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CONFERENCE

Thirty-eighth Session

Rome, 15-22 June 2013

**Report of the 28th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe
(Baku, Azerbaijan, 17-20 April 2012)**

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ERC/12/REP

REPORT

Baku, Azerbaijan
19 and 20 April 2012

**Twenty-eighth FAO
Regional Conference
for Europe**



FAO Member Nations in the European Regional Conference

Albania	Hungary	Russian Federation
Andorra	Iceland	San Marino
Armenia	Ireland	Serbia
Austria	Israel	Slovakia
Azerbaijan	Italy	Slovenia
Belarus	Kazakhstan	Spain
Belgium	Kyrgyzstan	Sweden
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Latvia	Switzerland
Bulgaria	Lithuania	TFYR of Macedonia
Croatia	Luxembourg	Tajikistan
Cyprus	Malta	Turkey
Czech Republic	Republic of Moldova	Turkmenistan
Denmark	Monaco	Ukraine
Estonia	Montenegro	United Kingdom
Finland	Netherlands	Uzbekistan
France	Norway	European Union
Georgia	Poland	(Member Organization)
Germany	Portugal	Faroe Islands
Greece	Romania	(Associate Member)

Date and place of FAO Regional Conferences for Europe

First - Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1949
Second - Rome, Italy, 10-15 October 1960
Third - Rome, Italy, 8-13 October 1962
Fourth - Salzburg, Austria, 26-31 October 1964
Fifth - Seville, Spain, 5-11 October 1966
Sixth - St. Julian's, Malta, 28-31 October 1968
Seventh - Budapest, Hungary, 21-25 September 1970
Eighth - Munich, Germany, Federal Republic of, 18-23 September 1972
Ninth - Lausanne, Switzerland, 7-12 October 1974
Tenth - Bucharest, Romania, 20-25 September 1976
Eleventh - Lisbon, Portugal, 2-7 October 1978
Twelfth - Athens, Greece, 22-27 September 1980
Thirteenth - Sofia, Bulgaria, 4-8 October 1982
Fourteenth - Reykjavik, Iceland, 17-21 September 1984
Fifteenth - Istanbul, Turkey, 28 April-2 May 1986
Sixteenth - Cracow, Poland, 23-26 August 1988
Seventeenth - Venice, Italy, 3-7 April 1990
Eighteenth - Prague, Czechoslovakia, 24-28 August 1992
Nineteenth - Killarney, Ireland, 6-10 June 1994
Twentieth - Tel Aviv, Israel, 29 April-3 May 1996
Twenty-first - Tallinn, Estonia, 25-29 May 1998
Twenty-second - Porto, Portugal, 24-28 July 2000
Twenty-third - Nicosia, Cyprus, 29-31 May 2002
Twenty-fourth - Montpellier, France, 5-7 May 2004
Twenty-fifth - Riga, Latvia, 8-9 June 2006
Twenty-sixth - Innsbruck, Austria, 26-27 June 2008
Twenty-seventh - Yerevan, Armenia, 13-14 May 2010

Table of Contents

	Pages
Summary of Main Recommendations	7 - 10
	Paragraphs
I. Introductory Items.....	1-22
Organization of the Conference.....	1-2
Opening Ceremony.....	3-6
Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteur.....	7-9
Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable.....	10
Statement by the Director-General.....	11-12
Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council.....	13
Statement by the Chairperson of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe.....	14-16
Outcomes of the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security and update on the CFS reform.....	17-22
II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues.....	23-43
(Ministerial Round Table) Policies for Food Security in the Region: Challenges and Perspectives – Food outlook towards 2050.....	23-27
Summary of the outcomes of the debate of the Technical Commissions in the Region including the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA).....	28
Land reform and farm performance in Europe: a 20-year perspective.....	29-33
Women in Agriculture – Closing the Gender Gap for Development in Europe. The Activities of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development.....	34-37
Summary report of the recommendations of the European Forestry Commission (EFC) and Importance of Forestry for the Region.....	38-39
Summary report of the recommendations of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission, and Importance of Fisheries for the Region.....	40-43
III. Programme and Budget Matters.....	44-58
Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010–2011, Programme of Work and Budget for 2012–13 and Areas of Priority Action for the Region for the Biennium 2014–15 taking into account the discussions and recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions.....	44-52
Update on the status and vision of Decentralization in the Region.....	53-58

IV. Other Matters..... 59-69

Multiyear Programme of Work (MYPOW)..... 59-61
Rules of Procedure for the Regional Conference for Europe..... 62-64
Date and Place of the Twenty-ninth FAO Regional Conference for Europe..... 65-66
Adoption of the Report..... 67
Closure of the Conference.....68

Pages

Appendix A..... 23
Appendix B..... 25

Summary of Main Recommendations

Matters Requiring the Attention of the FAO Council

The Twenty-eighth FAO Regional Conference for Europe:

Implementation of Programme of Work and Budget and Areas of Priority Action

1. Confirmed the regional results to be attained under the PWB 2012-13 and recommended in order to better align the priorities with the results and in view of the limited resources available to indicate areas proposed to be de-emphasized (**para. 45**)
2. Supported the Strategic Thinking Process initiated by the Director-General and emphasized the importance of focusing the work of FAO on key challenges faced by the countries so as to achieve measurable progress through the effective and efficient use of available resources on a limited number of activities, aligned with FAO's comparative advantage (**para. 46**);
3. Confirmed that the main global challenges are consistent with the region and agreed on the regional trends and challenges and supported the six priorities of work in the region and requested that these priorities be taken into account in reviewing the FAO Strategic Framework and preparing the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2014–17 (**para. 47**);
4. Urged FAO to focus its work based on its comparative advantage, particularly in providing global public goods and policy advice based on its normative and analytical work. It underlined the essential functions of advocacy, communication, capacity development and knowledge-sharing (**para. 49**);
5. Requested FAO to prepare Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) as a tool for strategic delivery of assistance and country-specific development, coordinated with United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and close collaboration with International Financing Institutions, civil society and private sector (**para. 50**);

Update on the status and vision of Decentralization in the Region

6. Fully supported the endeavours to enhance the impact of the Organization through improved and well-designed decentralized structures and emphasized that decentralization efforts should not jeopardize the technical capacity in Headquarters and other locations or the ability to execute the agreed technical programmes (**para. 53**);
7. Supported the emphasis on value for money by the increased use of cost-sharing agreements with host governments and the efforts to ensure the presence of competent FAO Country Representatives, whose posts should be part of the career development and geographic rotation policies of the Organization (**para. 54**);
8. Agreed with the proposal to transfer responsibility, management and accountability for operations related to emergency and rehabilitation activities to the Decentralized Offices as soon as their capacities are adequate, in order to better achieve integration of development, emergency and rehabilitation activities (**para. 55**);
9. Noted the proposal of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) for positioning decentralized FAO resources in the region to achieve greater impact, including the proposition that FAO should establish two full-fledged FAO Representations in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and two Assistant FAO Representative posts in the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan and supported the focus on the most needy countries in the region and requested to address cross-cutting themes such as gender and climate change (**para. 56**);
10. Recommended, to further consider funding options, including financing from the REU budget, centralized funds (including extra-budgetary) or a combination of both and to prepare an implementation plan for positioning FAO resources and requested the Programme and Finance Committees in May 2012 on the basis – to the extent possible – of a detailed and timely proposal from the Secretariat to consider the implications of the proposed changes and give appropriate recommendations for further decision to the 144th Session of the FAO Council in June 2012 (**para. 57**) .

Multiyear Programme of Work (MYPOW)

11. Reviewed the MYPOW and recognized the central role of European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) as a technical preparation body for the ERC, reflected through the submission of its technical recommendations to the ERC and the function of the ECA as a consultative body between the ERC sessions (**para. 59**);
12. Encouraged further refinement and elaboration of the MYPOW with respect to the purpose and functions, specific work tasks of the Regional Conference related to the reference period, and inclusion of measurable indicators (**para 60**);
13. Endorsed the MYPOW and recommended further consultations between the Member States in the region and REU and in cooperation with partner organizations noted that the MYPOW will be updated (**para. 61**);
14. Approved to hold the 29th Session of the Regional Conference for Europe in Romania in 2014 (**para. 65**).

Matters Requiring the Attention of the FAO Conference

The Twenty-eighth Regional Conference for Europe:

Outcome of the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and update on the CFS reform

1. Reviewed the recent developments and deliberations of the CFS and supported the reform and requested that CFS matters should be included in future Regional Conferences and called for appropriate mechanisms for exchange and views between the CFS, member countries and other multi-stakeholders. A clear and common vision for the CFS was advocated with a reformed CFS in order to improve the system of global governance on food security (**para. 18**);
2. Welcomed the successful conclusions of the CFS-led negotiations on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries (**para. 19**);
3. Noted the development of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) and recognized the potential of the ongoing multi-stakeholder preparation process for improving coordination and guiding synchronized action in support of global, regional and country led actions to address food insecurity, and recommended that regional perspectives be fully reflected in further drafts of the GSF and urged stakeholders to provide additional inputs (**para.20**);
4. Requested FAO to work with appropriate stakeholders to facilitate the development of systems for mapping food secure and nutrition action to enhance the coordination and alignment of policies and programmes of governments and development partners and to monitor the progress in implementing key decisions and encouraged regional coordination and support for country-level mapping of food security and nutrition actions based on existing mechanisms and institutions, including the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (**para.21**);

Policies for Food Security in the Region: Challenges and Perspectives – Food outlook towards 2050

5. Endorsed the proposal to conduct an FAO/World Health Organization special study on dietary transition and malnutrition in the European and Central Asia region in partnership with other organizations, and noted that FAO should address the issue of closing yield gaps in the region through both technical and policy work including advisory services and plant breeding (**para.23**);
6. Invited FAO to continue working on the Agriculture Market Information System (AMIS) in support of the G-20 Action Plan and requested FAO to prepare a study on food waste in the European and Central Asia region including policy recommendations for reducing post-harvest waste (**para.24**);
7. Noted the efforts of several countries in improving food security, raising the productivity of small holder agriculture and ensuring sustainable use of resources in their countries and emphasized that gender equality could substantially increase agriculture growth and productivity and encouraged FAO to continue its support (**para. 25**);
8. Supported an integrated approach to agriculture development, including forestry and fisheries and cooperate with multilateral and bilateral donors and International Finance Institutions (IFIs) to achieve synergy of support to farmers and rural areas (**para.27 a**);

Land reform and farm performance in Europe: a 20-year perspective

9. Requested FAO to engage in shaping policies and providing technical assistance to support re-establishment of extension and advisory services including legislative frameworks for agriculture associations and farmer groups also for smallholders and recommended a) to continue efforts to promote voluntary guidelines for responsible land tenure b) assist member countries in drafting legislative frameworks for agriculture associations and farmer groups; c) assist in developing other farm services for small holders and d) collaborate with ministries of agriculture to develop their capacity to promote a policy level playing field for small holders (**para. 31 and 32**);

Women in Agriculture – Closing the Gender Gap for Development in Europe.

