

REPORT OF THE

**TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE
ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION
ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

**Held in Kuching, Malaysia
9 – 13 June 2008**



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**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (RAP)
BANGKOK, 2008**

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ACRONYMS

ABCDQ	Agricultural Bulletin Board on Data Collection and Quality of Statistics
APCAS	Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics
ARD	Agriculture and Rural Development
ARDP	Agriculture and Rural Development Programme
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CAP/CAS	Country Assessment Programme/Strategy
CBS	Commodity Balance Sheets
CSV	Comma Separated Values
GAUL	Genetic Algorithm Utility Library
GDD	Gender-disaggregated Data
CMDG	Cambodian Millennium Development Goal
CPC	Commodity and Product Classification
CSGCA	Centre for Studies on Gender Concerns in Agriculture
EC	European Community
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission in Asia and the Pacific
ESS	FAO Statistics Division
ESSS	FAO Country Statistics Service
ESW	Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAAHM	Food and Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Information Management
FAMA	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
FBS	Food Balance Sheets
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity Vulnerability Information and Mapping System
FRA	Forest Resources Assessment
GAD	Gender and Development
GCP	Global Cooperation Project
GDPRD	Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System
HQ	Headquarter
IEE	Independent External Evaluation
ICAS	International Conference on Agricultural Statistics
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupation
ISFP	Initiative on Soaring Food Prices
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
IT	Information Technology
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Study
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NSO	National Statistics Office

NSS	National Statistical System
RAPI	RAP Fisheries Group
RDES	Regional Data Exchange System
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
SEAFDEC	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center
SITC	Standard International Trade Classification
SNA	System of National Accounts
TCP	Technical Cooperation Project
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UTF	Unilateral Trust Fund
WB	World Bank
WCA	World Census of Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme
WID	Women in Development
XCBS	Commodity Balance Database

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Government of Malaysia generously hosted the Twenty-Second Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS), convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia from 9 to 13 June 2008. Sixty participants consisting of 49 delegates from 14 member countries and six representatives from FAO participated in the Session. Five observers also attended, two from Malaysia and three from Afghanistan.

2. The Opening Ceremony was presided over by the Honourable Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, Malaysia, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam, who read the inaugural speech on behalf of the Rt. Honourable Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, Chief Minister of Sarawak. He expressed great pleasure to welcome all delegates to Malaysia, especially to Sarawak, the Land of the Hornbill. On behalf of the Malaysian Government, he expressed utmost gratitude to FAO for accepting Malaysia's offer to host this APCAS Session. He hoped that the Session, organised by the FAO, Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities and the Department of Statistics (DOS), Malaysia, would address important aspects of agricultural statistics.

3. The Chief Minister informed that for the period 2006-2020 of the Third Malaysia Industrial Masterplan, the economy was targeted to grow 6.3 percent as the world economy would register an average GDP growth of 3.5 percent during that period. Greater focus would be given to developing the agriculture sector, particularly in the areas of food supply and food security that was in line with the Third National Agriculture Policy 1998–2010. These policies were aimed to increase and strengthen agricultural production, exports, agro-based processing activities, market and global networking, and improve the delivery service system to ultimately elevate the income levels of farmers.

4. He recognized that a strong statistical system was fundamental for the formulation of macro-economic policies for now and the future. He also pointed out that the statistical indicators helped in the comparative analysis of the Malaysian economy vis-à-vis other economies of the world. He added that the Ministries involved and the DOS were in the process of developing a comprehensive database for agricultural statistics for the benefit of policy makers and other users. Advances in computing technology and information systems had facilitated storage and dissemination of information.

5. He explained that the compilation of comprehensive up-to-date agricultural statistics warranted priority attention in the light of current global issues on the

increase of food prices and other challenges in food supply. The Chief Minister encouraged the delegates to actively participate in discussions and bring about improvements and innovations in the management of national agricultural statistical systems. Finally, he wished participants a pleasant stay in Sarawak and hoped that everyone would keep fond memories of Malaysia. The Deputy Chief Minister concluded the inaugural speech by declaring the Twenty-Second Session of APCAS open.

