

Outcome of the 3rd UN Conference on LDCs

Brussels, May 2001

Programme of Action (POA) for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

FAO Contribution to Annual Progress Report

Since the adoption of the Brussels Plan of Action in May 2001, FAO has undertaken a number of activities in the implementation of the Brussels POA. In the year 2002 alone, more than 680 FAO field projects, with a total budget value of US\$ 447 million, were ongoing in the 49 LDC countries. They cover a wide range of technical fields in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The following are some of the major activities undertaken by FAO, during 2002, under Commitments 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Brussels POA:

Commitment 3: Building human and institutional capacities

Section D - Health, nutrition and sanitation

- FAO established guiding principles and a framework for action for use by LDCs and others in their fight against HIV/AIDS. A manual on the nutritional care and support for people with HIV/AIDS, entitled “*Living Well with HIV/AIDS,*” has also been prepared in cooperation with WHO.
- FAO assisted LDCs to develop capacities to provide effective nutrition education and communication within schools, to the public, to highly vulnerable groups, and to decision makers.
- FAO prepared and disseminated more than 16 publications on food, nutrition-related issues for use in LDCs and other countries.
- Considerable efforts were devoted to incorporating nutrition into emergency responses particularly in the briefing and backstopping of assessment and planning missions. Technical support of emergency food and nutrition assessments and planning missions were carried out in several countries, including Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and the Great Lakes Countries.
- Through its Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA), FAO continued to provide support to member countries on activities relating to women in agricultural development. Support included policy advice, skills and competence building, and assistance to projects and programmes.
- FAO increased its support to Member Nations to assist in producing and using gender-disaggregated data and statistics. Between 2000-2002, the Gender and Development Service (SDWW) developed a training methodology and materials to help improve the skills of agricultural data producers such as statisticians, planners, and policy analysts in this area.

Under the IP, SDWW developed and tested the methodology and materials with partners in Namibia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- FAO continued to participate actively in defining and implementing programmes to reduce micronutrient malnutrition. It supported the promotion of the production and consumption of micronutrient-rich foods, including for example through the development of home gardens, as the sustainable solution to micronutrient deficiency problems.

Commitment 4: Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs

Section E - Agriculture and agro-industries

- FAO launched a new programme to identify best practices in forest management in Central Africa. Fourteen case studies prepared in 2002 followed by a regional workshop to discuss lessons learned and share information and experiences. LDCs involved in this initiative include: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe.
- FAO continued to support the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The year 2002 was mainly the year of CRIC (Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention). FAO participated in the Regional Preparatory Meeting in Geneva (July 2002) and supported the CRIC Meeting which was held within FAO premises in November 2002.
- A new initiative in support of Low Forest Cover Countries (LFCCs) was launched in 2000. The initiative aims at enhancing the role of planted forests, trees outside forests & urban and peri-urban forests in LFCCs and is also providing support to the LFCC Secretariat (Tehran Process). Case studies were conducted in countries in the Near East and Africa including the following LDCs: Mali and Ethiopia.
- Several publications on forestry-related conservation issues were prepared and disseminated, including for example, 1) A thematic issue of *Unasylva* on “Rehabilitation of degraded sites”; and 2) a "Practical Handbook on Integrated Resources Management and Combating Desertification in arid and semi-arid lands”.

Section G - Rural development and food security

- FAO continued its support to LDCs through its Special Programme for Food Security, SPFS, which assisted these countries to rapidly increase food production and productivity on a sustainable basis, reduce the year-to-year variability of production improve access to food as a contribution to equity and poverty alleviation. By December 2002, the FAO Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) was operational in 39 LDCs. Major activities of the SPFS covered water control, crop intensification, diversification on small animals and fisheries and constraints analysis.

- FAO has established the Trust Fund for Food Security and for Emergency Prevention of Transboundary Pests and Diseases of Animals and Plants with an initial target of US\$500 million. The projects to be funded from this Trust Fund will assist Member Governments, particularly LDCs, in initiating, strengthening, accelerating and expanding activities in the following two areas: Food Security and Emergency Prevention of Transboundary Pests and Diseases of Animals and Plants.
- FAO, in collaboration with 12 regional economic organisations (REOs), prepared Regional Programmes for Food Security (RPFS), which constitute a concerted effort to raise food security in the member countries of these REOs, in particular in LDCs and low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs), through, among others, trade facilitation and harmonisation of national agricultural policies.
- Two pilot Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System (FIVIMS) projects were initiated in Burkina Faso, Haiti and Madagascar. A key concern of these projects is to improve the effective use of better food security and vulnerability information in decision making, and policy and programme formulation and monitoring.
- The UN System Network on Rural Development and Food Security, which exists in 32 of the LDCs, has been promoting partnerships for rural development and food security at the national level through encouraging the formation of inter-agency/multi-stakeholder Thematic Groups. FAO country representatives have largely taken responsibility for facilitating the formation of the groups and organizing/hosting meetings. The priority areas of work of these groups include food security, supply and aid; food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS); natural resource management and the environment; emergency situations and natural disasters; and national capacity-building.
- Several international workshops and activities were organised by FAO in support of food safety management in developing countries. Several LDCs benefited from these events. FAO also convened, jointly with WHO, a Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators in 2002, in which support was provided in priority to LDCs to participate in this Global Forum.
- Forestry projects supporting rural development and food security were launched in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi and Zambia.
- FAO provided assistance through community-centred initiatives using participatory appraisal and planning approaches that encourage and empower poor people to take an active role in designing and implementing activities to improve their food security and nutritional well-being. Innovative multi-disciplinary, community-based nutrition projects are underway in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Zambia.

Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development

Section A - Trade, commodities and regional trading arrangements

- FAO assisted LDC' to better face the challenges of the global economy, as well as harness adequate resources for their development, through the promotion of regional economic

integration by collaborating with Regional Economic Organisations (REO) in the preparation of Regional Strategies and Programmes for Agricultural Development and Food Security.

- FAO provided support to the NEPAD initiative of the African continent, in which 33 African LDCs will benefit, regarding institutional building for intra-regional trade. Support has been provided mainly for the formulation of possible common agricultural policy in the context of the African Union.
- At the multilateral level, FAO provided technical analyses and support to the efforts to make operationally effective the Marrakesh Decision on Measures Concerning the Possible Negative Effects of the Reform Programme on LDCs and net food-importing developing countries. In this context, FAO has participated actively in the Inter-agency Panel of experts established by the WTO Doha Ministerial Conference Doha to explore ways and means for improving access by LDCs and WTO net food-importing developing countries to multilateral programs and facilities to assist with short-term difficulties in financing normal levels of commercial imports of basic foodstuffs.
- FAO provided support to member countries including LDCs in particular in the current phase of the WTO negotiations on agriculture, through, *inter alia*, informal briefings/roundtables held in Geneva in concert with the WTO sessions, and covering some of the main topics that are on the formal agenda.
- At the country level, FAO continued to provide assistance to governments and other stakeholders, particularly in LDCs, to identify national interests and clarify negotiating positions *vis-à-vis* issues in the multilateral negotiations on agriculture-related issues, incorporate trade policy concerns in the formulation of domestic agricultural policy, and assisting non-members of the WTO on accession issues. Particular attention has been paid to SPS and TBT agreements, and related issues, where FAO's technical assistance is highlighted by the critical role played by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for which FAO, together with WHO, provide the Secretariat. In addition, FAO work is related to the International Plant protection Convention (IPPC) servicing SPS and TBT.
- A Joint FAO/WHO/OIE/WTO/WB Standards and Trade Development Facility for Capacity Building in SPS-related Matters was launched by the 5 organisations following the joint Statement made by their respective Executive Heads in November 2001 in favour of increased capacity building efforts for developing countries (including LDCs) to enhance their ability to fully participate in the work and decision making process of international standards setting bodies. A draft framework has been prepared by FAO and is currently under active discussion by the concerned units within the organisations.
- An FAO global project for the Enhancement of Coffee Quality through Prevention of Mould Formation started in December 2000, and is due to end in December 2004. The project approach emphasises capacity-building in coffee-producing countries, many of which are LDCs.
- An FAO project was launched to train private small/medium size industries in HACCP/Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) covering Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal began in September, 2001. The main objective of the project

is to support the member states in their efforts to improve food quality to protect consumers and facilitate access to international markets.

Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

Section A - Protecting the environment

- Several publications on forest energy were disseminated in order to provide members with information on a range of issues relating to fuels that can be derived from forest biomass.
- A project providing support to the establishment of plantations for wood energy in Angola commenced operations in July 2002.
- The FAO implemented GEF PDF-B project "Aménagement intégré du Massif du Fouta Djallon" started in 2002. It concerns Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone.
- FAO maintains several global environmental data bases which, *inter alia*, contain information on forest resources and changes in forest cover over time and on the extent of forest protected areas. Efforts to support national capacities in collecting, analysing and disseminating national level statistics on forest resources and forest products are given high priority.
- Assistance on understanding forest-related agreements was provided to countries in West and Central Africa including Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Burundi.
- Support was provided to develop and implement national forest programmes, policies and plans in Malawi.

Section B - Alleviating vulnerability to natural shocks

- FAO supported Ethiopia's efforts to prevent and mitigate forest fires through the strengthening of forest fire management.
- Through its work in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which has to date established 9 regional Wildland Fire Networks, FAO assisted member countries in fire disasters. FAO assistance included provision and dissemination of fire information, fire management guidelines, model agreements, training and capacity building and develops participatory fire management activities aimed at finding out and mitigating the reasons for fire.
- A global information system on outbreaks and impacts of insects and diseases on forests was developed.

- In the area of disaster management, FAO helps governments and regional organisations plan for disasters, including measures to mitigate their effects and to mobilise rapid relief and rehabilitation assistance.
- FAO contributes to reducing the vulnerability of agricultural communities to natural disaster. It assists member develop national food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems (FIVIMS). Prevention and mitigation measures includes:
 - more efficient agricultural production for a better yield/inputs ratio;
 - diversification of crop, livestock, forestry and fisheries systems and products;
 - support for better water use and management;
 - drought-mitigation and management strategies;
 - improved control of pests and diseases affecting crops and livestock;
 - improved management of soils and watersheds in crop, range and forested lands;
 - better coastal and aquaculture fishing practices;
 - home gardens and nutrition education;
 - improved on-farm storage, cereal banks and food security reserves;
 - multi-stakeholder disaster management strategies and mechanisms;
 - community based risk alleviation strategies.
- Programmes which aim to increase preparedness and resilience for natural hazards include: Special Programme for Food Security (assists low-income food deficit countries (LIFDCs) improve food security both at national and at household levels); Global Information and Early Warning System for Food and Agriculture (monitors food supply and provides up-to-date information on crop prospects and gives early warning on imminent food crises); Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases (keeps a global watch for signs of emerging threats from pests and epidemics);
- FAO also helps governments formulate food and agricultural development strategies, which include the framing of programmes and projects aimed at strengthening the resilience of rural communities against future disasters as part of the development process.

II. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION, FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING AND REVIEW

Section B - National, regional and global level arrangements

The FAO Council, in its 123rd Session from 28 October to 1 November, expressed its strong support to the Brussels Programme of Action (POA), called on FAO to continue to participate – within the framework of its work programme – in the implementation of relevant sections of the POA, and invited donors to provide extra-budgetary funds for this purpose.