10. Expressed support for FAO's proposed core set of indicators in agriculture, and recommended to increase the visibility of WPW, and urged governments to increase self-financing of participatory activities in the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) and recommended that gender-specific indicators and targets should be established in formulating and assessing policies, programmes and projects (**para. 35**)
11. Noted that, in line with the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2010-11 report, closing the gender gap in agriculture may raise yields significantly, and thus contribute to poverty alleviation; however the general lack of sex-disaggregated data in agriculture hinders the full understanding of the status of rural populations and urged in this context countries to cooperate with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia on awareness raising and capacity development in the ministries of agriculture and national statistical offices in the field of sex-disaggregated data (**para. 36 a) and b)**);
12. Expressed concern regarding the future of the WPW and urged member countries to review and discuss the proposals regarding i) the creation of a national Gender Focal point in the ministries; ii) revised roles and responsibilities of the board and the secretariat of the WPW and iii) a new name for the WPW (**para. 36 c)**)

I. Introductory Items

Organization of the Conference

1. The Twenty-eighth FAO Regional Conference for Europe was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 19 and 20 April 2012. The Conference was preceded by the Thirty-seventh Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) on 17 and 18 April 2012.
2. Representatives from 46 member countries participated in the Conference. Observers from two United Nations Systems member states, seven international non-governmental organizations and five intergovernmental organizations were in attendance. Representatives of four United Nations organizations also participated.

Opening Ceremony

3. The Minister for Agriculture of Azerbaijan, His Excellency Ismat Abasov, welcomed the participants on behalf of his Government and expressed his satisfaction that Azerbaijan was hosting this high-level event of FAO, which was providing strategic guidance and identifying the regional priorities for the Organization.
4. His Excellency Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan, addressed the participants of the Twenty-eighth Regional Conference for Europe, indicating that it was an important stage in cooperation between Azerbaijan and FAO. The President referred to the success of agricultural reforms in Azerbaijan, including land reform and confirmed that agriculture and rural development were a key component of the national economy with a large part of the revenues from oil production and exports invested into agriculture and for regional development.
5. Azerbaijan at present provided some 80 percent of its own food with increasing exports to traditional neighbouring countries' markets but also to European markets with products of international quality and standard. Farmers were supported by the state through the provision of fertilizers and fuel as well as agro-leasing and machinery services. Providing Azerbaijan agriculture with up to date know-how and technologies for its modernization was part of the transformation process. A state programme for the development of regions in Azerbaijan was being implemented with jobs created mostly in agriculture. A major achievement had been reduction of rural poverty, among other things seen as a way of stopping migrations.
6. Azerbaijan was ready to contribute to fighting hunger. Azerbaijan is becoming a donor country, returning past assistance from the international community, including FAO technical assistance. The positive experience of reforms in Azerbaijan is precious and to be shared.

Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of Rapporteur

7. His Excellency Ismat Abasov, Minister for Agriculture of Azerbaijan was elected as Chairperson of the Conference.

8. Her Excellency Ambassador Gerritje Verburg, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Food and Agriculture Organization, and Mr Sergiu Sorin Chelmu, Secretary General, Ministry of Agriculture, Romania, were elected as Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference.

9. Mr Oleg Kobiakov, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to FAO, and Ms Makbule Koçak, Counsellor, Embassy of Turkey, Rome, were appointed Rapporteurs of the Session

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

10. The Chairperson introduced the Agenda and the Conference adopted the Agenda and Timetable. The Agenda is given in Appendix A. Documents submitted to the Conference are listed in Appendix B.

Statement by the Director-General

11. His Excellency José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO, delivered his statement to the Conference, outlining the global challenges and referring to the regional priorities. He expressed his concern that food security was still not ensured for one billion people globally even though there could be enough food for all. In the Europe and Central Asia region food security was an issue in the Caucasus and Central Asia but obesity and diet-related illnesses were becoming a problem in the region.

12. He stressed that FAO needed to adapt to a changing environment based on a consultative process. The five critical areas for FAO's attention were: eradication of hunger; sustainable food production; fairness in the international system of food production; institutional reform and decentralization; and South-South cooperation. In this context FAO has to assist member countries in improving the livelihoods of rural people. Special attention needs to be given to women and youth. Cooperatives are important institutions to give farmers better access to opportunities.

Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council

13. His Excellency Luc Guyau, Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, addressed the Conference, reporting on the conduct of the mandate entrusted to him: implementation of the reform of FAO and the outlook for the 2012–13 biennium.

