



FAO IN THE FRONT LINE OF DEVELOPMENT

IN PREPARATION OF WORLD FOOD DAY 1994

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Global Perspective

On 16 October 1994 FAO will celebrate 49 years of service to human-kind and in Bangladesh preparations are already well advanced by the Ministry of Agriculture's national Committee for the celebration on that date of World Food Day — the theme for this current year being **WATER FOR LIFE**.

channelled or alternatively made available through FAO trust-fund arrangements directly with the donor governments concerned.

The vision of FAO's founding members, of enabling all the world's peoples to eat well and have a satisfactory standard of living remains as valid an objective today as in 1945. The four tasks assigned to FAO in its Constitution to assist Member Nations in the achievement of that objective are: collecting, analysing, interpreting and disseminating

Nowhere else is there an accumulation of global information on food and agriculture that compares with FAO's. Not only does the Organization have the widest information bases, but all countries have free access to them.

information on nutrition, food and agriculture; providing Member Nations with a forum for dialogue and joint work with a view to drawing up common policies in these areas; providing them with policy advice and recommendations for elaborating and implementing their national policies and finally, furnishing them, if requested, with technical advice.

During five decades, much has been achieved. World agricultural production has grown at a rate never before attained

in history. Global policies and approaches have been developed to deal with global problems. And international actions on many fronts and in many countries of the world have certainly mitigated distress and saved millions of lives. The world community can indeed derive some satisfaction from its achievements during this period. However, as we all prepare later this week, to celebrate yet another World Food Day and as we look forward to FAO's 50th Anniversary next year, it has to be

output, making effective use of scientific and technical progress;

— to safeguard natural resources on which humanity depends for its very own survival; and

— to ensure a socially fairer distribution of the fruits of growth.

All individual countries, regional groups and international agencies have been called upon to play their role.

First and foremost, governments of developing countries will have to adopt efficient policies and programmes to foster agricultural production. They need to re-allocate their means, however meagre, to invest in agricultural and rural development.

Second, international financing institutions and bilateral agencies will have to redirect their funds in favour of the agricultural and rural sector including investment in basic infrastructure.

Third, industrialised nations should encourage easier access to their markets for agricultural commodities from developing countries.

From the FAO side a major new programme on Food Production and Food Security will give priority to low-income, food-deficit countries and will focus on practical pro-

jects at field level. Already, in support of this initiative, FAO and UNDP have announced a concerted global drive to achieve sustainable food security — recognising the pressing need to develop resilient farming and agro-forestry systems that can support higher yields incorporating agro-ecological methods to enhance soil fertility, improve water management and manage pests through integrated approaches.

Priority will also be given to another new FAO programme

to gear up response to emergencies faced by Member Nations from transboundary movements of pests and diseases of both plants and animals initially focusing on rinderpest and desert locusts.

Other FAO programmes are also being strengthened to meet the new challenges in the fields of genetic resources, forestry and fisheries with emphasis on the use of proven technology to raise the performance of production systems whilst also addressing environmental concerns to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural resource base. Water of course, is one of these resources and while its quantity remains finite, the quality of water is diminishing — in some areas rapidly. Hence the need to highlight these issues and the choice of 'Water for Life' as the theme for this year's World Food Day.

What is World Food Day?