6. Mr Jairo Castano, APCAS Secretary, read the opening statement of the FAO Assistant Director-General (ADG) and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, Mr He Changchui. The ADG welcomed the participants to this Session of APCAS on behalf of the Director-General of FAO and on his personal behalf. He expressed gratitude to the Government of Malaysia for hosting this Session in the enchanting State of Sarawak and for providing excellent facilities for fruitful and productive discussions. He noted that Malaysia had hosted the fifth session of APCAS in Kuala Lumpur in 1974. He also thanked member countries for their favourable response to FAO's invitation to this Session.

7. Mr He recalled FAO's main mandate to combat hunger and monitor progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He noted that despite the rapid transformation of economies, the Asia-Pacific region still accounted for more than 60 percent of the world's undernourished population due to its large population and relatively low per capita incomes when compared with other regions. He added that the recent soaring food prices might exacerbate the issue by pushing a large number of people back to poverty.

8. Mr He noted that several relevant and interesting issues from technical to policy matters were slated for the Session. One such matter was the presentation of the final report of the Japan-assisted project Regional Data Exchange System (RDES). He added that the "Compendium of Country Reports on Metadata for National Agricultural Statistics", prepared in collaboration with the RDES project, would also be presented.

9. Mr He made special mention of a sourcebook on indicators for agricultural and rural development recently prepared by FAO in collaboration with the World Bank. The sourcebook provided guidance on how to build the capacity needed for effective monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of development results, including those embodied in the MDGs. He hoped that the Commission would gain fruitful insights from this sourcebook and the results of the validation of its methodology in Cambodia.

10. Mr He referred to the issue on which agency should be responsible for agricultural statistics in countries: the National Statistics Office or the Ministry of Agriculture? This provocative topic would be considered in a roundtable discussion during the week. Another roundtable would discuss the role of statisticians in supporting decision-making in the context of rising food prices.

11. Mr He made reference to other topics such as the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010, the Food Balance Sheets, Gender Statistics and CountrySTAT. He urged participants to exchange frankly their experiences and make recommendations to help orient FAO's future activities in statistics.

12. The Honourable Chief Statistician, Malaysia, Ms Wan Ramlah Wan Abdul Raof, welcomed the Honourable Deputy Chief Minister and thanked him for delivering the opening address on behalf of the Honourable Chief Minister and officiating the Opening Session. She extended, on behalf of the Government of Malaysia, a warm *Selamat Datang*-Welcome to all the delegates and guests of the Session. She added that it was an honour for the DOS and the Government of Malaysia to host this Session 34 years after Malaysia hosted the Fifth Session in 1974. She also expressed her gratitude to FAO for the support and commitment to make this event a reality.

13. She observed that this biennial event was providing strong support for the development of agricultural statistics in the Asia and Pacific Region. She also noted that in its 45 years of existence, the Commission, as a platform for sharing country initiatives, was responsible for setting the directions for further development of statistical systems. This assisted FAO in designing new programme initiatives and setting priorities in the development of agricultural statistics.

14. She noted that this meeting was a useful avenue to review the development in agricultural statistics by facilitating the sharing of ideas on the state of food and agricultural statistics in the region among member countries and experts from FAO and other organizations. She informed that in the case of Malaysia, the Ninth Malaysia Plan had set a shift in the priorities for the agriculture sector with the development of new programmes that would enable agriculture to grow at 7.6 percent by 2010. The Plan envisaged the development of the agriculture sector as the new source of growth for the economy and a tool for eradicating poverty.

15. She informed that the Ministry and DOS had allocated resources to conduct surveys and censuses in 2005. This included an agricultural census that covered all agricultural households in Malaysia. In addition, DOS established in 2007 the Agriculture and Agro-Based Statistics Division to improve the methodology of data collection and consultations with stakeholders and users of agricultural statistics. She further added that the alarming global threats – shortage of food and price volatility – repositioned agricultural statistics as a crucial tool for planning and policy formulation in Malaysia.