Statement by the Chairperson of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe

14. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe, Hans-Jörg Lehmann, reiterated that the Conference in Yerevan, Armenia, in 2010 had expressed its full support for the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action, the main thrusts of which in the European Region were to enhance the delivery and efficiency of the decentralized offices and move from activity- to results-based planning. He underlined the importance of cooperation with, and support to, the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, including new mechanisms such as the

Informal Consultation in Budapest in January 2012, as part of much needed enhancement of dialogue in the region.

15. The Vice Chairperson of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe, in the context of work done to identify and select the most urgent priorities and changes to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for the next biennium, noted that while the Regional Conference may decide on priorities, a well organized Regional Office was needed for implementation. Support for the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) was also needed, if it was to facilitate the East-West and North-South exchange in the region, as recommended. The Vice Chairperson noted the work done to improve in the preparatory inter-sessional process of the Regional Conference and observed that this underlined the need, on the one hand, for pro-active participation by Member States, and on the other, for strengthening the role of the ECA as a technical preparatory body.

16. The work and recommendations of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe had been presented to the FAO Governing Bodies in 2011 and 2012. The Vice Chairperson called attention to the need for an enhanced and more effective presentation of the work and decisions of the Regional Conference to the FAO Governing Bodies.

Outcomes of the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security and update on the CFS reform¹

17. The Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), Mr Yaya Olaniran, reported on the progress made by the reformed CFS over the past two years and its relevance to the work of the FAO Regional Conference. He stressed that the CFS continued to work towards fulfilling its goal of being the foremost inclusive platform for different stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. In this regard, he emphasized the importance of expanding and strengthening such exchanges, including through a multi-stakeholder mechanism, a model which continues to improve its effectiveness and influence, to address food security and nutrition in the region. He invited delegates to strengthen linkages between the Regional Conference, other regional food security and nutrition initiatives and the CFS, particularly during inter-sessional periods.

18. The Conference reviewed recent developments and deliberations of the Committee on World Food Security and supported the reforms. It was requested that CFS matters be included in future Regional Conferences and called for appropriate mechanisms for exchange between the CFS, member countries and other multi-stakeholders. A clear and common vision for the CFS was advocated with a reformed CFS and this would be very important in order to improve the system of global governance of food security.

19. The Conference welcomed the successful conclusion of the CFS-led negotiations on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and urged their adoption by the special session of the CFS in May 2012.

20. The Conference noted the development of a Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF), which was discussed during a multi-stakeholder dialogue that was held on 17 April 2012 in Baku. Delegates appreciated the ongoing multi-stakeholder preparation process in the development of the GSF and recognized its potential for improving coordination and guiding

¹ERC/12/INF/12 Rev.1, ERC/12/INF/13; ERC/12/INF/14 and CFS: 2011/7

synchronized action in support of global, regional and country-led actions to address food insecurity concerns. The Conference recommended that regional perspectives be fully reflected in further drafts of the GSF and urged stakeholders to provide additional inputs through all available mechanisms.

21. Delegates drew attention to the CFS side event that had been organized on 17 April to demonstrate tools for country-level mapping of food security and nutrition actions. The Conference requested FAO to work with appropriate stakeholders to facilitate the development of systems for mapping food security and nutrition actions to enhance coordination and alignment of the policies and programmes of government agencies and development partners and monitor progress in implementing key decisions concerning food security and nutrition. The Conference encouraged regional coordination and support for country-level mapping of food security and nutrition actions, based on existing mechanisms and institutions, including the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

22. Several delegations supported the outcome of the side event on rye to turn more attention to rye, encouraging the joint work of interested members together with FAO on elaboration of more concrete initiatives.

II. Regional and Global Policy and Regulatory Issues

(Ministerial Round Table) Policies for Food Security in the Region: Challenges and Perspectives – Food outlook towards 2050²

23. The Conference endorsed the proposal to conduct an FAO/World Health Organization special study on dietary transition and malnutrition in the Europe and Central Asian region in partnership with other organizations to be completed by the next Regional Conference for Europe. It was noted that FAO should address the issue of closing yield gaps in the region through both technical and policy work, including through supporting advisory services and plant breeding. It was confirmed that FAO has a mandate for capacity development to encourage good agricultural practices to reduce the need for pesticides and herbicides in order to build a more sustainable agriculture in the region.

24. The Conference solicited the continuation of work on the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) in support of the G20 Action Plan on food price volatility and agriculture. FAO was requested to prepare a study on food waste in the Europe and Central Asian region, including policy recommendations for reduction of post-harvest waste.

25. The Conference noted the efforts of several countries in improving food security, raising the productivity of smallholder agriculture and ensuring sustainable use of resources in their countries. The Conference emphasized that gender equality could substantially increase agricultural growth and productivity, and encouraged FAO to continue its support to this issue.

26. The spokesperson of the civil society organizations (CSOs) urged the member countries that food security policies for the future must be based on local small-scale farming and local food nets. This should include community supported agriculture, local farmers markets, women's empowerment,

² ERC/12/2

respect and protection of land rights, and be based on agro-ecology good practices to protect the soil and the environment.

