanent observers. This great country, a signatory to the Constitution at the Quebec Conference in 1945, can of course at any moment claim its right to become a member of the Organization, and I fervently hope that it will not be long before it joins us. With the entry of the USSR and the German Democratic Republic, FAO's aspirations to universality would be fully realized. We should then see an expansion and enrichment of the dialogue among all the European partners, which is the meaning and purpose of your Regional Conference.

One of the important elements in this dialogue is cooperation between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and FAO. I am, therefore, particularly pleased to greet Mr. Hinteregger, Executive Secretary of that Commission; his presence among us bears witness to our joint desire to intensify this cooperation and make it still more effective, for the greater good of the European Member Nations.

In addition to the FAO Regional Conference, these nations already have a large number of bodies to discuss agricultural problems. Off the cuff, I could mention the meetings of Ministers of Agriculture of the OECD countries, those of the European Economic Community, of Comecon, of the countries of the European Free Trade Zone - and this list is probably not exhaustive.

Under the circumstances, one is tempted to wonder what is the need for the FAO Regional Conference for Europe.

First of all, none of the bodies I have mentioned comprises all the European countries, and at least one - OECD - admits non-European States as well. As we have just seen, FAO includes practically every nation in Europe, and may hope to bring them all together in the near future.

In the second place, the functions of these different groups do not lie within FAO's specific vocation. The latter's role is not to organize the discussion - still less the drafting or implementation - of common agricultural policies. It has no desire to compete with any other body. But it does make available to all interested nations the unique wealth of information at its disposal and, in addition, a forum, a space for broader discussion on agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Broader, not only because of the number of its European members but also because it sets the agricultural problems of Europe in the context of the whole human community. Open to all European nations, it offers them at the same time an opening to the world.

This approach seems to me in line with some of the fundamental characteristics of Europe, of its spirit and its agriculture. It was Europe, an essentially agrarian Europe, that invented humanism. A Latin author, Terence, was the first to state that nothing human was foreign to him. Over the centuries, the monks built up the agricultural and intellectual infrastructure of medieval Europe. In the Europe of today, agriculture is still perhaps more a way of life than a purely entrepreneurial activity. The best proof of this is the current interest in preserving the family holding - even, in some large countries with planned economies, a partial return to this type of farming. At the same time, technological progress and the know-how of your peasants have given European agriculture such a dynamism and such productivity that the options selected by your countries have inevitably had resounding repercussions on the rural community and the entire population, not only in Europe but in the whole world.

European agriculture: toward 2000

This interdependence lays on Europe world-wide responsibilities, and the present Conference provides you with an ideal opportunity to give some thought to them. As a springboard for your discussions, we have taken the initiative of preparing a study which only FAO, I believe, could have undertaken and successfully completed. I am referring to the document entitled "European Agriculture: Policy Issues and Options to 2000". I did, I will admit, have a moment of hesitation before submitting it to you, since I was not absolutely certain that this study, without precedent and without equivalent, would meet your wishes. But in fact its interest lies in its very originality, which seems to me thought-provoking and calculated to stimulate discussion. This is why, although the subject as such does not appear on the agenda, the study is presented to you as an information document.

Since our first mission is to assist developing countries, often short of analytical instruments, you may wonder why we are devoting such a comprehensive study to the problems of countries so well equipped from the point of view of technology, policies and economic studies. Are we presuming to give lessons to those who have taken the lead in progress? Not at all. Our study is not born of dogmatism, and certainly makes no pretension to dictate to sovereign Governments. It is not supposed to be either a collection of medical prescriptions or a cookery book. So what did we set out to do?

It is very simple: we have tried to present figures, statements and an analysis of the possible options to stimulate discussion and help Europe to understand and assume its world dimension.

You did not need us to tell you that the situation of European agriculture called for major decisions on the part of your Governments. Individually and collectively, the countries of the region are already devoting an impressive amount of thought to these problems and the options they demand. They are almost all engaged in a process of adjusting their agricultural policies. We just want to help them to set their reflection and their action against a broader background - to extend the field. We are convinced that such assistance could be useful. The questions European Governments have to tackle are indeed unbelievably complex; the diversity of conditions and the play of interactions between economic, social and ecological interests make it extremely difficult to find balanced and harmonious solutions. Efficiency, profitability, keeping agricultural incomes on an even keel, safeguarding rural traditions and the environment: countries must face and try to reconcile in their policies so many different or even contradictory demands, that the more distant consequences of their decisions - namely, their repercussions on the rest of the world - risk being pushed into the background or even out of sight altogether.