16. In concluding, she conveyed special thanks to FAO for the technical assistance during the 2005 agricultural census. She assured the Commission of Malaysia's participation in the 2010 round of WCA. She recognized the important role that the WCA would play in monitoring of the MDGs. She also noted that the modernization and user-friendliness of FAOSTAT was a big help to policy makers and planners. Finally, she expressed sincere appreciation to all for the support and commitment given to make the meeting a success and wished that the efforts be blessed. She also wished participants a productive Session and a pleasant and memorable stay in Kuching, Sarawak.

17. The outgoing chair, Ms Jirawan Boonperm, Deputy Secretary General, National Statistical Office, Thailand, presided over the election of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Drafting Committee. Before opening the floor for nominations, Ms Boonperm expressed her great pleasure to be given the opportunity to chair the Twenty-First Session in 2006 in Phuket, Thailand. She was pleased that APCAS was continuing

to provide strong support for the development of agricultural statistics in the region. She cited the development and strengthening of the database function of the CountrySTAT as core software of RDES, and the creation of the APCAS website as manifestations of positive contribution of APCAS.

18. Mr Ismail Yusoff, Deputy Chief Statistician, Malaysia and Head of the Malaysian delegation was unanimously elected Chair of the Twenty-Second Session. Mr Pham Quang Vinh, Director, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics, General Statistics Office, Viet Nam was elected First Vice-Chair and Ms Meas Sotheavy, Chief, Statistics Office, Department of Planning Service, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia, Second Vice-Chair.

19. The Commission constituted a Drafting Committee. Mr Romeo Recide (Philippines) was elected Chair. Messrs Dhrijesh Kumar Tiwari (India), Abang Saifulhadi Abang Hj Ibrahim (Malaysia), Mukesh Srivastava (FAO), Jairo Castano (APCAS Secretary) and Generoso de Guzman (Consultant, FAO) were co-opted as members of the Committee.

20. The Session adopted the agenda given in Appendix A. The list of delegates and observers is given in Appendix B and the list of documents is in Appendix C. The speeches delivered in the Opening Session are given in Appendices D, E and F. The list of member countries of the Commission, as of June 2008, is cited in Appendix G.

FAO'S ACTIVITIES IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE STATISTICS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC DURING 2006-2008

(Item 4 of the Agenda)

Overview of FAO's Activities in Asia and the Pacific Region since the 21st Session of APCAS

(Item 4a of the Agenda)

21. Mr Jairo Castano, APCAS Secretary, introduced Document APCAS/08/3 "Overview of FAO's Activities in Asia and the Pacific Region since the 21st Session of APCAS". He informed that each year a substantial amount of time was being devoted to the preparation and publication of the annual "Selected Indicators of Food and Agricultural Development in the Asia-Pacific Region". Copies of the publication were made available to the delegates of the Session. The Commission noted that other activities included the publication of the "Report of the Twenty-First Session of APCAS" held in Phuket, Thailand in September 2006 and the preparations and organization of the Twenty-Second Session of APCAS with the Government of Malaysia.

22. The Commission took note of the technical backstopping provided to the following projects: GCP/RAS/184/JPN "Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries (RDES)", a regional project, and GCP/AFG/042/EC "Support to the Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Information Management and Policy Unit (FAAHM) in Developing an Agricultural Statistics and Market Information System – Phase II (Afghanistan)".

23. The Commission was pleased to know that six Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs) and one Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) project proposals were formulated between 2007 and mid-2008. These included: (a) improving livestock statistics in Nepal; (b) training on agricultural census methodology and time series analysis in Pakistan; (c) assistance in the formulation of a project for conducting an agricultural census in Cambodia; (d) monitoring of the food market developments in the Asia-Pacific Region for rapid response to soaring food prices; (e) strengthening of capacity for the statistical assessment of rice situation and outlook in Lao PDR; and (f) decentralization of agricultural statistics in Timor-Leste.

24. The Commission appreciated the successful organization of an “Expert Consultation on Farmers’ Income Statistics” in December 2007 wherein ten papers were presented and 16 experts from member countries, Eurostat, US Department of Agriculture, FAO Headquarters and an FAO Consultant participated.

