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TWENTY-EIGHTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Guatemala City, Guatemala, 26-30 April 2004

FAO ACTIVITIES (2002-2003), TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY IN THE REGION AND ACTION TAKEN ON THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Table of Contents

| | <u>Paragraphs</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN | 1 – 68 | 2 |
| A. Preparation of The World Food Summit: <i>five years later</i> . Regional Dimensions:..... | 1 – 5 | 2 |
| B. General Debate on Trends and Challenges in Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Food Security in the Region:..... | 6 – 37 | 3 |
| C. Balance between food security and sustainable management of natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean | 38 – 46 | 7 |
| D. Production partnerships for food security and rural development..... | 47 – 49 | 8 |
| E. Effects of subsidies and market restrictions on agriculture and fisheries production and market access..... | 50 – 59 | 9 |
| II. TRENDS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE RURAL SECTOR IN THE REGION..... | 0 – 68 | 10 |
| A. Current and emerging issues..... | 60 – 68 | 10 |

I. Implementation of the recommendations of the Twenty-seventh Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

A. PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT: FIVE YEARS LATER. REGIONAL DIMENSIONS

Recommendation N° 7. Conduct a more in-depth analysis of the causes explaining the unfavourable trend in undernutrition.

1. For the third time, a study was carried out this year on "Trends and Challenges of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Latin America and the Caribbean" which provides a broad systematic diagnosis of agriculture and other rural activities and their relationship with changes in poverty, inequality and undernutrition in the Region. Efforts to develop information systems that provide diagnostic overviews of food security situations throughout the Region have been coordinated under the Food Security and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS).

Recommendation N° 8. Consider projects geared towards income generation (agrotourism, rural tourism).

2. In the framework of initiatives for regional strategies and programmes on food security, FAO helped the member countries of the Andean Community (CAN); the Regional Council for Agricultural Cooperation in Central America (CORECA) – Central American Agricultural Council (CAC); the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR); and the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) - Caribbean Community (CARICOM) prepare strategic papers on food security and a draft regional project proposal. These documents were discussed at the World Food Summit: *five years later*. In the light of the concerns expressed by these economic groups at the meeting, five technical cooperation projects were approved and are currently under implementation (GTFS/RLA/141/ITA; TCP/RLA/2907; TCP/RLA/2908; TCP/RLA/2909; TCP/RLA/2910). Together with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), support was given to organizing the "Meeting on Regional Initiatives for Food Security and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean", Washington 2002, and the "Workshop on the Importance of the Territorial Approach to Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean", Milan 2003.

3. Advisory and supervisory services were made available to agrarian policy, rural development and food security projects in Brazil (UTF/BRA/040/BRA; UTF/BRA/058/BRA; UTF/BRA/059/BRA); and four projects are being implemented in support of the *Fome Zero* Programme (TCP/BRA/2904; TCP/BRA/2905; TCP/BRA/2906). Studies and projects are being carried out to improve land access for the rural poor in Honduras (PACTA: UTF/HON/025/HON) and Mexico (UTF/MEX/052/MEX).

Recommendation N° 9. Broaden analysis of the gross investment needed to achieve the goals of the World Food Summit.

4. In order to improve technical capacity for designing and applying the public sector agricultural budget in rural areas, studies have been carried out on public policies in Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Peru under project TCP/RLA/0176, which included the International Workshop on Trends and Challenges in the Management of Public Expenditure for Agricultural and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in the Dominican Republic.

5. Project TCP/RLA/2911 seeks to strengthen the decentralized implementation of public policies and management of public expenditure in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala.

B. GENERAL DEBATE ON TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY IN THE REGION

Recommendation N° 11. Direct projects towards the family economic unit and not solely towards production in the field.

6. This approach has been integrated into the new projects implemented by FAO in the Region, especially those in support of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) implemented in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela. Technical support has been provided for more than ten years to projects geared towards the promotion of family farming in Brazil, as in the case of project UTF/BRA/057/BRA.

