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**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE URUGUAY ROUND**

**Communication from FAO**

The following communication, dated 18 November 1994, has been received from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, with the request that it be circulated to delegations for their information.

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**FAO ACTIVITIES TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
IN CONNECTION WITH THE URUGUAY ROUND**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is the United Nations specialized agency which provides technical advice and assistance to its member countries, particularly developing countries, on a wide range of food and agricultural topics. These include advice and assistance on food quality and safety, plant protection and quarantine activities and general advice on agricultural production and trade, including information on agricultural policy and incentives for production and trade. The GATT Uruguay Round Final Act calls for technical assistance to developing countries in many of these areas. Because of its expertise, and extensive experience of providing assistance to developing countries, FAO is especially well-qualified to provide appropriate advice, technical training and other technical information to its member countries.

**Food Quality and Safety Assistance**

**Introduction**

FAO's Food Quality and Standards Service is pivotal to the provision of technical assistance to developing countries in relation to food in the context of two of the Agreements that were included in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round, namely the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (the SPS Agreement) and the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (the TBT Agreement).

This technical assistance has been provided by a variety of means, all interrelated, with the focus being placed on establishing or strengthening national food control systems. Included are developmental projects on food control, food law and regulations; establishment of national export

food certification programmes; food contamination monitoring programmes; regional training programmes and workshops on specific technical aspects of food control; publications and technical manuals on food control subjects; expert consultations to address specific problems concerning food quality and/or safety; and the actions of the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission in establishing recommended international codes of practice and standards of quality and safety for foods.

#### Direct Assistance to Developing Countries

The export of food is, for many countries, a prime source of foreign exchange and convertible currencies. The difficulty is in meeting the legitimate standards set by importing countries. This requires establishing an export food control system that can examine and certify foods before shipment, so that foreign buyers can be confident that they meet international standards and the numbers of shipment rejections by importing countries are kept to a minimum.

Typical of such assistance programmes is a very successful FAO/UNDP assistance project with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in Thailand. A new organization was formed under the Ministry, called the Centre for Export Inspection and Certification of Agricultural Products (CEICAP). CEICAP has been very successful with their certificates now being recognized by many countries. In addition, CEICAP has been utilized by FAO as a training site for food control officials from other countries of the Region receiving technical assistance from FAO, such as Laos and Viet Nam. Another example from a different region is the special technical assistance that was provided to Peru to strengthen its food control system for import/export after the outbreak of a cholera epidemic.

Countries that have been provided with direct FAO technical assistance to strengthen their food control system have included Albania, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chile, the People's Republic of China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Gabon, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Kenya, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, the Slovak Republic, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Zambia.

#### Regional Assistance to Developing Countries

Regional activities in the form of workshops and seminars are a further form of technical assistance that is relevant to trade and the Uruguay Round. They achieve this through providing training and personal development to food control officials involved in exports and imports of food. An example of such an activity is an FAO Seminar on Management of Food Control Programmes of Eastern and Central Europe that was held during September 1993 at Seibersdorf in Austria, and Modra in the Slovak Republic. Senior level food control officials of all Eastern and Central European countries participated. The programme allowed the participants to present current issues in food control confronting food control managers in most Eastern and Central European countries. Presentations by senior managers of food control programmes in FAO, North America and Western Europe provided the participants with information on existing food control programmes, including the organizations structures in other parts of the world representing different systems or approaches to food control. A similar seminar on other aspects of food control for other participants from the same countries is currently in progress in Prague, in the Czech Republic.

#### Regular Programme Assistance to Developing Countries

FAO's Food Quality and Standards Service also provides technical assistance in support of international trade through its regular programme. It includes regular programme work on food quality and safety and the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Both play a vital role in the

international trade in food and thus in matters that require action as a result of the Uruguay Round decisions.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an intergovernmental body reporting to the Directors-General of FAO and WHO. Funded primarily by FAO, it implements the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme with the stated purpose of protecting consumers' health and facilitating international trade in foods. It currently has 150 Member nations. More than 280 Codex standards, 40 Codes of good Manufacturing and Hygienic Practice and Maximum Residue Limits of 137 agricultural and veterinary chemicals in food have been adopted by the CAC for this purpose. Under the terms of the SPS Agreement, measures that are in accordance with the standards established by the appropriate international standards setting body (and this means Codex standards in the case of food related measures to protect human life or health) are automatically presumed to be justified.

The FAO's Food Quality and Standards Service also develops *Manuals of Food Quality Control* which provide recommendations for the development and operation of food quality and safety systems. These are aimed primarily at providing advice to developing countries, and document modern approaches including the development of quality control programmes throughout the food chain. Such an approach is instrumental in facilitating international trade in food. Key titles in the series include *Food Inspection*, *Food for Export*, *Management of Food Control Programmes* and *Imported Food Inspection*.

### International Plant Protection Convention Assistance

#### Introduction

Technical assistance is provided by FAO to members in developing countries to upgrade their plant quarantine services to a fully operational level. This assistance is given through the regular programme as well as the FAO field programme.

#### Regular Programme Assistance to Developing Countries

In connection with the regular programme, assistance is provided through the development of international standards and guidelines in plant quarantine which would ensure that quarantine measures are scientifically based and would not constitute unwarranted trade barriers. To this effect, the Secretariat for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) was established to guide a work programme on harmonization in plant quarantine. In addition, a Committee of Experts on Phytosanitary Measures (CEPM) was established to assist the IPPC Secretariat in its work. The first international standard which was approved was the Principles of Plant Quarantine as related to International Trade. Other proposals have been developed and are in various stages of approval. These include the "Guidelines for Pest Risk Analysis", the Code of Conduct for the Import and Release of Biological Control Agents" and the "Glossary of Phytosanitary Terms". The first two proposals will be submitted for their approval in 1995, while the Glossary will be published. Other proposals are being developed, including the "Requirements for Pest Free Areas". The publication of these standards will assist member countries in harmonizing their quarantine measures to enhance plant protection while facilitating trade.