25. The Commission noted that in relation to the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO, an evaluation of FAO’s statistical system and its databases and data systems had been undertaken. An independent mission visited stakeholder institutions as well as three member countries in Asia (China, Thailand and Viet Nam) in early 2008. The mission discussed the findings in a stakeholders’ workshop in May 2008.

26. The Commission was informed that an important activity associated with forestry statistics was FAO’s Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA). The results of the recently completed FRA 2005, the most comprehensive assessment of forests and forestry to date – in terms of the number of countries, people involved and scope – was published in 2006. CD-ROMs of FRA 2005 were made available to the delegates of the Session. The follow-up FRA 2010 was officially launched in March 2008. The Commission noted that the website <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fra2010/en/> provided a full range of information about the forest resources by country, sub-region and region and at global levels.

27. The Commission noted that in the last two years, RAP Fisheries Group (RAPI) participated in several regional meetings and workshops on fishery statistics organized by regional organizations, e.g. Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC). The Commission noted that several projects relating to fishery statistics had been backstopped and implemented by RAPI. Among these projects were the FishCode STF project on “Fishery Information Gathering for Fishery Policy and Management” in Thailand and a TCP project on “Addressing the Quality of Information on Inland Fisheries in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand”. RAPI had additionally backstopped a GCP project on “Marine Fishing Vessel Census” in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. A major component of the statistical work performed by RAPI in fishery statistics was the preparation of the biennial publication “Status and Potential of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Asia and the Pacific”.

28. The Commission appreciated the continued close cooperation with UN and international organizations involved in food and agricultural statistics in the Asia and Pacific region. FAO was represented in meetings on statistics, including those organized by ESCAP. Further, the FAO Statistics Division also continued to play its due role in the revision of international classifications like CPC, ISIC, ISCO and SITC undertaken by UNSD in the last few years.

29. The Commission was informed that in 2006, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD), the World Bank and FAO Country Statistics Service undertook the preparation of a sourcebook on indicators for monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes in agriculture and rural development. Highlights of this major work were presented under Agenda Item 6.

Final Draft Report on the FAO/Japan Project GCP/RAS/184/JPN – Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries

(Item 4b of the Agenda)

30. Document APCAS/08/4 The “Final Draft Report on the FAO/Japan Project GCP/RAS/184/JPN – Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries” was presented to the Commission by Mr Romeo Recide.

31. The Commission was reminded that 16 member countries participated in this project and its precursor GCP/RAS/171/JPN “Improvement of Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries”, which was undertaken upon the initiative of APCAS when it met in Tokyo, Japan in 1996.

32. The Commission was pleased that the project successfully achieved its main milestone of setting up a common framework for the Regional Data Exchange System (RDES) by developing a website for exchange of data and information dissemination (<http://www.faorap-apcas.org>) and standardising production and production-related data for 19 commodities (rice paddy, wheat, maize, cereals, cassava, potatoes, pulses, groundnuts, soybean, seed cotton, sugar cane, tea, cattle, pig, sheep, goat, chicken, milk (total) and hen eggs) on a calendar year basis, following concepts and definitions consistent with those of FAO. The “Guidelines on Standardization of the Regional Data Exchange System” was prepared for this purpose. The usefulness of the RDES was enhanced with the inclusion of metadata on the methodology, concepts, definitions and other useful information about the agricultural statistical series of the participating countries.

33. The Commission noted that the RDES national Focal Point meetings and technical consultations served as the principal means for strengthening the national capacity to analyse, use and disseminate food and agricultural statistics in support of national agricultural development policy and planning, including associated food security and poverty alleviation concerns. The use of Focal Points had proved to be an effective modality in carrying out project activities. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the Focal Points were instrumental in the formation of a good network of professionals in APCAS countries. Moreover, the Commission was pleased to know that over the Project life, from February 2003 to December 2007, the RDES site had logged around 2.7 million hits and more than 280 000 visitors.