7. A workshop on participatory development approaches and an emphasis on sustainable livelihoods has been conducted to strengthen the capacity of officials at the Regional Office.

Recommendation N° 12. Child labour and rural education should be FAO priority issues.

8. The "Education for the Rural Population" initiative is being promoted with UNESCO as part of the "Education for All" programme that aims to reduce the educational divide between the rural and the urban populations. A project proposal has also been formulated on "Distance Education for the Dissemination of Improved Potato Cropping Using New Information Technology" in various countries. In Honduras, a study programme has been drawn up for rural secondary education (GCP/HON/020/NET), and FAO is involved in school garden initiatives in several countries. A field trial has been undertaken, producing valuable lessons for adjustment of rural secondary education.

9. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the University of Chile's Institute of Nutrition and Food Technology (INTA), a food and nutrition education model has been developed for primary schools and the rural community that will boost government efforts to prevent the serious nutritional and health problems that affect this section of the population.

10. In concert with the Dominican Republic's Secretariat for Education and Department of Agriculture, training in nutrition and food security has been given to teachers, mothers and/or fathers responsible for school feeding. This training resulted in the preparation of an educational component on nutrition and food security which is to be implemented at national level under the Global Food for Education Initiative Programme (PIGAE).

11. With the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Nutrition Programme of the National University of El Salvador, a project has been formulated in which FAO will provide technical assistance to strengthen nutrition and food security in the basic education curriculum.

Recommendation N° 13. Develop programmes that target women and rural youth.

12. FAO developed the Programme of Forestry Activities to Increase the Food Security and Welfare of Rural Populations, which is aimed primarily at rural communities, with a gender approach and in support of rural youth.

13. Initiatives are also being supported in Colombia and El Salvador for integrating rural youths living in coffee-growing areas into production activities. FAO's component of the "Inter-Agency Programme for the Empowerment of Adolescent Women in El Salvador" is also focused on income generation for the young by means of agribusiness and micro-enterprises and on the organization of youth groups and leadership training. However, it is recognized that this is a topic that needs to be addressed more broadly as the integration of women and youths into production provides for the generational succession of agricultural producers.

Recommendation N° 14. *Support the exchange of experiences with risk management policy instruments.*

14. Studies on risk management are being pursued in various countries, including Honduras and Argentina, whose findings will be consolidated in a similar inter-regional exercise. These studies look at the role of local governments in risk management and analyse the comparative advantages of local organizations and institutions in risk management, as compared to higher-level institutions. Support has also been given to the CAC-CORECA member countries in preparing a "Strategic paper on food security in Central America: from short-term crisis management to long-term crisis management and reduction of vulnerability".

Recommendation N° 15. *Develop agricultural information systems.*

15. Project TCP/RLA/2901 produced a Latin American agricultural biotechnology information system connected to on-line databanks on projects, patents, policies, biosecurity, institutions and professionals associated with agricultural biotechnology. FAO has continued to monitor the harvest and food security situation in the countries of the Region. The assessments of the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) are disseminated through its Food Crops and Shortages and Food Outlook publications.

16. Project PFL/INT/861 on improving the safety and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables has developed and established an FAO on-line database on the quality and safety of fresh fruits and vegetables, as an instrument for the exchange of information and experience. This database contains publications, international, national and regional training programmes, information on certification and research, support material for trainers (including a training manual) and related services.

Recommendation N° 16. *Conduct training activities for the integration and application of statistics.*

17. Projects GCP/BOL/034/ITA, TCP/COL/2902, TCP/ELS/2801, GCP/HON/027/SPA, TCP/PER/0171, TCP/PER/2804, UTF/VEN/008/VEN, GTFS/RLA/141/ITA and TCP/RLA/2908 all feature agricultural information systems as central components.

