

The First Conference on Food and Agriculture, convened at Hot Springs, Virginia, in 1943, took the initial action toward the creation of FAO by setting up an Interim Commission to draft a specific plan for a permanent organization in the field of food and agriculture. Then at Quebec City on October 16, 1945, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was formally created and temporary headquarters were established at Washington, D.C. Six years later, in 1951, the Organization moved into its present permanent headquarters in Rome.

In 1945, the FAO Constitution was signed by 42 governments; in 1960, FAO had 81 members and, in 1967, its membership rose to 116 member nations and three associate members.

As of October 31, 1967, staff employed by the FAO under either permanent or fixed-term appointments stood at 5,301. Of these, 2,957 were in the professional and higher categories and 2,344 in the general-service category. Of those in the professional and higher categories, 1,858 were technical-assistance field experts. The FAO annual budget increased from \$5 million in 1946 to \$30 million in 1968. The FAO's total expenditures increased even more rapidly as it received funds from the UN Development Programme, the Freedom-from-Hunger Campaign and from the various joint activities with other UN agencies.

The FAO is organized into five major departments, which include fisheries, economics and social affairs, and the technical department (agriculture, forestry and nutrition). In addition, there are six regional offices.

From its inception, the FAO has served as the organizing and co-ordinating agency which brought together representatives of national governments and scientific bodies to review and exchange information, to study problems of common interest and to plan action programmes within the whole range of food and agriculture including nutrition, forestry and fisheries. The central body of activities conducted in response to this assignment of duties and responsibilities is known as the FAO's Regular Programme. It is the programme of activities, services and projects determined by the FAO Conference each biennium.

The Regular Programme is financed by annual payments from member nations. The amount of these payments is established in accordance with the scale of contributions determined by the Conference. This scale of contributions, as for other organizations in the United Nations family, is derived from the United Nations scale of assessments. It is based on a formula which takes into consideration a number of factors such as gross national product, population, standard of living, etc., and so recognizes the wide differences in the ability of different nations to pay the costs of conducting the FAO's programme. The assessment of each member nation is expressed as a percentage of the whole budget.

Scope

The task assigned to the FAO by its member nations, as described in the preamble to its Constitution, includes raising levels of nutrition and securing improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of all food and agricultural products, with particular reference to bettering the condition of