34. The Commission was informed that at the close of the Project, the Focal Points recommended that: (a) the existing methodologies for collection and processing of data be improved; (b) new and modern techniques in data collection, analysis and dissemination be applied and the corresponding capacity-building programmes be

conceptualized and implemented; and (c) the RDES in Asia and the Pacific continue to be maintained because many countries still lacked websites and internet-enabled database systems on food and agricultural statistics despite the advancement in information technology.

35. The Commission noted that Japan believed that promoting reliable statistical data in all countries and sharing these data among them were indispensable in ensuring global food security, hence it supported this APCAS initiative. The Commission acknowledged the pivotal role of the Government of Japan in supporting and steering the successful completion of this project.

Expert Consultation on Farmers' Income Statistics

(Item 4c of the Agenda)

36. The APCAS Secretary introduced Document APCAS/08/5 "Expert Consultation on Farmers' Income Statistics". The Commission noted that the Expert Consultation conducted in Bangkok in December 2007 aimed to: (a) identify methodologies for collection and possible integration of surveys to obtain farmers' income data; (b) review processing of farmers' income data and identify appropriate strategies for imputation and analysis; and (c) recommend optimal strategies for improving the collection and analysis of farmers' income data. Fourteen Experts from APCAS member countries, Eurostat and the US Department of Agriculture, and two observers from Thailand participated in the Expert Consultation.

37. The Commission noted the following recommendations of the Consultation: (a) FAO should increase awareness among national governments on the use of farmers' income data, including the need for setting aside funds for data collection, analysis and dissemination, either from government or alternative sources of funds; (b) efforts should be made to define the core data requirements that provide consistency and comparability among collections across countries and over time, including the development of FAO guidelines on the conduct of farm income related surveys and imputation methods; (c) accounting frameworks like the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and the System of National Accounts (SNA) should be considered when measuring farm household incomes; (d) a pilot study should be undertaken across countries to assess the extent of under-reporting of farm income data and to estimate correction factors; (e) FAO should explore the possibility of conducting a study or a workshop to identify methods that could be used efficiently to collect farm income data from areas where access was difficult; (f) efforts should be made to improve the accessibility and feedback of information to all stakeholders, including farmers, as a way of incentive to provide reliable information; (g) a review should be undertaken on the use of information technology in farm income surveys from collection to analysis and dissemination of data, assessing its potential applications in Asia-Pacific countries.

Highlights of the Fourth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS – IV)

(Item 4d of the Agenda)

38. Document No. APCAS/08/6 “Highlights of the Fourth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS – IV)” was presented to the Commission by Mr Hiek Som. He informed that the Conference in Beijing from 22 – 24 October 2007 was the fourth in this series of international conferences. The Commission noted that ICAS conferences aimed to: (a) bring together agricultural statisticians on a global scale to exchange current practices and new developments; and (b) transfer, where applicable, these practices and developments to the developing countries. The Commission was pleased that the participation of developing countries in this Conference was supported by travel grants to over 50 participants from Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America from the sponsors of the Conference.

39. The Commission was informed that ICAS – IV, which had as theme “Strategic Integration of Agricultural Statistical Framework with Other Measures of Economic Development”, succeeded in attracting the participation of about 350 statisticians from over 60 countries. Compared with previous conferences, ICAS – IV had the largest participation.

40. The Commission was pleased that the Conference covered wide-ranging and interesting topics on agricultural statistics. The papers primarily focused on the fundamental issues related to the development of agricultural statistics within an integrated national statistical system. They stressed the importance of statistical harmonization and the need for comparability among countries in order to promote wide use of agricultural statistics. The Conference was organized along seven thematic issues consisting of integration of agricultural statistics, methodology and technology, agriculture and rural statistics development, agricultural surveys and censuses, data quality and comparability, new domains and dimensions, and challenges in data needs. The Agenda also included roundtable discussions on the future of agricultural statistics and on whether statistics on agriculture and rural dimension were properly represented in national statistics.

41. The Commission was informed that 70 papers were presented. Contributors included European Countries (14), Asia and the Pacific (22, including 12 from China), Africa (9), North America (6), Latin America (4) and FAO (9). The Commission commended the Conference organizers for securing wide participation of experts with representation from all regions of the world which substantially contributed to the success of the Conference.