27. In addition to the above, the Conference³ supported the following technical areas and policy issues raised during the Ministerial Round Table debate for review by the Secretariat and inclusion in FAO work in the region, as aligned with the regional priorities:

- a) to adopt an integrated approach to agricultural development, including forestry and fisheries and cooperate with multilateral and bilateral donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to achieve synergy of support to farmers and rural areas;
- b) to conduct further technical work, including policy recommendations, for reduction of post-harvest waste and losses of food products along the food chain.

Summary of the outcomes of the debate of the Technical Commissions in the Region including the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)

Report of the outcome of the debate of the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture

28. The Rapporteur provided a summary report of the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture outlining the results of the debate based on documents ERC/12/LIM/1 and ERC/12/LIM/3.

Land reform and farm performance in Europe: a 20-year perspective⁴

29. The most striking feature of land reform in the post-Soviet states has been the overall shift from collective to individual land tenure in agriculture, generally accompanied by privatization of legal land ownership. Individualization of farming has been one of the main factors that acted to arrest the initial transition decline and led to agricultural recovery in the region. In countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the recovery point for agricultural growth is closely linked with the dates when individualization of farming started in the observed watersheds. Furthermore, the rate and the attained level of recovery are higher in countries in regions that pursued decisive individualization policies (the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia), while in countries with less far-reaching individualization reforms (the European CIS) the recovery has been slower.

30. In addition to resumption of agricultural growth, land reform and individualization have also led to significant improvements in agricultural productivity due to the higher incentives in family farming. Greater production and higher productivity have contributed to significant poverty reduction observed since 2000. Rural incomes rise with the increase of the land allotments in family farms and with the increase of the share of output that farms are able to sell. To ensure continued improvement of rural family incomes and poverty mitigation, policy measures should be implemented that facilitate enlargement of very small family farms and encourage the access of small farms to market channels and

³Para 27 summarizes the discussion and statement of the continuation of the ministerial round table session on Friday afternoon, 20 April 2012. This part was not included in the draft report presented to the conference and thus was not part of the approved report.

⁴ ERC/12/LIM/1

services. Enlargement of small farms requires development of land markets both for buying and selling of land and for land leasing. Improvement of market access necessitates development of services for sale of products (collection, sorting, packing, quality control), availability of competitive processing plants, and rental arrangements for farm machinery and mechanical services.

31. Further productivity improvements require re-establishment of extension and advisory services, attention to animal health through modern veterinary services, and introduction of artificial insemination for higher-yielding breeds. FAO was requested to engage in shaping these policies and provide technical assistance in respective areas of expertise including policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification of production for small farms.

32. Member countries took note of the role of smallholder agriculture in their countries and recommended that FAO:

- a) continues efforts to promote the Voluntary Guidelines for Responsible Land Tenure in the region;
- b) assists member countries in drafting legislative frameworks for agricultural associations and farmers groups, and advises countries on programmes for development of farm cooperatives;
- c) assists countries in developing other farm services for smallholders; and
- d) collaborates with ministries of agriculture to develop their capacity to promote a policy level playing field for smallholders.

33. Civil society organizations (CSOs) drew the attention of the ECA to concrete instances of land grabbing and the uneven position of smallholders in defending their tenure rights, emphasizing the need to ensure access to land for the rural population.

Women in Agriculture – Closing the Gender Gap for Development in Europe. The Activities of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development⁵

34. The Secretariat presented the results of extensive research on the socio-economic status of rural women and men in the region and acknowledged the constraints to providing a comprehensive analysis due to the lack of sex-disaggregated data in the agricultural sector. A brief report on the activities of the FAO/ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development (WPW) in the 2010–11 biennium was also included. It was noted that the gender gap refers to the unequal access to assets, resources, and opportunities in addition to the unequal access to legal recourse and to the existence of discriminatory pay practices.

35. The Conference expressed support for FAO's proposed core set of gender indicators in agriculture. Furthermore, it was recommended to increase the visibility of the WPW and governments were urged to increase self-financing of participatory activities in the Working Party. Gender-specific indicators and targets should be established in formulating and assessing policies, programmes and projects.

⁵ ERC/12/LIM/3

36. The Conference:

- a) Noted that, in line with the findings of the FAO State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2010-11 report, closing the gender gap in agriculture may raise yields significantly, and thus contribute to poverty alleviation; however the general lack of sex-disaggregated data in agriculture hinders the full understanding of the status of rural populations.
- b) Urged member countries to cooperate with the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia on awareness-raising and capacity development in the ministries of agriculture and national statistical offices in the field of sex-disaggregated data.
- c) Expressed concern regarding the future of the FAO/ECA Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development and urged member countries to further review and discuss the proposals of:
 - i) the creation of a National Gender Focal Point in the ministry or relevant national institution;
 - ii) the revised roles and responsibilities of the Board and Secretariat of the WPW; and
 - iii) a new name for the WPW.

37. Civil society highlighted the fact that women globally produce more than half of the food, yet are the majority of the undernourished. It pointed out that this was a direct result of the lack of institutional support for smallholder farms. It also noted that women lagged behind in all but one Millennium Development Goal.

Summary report of the recommendations of the European Forestry Commission (EFC) and Importance of Forestry for the Region⁶

38. The Conference appreciated the information on the activities of the regional technical commissions and welcomed the successful cooperation between the European Forestry Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Timber Committee, resulting in provision of unique statistics and resource assessments.