One of the merits of the study is that it does not overlook the global importance of the problem. Europe and North America together produce nearly half the food in the world, and their share in world trade in agricultural products is bordering on two-thirds. Inevitably, questions such as that of structural surpluses or optimal utilization of agricultural resources exercise a decisive influence on the interests and even the existence of the developing world. Choices involving the closure of European markets to exports from developing countries, yet another sharp distortion in trade, risk perpetuating and aggravating poverty, underdevelopment and hunger for hundreds of millions of human beings.

In no way are we setting ourselves up as judge of European countries. Their concern to protect their national interests is eminently legitimate, particularly for countries with limited agricultural resources and a difficult environment. The problem of food security also arises in Europe. Let us not forget that in past centuries the main concern was whether or not European agriculture would ever be able to cope with the ever-growing number of mouths to feed. In this connection, it must be recognized that the recent considerable surpluses in many countries of Europe do not represent a failure, but, on the contrary, a striking success for agricultural policies intended to increase production and productivity. Moreover, it would be a mistake to believe that surpluses necessarily constitute a long-term problem; we have only to look at the effects of one year of drought on the soybean surpluses of the United States.

No, I repeat, it is not the purpose of this study to put Europe on trial. It is intended only to assist your countries to measure the consequences of their decisions for the entire planet, to understand fully that self-centred policies could jeopardize the well-being and stability of the rest of the world and, eventually, of the originators themselves. Bearing

in mind the extreme diversity of Europe's natural resources, ecological conditions and socio-economic and institutional features, we want to help you to see more clearly. We should like to encourage greater mutual understanding of the extraordinarily complex questions posed by the process of adjustment. We should like to assist you to ensure that your legitimate efforts to safeguard essential national interests involve only a minimum distortion of international trade.

Our research has led us to think that the evolution of European agriculture, particularly the spectacular increase in its productivity, represents for policy-makers both a risk and an opportunity. The risk is the temptation to solve the problem by implementing costly policies of import substitution or export subsidy to the detriment of the countries - mainly developing - who produce at a low cost price. The opportunity to be seized is the possibility of taking advantage of gains in productivity to promote more rational utilization of agricultural resources.

Policy adjustment, whether national or international, raises a host of complex and delicate problems. The road will be long and difficult. To reach the end, we shall have to show wisdom, pragmatism and above all mutual understanding. In submitting this study to you, our only purpose is to make available to you the instruments for measurement and observation. I firmly trust that these instruments will help you to trace out your own path and to advance along it with a minimum of difficulties.

This is the gist of the information, analysis and study document we are submitting to you and on which delegations that so wish may express their views. It is up to participants to let us know if they would like a similar subject to be on the agenda of future Regional Conferences.

Environment

One of the recurrent themes in our study is concern for the environment. Europe, very much industrialized and a major energy consumer, is pouring out into both air and water enormous quantities of smoke and industrial effluents. Hence the gravity of the environmental problem throughout the region. It bears very heavily on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, but also on the quality of life and, in the long term, on life itself. One terrifying example of this is the way pollution has ravaged seal populations, with 25 percent of them apparently perishing in a few months. In the forests, as in the seas, we can see the spread of the sinister patches that are so many signs of death. More and more people are sounding the alarm and calling for action. In this connection, I should like to pay special tribute to Mrs. Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, whose far-sightedness and courage were a driving force behind the report, "Our Common Future", prepared by the World Commission on Environment and Development. This text is generally known as the "Brundtland Report", and with good reason.

In the wake of this report, I should like to mention an important conference held in Oslo on 8 and 9 July 1988 at the invitation of Mrs. Brundtland. Mrs. Brundtland and the Secretary-General of the United Nations were joined by the executive heads of 22 United Nations agencies and the members of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

Discussions highlighted the close connection between deterioration of the environment, poverty and the development crisis. Stating that growth and alleviation of poverty were prerequisites for the preservation of the environment and sustainable development, participants proclaimed the need for a new planetary ethic based on equity, accountability and human solidarity, with both present and future. We must, as they pointed out in a striking phrase, escape from "the tyranny of the immediate". Convinced that protection of the environment and the struggle against poverty could become economically viable components of development plans and programmes, they launched an appeal for dialogue and concerted efforts on a world-wide scale to solve these problems. You may wish to read the joint communiqué published at the end of this meeting by Mrs. Brundtland and Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar.