18. The Organization has helped various countries prepare their agricultural censuses.

Recommendation N° 17. *Direct project evaluation towards implementation problems and their impact on the achievement of objectives.*

Recommendation N° 18. *Improve instruments and methodologies of evaluation of agricultural development policies and programmes.*

19. FAO is working on the design of impact assessment methodologies that can be applied to rural development programmes in order to help shape government policy. It is helping the Government of Brazil evaluate selected *Fome Zero* activities and to the Government of Mexico evaluate the Alliance for the Countryside (UTF/MEX/053/MEX).

20. TCP/BRA/2906 is helping design a system of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the *Fome Zero* Programme, and a monitoring project has been formulated that includes a monitoring and evaluation system. A training workshop on gender analysis for monitoring and evaluation was organized under project GCP/COL/022/NET. In Brazil, recently signed UTF/BRA/064/BRA includes FAO technical assistance for concluding the establishment and operation of a system of monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Programme.

21. Project UTF/MEX/053/MEX has evaluated the design, planning, operation, monitoring and institutional framework of the Alliance for the Countryside in order to identify opportunities for greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving its objectives. Similarly, project UTF/MEX/052/MEX has evaluated the Support Fund for Agricultural Production Projects FOAPOA 2000 and FAPPA 2001.

22. The FODEPAL project (GCP/RLA/138/SPA) has introduced an important training component on programme evaluation and public expenditure monitoring for public policy-makers to enhance the functioning and impact of agricultural and rural policy instruments, with the support of systematic RLC processing of experiences from its field programme.

23. Through project TCP/COS/2901 and its Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) programme, FAO has supported the establishment of an integrated forestry information system to serve as a database for the monitoring and evaluation of the National Forest Programme.

***Recommendation N° 19.** Provide technical assistance and training in biosecurity, intellectual property rights and the management of indigenous plant genetic resources.*

24. In Paraguay, a project has established the legal base of the National Biosecurity System (TCP/PAR/0166) and strengthened the technical capacity of the Commission on Biosecurity and the analytical capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock's laboratories.

25. Project TCP/BOL/2902 is seeking to strengthen scientific and technical institutions involved in the management of biosecurity and to promote national technical capacity. Project TCP/ARG/2903 will enhance the capacity of national institutions to comply with international biosecurity standards and to manage, control, trace and certify cereals in accordance with international and national standards. Regional workshops and meetings on plant and animal genetic resources have been held in Argentina, Barbados and Peru.

***Recommendation N° 20.** Draw upon previous experiences for new projects.*

26. Such activities have been conducted in field projects in Honduras (GCP/HON/028/NET), El Salvador (GCP/ELS/005/NET), Brazil (UTF/BRA/057/BRA) and Costa Rica, producing results that can be applied to future projects and to training in economics, agricultural policy and rural development.

27. Project TCP/RLA/0176 included the International Seminar on Trends and Challenges in Public Expenditure Management for Agricultural and Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in the Dominican Republic. Project TCP/RLA/2911 also dealt with public policy implementation and public expenditure management in various countries of the Region.

28. Since 2002, FAO has hosted the National Forest Programme Facility, a multidonor fund set up to support the development of participatory national forestry policies and strategies interconnected with other national strategies to reduce poverty and safeguard the environment. Eight Latin American countries – Chile, Paraguay, Ecuador, Colombia, Honduras, Cuba, Guatemala and Jamaica – have already signed and are benefiting from cooperative agreements with the Facility.

29. A proposed Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) in the Caribbean was formulated under projects TCP/RLA/0173, TCP/RLA/0174 and TCP/RLA/2907. Lessons from these projects have been used to elaborate and implement project GTFS/RLA/141/ITA.

***Recommendation N° 21.** Target technical cooperation towards country demand but allow for change.*

30. During the 2002-2003 biennium, multidisciplinary missions for the programming of technical cooperation and the identification and preparation of projects visited Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Nicaragua. Preparation for these missions included workshops at the FAO Regional Office where representatives of government, the private sector and the academic world suggested inputs for FAO programmes in these countries.

