

REFERENCE PAPERS

doc
CA1
EA9
R121
ENG
1968
April

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères

JUL 19 2004

Return to Departmental Library
Retourner à la bibliothèque du Ministère

No. 121

(April 1968)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

(Written by Frank Shefrin, Secretary,
Canadian Interdepartmental FAO Committee)

The Food and Agriculture Organization serves agriculture in the modern world by encouraging the growth, development and use of essential information, science and research, and by bringing together government officials and policy makers for consultations leading to international action and arrangements to encourage improved agricultural production practices and to facilitate world business in agriculture. The work which the FAO is called on to do includes assisting governments in:

- (a) the establishment of planning machinery;
- (b) the training of personnel;
- (c) the formulation, improvement and implementation of their development plans;
- (d) the determination of guidelines for agricultural policy which take due account of resource potentialities and export possibilities.

Essentially, the entire operation is aimed at transferring knowledge and techniques to developing countries in order to enable them to plan rationally, to regulate their economic and social environment, and to build up trained cadres of their own. There are many difficulties to be overcome before these techniques of action can be perfected.

History

Until 1945, when the Food and Agriculture Organization -- one of the 14 Specialized Agencies of the United Nations -- was established, no really concerted international effort had ever been launched against world-wide hunger.

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

rural populations. Since most of the population in developing countries is rural, the developing world looks primarily to the FAO as a most important instrument for the fulfillment of its development objectives.

Functions

Article I of the FAO's Constitution defines the functions of the Organization as follows:

- (1) It shall collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture. In this Constitution, the term "agriculture" includes fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products.
- (2) It shall promote and, where appropriate, shall recommend national and international action with respect to:
 - (a) scientific, technological, social and economic research relating to nutrition, food and agriculture;
 - (b) the improvement of education and administration relating to nutrition, food and agriculture, and the spread of public knowledge of nutritional and agricultural science and practice;
 - (c) the conservation of natural resources and the adoption of improved methods of agricultural production;
 - (d) the improvement of the processing, marketing and distribution of food and agricultural products;
 - (e) the adoption of policies for the provision of adequate agricultural credit, national and international;
 - (f) the adoption of international policies with respect to agricultural commodity arrangements.
- (3) It shall also be the function of the FAO:
 - (a) to furnish such technical assistance as governments may request;
 - (b) to organize, in co-operation with the governments concerned, such missions as may be needed to assist them to fulfill the obligations arising from their acceptance of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture and of this Constitution.

Implementation of the Programmes

The methods employed by the FAO must be those which are most effective in assisting governments in performing their own functions and the Organization cannot in any way assume the responsibilities of governments for carrying out those functions. Thus, the FAO's methods are designed to meet these conditions and include the following:

- (1) Provision of international forums;
- (2) preparing and publishing documents;
- (3) holding technical and economic meetings;
- (4) sending survey missions to study the needs of countries;
- (5) sending individual experts or groups of experts to countries.

Field Programmes

When the FAO was set up at the end of the Second World War, many people thought that international exchange of knowledge alone was the answer to world food and agricultural problems -- with a little technical information, provided from a world centre, any country could solve its own problems.

During the last 12 years, there has been a significant reorientation in the FAO's role in assisting developing countries. From being solely an advisory body, the FAO has also become an operational organization assisting countries in preparing development plans, helping to execute major projects, providing some of the backing for these projects and aiding countries in obtaining finance for the largest projects of national development.

This change in approach became possible at the end of 1950 with the establishment of the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. Since the development of agriculture is the main preoccupation of most developing countries, it was inevitable that a major part should be carried out by the FAO.

The FAO now serves as executing agency for a larger number of projects assisted by the special fund sector (pre-capital investment activities) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) than any other participating organization, namely 39.6 per cent of the total in number and 38.4 per cent in cost. It has been responsible since 1960 for 308 such projects, to which UNDP allocated \$295 million while aided governments contributed about \$360 million. Of the 308 projects, the FAO completed 58, costing \$35,826,417.

Similarly, as indicated above, the FAO is the executing agency for a number of projects under the technical assistance component of UNDP. A total of more than \$135 million was allocated to such projects between 1950 and 1967 and about 5,000 technical-assistance projects had been carried out. Regionally, the 287 projects which had been assigned as of January 1967 were distributed as follows: Africa, 100; the Americas, 83; Asia and Far East, 62; Europe, 19; Near East, 22; interregional, 1.

The FAO's field experts are drawn from all over the world and sent to assisted countries at their invitation. These men and women came from 100 countries, including Canada, and have worked in more than 100 countries and territories. They work side by side with government officials, farmers, foresters and fishermen, demonstrating and guiding them in the task of developing resources and increasing harvests in climatic conditions that range

from the steaming tropics of Africa to the freezing slopes of the Andes. When nationals of the recipient countries acquire the skills and experience enabling them to carry on unaided, the FAO withdraws its experts. It should be noted that all projects are carried out in full co-operation with the recipient countries that are making available national personnel, building sites, material, local equipment, supplies, services and other facilities.

To sum up, the primary aim of the FAO's field programmes is to assist governments to prepare their national development programmes to make the most effective use of limited resources and to help build up national forces to deal with all the problems of development.

It was, however, recognized that technical assistance, on whatever scale, is not the whole answer to the development of agriculture; capital is also needed. This led to the joint programming by the FAO and the IBRD.

The FAO-IBRD Programme was established in April 1964. About 180 joint missions have been sent to all parts of the world and a total of \$330 million in loans and credits have been made by the IBRD to agricultural development programmes. The Programme advises on the investment possibilities of agricultural-development projects and assists governments in preparing submissions of projects for back financing.