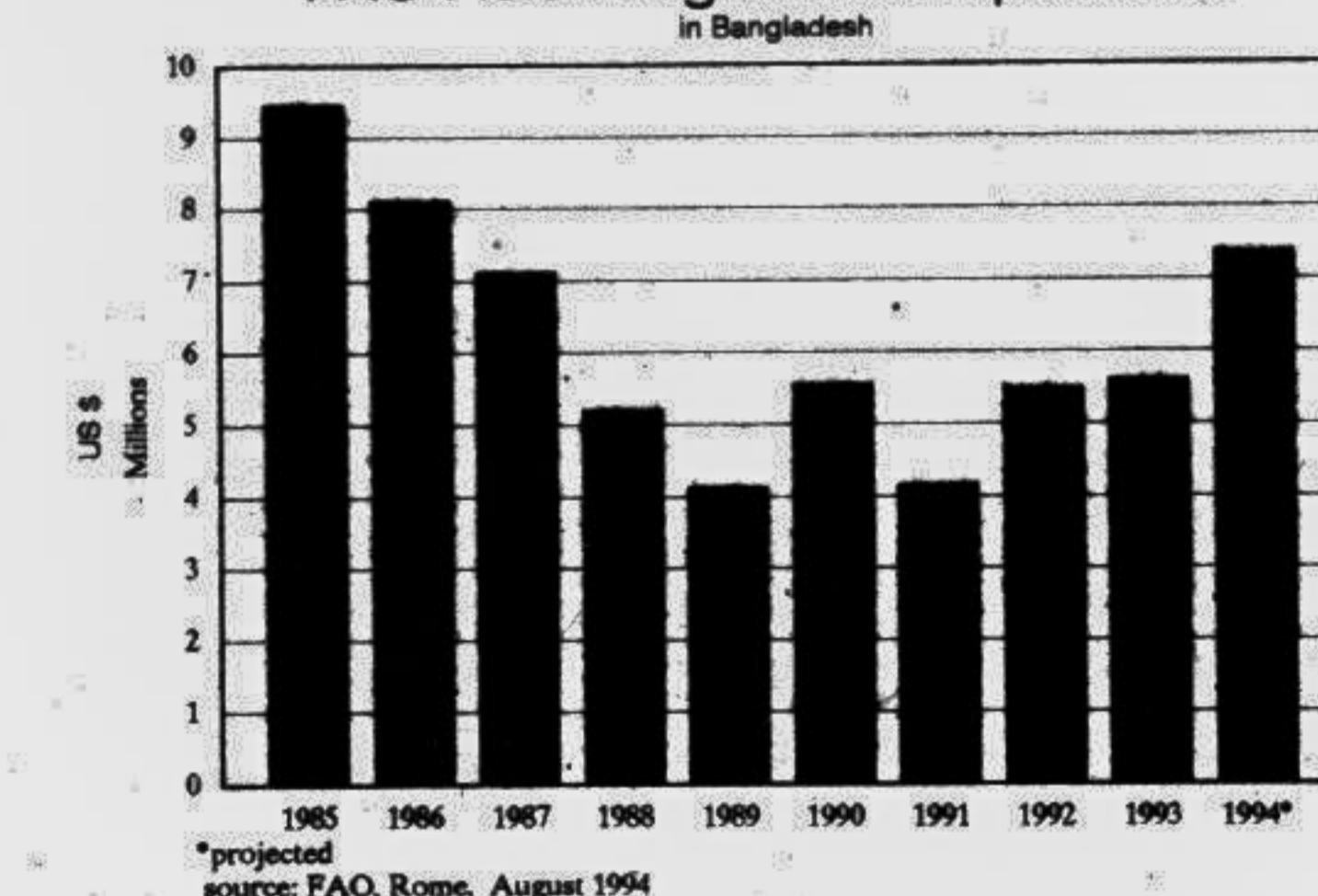
World Food Day was born from quite a simple idea, one to which others were subsequently grafted. How could we make the public more aware of the extent of the food problem in the world and develop a sense of national and international solidarity in the fight against poverty and its disastrous consequences? How could we express better our recognition of and respect for those men and women whose unremitting labour produces food for humanity? As a mark of homage, in one and the same celebration, to the foresight of our founding fathers and to those working on the land throughout the world, on 25 November 1979 the Conference of FAO unanimously decided to institute World Food Day, which would be celebrated each year on 16 October.

Water for life

The Earth, once it was seen from space, became known as the Blue Planet because of the colour imparted to it by water. It is no coincidence that this Blue Planet is, as far as we can tell, the only one to support life, at least in our solar system. Water and life are inseparable. In developing countries, most of the water available is used for agriculture. The focus is on those water issues that directly affect the production of food and the quality of rural life — issues of particular concern to FAO.

Jacques Diouf
Director-General
FAO

FAO Field Programme Expenditure



*projected source: FAO, Rome, August 1994

by 1989 but from 1990 onwards the decline was followed by a period of consolidation and expansion and as shown in the graph below total delivery in 1994 is currently projected to exceed US\$7 million. The major part (\$6.3 per cent) of the current programme is funded through UNDP with trust fund assistance and the FAO/TCP programme representing 14 per cent and 3 per cent of total delivery, respectively. Compared with other countries of the Asia and Pacific Region the FAO field programme in Bangladesh as of 1993 was the third largest in dollar terms being exceeded only by China and Pakistan.

