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ORGANIZATION DE L'UNITE
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• Addis Ababa •

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
FORTIETH ORDINARY SESSION
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
27 February-7 March 1984

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REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE JOINT OAU/FAO/WHO COMMISSION



INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Session of the Joint FAO/WHO/OAU Regional Food and Nutrition Commission for Africa was held in the Egyptian International Centre for Agriculture, Cairo, Egypt, on 24-26 October, 1983. It was the sequel to the Second Session held in Accra, Ghana, in December 1981. There are now 43 Member States of the Commission (Annex 1). The Third Session was convened by the FAO Director-General, on behalf of the three sponsoring organizations; the 43 Member States were invited to nominate a delegation. Three Liberation Movements recognized by OAU and several other agencies working in the field of food and nutrition were invited as observers. A total of 21 countries were represented at the Session.

2. At the Opening Ceremony addresses were given by :
- i) Mr. A.B. Cissé (Niger Vice-Chairman of the Second Session)
 - ii) H.E. the Minister of Health (Egypt), Dr. M.Z. Sabri.
 - iii) Mr. J.A.C. Davies, FAO Assistant Director General and Regional Representative for Africa (read by Dr. A. Abusineina, FAO Representative, Egypt)
 - iv) Dr. C.A.A. Quenum, WHO Regional Director for Africa, read by Dr. Ch. Randriamanana, WHO Regional Officer)
 - v) Dr. M.H. Rajabally, OAU Representative
 - vi) H.E. The Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Dr. Youssef Wali.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by representatives of diplomatic missions and several Ministries of the Government of Egypt.

3. Elections. The Officers elected were : Mr. F. Afifi (Egypt), Chairman; Mr. C.S. Chobokoane (Lesotho), Vice-Chairman; Mrs S.N. Kiyingi (Uganda) and Mr. J.M. Béké (Central African Republic), Rapporteurs.

4. Adoption of the Agenda. The agenda adopted is shown in Annex 7.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

5. Dr. E.O. Idusogie introduced the Report (see Annex 8). He pointed out that subregional workshops could not be organized on food and nutrition policy and programme formulation as envisaged, because of lack of funds. Therefore, an alternative approach was adopted, of collaborating directly with individual countries in the formulation of national food and nutrition policies and programmes. Programming missions were carried out in several countries - Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Uganda in 1982; Burundi, Rwanda and Zimbabwe in 1983. The results of these missions are described in the next section. Other areas of major effort were : participation in formulation of guidelines on child feeding (five countries), applied research projects (four countries) and food and nutrition development projects (three countries). During this period the Chairman of the Commission worked closely with the Secretariat, until his retirement in February 1983. Contact has been maintained with UNDP, WHO, FAO, and UNICEF offices in most of the countries visited, as well as with key national staff in those countries. A visit was also made to the People's Republic of China, on invitation from the Chinese Government. Six areas were identified as ones in which African countries could greatly benefit from Chinese experience and cooperation.

6. In the ensuing discussion the Secretariat specified the following main constraints : (i) excessive work load due to the number of visits to countries as well as work in the Secretariat itself; (ii) lack of definite contact points in countries; (iii) inadequate trained manpower in the countries; (iv) lack of financial support for the programme of work. Some clarification was requested on the reasons for China's success in food production. This is difficult to specify exactly because of differing agro-ecological, psycho-social

and political conditions. It was also pointed out that some TCD funds, as recommended by the working paper, do exist with various agencies (FAO, WHO, UNDP, UNICEF) if required.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS

7. Country Statements were given by Egypt; Lesotho and Niger.

8. The representative of the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture presented a paper on Progress in Research Development in Farming Systems and Crop Improvement at ITTA.*

GUIDELINES FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY AND PROGRAMME FORMULATION IN AFRICA

9. Dr. Bailey explained that the proposed outline for national food and nutrition policies and programmes (Appendix 1 of Annex 11) was the fruit of many years of experience of the sponsoring agencies and the Secretariat of the Commission. Unfortunately there is no global consensus among various agencies on a framework for such policies and programmes. The one proposed comprises two parts:

Part A - Food and nutrition situation and activities

Part B - Policies and programmes

Part A is based on the food and nutrition summaries made by the Commission secretariat and sponsoring agencies over the past 10 years. Part B is derived from the medium-term programme approach adopted by FAO and WHO. This procedure has now been carried out fully in four countries (Burundi, Guinea, Uganda and Zimbabwe) and partially in several others. The document resulting from a programming mission does not represent a finished product; it still remains to be thoroughly studied by government, adopted and then implemented. Some 30 countries

* Available on request from ITTA, Ibadan, Nigeria

these documents, the programme of work was approved. It was stressed by the FAO Assistant Director General/Regional Representative that the programme of work must be a joint effort and a team-work of national authorities with the Secretariat, not of the latter alone. Member States should give as much support as possible to the programme of work.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

15. The Commission wishes to thank heartily the Government of Egypt for the facilities placed at its disposal for holding the Third Session of the Commission in Cairo, and for the generous hospitality extended to the participants.

16. Food and nutrition programming missions should be continued in selected countries, as a key activity of the Secretariat. They should be conducted in line with FAO policies and priorities as formulated by Member States and incorporated in the Regional Food Plan for Africa, the Report of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, and the Lagos Plan of Action. The selection of countries should follow the criteria mentioned in paragraph 10. The Secretariat should maintain contact by correspondence and/or by exchange visits, with the countries already visited.

17. Special effort should be put on the following areas, and the necessary budgetary support obtained (particularly consultancy funds):

- i) national food and nutrition policy and programme formulation;
- ii) execution of, and training national teams for, rapid national food and nutrition surveys;

- iii) food and nutrition surveillance;
- iv) food self-sufficiency, food security;
- v) food storage and post-harvest development;
- vi) local cereal and legume mixtures for vulnerable groups;
- vii) national training courses in food and nutrition for planners;
- viii) integration of applied nutrition components in agricultural and rural development and primary health care programmes.

18. The Secretariat should identify promising programmes and projects in the areas mentioned above in various countries, and arrange multidisciplinary visits to such programmes when requested by Member States.

19. The sponsoring agencies should find ways and means to increase the participation of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in the on-going work of the Commission.

20. For the Fourth Session, the Secretariat should prepare a formal evaluation of the work of the Commission and of the Secretariat.

21. The Secretariat should take immediate steps to establish contact points, as already requested by the Second Session.

22. At the Fourth Session, Member States should present their National Food and Nutrition Policies and Programmes. The sponsoring agencies should seek special funds to cover the expenses of at least one delegate from each Member State at the Fourth Session.

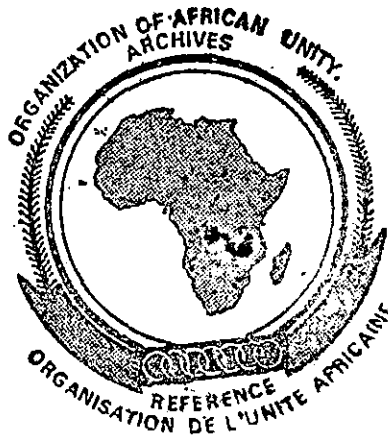
23. The document FAO/WHO/OAU FNAF/83/4 is adopted but should be regarded as the Programme of Work of the Commission rather than as a plan of work of the Secretariat. Member States should actively participate in the programme. In particular it is recommended that they set up multisectoral working groups to work on the food and nutrition policies and programme document, with the collaboration of national institutes of management.

24. The Secretariat was congratulated on the tremendous work it had carried out during the period 1982/83 considering the limited manpower it has. However, the delegates felt it necessary that the Secretariat should have a full-time FAO Secretary in order to ease the load on the present staff.

25. The sponsoring agencies should seek the collaboration and participation of UNICEF in the work of the Commission.

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Benin
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Burundi
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Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Comoros
Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
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