Inspired by the same spirit, we have proposed the addition to the agenda of a separate item on the place allotted to ecological considerations in agricultural, forestry and fishery policies, and we have submitted to you a document dealing specifically with this question. In preparing our Programme of Work and Budget for 1990-91, I shall take due note of your discussions and the opinions expressed, in determining the priority to be given to environmental problems.

As to the environment in which FAO is working, it too, as you all know, poses some singularly thorny problems.

Review of FAO

The Conference of FAO, in its Resolution 6/87, entrusted to the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee the responsibility for undertaking a study of certain aspects of the goals and operations of the Organization, with a view to making it more effective. It authorized the Committees, working jointly, to be assisted by experts. In May the Committees, taking into account information received from all sides, examined very carefully possible approaches to organizing and conducting this study; they reached unanimous decisions on the method, the experts and various other matters. In accordance with the wishes of the Conference, the experts were chosen on the basis of their professional competence and experience, with due consideration for balanced geographical distribution. The Committees gave them precise instructions on their terms of reference. To finance the cost of this study, we deducted 2.5 million dollars from our slender budget.

The Conference had, by a majority decision, limited the field of this study in a fairly restrictive way. But, since one thing leads to another, it seemed to me desirable to extend the boundaries and to include within them everything that contributes to our activities and operations. Indeed it seemed to me obvious that the eventual solutions must take into account the inter-dependence of all these factors. The Committees welcomed this proposal, and all aspects of our work will therefore be examined. The review will include three sections: the role of FAO, particularly its strategies and priorities; operational activities; administrative, financial and personnel management.

The experts have started their work, and I have placed the Secretariat at their disposal. They arrived in July to gather information, talk to my colleagues, observe our work and contact the organizations with which we

collaborate. As you see, the work is well in hand. This is the year of the experts and next year the Committees will draw up their report, which will be submitted to the Council and will finally be placed before the Conference. For my part, as laid down in Resolution 6/87, I shall submit the conclusions and recommendations of the study, together with my views and comments, to the Council, which will transmit it, together with its comments, to the Twenty-fifth Session of the Conference.

Cash flow crisis

But this review, on which there has been so much insistence, must not be conducted on an excessively debilitated and bloodless FAO unless, like a scene from Molière, it is to turn into a sort of horrible and grotesque medical argument around a dying patient. As you are well aware, our Organization is going through a serious cash flow crisis which already jeopardize its activities and could, if it continues, threaten its very existence.

You all know the origin and the causes of this situation: it is pointless to go over them again. Let us rather consider the immediate consequences and prospects for the future.

During the present biennium, we have had to reduce the services we provide to Member Nations to the tune of 25 million dollars. In 1988 we had to make a cut of 20 million dollars, which would have been even more drastic without the additional contribution of 15 million dollars from Italy. I should like to quote this as an example, and to pay tribute here to the far-sighted and generous attitude of our host country, which will be making an exceptional contribution for the 1988-89 biennium, amounting to 30 million dollars.

Despite this shot in the arm, our programmes have been cut by 45 million dollars in two years. What does this mean in practice?

It means, first of all, a dangerous drain on our staff. The first generations of international officers have reached, or are reaching, retirement age. Others are leaving us prematurely. We are witnessing the departure, one after another, of servants of the international community whose competence, devotion and experience will be sorely missed, since lack of money prevents us from replacing them. The succession is unsure, and therefore the very future of the Organization is mortgaged. On this aspect, the anxiety I feel is little short of anguish: we are reaching a situation comparable with that of peasants reduced by famine to eating next year's seeds.

Secondly, it means that daily expenditure is monitored, sifted, and ruthlessly whittled down. I check this personally, sometimes sick at heart when I have to block the funds for action which is all too necessary. Often we find ourselves unable to exercise one of our major constitutional functions, namely providing advice to Governments requesting it, since we cannot finance the travel, or there are no staff available because of unfilled vacant posts. Similarly, we are obliged to forgo attendance at international meetings of great interest at which we have always been represented.