42. The Commission was informed that the detailed programme together with papers, abstracts and presentations were available at <http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/icas/>. The Commission was further informed that the next ICAS would be held in Africa and hosted by Uganda in 2010.

Other Information Items

(Item 4e of the Agenda)

43. The Commission endorsed the appeal of the APCAS Secretary for donors to support follow-up activities on the recommendations made in the Expert Consultation that would foster increased awareness on the use of farmers' income data.

STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN COUNTRIES OF THE REGION

(Item 5 of the Agenda)

Compendium of the Metadata for National Agricultural Statistics in Selected APCAS Countries: Experience and Preliminary Findings

(Item 5a of the Agenda)

44. Document APCAS/08/7 "Compendium of the Metadata for National Agricultural Statistics in Selected APCAS Countries: Experience and Preliminary Findings" was introduced to the Commission by Mr Hiek Som. The Commission was reminded that at its Twenty-First Session, the metadata framework was introduced by FAO. It was recognized that there was a strong need for statistical metadata, which would provide better understanding of all the data items and the way to obtain them within the national system of agricultural statistics. Sixteen member countries consisting of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam participated in the exercise.

45. The Commission was informed that a questionnaire on national agricultural statistics and an annotated outline for country reports on related metadata were provided to participating countries.

46. A country report on metadata comprised three main chapters: (a) the national system of agricultural statistics; (b) major domains and selected indicators of agricultural statistics; and (c) major data sources for agricultural statistics. The report would allow readers to view the national system of agricultural statistics holistically, covering the production base, the enabling environment, the inputs needed and the outputs.

47. The Commission was informed that several drafts of country reports were prepared to comprehensively document the information available in the countries. A review of the country reports showed that major publications produced by national agricultural statistics systems included yearbooks of agricultural statistics, quarterly indicators of agricultural performance, occasional reports on agricultural census and surveys, chapters on agricultural statistics in national statistics yearbook, publications on agricultural foreign trade, food security and early warning statistics, food balance sheets, and costs of agricultural production.

48. Common statistical domains found in the country reports were production, price, foreign trade, agricultural inputs, agricultural credit, food consumption, rural communities and infrastructure. The main data sources cited were agricultural census

and crop and livestock production surveys. Other surveys reported included cost of production surveys, land use surveys, population censuses, fisheries censuses and household socio-economic surveys. The Commission noted with appreciation that methodological details for each of the data sources were described in the country reports.

49. The Commission appreciated that countries that had prepared the documentation on metadata of national agricultural statistics had realised the value of such an exercise for users and producers of statistics. The latter used such documents to identify weaknesses in the national system of agricultural statistics, thus giving an opportunity to take measures for improvement.

50. Information on financial and human resources devoted solely to agricultural statistics was difficult to obtain. The Commission recognized that the task of establishing a complete metadata framework for national agricultural statistics was a continuing process both for FAO and member countries. The Commission was pleased to note the contribution of such initiative on metadata, which had improved the countries' ability to provide useful information to FAO's Agricultural Bulletin Board on Data Collection and Quality of Statistics (ABCDQ).

51. The Commission praised member countries' positive response to the suggestion of posting country reports on their respective RDES website. The Commission congratulated the Philippines for incorporating its metadata into its CountrySTAT <http://countrystat.bas.gov.ph/> under the module of "Metadata" at http://countrystat.bas.gov.ph/metadata_new.asp. Meanwhile, Nepal published its metadata report as a pamphlet.

52. The Commission recommended that member countries update their respective metadata regularly. It also recommended that updated metadata, and as needed new surveys and publications, be posted on the web for wider dissemination. The Commission further recommended that FAO include in its programme of work the global updating of the compendium of the metadata at least once in five or ten years.