39. The Conference recognized the importance of FAO to continue working on sustainable forest management as a component of a green economy, including green jobs, as well as FAO inputs to the RIO + 20 process. The Conference recommended FAO servicing negotiations on the legally binding agreement on sustainable forest management in Europe. The importance of forest management and good practice in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change impacts and sustainable water resources management was underlined. The significance of the multiple benefits of forests, the role of forests in food security and sustainable livelihoods, and addressing forestry issues at regional and international levels with focus on involving the Central Asia countries were recommended for FAO attention. The

⁶ ERC/12/INF/6 and ERC/12/INF/7 Rev.1

Conference expects FAO to continue working on forestry issues within its mandate and recommended that forestry be integrated in a visible way into the new Strategic Framework.

Summary report of the recommendations of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission, and Importance of Fisheries for the Region⁷

40. The Conference⁸ appreciated being informed about FAO activities on fisheries in the region and emphasized the need to prioritize FAO's work on fisheries and aquaculture in the region, both in the area of responsible capture fishery, and in particular in the field of environmentally friendly aquaculture, which provided a way to alleviate poverty, generated income and was a source of valuable protein. The Conference urged the Secretariat to facilitate the sharing of experience among countries in the region and support international and regional fisheries' bodies cooperation on the sustainable management of fisheries resources, including the Caspian Sea.

41. In the context of overexploitation of capture fisheries in the region, the Conference stressed the importance of the work of FAO on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, in particular combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing.

42. The importance of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) and of gender aspects in fisheries and aquaculture was emphasized as well as FAO's support to the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). The need to revitalize the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC), modernize its rules of procedure, develop a project approach and involve more the Central Asian countries was also highlighted.

43. The CSOs called attention to the importance of the rights of the Small-Scale Fisherfolks (SSFs) and how regulations for the industrial fleets often jeopardized the fisheries of the SSFs.

III. Programme and Budget Matters

Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010–2011, Programme of Work and Budget for 2012–13 and Areas of Priority Action for the Region for the Biennium 2014–15 taking into account the discussions and recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions⁹

44. The Conference appreciated the lessons learned from implementation of the regional programme of work in the previous biennium and considered areas of priority action for FAO in the Europe and

⁷ ERC/12/INF/8 Rev.1

⁸ Paragraph 40 – 43 were not part of the draft endorsed report as the item was moved on the agenda from Thursday afternoon to Friday afternoon due to time constraints and therefore not part of the draft report as endorsed.

⁹ ERC/12/LIM/2 and ERC/12/INF/15

Central Asia region for the current and future biennia in the context of global trends and future challenges for the work of the Organization.

45. The Conference confirmed the regional results to be attained under the PWB 2012–13. In order to better align the priorities with the results and in view of the limited resources available it was recommended to indicate areas proposed to be de-emphasized.

46. The Conference welcomed the broad and inclusive strategic thinking process launched by the Director-General in January 2012 to determine the future strategic direction and priorities of the Organization. The Conference emphasized the importance of focusing the work of FAO on key challenges faced by countries so as to achieve measurable progress through the effective and efficient use of available resources on a limited number of activities, aligned with FAO's comparative advantage.

47. The Conference confirmed that the main global challenges are consistent with the conditions in the region, and agreed with the regional trends and challenges. It supported the six priorities for work in the region and requested that these be taken into account in reviewing the FAO Strategic Framework and preparing the Medium-Term Plan 2014–17:

- a) strengthening food security and nutrition;
- b) policy advice to governments in support of sustainable intensification for small farms;
- c) natural resource management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- d) control of animal, plant and foodborne pests and diseases;
- e) policy and institutional support for entry of Member States into regional and global trade and standard-setting bodies and organizations of regional economic cooperation;
- f) supporting and building global and regional public goods through applied research in the areas of food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

48. In reviewing the challenges and priorities for the region, the Conference emphasized: support to smallholder agriculture while managing natural resources in a more sustainable manner including reduction of post-harvest waste; more attention to fisheries and forestry issues; work on land degradation and improved land use; addressing nutrition and climate change; and mainstreaming gender in all activities.

49. The Conference urged FAO to further focus its work based on its comparative advantage, particularly in providing global public goods and policy advice based on its normative and analytical work. It underlined the essential functions of advocacy, communication, capacity development and knowledge-sharing.

50. The Conference requested FAO to prepare Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) as a tool for strategic delivery of assistance and country-specific capacity development, where relevant coordinated with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and in close collaboration with IFIs, civil society and the private sector.

51. The Conference encouraged FAO to facilitate increased collaboration at regional and subregional levels, including through cooperation and partnerships with public and private organizations, on transboundary pests and diseases, food safety, sustainable management of natural resources, and food price volatility and integration of smallholder farmers in value chains.

52. The Conference encouraged the ongoing implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, as well as the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests once formally adopted.