The FAO is also developing co-operative activities with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

The FAO's efforts were further strengthened in 1963 when the World Food Programme went into operation. This Programme, which the FAO sponsors jointly with the United Nations, uses food, services and cash pledged by member nations of the FAO and the UN to support national development programmes, both social and economic. In the years 1963-67 inclusive, it has committed more than \$250 million for 264 development projects in 64 countries. The foods have been used in a variety of ways--to support settlers on new lands while they await their first crops, to pay workers building roads, digging irrigation channels, planting trees in afforestation schemes and as an investment in the future by feeding nursing mothers, children and students at schools and universities.

The FAO also operates programmes jointly with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The FAO also carries out field programmes with funds provided by governments and organizations to the Freedom-from-Hunger Campaign, and by several governments which support special training activities and associate-expert schemes. The FFHC was launched in 1960 with the purpose of increasing international awareness of the problems of hunger and malnutrition, and of encouraging voluntary action on the part of individuals and groups contributing toward the solution of this problem. National committees have been set up in over 80 countries. These committees carry out a wide variety of educational and informational activities and organize support for action.

During 1967, there was increased co-operation between the FAO and major industrial firms with the aim of expanding industries related to agriculture in the developing countries. This FAO Industry Co-operative Programme established in 1966, whose Committee is composed of senior industrialists, seeks to mobilize the managerial ability, technical competence and capital resources of industry, implementing in particular the FAO's pre-investment field work, especially in agricultural processing and agriculturally-oriented industries.

Commodity Policies

The Conference in Quebec, in 1945 gave the FAO broad responsibilities in the economic policy field. Over the years, the FAO has provided the forum for governments to consider a world food board and an international commodity clearing-house. Member countries of the FAO organized a Committee on Commodity Problems and a host of commodity study groups covering grains, fats and oils, jute and hard fibres, citruses, cocoa and bananas. The FAO and its member governments worked out the principles of surplus disposal which provided guidelines for surplus disposal of agricultural products in a manner which minimized damage to commercial trade. It spelled out the guiding principles for stabilization of farm products. These principles were also an attempt to provide guidelines to member countries, to make sure the price support legislation in one country was not at the expense of farmers in another country.

Canada and the FAO

Canada is one of the founding members of the FAO and the World Food Programme. It has contributed financial resources, food and technical experts to both of these organizations. Canada is the fifth largest contributor to the FAO -- next to the United States, Britain, France and Germany. Its share for the years 1968 and 1969 is \$1,236,129 (U.S.) per annum or 4.13 per cent of the total budget. Its original contribution in 1946 was \$126,500 (U.S.). Canada is also the second largest contributor to the World Food Programme. Its contribution has risen from \$2.3 million (U.S.) a year during 1963-65 to \$10 million a year for 1969-70.

Canadians serving as FAO experts have come from the federal and provincial civil services and from the universities and industry. The scope of their activities is shown in the few examples given below:

- Veterinarians - Turkey, serving on a team fighting foot-and-mouth disease.
- Home economists - in Ghana and Sierra Leone, developing improved home and family living programmes.
- Grain storage expert - Turkey.
- Consultant on forestry and forestry industries - Ecuador.
- Expert on wildlife management - Cameroun
- Forestry economics expert - Turkey
- Instructor at the National Seminar on Farm Broadcasting - Turkey.
- Technical officer (groundwater) - Indonesia.
- Forestry officer (Logging) - Republic of China.
- Animal health officer - Lebanon.
- Ecologist - Sudan.
- Forestry technician (sawdoctor) Guyana.

Masterfisherman (engineer) - East Pakistan.
Technical officer (range economy) - Kenya.
Forestry officer (sawmilling) - Malaysia.
Animal production officer (livestock improvement) - Kenya.
Nutritionist - Swaziland.
Agricultural officer (applied physiology) - U.A.R.
Fisheries officer (vessel and gear) - Barbados.
Animal production officer (animal nutrition) - Iran.
Technical officer (soil and water management) - Iran.
Technical officer (plant nutrition - fertilizer use) - Malaysia.
Nutrition officer (education and training) - Ceylon.
Home economics officer - Nigeria.
Animal production officer (dairy cattle husbandry) - Iraq.
Nutrition officer (fruit and vegetable technology) - Greece.
Technical officer (dry farming) - Tunisia.
Land water management specialist - India.

Canadians also served on a number of FAO expert panels such as: Panel of Experts on Integrated Pest Control; Working Party of Experts on Pesticide Residues; Seminar of Experts to Advise on Soil Map of the World Project; Expert Panel of Nutrition; and Expert Panel on Blood Group Scientists; Advisory Committee on Marine Resources Research; Advisory Committee on Forestry Education; FAO-WHO Expert Group on Vitamin Requirements.

Canada continues to be active both in its support of the FAO and its participation in the FAO. It has been a member of the Council, the Committee on Commodity Problems, the Fisheries Committee, the Sub-Committee on Surplus Disposal and the Group on Grains since their inception and has participated in the Study Groups on Fats and Oils, Bananas and Hard Fibres, as well as Groups involved in food standard work. Canadians served as Chairman of the FAO Conference and the UN-FAO World Food Programme Pledging Conference, Chairman of the Fisheries Committee, Chairman of the Committee on Commodity Problems, First Vice-Chairman of the Council, Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the North American Forestry Commission, and as chairmen of various working parties.

Canada recognizes the role of the Food and Agriculture Organization. It also recognizes the need of the FAO to be flexible, to adapt itself to changing conditions and to meet new challenges. Canada's contribution has matched the growing responsibilities of the FAO in the war against hunger and in the struggle to attain freedom from want.

DOCS
CA1 EA9 R121 ENG
1968 April
Shefrin, Frank
Food and Agriculture Organization
16389746

LIBRARY E A / BIBLIOTHÈQUE A E



3 5036 01063646 5