**Recent Development in Agriculture Statistics in the Countries of the Region:
Update by Member Countries on Selected Topics**
(Item 5b of the Agenda)

53. Delegates from participating countries presented Document APCAS/08/8 "Recent Developments in Agricultural Statistics in the Countries of the Region (update by member countries on selected topics)". The delegates updated the Commission on the latest developments in their respective national agricultural statistical service since the last APCAS Session in 2006. The Commission noted that statistical systems widely practiced among APCAS member countries consisted of three variants – centralized, decentralized with institutionalized mechanism for coordination and decentralized without any institutionalized coordinating mechanism.

54. More than half of the member countries reported to be operating under a comprehensive statistics law which governed the development, direction and delineation of responsibilities and activities of the national statistical system. Some

member countries reported that while they did not have such a comprehensive law, they operated under *ad hoc* orders from either the head of the state or the parliament, mandating specific statistical activities that should be undertaken by line ministries.

55. The Commission noted that while many member countries had undertaken at least one census of agriculture, some, particularly low-income countries, had yet to plan for their first agricultural census. In many developing member countries, agricultural censuses (especially the first) were carried out with support from development partners and donors. In a few countries having decentralized statistical systems, the responsibility for the agricultural census lied with the National Statistics Office. In Pakistan, a separate Agricultural Census Organisation had the sole mandate to plan and oversee agricultural census activities. A few countries reported that instead of decennial censuses, they were conducting their agricultural censuses every five years. Moreover, some reported to have conducted subject matter specific censuses like livestock censuses, censuses of agricultural machinery, fisheries censuses and village censuses. The Commission was informed that China, which had carried out its second census in 2007, was among the first countries in the region to conduct the agricultural census under the ambit of the 2010 round of WCA. It was noted that the country updates did not mention if their planned censuses of agriculture would include thematic modules as suggested in the WCA 2010 Programme.

56. The Commission noted that many surveys in member countries continued to be focused on production and area statistics. Existing market information systems were, in general, concentrated on price monitoring. Some have started to develop separate surveys for cost of production. Very few countries, however, reported to have in place regular farm income surveys. In many instances, information on farmers' income came from more comprehensive household income, expenditure and consumption surveys. However, few reported to have undertaken at least one survey focused exclusively on farm income. These were nonetheless undertaken as one shot *ad hoc* surveys.

57. Member countries reported to have started taking advantage of the countless information technology (IT) options to facilitate data capture, reduction of errors, speed up processing, creation of agricultural databases and generation of a wide variety of reports. Developments in cyberspace had also impacted on how information was being disseminated and shared between data producers and users. All member countries who submitted their updates reported that they were still using the printed mode of disseminating statistics. However, many reported to have been complementing this conventional dissemination modality by using the internet for disseminating country statistics. The advances in IT were also being exploited by member countries in reducing data flow time between field satellite offices and the headquarters.

58. The Commission noted with concern that in many low-income countries, major statistical activities were possible only with donor support. This raised concerns on the sustainability of these activities given the countries' limited resources.

59. A broad spectrum of emerging issues in agricultural statistics was highlighted by member countries. The dynamic changes in the agricultural sector were leading

to never ending demands in agricultural statistics, exerting pressure on some countries to review and evaluate their agricultural survey programmes.

60. The Commission noted that among countries with weak statistical infrastructure, limited logistics and weak statistical human resource base continued to be a priority concern. In contrast, countries with better organized agricultural statistics systems were concerned about incorporating in their regular agricultural statistics programme more sectoral and subject-matter specific surveys such as capital formation and food consumption surveys. It was also reported that national statistical systems in many countries were under increasing pressure to support more sophisticated planning and policy formulation processes and adopt advances in information and communication technology. National statistical systems were expected to include in their agricultural statistical programmes such activities as forecasting agricultural output using space, agro-meteorology and land-based observations, small area estimation for bringing out sub-district level crop production estimates, and sound statistical techniques for estimating horticulture production.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS AND INDICATORS FOR MEASURING PROGRESS IN RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: A JOINT FAO-WORLD BANK STUDY

(Item 6 of the Agenda)

Tracking Results in Agriculture and Rural Development in Less-than-Ideal Conditions: A Sourcebook of Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation

(Item 6a of the Agenda)

61. Document APCAS/08/9 “Tracking Results in Agriculture and Rural Development in Less-than-Ideal Conditions: A Sourcebook of Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation” was presented to the Commission by Mr Mukesh Srivastava.