Recommendation N° 22. *Compile experiences into a database to improve the design of new sustainable projects.*

31. FAO has initiated actions to ensure that future projects in the Region include a system of monitoring and evaluation of impact, as explained in paragraphs 19 to 22 of this document. Such systematic compilation should become a central project component in order to provide information that will help define policy and replicate lessons learned. Activities in this direction have been conducted under projects GCP/HON/028/NET, GCP/ELS/005/NET, and GCP/RLA/136/SPA.

Recommendation N° 23. *Favour the implementation of regional projects that utilize cooperation between countries and stimulate the creativity of national capacities.*

32. The Organization participated in the formulation of the Central American Forestry Strategy (CAFS), together with the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), and is in the process of implementing the Regional Project on Information and Analysis for Sustainable Forest Management.

33. The Organization is implementing the FODEPAL regional project on training in economics and agrarian and rural development policies (GCP/RLA/138/SPA), whose central purpose is to facilitate sustainable rural development by improving policy-maker capacity. Since coming on stream in 2002, this project has catered to more than one thousand officials from the public and private sector and from non-governmental organizations in 22 distance-learning courses, six expert seminars and seven in-person training courses. Collaborative agreements have been concluded with 30 universities of the Region.

34. Most of the projects promote the use of the services of experts contracted under programmes of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) and among Countries in Transition (TCCT) and the use of retired experts.

Recommendation N° 24. *Cooperation between international organizations to avoid duplication; to intensify South-South cooperation (SPFS); and to reduce costs of intermediation.*

35. FAO participates in the Inter-Agency Working Group for Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean which promotes agency action in generating and disseminating information on the development of rural economies, identifies new approaches to rural development, and implements joint projects for training, technical assistance and investment at national and regional level.

36. It helped organize the XVIII Session of the Inter-American Cooperation Group on Animal Health (GICSA) and gave support to the Panamerican Foot-and-Mouth Disease Center.

37. FAO participated in joint missions with Chilean officials to Guatemala and Honduras, and with Cuban and Chinese officials to the Caribbean to define South-South cooperation activities for SPFS projects. Project UTF/VEN/008/VEN is stepping up South-South cooperation between Cuba and Venezuela for integrated pest management, organic vegetable growing and animal production.

C. BALANCE BETWEEN FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Recommendation N° 28. Support an integrated strategy for natural resource sustainability.

38. The sustainable management of natural resources, especially soil and water, is a core component of all SPFS projects. FAO implemented projects in Brazil (UTF/BRA/060/BRA; TCP/BRA/2903), El Salvador (GCP/ELS/005/NET), Haiti (TCP/HAI/2904; GCP/HAI/016/CAN), Honduras (GCP/HON/028/NET), Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru (TCP/PER/0167) and Venezuela to determine and implement strategies for sustainable natural resource use and management. A feasibility study was carried out in Grenada on the promotion of small-scale irrigation, while a project was implemented in Antigua on the use of water resources for agriculture and the protection of catchment basins (TCP/ANT/0067). In Jamaica, FAO provided support to a project on the sustainable production of coconut and the control of lethal yellowing disease, financed by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), and helped formulate a similar proposal for the Caribbean and Central America. Project TCP/ARG/0168 is improving water management in a smallhold farming area through the technical and institutional strengthening of water user associations.

39. Under the FAO Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources, the Organization ran two subregional workshops in Peru and Cuba to help prepare country reports for the first world report on the state of animal genetic resources. Priorities were also discussed for the formulation of national and subregional projects on the management and conservation of animal genetic resources, which highlighted the need for cooperation among countries.

40. FAO supported the III Latin American Congress on Watershed Management held in Peru, and implemented the regional project on climate change (FNPP/GLO/002/NET) in Central America and the regional project on forest protection (TCP/RLA/2903) to protect native forests against the bark beetle.

Recommendation N° 29. Support for the establishment of legal and regulatory frameworks for natural resource sustainability.