It means, again, that we have had to suppress, suspend or reduce an appalling number of publications and meetings: 98 publications and 53 meetings in 1986-87, 86 and 51 in 1988-89. In particular, we have had to suspend indefinitely the appearance of all FAO reviews, including CERES, Unasylva and the World Animal Review. The Organization is thus deprived of the means of making its activities known, its public image disappears, and this is another vicious circle; without a public image, how can we influence world opinion and reverse the pernicious trend of disaffection toward multi-lateral cooperation, which is the root of the whole problem?

Role of Member Nations

This is what we have come to. Where do we go from here? This will depend on the way in which Member Nations recognize and assume their responsibilities.

First of all, they should respect their financial commitments. I mentioned the exemplary action of our host country: other countries have paid to the last cent, and I am grateful to them. Unfortunately, however, there are among our major contributors certain countries who have not yet settled their contributions for 1988, or have only paid part, or have even accumulated substantial arrears. I entreat them to regularize their position as soon as possible in order to loosen the garotte that is strangling us, since these arrears are the prime cause of the crisis.

With one notable exception, the main European contributors have shown exemplary punctuality. Europe's share in the regular budget is verging on 50 percent; where multi-bilateral aid and trust funds are concerned, it is well in the lead. It also makes an outstanding intellectual and technological contribution to the Organization's activities. The expertise it provides is unequalled. It is no mere chance that our Headquarters are in Rome. Your region's share in the management of our House also broadly reflects its contribution: out of eight Assistant Directors-General at Headquarters, there are no less than five Europeans.

FAO is your Organization; I am sure it grieves you to see it in its present difficult situation. You, who have already done so much for it, cannot fail to share my apprehension at the dangers it runs, or to give concrete proof of your concern. We are hoping for a change of heart on the part of our largest contributor, who holds the key to the situation, to the crisis affecting all agencies in the United Nations family. The first signs of such a shift in attitude are already appearing among the congressmen of that great country, surprised to see how decisive the action of a great international organization can be, for example, in settling a terrible and murderous conflict. If, at this precise moment, the nations of Europe decide to exert their influence to this end in the course of their dialogue with that country, they could play a very positive role and help to tip the balance. Let us not forget that multilateral cooperation is a matter for sovereign States acting in concert on a basis of equality. The international community is the Member Nations - you. As for us, we are the servants and not the decision-makers in this community.

Firm action is becoming increasingly urgent since, whatever happens, the crisis will not disappear from one day to the next. In demography, as you know, a fall in the birth rate does not prevent the population from continuing to expand on its own impetus for a certain time. The same is true for the crisis we are going through: our difficulties will persist and perhaps become worse for several years more. I am in continuous contact with the Finance Committee, and I intend to submit this problem in greater detail to the next session of the Council. I wanted, however, to bring home the gravity of the situation to all our European Member Nations; I had to tell you how much I need - how much FAO needs - the constant, clear-sighted and resolute support of all Europe.

FAO's work in Europe

In this cooperative, FAO, the Organization's efforts in the service of Europe are commensurate with the action of European countries to further the Organization's work. Certainly our operations in the region are not on the same scale as those in developing countries; I would say the distinction lies in their very nature. In such an advanced, developed, industrialized region, our role is essentially to promote exchange of information and the latest technologies between East and West, North and South. It is to anticipate and encourage the trends I mentioned at the beginning of my statement. It is to bring the parties together, to help them to build up information and research networks. In short, it is above all a role of communication of establishing relations. It is performed not only through our Regional Office for Europe, but also through the several joint bodies such as the Joint FAO/Economic Commission for Europe, the FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency, and the FAO/World Health Organization. This cooperative aspect of our work in Europe seems to me highly significant.

I do not want to anticipate the report that our Regional Representative will present to you. I shall therefore restrict myself to mentioning a few fields where the action of the cooperative networks and the joint bodies I mentioned just now has proved particularly fruitful: increased European production of soybeans, standards and regulations on pesticides and animal wastes, application of nuclear technologies to animal and plant production, assessment of fish stocks in the Mediterranean, aquaculture development, fishery resource protection and management, and the ecological and social role of the forest. Other sectors where interesting results have been obtained are rural development, pluriactivity and rural employment. Lastly, certain world-wide activities have been particularly important for European countries: this is true of the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission on planning and evaluation of nutritional needs, food additives, standardization and contamination. I remind you that FAO bears 80 percent of the budget for this joint programme with WHO.