Update on the status and vision of Decentralization in the Region¹⁰

53. The Conference appreciated the documents and presentations on decentralization and considered the topic to be one of the most important to be dealt with at its 28th Session. It fully supported the endeavours to enhance the impact of the Organization through an improved and well-designed decentralized structure. It recognized the need for FAO to function as one organization with an appropriate balance between Headquarters, which should maintain a critical mass of technical expertise in order to continuously ensure normative work within the Organization, and a flexible and responsive country impact-centred network. It emphasized that decentralization efforts should not jeopardize the technical capacity at Headquarters and other locations or the ability to execute the agreed technical programmes and provide global public goods.

54. The Conference supported the emphasis on value for money by the increased use of cost-sharing agreements with host governments, the consideration of FAO offices hosting experts from research institutions and other organizations as well as secondments of external staff, while safeguarding FAO's neutrality and independence, and the efforts to ensure the presence of competent FAO country representatives, whose posts should be part of the career development and geographic rotation policies of the Organization.

55. The Conference agreed with the proposal to transfer responsibility, management and accountability for operations related to emergency and rehabilitation activities to the Decentralized Offices, in order to achieve a better integration of development, emergency and rehabilitation activities. It emphasized that this new arrangement requires the building of capacity in the field as well as oversight and audit procedures. It requested to be fully informed about the impacts and lessons learned as well as the costs involved in this transfer by the end of this biennium.

56. The Conference noted the REU proposals for positioning decentralized FAO resources in the region to achieve greater impact, including the proposition that FAO should establish two fully-fledged FAO Representations in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and two Assistant FAO Representative posts in the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan. With regard to the specific proposals for new decentralized arrangements in the region, the Conference supported the focus on the most needy countries. It also requested to address cross-cutting themes such as gender and climate change.

57. The Conference recommended to further consider the funding options including financing them from the REU budget, centralized funds (including extra-budgetary) or a combination of both, and to prepare an implementation plan for positioning FAO resources, both human and financial. It requested the Programme and Finance Committees in May 2012 on the basis of – to the extent possible – detailed and timely proposals from the Secretariat to consider the implications of the proposed changes and give appropriate recommendations for further decision to the 144th Session of the FAO Council in June 2012.

¹⁰ ERC/12/3 and ERC/12/INF/9

58. The Conference requested that information on two-way links, exchanges of experience and reporting procedures between Regional Offices and Headquarters should be presented before the next Council session.

IV. Other Matters

Multiyear Programme of Work (MYPOW)¹¹

59. The Conference reviewed the draft Multiyear Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2012-15 for the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, which is an instrument to enhance the role of the Regional Conferences and better integrate and feed their work with FAO Governing Bodies. The central role of the ECA as a technical preparatory body for the ERC is reflected through the submission of its technical recommendations to the ERC and the function of the ECA as a consultative body between the ERC sessions.

60. The Conference appreciated the efforts to develop the first MYPOW for framing the work of the Regional Conference and encouraged further refinement and elaboration with respect to its purpose and functions, specific work tasks of the Regional Conference related to the reference period, and inclusion of measurable indicators.

61. The Conference endorsed document ERC/12/4 for the MYPOW for 2012–2015 recommending further consultations between the Member States in the region and REU and in cooperation with partner organizations. It took into account the changes to be proposed in the FAO Strategic Framework and noted that the MYPOW will be updated with regard to the amended Rules of Procedures for the FAO Regional Conference for Europe.

Rules of Procedure for the Regional Conference for Europe

62. In the absence of a background document on this item as the Secretariat was not in a position to provide a final draft of the Rules of Procedures, the Assistant Director-General/ Regional Representative introduced issues on this item for discussion.

63. The Conference highlighted that the Rules of Procedure should reflect the new role of the Regional Conference as an integrated part of the FAO governance system including a reflection of the procedures for preparation of regional conferences and the clear reporting lines to the FAO Council and Conference. It stressed that the Rules of Procedure should also address the procedures for the possibility of the regional conference exercising oversight of the various regional bodies: the ECA, EIFAAC, Ecosystem and Fishery Management (EFM), EFC, GFCM, the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Central-Eastern Europe (NACEE), CACFish, the European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (ESCORENA) and others.

64. The Conference suggested that the role of the ECA would also be included in the upcoming evaluation of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia during 2012.

¹¹ ERC/12/4

Date and Place of the Twenty-ninth FAO Regional Conference for Europe

65. The Conference approved the invitation by Romania to host the next 38th European Commission on Agriculture and 29th Regional Conference for Europe in Romania in 2014.

66. The Conference took note of the proposal made by Turkey to host the 39th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture and the 30th Regional Conference for Europe in Turkey.

Adoption of the Report

67. The Conference adopted the draft report as presented by the Rapporteur on the basis of modifications and adjustments, which were made during the discussion of the draft report.

Closure of the Conference

68. On behalf of the Government of Azerbaijan, the Minister for Agriculture, His Excellency Ismat Abasov, thanked the participants for their contributions and inputs during the two days discussions.

69. In his closing remarks, the Director-General highlighted the importance of the numerous high-level delegations from the countries in the region and particularly the presence of representatives from the Central Asian countries. He expressed his satisfaction that the Conference had reaffirmed on the last day of its deliberations the commitment of all the countries of Europe and Central Asia to eradicate hunger and that it had also discussed the global challenges in the area of food security and agriculture. He highlighted the importance of the participation of the civil society representatives at the Regional Conference and stressed that this was part of FAO's efforts to incorporate new actors in the rural development debate, since civil society plays an important role in this context. He also thanked the Government of Azerbaijan for its great hospitality and His Excellency Ismat Abasov for his strong commitment to the preparation and implementation of the 28th Regional Conference for Europe.

