

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

FAO GENERAL STATEMENT TO FOURTH SESSION OF ECAFE IN
CONNECTION WITH THE RELATIONS BETWEEN
FAO AND ECAFE

1. I have the honour to convey the good wishes of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the success of this Fourth Session of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in the common task of promoting economic reconstruction and development throughout the region.
2. During the past year the state of food and agriculture throughout the region has improved, though average per capita production and consumption are still substantially below pre-war levels and there remains much to be done. Developments during the year are described in the FAO Report on Food and Agriculture Conditions in Asia and the Far East, 1948, which is before you as a Commission document. This is the first of the annual reports on the state of food and agriculture in Asia and the Far East, which FAO has agreed to prepare.
3. During the year also, FAO has engaged in many activities in the area which, in the aggregate, will contribute greatly to increased production of farm, fishery and forest products, improve nutrition and promote the well-being of the people. Perhaps even more important, the foundations have been laid for future activities, which will be undertaken as a cooperative venture between member countries and FAO, and between FAO and ECAFE.
4. In its relations with member governments, FAO has followed two principles: (1) to promote and assist member governments in establishing organizations through which they may cooperate with each other; and to ~~service these;~~ (2) to assist member governments in planning and implementing production and nutritional programmes.
5. Having regard to the necessity for a division of labour between ECAFE and FAO and the nature of the work to be done, the Commission will no doubt wish to take into account the activities and organizational arrangements of

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FAO within the region, in planning its own activities and organization. I, therefore, ask the indulgence of the Commission in briefly outlining the work of FAO in 1948 and plans for 1949.

ORGANIZATION

6. Regional Office Established

A Regional Office of FAO has now been established at Bangkok and will be in full operation in 1949. This will strengthen the relations between FAO and member countries, expedite service to these countries, promote joint action among them, and coordinate the activities of the organization. It will facilitate consultations between the staff of ECAFE and FAO, and such joint activities as are appropriate.

7. International Rice Council

As reported at the Third Session of ECAFE, the Baguio Rice Meeting held in March 1948 recommended the establishment of a Rice Council. Membership of the Rice Council is open to all government members of FAO, and the Council is to meet once a year. The constitution is to come into force as soon as ten member countries of FAO accept it, representing not less than half of the world's production of rice. In order to avoid confusion in terminology the Interim Coordinating Committee on International Commodity Agreements has suggested that the name be changed to "International Rice Board". This does not affect the status of the Council. The seat of the Council is to be located at the same place as the Far Eastern Regional Office of FAO; and its secretariat is to be provided by FAO. Very close coordination will therefore result between the activities of the Council and of the Regional Office.

8. Except in matters relating to international trade, the functions of the Council will include: formulating and keeping under review all problems involved in the production, distribution and conservation of rice; promoting and coordinating research; encouraging the mobilization and use of scientific personnel; undertaking cooperative projects; assembling, collecting and disseminating information; establishing committees and calling meetings of experts; and, through FAO, recommending such national and international action as may be necessary.

9. Rice Investigation Committee

The Baguio Rice Meeting also proposed the establishment of a Far East Rice Investigation Committee consisting of government appointed scientists and technicians from each country concerned. The purpose of this committee is to undertake a planned programme of investigations. Its establishment is awaiting the working out of administrative arrangements with the Rice Council and the Regional Office.

10. Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council

The Fisheries Conference held at Baguio in February 1948 recommended the establishment of an Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council. This has come into existence by the acceptance of a draft agreement made at Baguio by France, Philippines, India, Netherlands, Siam and the United States. The Council is to meet at least once a year and is to be located at the Regional Office of FAO. Its functions are to include: the encouragement and coordination of research and the application of improved methods; assembling and disseminating biological and technical information; recommending and undertaking cooperative research and development projects; and promoting the standardization of scientific equipment, techniques and nomenclature. FAO is to provide the secretariat to the Council.