41. FAO helped the governments of the Region strengthen the regulatory, legal and institutional features of their National Forest Programmes. Project TCP/RLA/0067 reviewed the legal and policy framework for territorial land-use planning in the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and recommended new policies to accelerate the programme of agricultural diversification at the regional level. Through projects TCP/ANT/2902, TCP/JAM/2901 and TCP/URU/2802, FAO provided support to the governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica and Uruguay for strengthening their legal and institutional frameworks for the fisheries sector.

Recommendations N° 30 and 31. Support the development of information systems on natural resource utilization that will measure natural resource availability and deterioration.

42. The Regional Project in Support of Forest Information for Sustainable Forest Management in the Region (GCP/RLA/133/EC) conducted a study on trends and the outlook for the forest sector with sustainability indicators and monitoring mechanisms; while project GCP/BOL/034/ITA provided lessons and experiences on this subject for dissemination in the Region. Together with UNEP, FAO is involved in the Global Land Cover Network (GLCN) initiative, as applied to the natural resources of the Region. The GLCN aims to enhance global information on land cover.

43. FAO has developed a methodology for gathering and processing information on natural resources that will help evaluate potentialities and weaknesses and simulate optimal land-use

scenarios for sustainable agricultural development plans. This methodology has been applied in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay (GCP/RLA/139/JPN). Land information systems are also being developed in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

44. The project for strengthening the management and exchange of information on plant genetic resources in Latin America and the Caribbean helped define a new system of information on plant genetic resources for agriculture. Pilot activities were carried out in Ecuador and Cuba on the establishment of a national mechanism of exchange of information for monitoring implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

45. Other activities involving information system components to evaluate the state of natural resources include projects UTF/BRA/060/BRA and TCP/BRA/2903 in Brazil and TCP/PER/0167 in Peru.

Recommendation N° 32. Explore mechanisms to facilitate payment mechanisms for environmental services.

46. FAO and the World Bank are working in Central America on the exploration and development of options for the payment of environmental services. Case studies have been published on the valuation of hydrological services and mechanisms of payment for these services in the Region, and a regional forum on the payment of environmental services in catchment areas was held in Peru under the Third Latin American Congress on Watershed Management. In Mexico, project TCP/MEX/2905 is seeking to integrate environmental services into land-use planning. A study is also under way on financial mechanisms for sustainable forest management in the Southern Cone countries.

D. PRODUCTION PARTNERSHIPS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation N° 37. Help the countries of the Region undertake actions to develop production chains.

Recommendation N° 38. Promote business and investment opportunities among organized small producers to improve their competitiveness.

47. Project TCP/RLA/2905, implemented in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Peru, promoted the mobilization of rural production resources by grouping small agricultural producers under specific commodity systems to raise their income and foster food security.

48. A technical meeting was organized to assess the energy problems of small agrifood enterprises (Mexico), in addition to a workshop on food safety and quality for the countries of CARICOM (Jamaica), two subregional workshops on improving the safety and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables for the Southern Cone countries (Chile) and for Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Guatemala), and a regional workshop as part of the global post-harvest initiative (Ecuador). FAO supported the governments of Argentina (TCP/ARG/2903), the Bahamas (TCP/BHA/2803), Jamaica (TCP/JAM/0066), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (TCP/STV/0065) in post-harvest management and handling, and in the small-scale processing of food products in order to increase their added value.

49. FAO is developing a programme of cooperation between forest industries and rural producers to increase business and investment opportunities for small producer associations. It supported a workshop for small seed farmers of Latin America (Santa Cruz, Bolivia) to identify opportunities for small producer development based on their positive experiences. It provided the Government of El Salvador with technical cooperation for implementation of project TCP/ELS/2801.

E. EFFECTS OF SUBSIDIES AND MARKET RESTRICTIONS ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES PRODUCTION AND MARKET ACCESS

Recommendation N° 47. Develop technical capacities to address the safety and sanitary requirements of the food trade.