Highlights of Current Programmes:

FAO is currently providing assistance to ten national projects as well as to 29 regional projects in which Bangladesh is participating. Nineteen of these projects are funded by UNDP; 16 projects through Trust Fund arrangement; and 4 projects are funded from FAO/TCP resources.

In the crop agriculture sector FAO is supporting the Ministry of Agriculture's Accelerated Cereal Production Programme (ACPP) with a core project to bring to farmers demonstrations of new technologies for irrigated agriculture. It is complemented by supporting projects in policy formulation and planning and integrated pest management. The core project (entitled Thana Cereal Technology Identification and Transfer Project: TCTTI) has as its main objective to increase farm productivity through the identification and extension of improved cereal technologies. It is designed to promote intensive, diverse and sustainable rice-based cropping systems which will utilize water resources in an optimum manner and reduce the need for food

imports.

Also in the crop sector FAO is assisting a large-scale field-oriented programme in horticulture research and development. With investment and TA inputs funded by ADB and UNDP respectively this Government project implements its activities around 16 Horticulture Demonstration and Training Centres (HDTTC) of the Department of Agriculture Extension and 9 Horticulture Development Centres (HDC) of the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation each being developed as a nucleus for direct farmer training and extension activities. So far, more than 3,000 growers, 125 technical staff of DAE and BADC, 250 traders, wholesalers, private marketing managers and exporters have been trained. While the major thrust of the project is to improve the qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of fruit, vegetable and spice crops production in order to improve the nutritional status of rural as well as urban populations the project is also laying an R&D foundation for future export possibilities.

In the forestry sector, FAO is engaged in supporting the Forestry Department in the development and implementation of social forestry programmes and in the development of a multisectoral integrated management system for the Sundarbans ecology. The latter project is designed to conduct mangrove ecosystem studies and to develop a long-term sustainable multiple-use plan to fully integrate the conservation, management and development of the several resources of the Sundarbans especially forest produce, fish, shrimp and crabs, wildlife, honey, tourism and recreation. The project is developing a system for monitoring the Sundarbans

A World Free from Hunger



Director-General Jacques Diouf Proposes 'Re-invigoration' of FAO

Elected in November last year, Dr Jacques Diouf of Senegal took up the post of FAO Director General in January 1994 calling for a "New Green Revolution" and for renewed commitment and allocation of resources to tackle the problems of poverty and malnutrition. Dr Diouf — formerly Ambassador to the UN and who held senior international positions with several agencies including IDRC and West African Central Bank — has stressed that FAO and its Member Nations "cannot accept the human tragedy of 800 million people without adequate food", emphasizing that FAO and the world community must face up to the challenge of feeding 9 billion people by the year 2030. He sees the need for "reinvigoration" of FAO to deal effectively with the global problems of food and agriculture "for the end of this century and beyond." Already the Director General has obtained Member Countries' approval for the setting up of Special Programmes to promote food security and to control transboundary agricultural pests and is also reorganising the agency to ensure effective follow-up to the Rio Summit Agenda 21 issues under a new Department of Sustainable Development. A new Technical Cooperation Department is also being set up to enable FAO to be more responsive to the needs of Member Nations.

Participation in International Regional Projects

In addition to national programmes, FAO is also actively supporting the development of Bangladesh through several international and regional projects. These international/regional projects strengthen and promote international cooperation for development and provide special facilities to participating countries including the following:

- to facilitate technology transfer and exchanges of development experience among the participating countries;
- to create international/regional Technical Cooperation Networks for the exchange of information;
- to create mutual understanding for collaborative actions on regional or international issues such as responsible fishing and the protection of marine resources; and
- to generate cooperative efforts for the eradication of plant and animal pests and diseases on a regional or global basis.

At present, Bangladesh is actively participating in 29 international/regional projects in a number of very diversified fields such as: plant biotechnology, remote sensing, gene bank, Jute and Kenaf seed programme, improved retting of jute, wood energy development programme, forestry research, integrated pest management, commercial information on marine products, fish technology and quality control, fishery communities' development along the Bay of Bengal.