There is another aspect of our regional activities that seems to me extremely promising, namely, the growing participation of national institutions in developing countries. One example of this is the concrete application of the findings of cooperative research on olive-growing in all the olive-producing countries in Europe, the Near East and North Africa.

As I often say, our European programme must not be judged by its volume; it is its quality that counts. The budgetary difficulties I have just mentioned prevent us from envisaging for the time being any expansion of our activities in Europe. I deplore this, since it stifles our initiatives and sometimes prevents us from responding as we would wish to requests made by many European countries to FAO or to the joint FAO/IAEA and FAO/Economic Commission for Europe. I am nevertheless highly encouraged by the dynamism, vitality and originality of the cooperative work conducted with European countries.

Conclusion

In following the paths of cooperation, the region is doing no more than pursuing a line of conduct of which it has always been a shining example. Europe's serious problems - particularly unemployment and inflation - have not prevented it from displaying concrete solidarity with less privileged countries and regions. In the campaign against the current invasion of desert locusts, of unprecedented gravity for North Africa and the Sahel, Europe ranks among the most generous donors, providing aeroplanes, staff, and large quantities of equipment and supplies.

How can one fail to find grounds for hope in this attitude where reason and generosity join hands? As I well know, Europe exercises over the rest of the world a sort of fascination - Europe, so old and so young, rich in experience and in constantly renewed creativity, custodian of the past and harbinger of hope. The world, which has already received so much from Europe, expects still more from it. Indeed, it still has much to give. This applies in a very special way, I am convinced, to the European agricultural summit constituted by your Regional Conference. The climate of political openness, the renewal of hopes for peace and cooperation which I mentioned earlier, will enable your debates to be conducted in a more friendly and relaxed atmosphere. It is therefore with great confidence that I extend to you my warmest good wishes for every success in your work.

Thank you.

STATEMENT BY Mr. Gerald HINTEREGGER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director-General, Ministers, distinguished delegates,

For the first time since taking up office as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), I have the pleasure to attend the Regional Conference for Europe and to share with you some thoughts on developments in the region and the special role which ECE plays in close cooperation with FAO in the areas of agriculture and timber.

I would like to give my congratulations to the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and wish them every success.

I should like to express also on behalf of the ECE our sincere appreciation to the Polish Government and in particular to the Polish Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Economy, as well as to the authorities here in Cracow, for the excellent organization of this Conference and warm welcome extended to the participants.

The association of FAO and ECE in Europe over many years has been an especially close one, as evidenced by the jointly staffed Agriculture and Timber Division in Geneva and the activities of a number of joint bodies. I especially welcomed the opportunity to discuss at a recent meeting with Dr. Saouma the cooperation between our two organizations, on which occasion we confirmed our determination to continue to work together closely in the interest of our member countries.

Important political and economic developments are occurring in the ECE region which offer new challenges and opportunities for increased international cooperation. After the serious economic difficulties and political tensions which marked the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the countries of this region have now entered a new phase in their relations. The signing of the historic agreement on the elimination of the intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe at the Washington Summit and further progress at the recent Moscow Summit are witness to the improvement in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union with beneficial repercussions for the world as a whole and for East-West cooperation in particular.

Dynamic processes of change are under way at present in Europe which are likely to have an important impact also on the agriculture policies of the countries of this region. I am referring above all to the economic integration processes taking place in various groupings of countries in the ECE region.

The European Economic Community aims to establish a single "internal market" for 330 million people in 1992 which will bring about a free movement of goods, services, capital and persons.

The joint Luxembourg Declaration of Ministers of the European Economic Community and EFTA countries in 1984, which embodied the political will to let EFTA countries participate to the extent possible in the integration process of the European Economic Community was praised by the member countries of both organizations.

At the recent meeting in Prague of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance at the level of heads of Government, far-reaching proposals were advanced which could eventually lead to the creation of a common market of 400 million people comprising the Soviet Union and the other European CMEA countries. The speed and scope of changes in intra-CMEA trade and cooperation will largely depend on the progress and effectiveness of the economic reform policies under way in the Soviet Union and some East European countries.