11. Baguio Nutrition Committee

The Baguio meeting was the first occasion on which a regional conference or committee on nutrition had been called by FAO. The Committee devoted special attention to methods of improving the nutritive value of rice and rice diets, food composition, feeding of vulnerable groups, and nutrition education. Its report provides the basis for an effective regional programme to eliminate waste in rice, improve nutrient content by better milling practices, and raise nutritional standards by improved treatment of rice and the use of suitable supplements and substitutes. It is proposed that a committee of experts on nutrition and allied subjects from countries in the region should be convened periodically.

12. Other Activities in 1948

Apart from those outlined, the largest single undertaking in the area is the system of advisory services commenced in China in December 1947 under the UNRRA-transfer fund. Some 26 specialists have been operating under the scheme, which is described in greater detail in the appendix to the FAO Report on Food and Agricultural Conditions in Asia and the Far East, 1948. Late in 1947 a Mission consisting of 9 members was sent to Siam and reported in March. On the request of the Siamese Government, a specialist had been procured on a six months' assignment to advise on rinderpest control. FAO also participated with ECAFE in the Joint Working Party on Agricultural Requisites. The report of this working party is separately before the Commission.

13. Many of the general activities of FAO in technical aspects of agriculture are of special interest to the region. In August 1947 a meeting on control of infestation in stored products was held in London; and in October-November 1948 a meeting on the control of

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rinderpest was held in Nairobi. Dr. S. C. Cheng, and associates, of China presented two of the main papers at the meeting.

14. During the year, a member of the Forestry Division visited countries throughout the region, and established contacts with government officials, forestry administrators and technicians, logging, sawmilling and wood-using industries, and port authorities, in preparation for a Conference to be held in 1949.

15. At the Baguio Fisheries meeting, a number of working committees were established. Pending the inaugural meeting of the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council, these committees have done a great deal of preparatory work. This has been concerned primarily with the collection of information on the fisheries projects and programmes in the area, and the preparation of registers of institutions, personnel, vessels, equipment and literature. These registers will be maintained and kept up to date as a basis for authoritative reviews of current information. In October, the Committee convened a meeting at Buitenzorg to consider the problems of the Celebes and Sulu seas and adjacent waters.

16. Officers of the Fisheries Division have visited countries within the region to consult and advise on problems of production, marketing and distribution. Special surveys have been made in Hong Kong and Batavia. In China, assistance has been given to BOTRA in the development of its research programme; and two officers have been sent as a mission to Siam to survey the fishery problems of that country.

17. The work of FAO in Economics, Marketing and Statistics is of importance to the ECAFE area in a number of directions. In addition to preparing the report on Food and Agriculture Conditions in Asia and the Far East, the Organization provided statistical information to the ECAFE secretariat on agricultural production, trade and consumption, to be used in the preparation of the ECAFE Annual Report on the Economic Situation in Asia and the Far East.

18. In addition, a number of economic and statistical bulletins and publications are of special interest to countries within the region. These include the monthly bulletins of statistics, the Yearbook of Food, Agricultural and Trade Statistics, Food Situation Reports, the World Fibre Review and bulletins on Rice, Wheat and Sugar.

19. Between October 1947 and September 1948 an officer of FAO spent full time in the Far East advising governments on the improvement of techniques of crop reporting, coordination of statistical work in the field of food and agriculture and other statistical problems. Upon completion of this assignment, the officer went to China to assist in a training school for

statistical officials from various Chinese provinces. This school, which is sponsored by the Chinese Government, places special emphasis on census methods in preparation for the 1950 World Census of Agriculture.

20. Following on the recommendation of the Baguio meeting that FAO "initiate studies to develop a uniform basis for defining rice eating populations and for making international comparisons of rice consumption", an expert on rice statistics was engaged who has just completed a "Rice Statistical Survey of Southeast Asia". This includes recommendations for the revision of rice statistics.

21. I.E.F.C. is represented in the region by a Sub-Committee on Rice for Southeast Asia for the primary purpose of preparing monthly programmes for shipment of rice from sources in Southeast Asia. In addition to its operational functions, the Sub-Committee is an extremely valuable source of information on export availabilities, shipping performances, ration levels and other matters. Early in 1948 it completed an exhaustive study of the smuggling problem, and assisted member governments in the development of control measures. The Sub-Committee has succeeded in bringing about a high degree of cooperation among member countries in promoting the orderly flow of rice from surplus to deficit areas within the region.