In a related development to strengthen Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), an agreement on FAO TCDC scheme was signed by the Government of Bangladesh on 10 September 1994, which will further strengthen Bangladesh's participation in TCDC activities with technical and financial support from FAO.

ecosystem. In preparing an Integrated Resource Management Plan, it will also make recommendations for strengthening institutional arrangements for multi-purpose management.

Under the Thana Afforestation and Nursery Development Project funded through ADB and UNDP, FAO is providing technical assistance to the Government to upgrade and expand the existing capacity of the Forest Department and the Thana Parishads for the design, implementation and management of social forestry programmes in 61 rural dwellers have been imparted training on agro-forestry. The project objective is especially to promote community involvement in social forestry programmes.

Working in support of the Department of Agriculture Extension's field programme, the FAO Inter-country Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme has established 78 IPM field schools for farmers in 72 thanas and a total of 3,775 rice farmers have been given special training and information on IPM techniques through a season-long practical field training.

FAO support to vegetable seed development brings benefits to various groups in Bangladesh. Farmers are particularly benefitted through the availability of locally produced high quality seeds but also, and in line with the Government of Bangladesh's seed policy announced in 1991, provisions have been made to actively involve private seed sector in production and distribution of quality seed.

The project has undertaken extensive training programmes in which more than 2,000 seed marketing individuals were trained in addition, more than 2,500 farmer field demonstrations with quality seed varieties were organized country wide on a collaborative basis including BADC, DAE, and various NGO extension services. During 1993, ten metric tons of high quality seed was produced through contract farmers and distributed to vegetable growers through private seed distribution channels. During 1994, a commitment from the private sector to produce 50 metric tons of quality vegetable seed through trained farmers has been received and this programme is under implementation under supervision of BADC and BARI.

Fisheries development in Bangladesh has long been supported by FAO and current attention is focused on aquaculture development and fisheries research covering both inland as well as marine subsectors. Under the Government's programme for pond fish production, FAO project is providing aquaculture training to 350 extension officers and over 3,000 fish farmers through "Trickle Down" system of extension in which trained farmers pass on their acquired techniques and knowledge to other farmers on a systematic and expanding basis. At present annual pond culture production is about 150,000 tons by the end of project in mid of 1995 it is estimated that the production will increase to over 500,000 tons.

In the area of livestock, FAO has been supporting Government's duck development and improvement programmes and increased duck production in rural areas is proving to be an important factor in enhancing rural incomes and increasing access to the rural poor to supplies of animal protein. In addition, under a project with Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute assistance has been given in the preparation of a Livestock Research Master Plan.

Bangladesh and FAO Two Decades of Development Cooperation

Genesis of Bangladesh and FAO Cooperation:

Bangladesh formally became a member of FAO on 12 November 1973. Since then a close relationship has developed between Bangladesh and FAO in the fields of agriculture, food, forestry, fisheries and rural development. These bonds were further strengthened with the establishment of an FAO Representative Office in Dhaka in 1978.

Cooperation between FAO and Bangladesh extending over two decades has strengthened Government programmes for the improvement of life of many people and for increasing food production and creating a higher level of food security and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO was one of the first international agencies to bring assistance to Bangladesh in the post-war period.

From initial programmes of emergency relief in the immediate post-war period FAO support was expanded to provide technical assistance for major development projects in many areas of national priority

including crop production, horticulture, nutrition, livestock, fisheries and forestry.

Development achievements and the experiences gained have been mutually rewarding. FAO has assisted Bangladesh in its development efforts and Bangladesh has reciprocated through its active participation in the FAO system of commissions, committees and working parties and its Council and Conference, as well as through Bangladesh experts, more than 140 of whom are now working for FAO throughout the world.