50. Training projects were implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean on thematic topics relating to food safety and quality and the strengthening of food standard and control systems. FAO collaborated with other technical cooperation agencies, notably PAHO. See ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/cclac13/la02_07s.pdf.

Recommendation N° 48. Support cooperation between countries to combat transboundary diseases.

51. FAO is helping the Central American Commission for the Environment and Development (CCAD) develop a Central American strategy for forest protection, the basic target being the bark beetle which is destroying natural pine plantations (TCP/RLA/2803).

52. Activities to control transboundary animal diseases were undertaken in Argentina (TCP/ARG/2801), Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba (TCP/CUB/8926), Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay (TCP/RLA/0177). Efforts are under way to promote the Continental Plan for Eradicating Classical Swine Fever and have been conducted to prevent and control Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. The Round Table on the Regional Strategy of Control and Eradication of the Screwworm in the Caribbean was held under project TCP/RLA/8927 implemented in Haiti, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

Recommendation N° 49. Inform the countries of the Region and help them draw up their negotiating positions at WTO and other bodies.

53. FAO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) continued to provide support to the Informal Agricultural Negotiators Group (GINA) in order to promote dialogue and exchange of information among agricultural trade negotiators. A workshop was also held in Panama on multilateral agricultural trade negotiations for the countries of Central America, Belize, Panama and the Dominican Republic, under an interregional project financed by the European Union (GCP/INT/736/EC).

Recommendation N° 50. Support prospective studies of scenarios resulting from the new round of WTO negotiations.

54. FAO collaborated with UNCTAD in improving the Agricultural Trade Policy Simulation Model (ATPSM), which helps predict the impact of different scenarios arising from the new round of WTO negotiations. The ATPSM model was also applied in projects TCP/GUY/2903, TCP/RLA/2910 and GCP/INT/736/EC.

Recommendation N° 51. Conduct studies on market liberalization and its impact on trade possibilities and food security of developing countries.

55. The Organization participated in studies on Doha Round discussions and organized fora on the roles of agriculture and the "development fund". The studies emphasized the need to clearly distinguish the development requirements of developing countries and small farmers.

56. It evaluated implementation of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture in Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica and Peru. There were also studies of the impact of trade liberalization on food security for Chile, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica and Peru. TCP/RLA/2910 examined the impact of protectionism on food security in the MERCOSUR countries, while projects TCP/GUY/2801 and TCP/SUR/2802 focused on the control of foods for import and export.

Recommendation N° 52. *Analyse the emergence of hidden trade barriers that set consumers against producers.*

57. Action has been taken to strengthen institutions responsible for implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary measures and quality standards. Project TCP/RLA/2907 seeks to reinforce databases and the use of market information for public and private sector decision-making and negotiations. Projects TCP/RLA/0065 and TCP/RLA/2904 have strengthened national committees dealing with analysis related to the Codex Alimentarius. Projects TCP/PAR/2801, TCP/URU/2801, TCP/ANT/0066 and TCP/HAI/2802 have supported national food control systems to enhance implementation of sanitary measures and to harmonize food standards.

Recommendation N° 53. *Conduct studies to assess the impact of indiscriminate subsidies on the harvesting of fishery resources.*

58. FAO has developed a methodology to identify, evaluate and quantify fishery subsidies in order to better examine their impact on the sustainability of fishery resources and the fish product trade. It produced the "Guide for Identifying, Assessing and Reporting on Subsidies in the Fisheries Sector" which was reviewed at a meeting of experts in Rome in December 2002. The Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries commended the guide as a very useful technical tool.

59. The Twenty-fifth Session of the Committee on Fisheries also agreed that FAO should convene a technical consultation on this matter, to be held during 2004. The consultation should discuss a practical mandate to examine the impact of subsidies on fishery resources, for example on illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, excess fishing capacity and other aspects of sustainable fisheries development.