Appendix A

Agenda

I. Introductory Items

1. Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Appointment of a Rapporteur:
for decision
2. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable: *for decision* (ERC/12/1 Rev.2 and ERC/12/INF/2 Rev.2)
3. Statement by the Director-General: (ERC/12/INF/4)
4. Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council (ERC/12/INF/16)
5. Statement by the Chairperson of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe (ERC/12/INF/5)
6. Outcomes of the 37th Session of the Committee on World Food Security and update of the CFS reform (ERC/12/INF/12 Rev.1; ERC/12/INF/13; ERC/12/INF/14 and CFS:2011/7)

II. REGIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICY AND REGULATORY ISSUES

7. (Ministerial Round Table) Policies for Food Security in the Region: Challenges and Perspectives – Food outlook towards 2050: *for discussion and decision*(ERC/12/2)
8. Summary of the outcomes of the debate of the Technical Commissions in the Region including the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA)
 - Report from the outcome of the debate of the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA): *for discussion and decision*(ERC/12/LIM/1- ERC/12/LIM/3)
 - Summary report of the recommendations of the European Forestry Commission (EFC) and Importance of Forestry for the Region: *for information* (ERC/12/INF/6 and ERC/12/INF/7 Rev.1)
 - Summary report of the recommendations of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission (EIFAC), the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission, and Importance of Fisheries for the Region: *for information* (ERC/12/INF/8 Rev 1)

III. PROGRAMME AND BUDGET MATTERS

9. Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011, Programme of Work and Budget for 2012-13 and Areas of Priority Action for the Region for the Biennium 2014–15 taking into account the discussions and recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions: *for decision* (ERC/12/LIM/2 and ERC/12/INF/15)
10. Update on the status and vision of Decentralization in the Region *for discussion and decision* (ERC/12/3) and (ERC/12/INF/9)

IV. OTHER MATTERS

11. Multiyear Programme of Work (MYPOW): *for decision*(ERC/12/4)
12. Rules of Procedure for the Regional Conference for Europe: *for decision*
13. Date and Place of the Twenty-ninth FAO Regional Conference for Europe: *for decision*
14. Any other business
Adoption of the Report
Closure of the Conference

Appendix B

List of Documents

ERC/12/1 Rev 2	Provisional Annotated Agenda
ERC/12/2	Policies for Food Security in the Region: Challenges and Perspectives – Food outlook towards 2050
ERC/12/3	Update on the Status and Vision of Decentralization in the Region
ERC/12/4	Multiyear Programme of Work (MYPOW)
<u>INF SERIES</u>	
ERC/12/INF/1 Rev 1	Information Note
ERC/12/INF/2 Rev 2	Provisional Timetable
ERC/12/INF/3 Rev 1	Provisional List of Documents
ERC/12/INF/4	Statement by the Director-General
ERC/12/INF/5	Statement by the Chairperson of the 27 th Regional Conference for Europe
ERC/12/INF/6	Summary Report of the Joint Sixty-ninth Session of the UNECE Timber Committee and the Thirty-sixth session of the FAO European Forestry Commission
ERC/12/INF/7 Rev 1	The Role of Forestry in a Changing World - A regional perspective
ERC/12/INF/8 Rev 1	Importance of Aquaculture and Fisheries for the Region including Summary of Recommendations from the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (EIFAAC) and the Central Asia and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission (CACFish)
ERC/12/INF/9	FAO Renewal – Transition to a More Dynamic Approach in 2012
ERC/12/INF/10	Provisional List of Delegates
ERC/12/INF/11	Declaration of Competence and Voting Rights submitted by the European Union
ERC/12/INF/12 Rev 1	CFS in the 2012 FAO Regional Conferences - Guidelines
ERC/12/INF/13	Global Strategic Framework of Food Security and Nutrition - Draft One
ERC/12/INF/14	Update on the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
ERC/12/INF/15	Global trends and future challenges for the work of the Organization
ERC/12/INF/16	Statement by the Independent Chairman of the FAO Council
CFS: 2011/7	Mapping Food Security and Nutrition Actions at Country Level

LIM SERIES

ERC/12/LIM/1	Report from the outcome of the debate of the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) on " <i>Land reform and farm performance in Europe: a 20 year perspective</i> "
ERC/12/LIM/2	Implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-2011, Programme of Work and Budget for 2012-13 and Areas of Priority Action for the Region for the Biennium 2014–15 taking into account the discussions and recommendations of the Regional Technical Commissions
ERC/12/LIM/3	Report from the outcome of the debate of the 37th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) on " <i>Women in Agriculture – Closing the Gender Gap for Development in Europe. The activities of the Working Party on Women and the Family in Rural Development</i> "

OD Series

- ERC/ 2012/DJ/1
- ERC/ 2012/DJ/2

Web Documents

- List of Participants and Observers
- Statement by the Director-General
- Statement by the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council
- Statement by the Chairperson of the 27th Regional Conference for Europe
- CSO Statement to the 28th Regional Conference for Europe