#### Direct Assistance to Developing Countries

As regards the FAO field programme, assistance has been provided in upgrading plant quarantine services of member countries through the assessment and improvement of quarantine legislation, the provision of basic facilities for inspection and treatment, the establishment of survey programmes, and the training of staff in quarantine procedures, including the current developments in harmonization in plant quarantine. This assistance has been given essentially through Technical Cooperation

Programme (TCP) Projects. Additionally, technical support has been provided to other projects funded by various donors (UNDP, Trust Fund, World Bank, etc.).

The provision of assistance under the aforementioned areas is aimed at strengthening and updating the capabilities of the quarantine services of member countries to enable them to meet the demands of present developments in plant quarantine as related to international trade and, thus, promote adequate plant protection and enhance trade.

### General Technical Assistance

#### Introduction

During the course of the Uruguay Round, the FAO Secretariat was encouraged by FAO Council and Conference to assist members in their preparations for the negotiations. This was done on a number of occasions when the Secretariat provided statistics, information and studies to assist groups of developing countries during the negotiations, particularly the Group of Net Food Importing Developing Countries but also other regional economic groupings.

As the Round came towards its end, FAO switched the emphasis of its assistance with how to deal with the changes in the external trading environment post-Uruguay Round. Prominent in these activities were the holding of two regional expert consultations, one with ECOWAS for the Africa region and one with the World Bank for Latin America. The former was held in Ghana in 1993 and attended by experts from countries in the ECOWAS region, where the implications of the conclusion of the Uruguay Round for agricultural policy both domestic and external and for food security were examined. The Latin American Consultation concentrated on the issue of possible instruments for market stabilization in the wake of the Uruguay Round. These regional activities were supplemented by pioneering studies on the implications of trade liberalization for food security, particularly food aid and for food stocks. These contributed in part to the exclusion of food security stocks from domestic support reduction commitments and to an acknowledgement that food aid could be affected by the reform process.

We have built on these pieces of work in our current activities to help countries deal with post-Uruguay Round realities. These activities may be grouped as regional, national level, and global.

#### Regional Activities

As regards regional activities, FAO is arranging two expert consultations, one in Cyprus in December and another in Bangkok in January. The Near East Expert Consultation will examine the impact of the Uruguay Round on agricultural trade of the region, including intra-trade questions and the particular prospects for the horticultural exports from the region to the E.U. as a consequence of the changes in access provided under the Round. The Expert Consultation for the Far East will focus on the oilseeds and oilseed products sector and will include a consideration of changes in the global and regional markets as well as policy implications. Unfortunately, the GATT Secretariat will not be able to participate in either of these activities.

#### National Activities

The FAO is responding to a large number of requests from developing countries for assistance in assessing the consequences of the Uruguay Round on their national agricultural policies. Our biggest project, financed by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, is to help Ethiopia undertake a review of its agricultural policy to take into account the changes in the world external trading regime. This pilot

project should be concluded in 1995 with a regional Workshop to be held to learn the lessons for policy formulation of this initial project. For other countries, e.g. Cuba, Brazil and Pakistan, FAO is or will be participating in Round Tables or Seminars on the Uruguay Round. Some work has been done for the CARICOM region while a report is being prepared for Tunisia. Staff have briefed or will brief individual countries on special aspects of the implications of the Uruguay Round for their policy formulation. Both Panama and the Czech Republic have been assisted in this way.

### Global Activities

The global activities under way, which benefit all members include studies, publications and meetings. The main study on which we are currently engaged is a detailed projection of the outlook to 2,000 of production, consumption, imports, exports and prices for around 20 main agricultural commodities taking into account the effect of both the Uruguay Round as well as the other major changes under way in national and international agricultural policy. These projections are being done for all countries and groups of countries. For this purpose we have especially modified our World Food Model, which contains over 14,000 equations and have entered into the model all the changes in tariffs, access provisions and export subsidy commitments for all detailed products and having aggregated them into manageable groups. This work has occupied a group of 20 commodity specialists, econometricians and model builders for several months. The results will be published over the course of the next 6-12 months. Once these studies are finished we should endeavour to cover the other main agricultural commodities. The results on commodity markets will be presented to the Committee on Commodity Problems at its next Session in April 1994. The impact of food security of these projections including the problems of higher food import bills for the Least-Developed and Net-Food Importing Developing Countries will be taken up by the Committee on World Food Security, also in April 1995. All of FAO's Intergovernmental Commodity Groups will examine the outlook post-Uruguay Round at their meetings the first of which, on meat, took place in October and the others will be taking place over the next year-eighteen months. In addition to papers and studies for our Governing Bodies, FAO will issue a book-length study detailing the results commodity by commodity mentioned before. FAO is also working on the preparation of teaching materials for our training activities in agricultural policy formulation.

FAO looks forward to working with other organizations in assisting countries in their assessments of the impact of the Uruguay Round on national agricultural policies. FAO has worked closely with some of the international commodity councils, with independent researchers and has good contacts with the World Bank, OECD, GATT and UNCTAD. However, it must be recognized that assisting countries to take into account the Uruguay Round when formulating their agricultural policies will need increased resources.