II. Trends and challenges for the rural sector in the Region

A. CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES

60. The Region has a relatively high level of food insecurity, agricultural dependency, rural poverty and social inequality. The new development agenda should be rooted in a political will and commitment that translate into government action and effective public policy. The process will require the promotion of rural development to achieve food security and eliminate poverty. The level and type of intervention will have to reflect the level of development of each individual country and policies will need to focus on alternative proposals, permitting the restructuring of production, promoting the development of new scientific and technical options and defending the rights of rural families.

Suggested priority items on the new rural development agenda

61. The general reference framework is the Rome Declaration and the agreements from the World Food Summit: *five years later* which distil actions into one precise and measurable objective: halving the number of hungry in the world by 2015. The following thematic topics might be relevant in this connection:

62. *The rural area and the territorial dimension of development.* There has been strong emphasis in the past two decades on promoting decentralization for more dynamic development. The core feature of decentralization policy is the redistribution of State authority, which within a general democratic context means the devolution of authority through modalities of co-responsibility to local governments and to civil society organizations and trade associations. There has also been a more recent emphasis on promoting territorial development policies that

seek to ensure that all regions can maximize their development potential. Central in this regard is the tapping of each region's comparative advantages, the "pulling power" of its urban areas and the development of new assets. The development of family farming is viewed within a territorial context, placing the economic unit within the comprehensive perspective of the nuclear family and its available resources, which include the land and its associated natural resources, but also other intangible assets that might be available to rural families and that stem from their membership of farmer associations or their capacity for management at local authority level.

63. *The development of urban agriculture* calls for the coordinated interaction of urban and periurban farmers, local authorities, the intermediary sector, market operators and the thousands of consumers, as the *expanding urbanization* that is characteristic of the Region has become a critical hindrance to sustained urban food security, especially for people living with inadequate incomes and undernutrition.

64. The promotion of policies to strengthen the capacity of family farmers and poor rural households is a first step towards ensuring their food security. This calls for strategies and mechanisms that are aimed at: a) consolidating small production units (through land transaction modalities) in order to create enterprises that can operate on an economically viable scale; b) facilitating land access for the young in order to pave the way for generational succession among agricultural producers, while at the same time encouraging the introduction of new technologies and agricultural practices; c) supporting collective forms of production and trade in order to operate on a sufficient scale to obtain market competitiveness.

65. *The feminization of rural economies needs to be effectively recognized in the design and implementation of agricultural and rural policies.* Women use many coping strategies to feed their families: they have higher levels of off-farm rural employment than men; they migrate to urban areas to send remittances home; and they have increasingly resorted to wage labour. Such work tends to be precarious and inadequately paid and to offer limited opportunities for training.

66. Reconstruction of the *institutional architecture* for agricultural and rural development driven by private, social, governmental and non-governmental players. There is no point in promoting flexibility, transparency and participation without recognizing the existence of economic and social diversity and pluralism. What is important here is to incorporate different strategies and social players into a broader and more inclusive dialogue.

67. The greater need for transparency and control that calls for the *identification of new instruments and methods of impact assessment.* Different experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean indicate that one crucial element of any programme is the design of a system of monitoring and evaluation of impact that can guide actions on a day-to-day basis and determine the real impact of an intervention on the target population and subsequently on the surrounding society. This inevitably means recognizing that all programmes, policies and projects are faced with restrictions, not only in terms of technology, but also in terms of rules of access to resources and to the mechanisms of association of the social players themselves. Critical analysis of these limitations should help build a concerted vision of existing problems and potentialities.

68. Finally, the countries of the region have pursued *subregional and regional integration* initiatives for a number of years. More recently, some countries have embarked on bilateral negotiations for free trade, which can offer market opportunities but can also present formidable challenges, especially for cereal farmers and meat producers. This brings us back to the priority issues of competitiveness of subregional production systems, vulnerability to fiercer competition on local markets and harmonization of subregional policies for trade and agriculture.