22. Programme in 1949

The FAO programme for 1949 will include many general projects which are of especial interest to countries within the region; but, in addition, special mention may be made of the following. Work already commenced on the cataloguing of superior genetic stocks of wheat will be developed, to be followed by similar work for rice and cattle. Much preliminary work has been done, and will be continued, on locust control in the Near East and the Americas and an historical analysis of locust plagues in China is being made. In these activities, emphasis will be placed on information which will be useful in the planning of national programmes in other countries. It is anticipated that the services given in China under the UNRRA-transfer fund will be continued, and a meeting on rinderpest control is tentatively planned. An expert meeting on cooperative organization is also proposed.

23. A major activity during 1949 will be the holding of a Conference on Forestry and Timber Utilization, probably in February or March. The provisional agenda covers such matters as immediate measures to meet local needs; measures to expand production and distribution; conservation; protection and development of forest resources; improved utilization of forest resources. In conformity with the request of ECAFE that special attention be given to standardization of timber, this problem is included in the agenda of the Conference.

/24. During

24. During the year, the regular activities of the Organization in the collection and publication of statistics and other information of interest to the ECAFE region will continue. In addition, it is planned to make available a statistician for full time service in the Far East to assist in eliminating discrepancies in agricultural statistics, improving methodology and improving the flow of agricultural statistics, thereby assisting governments in preparations for the 1950 Census. It is also planned to hold a training school for statisticians in Southeast Asia. The tentative plans provide for several months of intensive instruction and field work.

25. It is proposed also to transfer at least two economists to the Far Eastern Regional Office to assist individual governments in analysing their food and agriculture situations and developing programmes, and targets for production, consumption and trade. There is also under consideration the holding of a regional meeting of government representatives and analysts (a) to analyse the state of food and agriculture and policy questions arising out of this analysis; and (b) to consider and integrate national plans and programmes in the interests of a balanced expansion of production of essential commodities. It is anticipated also that further programmes of work will arise out of the report of the Joint Working Party on Agricultural Requisites.

26. In order to follow up the recommendation of the Baguio meeting the Nutrition Division is sending a staff member to visit countries in the region over the period November 1948 - March 1949 and discuss measures taken or planned in pursuance of the recommendations of the meeting and bring to attention the desirability of establishing national nutritional organizations where such do not exist. It is planned to convene a further meeting of nutrition workers from countries within the region, in 1949 or early 1950.

27. These activities are additional to those which will be undertaken by the Rice Council and the Fisheries Council, or which may be promoted during the year as the Regional Office develops and member countries indicate their special needs.

28. The meetings and conferences proposed, and the establishment of the Regional Office, the Rice Council, the Rice Investigation Committee and the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council will enable the needs of member countries to be clearly formulated, and provide the means by which coordinated plans to meet them can be more effectively prepared and implemented through cooperation between member countries; and between them and FAO. They will also provide closer opportunities for consultation and joint activities with ECAFE, more especially in linking the development of industry, transport and other services to the requirements of agricultural expansion.

29. Having regard to the magnitude and wide range of problems requiring attention in relation to the combined resources of the two organizations, FAO is impressed with the importance of cooperation between them. FAO considers that the resolution of the Sixth Session of ECOSOC and the exchange of correspondence between the Executive Secretary of ECAFE and the Director-General of FAO provide a framework within which continued collaboration between the two organizations can be designed. On its part FAO is to prepare an annual report to ECAFE on the food and agriculture situation in Asia and the Far East. In addition, it appears to FAO that collaboration can continue to be fruitfully developed by (a) the exchange of documents and advice on activities, (b) mutual representation by observers at regional conferences or meetings, (c) representations by each on matters coming within the field of responsibility of the other, (d) the joint sponsoring of regional meetings or conferences on matters of concern to both organizations, and (e) where appropriate, various forms of joint activity.