Active negotiations started in 1986 between the European Economic Community and CMEA, aimed at establishing relations at an official level. Even if the different mandates and systems of these two organizations may limit substantive cooperation in the near future, the recently reached agreement between them will nevertheless give new impetus to the economic relations between East and West. In any event, it opened the way for the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements between the EEC and individual CMEA countries.

In view of all these developments it is to be expected that the ECE will have to play an even more important role in the future as it is the only permanent forum for the economic cooperation comprising the whole region, that is the whole of Europe, both East and West, as well as the United States and Canada.

At this point I would like to note with satisfaction that for the first time all ECE countries not members of FAO are represented at a FAO Regional Conference for Europe.

Since the conclusion of the Final Act of Helsinki in 1975, the CSCE process has promoted dialogue on a variety of subjects - political, economic and humanitarian. The follow-up meetings to Helsinki have set the course for further and more specific activities. Negotiations at the Vienna Review Conference are at present passing through a critical phase, it is to be hoped that they can be brought to a fruitful conclusion in the next few months, providing in the "Second Basket" new proposals for activities by the ECE, which has served as the main instrument for implementing projects of economic and scientific cooperation resulting from the Helsinki process.

Let me now turn to our activities in the fields of agriculture and timber.

The ECE Committee on Agriculture Problems is one of the traditional bodies of ECE. Despite differing experiences and approaches to the agricultural sector, member countries have derived particular advantage from the exchanges of information, as well as the programmes on mechanization, standardization, energy conservation and environmental protection.

Since 1949, when the Committee was established, the agricultural sector has undergone profound changes. While hunger was still widespread in Europe immediately after the Second World War, today an increasing number of countries are struggling with the need to put a ceiling on the continuous growth of agricultural output. The strong expansion in the post-war period has occurred despite a massive emigration of agricultural labour to other sectors of the economy; and it was made possible by the parallel increase in the use of industrial inputs and capital, resulting in rapid rise in agricultural productivity.

These developments have led to serious market imbalances for some major commodities in parts of Europe, and they have given added weight to the need for continuous monitoring of the market situation for agricultural products. The regular exchange of information on recent developments in agricultural policy, as practiced by the Committee at its annual sessions, also helps to ensure a better coordination of national measures.

With demand for food in the ECE region largely satisfied in quantitative terms, the quality aspect has been moving increasingly to the foreground. Promotion of quality production has thus become a major policy goal in all ECE countries, and standards for agricultural products serve as an effective means of distinguishing levels of quality. However, diverging national standards can pose serious problems for international trade. Harmonization of standards, in particular for perishable produce where rapid frontier clearance procedures are essential, is thus one of several measures aimed at facilitating international trade.

Through the efforts of the Working Party on Standardization of Perishable Foodstuffs, there are today well over 70 UN/ECE standards, covering such commercially important products as fresh and dried fruit, vegetables, potatoes, cut flowers, eggs, and poultry meat. In addition, standards for fruit juices and quick frozen foods have been elaborated jointly with Codex Alimentarius Commission. Current efforts are concentrating on the continuous adaptation of standards to changing market requirements and on extending this work to new products, such as meat other than poultry meat.

The ECE region is the world's largest import market, in particular of fruit and vegetables. Consequently, the interest of countries outside the ECE region in these standards is evident. The Working Party has actively encouraged producing countries, in particular developing countries, to participate in its activities.

One of the factors contributing to the strong evolution of ECE agriculture has been the rapid and extensive mechanization of the sector. The FAO/ECE Working Party on Mechanization of Agriculture has assisted member countries to assess the main trends of agricultural mechanization and to find technical solutions to be applied in agricultural production.

In the field of forestry and timber, the Economic Commission for Europe, through its Timber Committee, enjoys especially close links with the European Forestry Commission of FAO.

Last October, when I addressed the fifth joint session of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission, I stressed the importance which ECE attaches to the excellent cooperation that has existed for more than 40 years between our two organizations in the field of forestry.

The joint session of the Timber Committee and the European Forestry Commission devoted particular attention to the latest FAO/ECE Study "European Timber Trends and Prospects to the Year 2000 and Beyond".

Among the basic findings of the study were that growth in Europe's wood raw material supply in the coming decades should be able to keep pace with the expected expansion in the consumption of forest products. This would mean that Europe's level of dependence on external supplies of forest products need not further increase.