Bangladesh was elected for three consecutive 3-year terms from 1977 to 1985 to the 49-member FAO Council, the policy body which meets twice a year. Bangladesh also worked from 1975 to 1979 in the nine-member Finance Committee, which oversees FAO financial affairs. Bangladesh also served in a number of bodies of the Organization, including the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFAP) for the period 1977-83. Representatives of Bangladesh have also conducted many of FAO's important sessions. They held

key positions, including Commission Chairman and Vice-Chairman in two Council sessions (74th and 82nd Councils in 1978 and 1982 respectively). Currently, Bangladesh is serving as a Council member of FAO. Additionally, Bangladesh has been involved in various important regional and international bodies of FAO thereby extending Bangladesh's concern to the international community. Bangladesh has also made significant contributions to FAO assisted programmes, by hosting, co-sponsoring and participating in numerous workshops, seminars held at the national, regional and international levels.

The current FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific is a very well-known and distinguished national of Bangladesh — former Agriculture Minister Mr A Z M Obaidullah Khan.

Cooperation between FAO and Bangladesh has focused primarily on building national institutional capacity required for the effective planning and management of natural resources — land, water, man-

power — and on providing increased access to technical know-how. FAO has also strongly supported the transfer of appropriate technology and expertise to Bangladesh through training programmes with many institutions. Major areas of earlier assistance included agricultural extension and agricultural research including a major study resulting in the classification of the entire country into different agroecological zones which provides a major work of reference for agricultural planning. Important inputs were also made to support the development of the poultry and dairy sub-sectors, marine and inland fisheries and also to support national forestry development programmes — the latter covering both management and research but also extending to the establishment of a forestry degree course.

From a modest level of some US\$ 2.5 million in 1977-78 total delivery under FAO assisted programmes expanded to a peak in 1985 of US\$ 9.4 million. During the next 5-year period programme delivery declined to a level of US\$4.1

is providing technical assistance for participatory forestry and agro-forestry while supporting an Integrated Resource Development and Management Plan for the Sundarbans Reserve Forests.

FAO activities in the fisheries and livestock sector range from pond aquaculture extension to duck development activities.

"Our current dialogue with the Government regarding possible future support covers areas including forestry planning, agriculture research management, integrated pest management, GIS systems for agriculture planning and development, food monitoring and information," Peter Myers informed.

Replying to a question on the changes in FAO's global perspective in the changed world economic order and increasing environmental awareness, he said the basic objectives of the UN agency remained the same. However, there was concern whether the flow of development funds for agriculture and rural development could not only be maintained but increased in the backdrop of many nations' recent involvement in peace-keeping and emergencies, the FAO Representative said. A massive investment commitment was required to effectively alleviate poverty and evolve technologies needed to support a future world population of nine billion, he added.

In the Forestry sector, FAO

A Conversation with FAO Resident Representative

by Masud Hasan Khan



Peter Myers, FAO Resident Representative in Bangladesh

increased while still maintaining and enhancing soil fertility and the biodiversity of the land.

Myers, one of the long-time UN staff in Bangladesh, said that diversification was a 'must' in terms of sustainable food production and employment generation in the rural areas. Particular attention was needed for further improvement of the fisheries, livestock and livestock feed, and integration into farming system as well as in the horticulture sectors, he pointed out.

FAO is currently involved in

different collaborative projects initiated by a number of ministries. In the crop agriculture sector, FAO is supporting an Agriculture Ministry project for strengthening the national capacity for monitoring and management of the irrigation sub-sector. The UN agency is also assisting Bangladesh in building up national research and development capacity in horticulture and developing vegetable seeds with the government and encouraging private sector participation.

THE Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) emphasises continued investment in the agriculture sector and the development of sustainable farming systems in Bangladesh so that the farmers can achieve their full potential. More efforts were required for the sustainability of farming and agriculture research and to provide technological support to help feed the growing population of the country, said FAO Country Representative Peter John Myers in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star.

"Bangladesh farmers are extremely hardworking and I think rural Bangladesh can face the future with some confidence through diversification and intensification of production systems," he said.

The interview was taken on the occasion of the World Food Day on October 16.

Giving a background to Bangladesh's dogged efforts in increasing food production since the pre-independence period, Myers pointed out that the introduction of High Yielding Variety (HYV) cereal technology in the 1960s and the emphasis on irrigated rice production had had a somewhat adverse impact on rain-fed agriculture and non-cereal crops like pulse, oilseeds, vegetable and fruits. He suggested that a more 'balanced approach' was now needed in Bangladesh so that food production could be further in-