

Chapter III

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued to work towards achieving sustainable global food security by raising nutrition levels and living standards, improving agricultural productivity and advancing the condition of rural populations.

At its one hundred and twenty-third session (Rome, Italy, 28 October–2 November), the FAO Council adopted a revised International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, aimed at reducing the threats posed by agro-chemicals in developing countries.

The World Food Summit: five years later, originally scheduled for 2001, was held in Rome, from 10 to 13 June 2002 (see p. 1225). The Summit adopted a declaration calling on the international community to fulfil the 1996 World Food Summit pledge [YUN 1996, p. 1129] to reduce world hunger by half, to about 400 million, by 2015.

As lead agency for the International Year of Mountains (2002) (see p. 1052), declared by the General Assembly in resolution 53/24 [YUN 1998, p. 994], FAO worked with UN agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations to increase international awareness of the global importance of mountain peoples and ecosystems.

In 2002, FAO membership remained at 183 countries, plus the European Community.

World food situation

World cereal production in 2002 fell to an estimated 1,833.3 million tonnes (including rice in milled equivalent), 63 million tonnes, or 3.3 per cent, less than the previous year's level. World wheat production was forecast at 568 million tonnes, nearly 3 per cent down from the previous year's level, largely due to drought and reduced plantings in the three major wheat-exporting countries, namely, Australia, Canada and the United States. World coarse grain production dropped by an estimated 4 per cent to 881 million tonnes. World rice output (milled) fell to an estimated 389 million tonnes, nearly 4 per cent less than in 2001, due to adverse weather in Asia and persistent low international prices.

FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System, in cooperation with the World Food Programme, increased its crop and food supply as-

essment missions and issued 23 special alerts/reports about impending food shortages. In response, some 17 emergency operations at a cost of \$1.5 billion were undertaken.

FAO's Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety initiated projects aimed at sustainable increased food availability and the control of transboundary animal diseases that threatened food security.

Activities

FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division provided emergency assistance in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors of developing countries affected by natural or human-induced calamities. In 2002, FAO's emergency assistance programme received \$85 million to fund over 150 projects in more than 40 countries, and \$66 million for the execution of the agricultural component of the oil-for-food programme in Iraq.

Through its field programmes, FAO provided technical assistance in food and agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development totalling \$342 million. FAO's Investment Centre assisted developing and transition countries to identify and assess investment opportunities, and formulated 117 projects worth some \$4.7 billion. The Special Programme for Food Security continued to assist developing countries, particularly through its South-South Cooperation initiative, to improve national and household food security on an economically and environmentally sustainable basis.

In 2002, FAO continued to participate in activities related to plant biological diversity, crop management and diversification, seed production and improvement, crop protection, agricultural engineering, prevention of food losses, and food and agricultural industries. It also developed programmes for livestock production and health. Through the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme, FAO tracked down the last pockets of the virus in Africa and Asia as part of its goal to eliminate the livestock disease by 2010.

The FAO Forestry Department continued its work in forest resource management, policy and planning, and forest products. At its fifth expert consultation, the Department highlighted the

alarming gaps in forest information in many countries and proposed strategies to address that issue.

The FAO Fisheries Department promoted sustainable development of responsible fisheries and contributed to food security through activities in fishery resources, policy, industries and information. Priorities included implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

In 2002, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, responsible for implementing the joint FAO/World Health Organization Food Standards Programme, agreed on a final draft of "Principles for the risk analysis of food derived from biotechnology", which provided a framework for evaluating the safety and nutritional aspects of genetically modified foods. The Commission continued to de-

velop standards, guidelines and other recommendations to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

Secretariat

As at 31 December 2002, FAO staff numbered 3,808, of whom 1,554 were in the Professional or higher categories and 2,254 were in the General Service category.

Budget

The regular programme budget for the 2002-2003 biennium was \$651.8 million.

NOTE: For further information, see *The State of Food and Agriculture 2002*.

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FAO also maintained liaison offices in Brussels, Geneva, Washington, D.C., and Yokohama, Japan; regional offices in Accra, Ghana; Bangkok, Thailand; Cairo, Egypt; and Santiago, Chile; and subregional offices in Apia, Samoa; Bridgetown, Barbados; Budapest, Hungary; Harare, Zimbabwe; and Tunis, Tunisia.