The study foresees a continuation to the end of the century of the keen competition between forest products suppliers, but the latest outlook for the wood supply/demand balance, the ever-increasing demand on the forest for environmental and other non-wood goods and services, the threat to forests from fire and air pollution, and the marked increase in public interest in forest policy issues in many countries have stimulated reappraisals of national policies.

The joint session in October approved a Declaration of the policy implications on the new long-term study. It identified a number of key policy areas, of which I will mention four:

- the protection of forests against damage due to fire, air pollution and other causes;
- the increasing relative importance of the non-wood benefits of the forest, such as environmental protection, grazing, hunting, nature conservation and recreation;
- the conversion of agricultural land to forestry as one of the alternatives for the use of surplus agricultural land in some countries; and
- the development of products and markets, through improved information services, research and development, promotion and marketing.

I very much hope that this Conference will endorse the Declaration, as the ECE has already done.

The countries of the ECE region have experienced some of the most dramatic and widely publicized effects of air and water pollution damage - the acidification of lakes, the pollution of rivers, the crumbling of cultural monuments, the dying of forests. Yet it is also in this region that some of the most vigorous action is now being taken to cope with the problem. A major milestone was reached in 1979, when the ECE adopted at a Ministerial Meeting the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, which entered into force in 1983.

Two Protocols of the Convention were adopted in 1984 and 1985. One on the "Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes by at least 30 per cent" entered into force in September 1987; the other on "Long-Term Financing of the EMEP Monitoring Programme" in January 1988. A third protocol dealing with an effective control of nitrogen oxide emissions will be signed at a Ministerial Meeting to be held in Sofia in October. While this is good news, further strenuous international efforts are needed to reduce emissions to tolerable levels, both on environmental and health grounds.

In conjunction with the implementation of the Convention, three International Cooperative Programmes have been agreed to: monitoring and assessment of air pollution damage to materials, including cultural monuments; to inland aquatic ecosystems; and to forests. A fourth, which would be concerned with damage to agricultural crops, is under active consideration.

Here I should like to pay tribute to the pioneering work of FAO's European Forestry Commission, which provided the basis for the ECE work on effects of air pollution on forests.

While this Conference is essentially concerned with European matters, they have to be considered in the context of the global environment. Here I would make two observations. The first relates to the increasing concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere arising from the burning of fossil fuels and depletion² of forests in tropical regions. Whether the devastating drought in parts of the United States turns out to be just temporary phenomenon or not, it has brought to the forefront concerns about man's capacity to cause changes to the world's climate and the potential environmental and economic consequences, not least for the agricultural sectors. The hole in the ozone layer is also a potentially alarming phenomenon arising from human activity.

My second observation relates to the report "Our Common Future", prepared by the World Commission on Environment and Development (the "Brundtland Commission"). The Report pays considerable attention, *inter alia*, to reviving growth and changing its quality, to conserving and enhancing the resource base (land use, water management, alternatives to chemicals, etc.) and to taking into account both environment and economy in decision-making.

At its session in April this year, our Commission decided to review its programmes and activities aiming at contributing to sustainable development and to convene a meeting of experts to consider this review and formulate proposals for sectoral and interdisciplinary activities for inclusion in the ECE's programme of work. Preparations are well advanced for this meeting, which will take place in Geneva from 10 to 12 October 1988.

I expect the meeting to come forward with proposals for new initiatives by ECE, including activities of an inter-disciplinary nature. Let me add that the ECE possesses a great potential for inter-disciplinary work as our programme comprises practically all areas of economy in addition to agriculture and forestry like trade, industry, energy, transport, environment and others. It is evident that, given their concern with many aspects of environmental protection and sustainable development, the Committee on Agricultural Problems and the Timber Committee will be actively involved. Without

attempting to prejudge what specific proposals the meeting may make, there are, under consideration, several of special interest to the two Committees, such as the optimum use of chemicals in agriculture and alternative agricultural practices for a sustainable use of natural resources.

Considering the very comprehensive and effective activities of the ECE in the field of environment and the interest of this Conference as evidenced by the inclusion of the topic of the integration of environmental aspect in agricultural policies in the agenda, there would seem to be ample scope for close cooperation between our two organizations in the environmental field.

I am confident that the Conference will give ample consideration to all these questions in the course of the week and I should like to take this opportunity to wish it every success in its deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.