62. The Commission was informed that at the UN Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico held in 2002 both developing and developed countries made commitments to the shared responsibility of achieving development results, including those embodied in the MDGs. It was later recognized that establishing an effective results-based orientation of the development process would require the capacity to monitor indicators that reliably reflect results at all phases of the development activities, from strategic planning to implementation to completion. Thus, developing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that could efficiently track outcome of projects and programmes became a natural priority for both the international development community and the developing countries.

63. The Commission learned that FAO and World Bank (WB) worked together since 2006 under the umbrella of Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) to prepare a document which would serve as a reference book for M&E professionals, project planners as well as donors. It aimed at standardising approaches which could work even in less-than-ideal conditions. “Less-than-ideal conditions” in the context of M&E referred to a situation where: (a) appreciation of data collection and demand were weak; (b) evidence was not used for decision-making; and (c) the stock of information was unreliable and its flow was irregular.

64. The process of development of the Sourcebook was outlined before the Commission. The Commission was informed that the contents of the Sourcebook were validated in a diversity of situation across five pilot countries viz., Cambodia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania. The Sourcebook was revised based upon comments received through a series of peer reviews by the widest possible international participation. The Commission noted that a pre-print version of the Sourcebook had already been placed on the websites of FAO, WB and GDPRD.

65. The Commission appreciated that the Sourcebook had specifically targeted countries where conditions were less-than-ideal, particularly with respect to the availability of statistical information for building indicators or the capacity to use available information for M&E purposes.

66. The Sourcebook contained five chapters, 19 priority indicators recommended for all countries, an extended list (menu) of 87 indicators, findings of five country studies, and a tool (scorecard) to make an assessment of existing capacity for M&E activities. It covered the evolution of M&E, analytical framework for selection of indicators, data framework, institutional framework, and setting up national capacity for M&E. The extended list of indicators was divided into indicators for measuring sector-wide performance, indicators for sub-sectors like crop, livestock and indicators for thematic areas.

67. The Commission was pleased to note that the Sourcebook would provide guidance on how to build the capacity needed for effective M&E in developing countries. The Commission noted that the development of institutional capacity for M&E needed to take into account three recent developments: (a) impact of devolution and decentralization on M&E; (b) involvement of communities themselves in M&E; and (c) monitoring and evaluation of Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) programmes at the global or international level.

68. The Commission noted that the main message emerging from the Sourcebook was that no single statistical instrument could meet all needs and that any monitoring system would most likely require data support for indicators that come from several different sources – both formal and informal. The Commission further noted that a desirable M&E system should be a coordinated network of institutions performing M&E functions or engaged in collection of data which would be used by the M&E system. A close link between the M&E system and the national statistics system would be crucial to strengthening the M&E activities at country level.

Validation at Country Level during the FAO-WB Study on Indicators for Tracking Results of Agricultural and Rural Development: Cambodia Case
(Item 6b of the Agenda)

69. Document APCAS/08/10 “Validation at Country Level during the FAO-WB Study on Indicators for Tracking Results of Agricultural and Rural Development: Cambodia Case” was presented to the Commission by Mr Hiek Som. It was informed that the Cambodia case study was undertaken along with four other country studies to provide inputs for the finalization of the Sourcebook and the list of indicators presented in document APCAS/08/9. The Commission noted that Cambodia’s experience in using

an indicator system as a tool for monitoring and evaluating Agriculture and Rural Development Programme (ARDP) was still at its early stage. The institutional capacity and various underpinning infrastructures for an effective development indicator system were still weak. Nonetheless, its current National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) was providing clear policy guidelines for the integration and use of an M&E system as a tool for systematically tracking progress of the strategic programmes and actions towards achieving goals and objectives of the plan.

70. The Commission was pleased to know that in support of its NSDP, which had focused on alleviating poverty and the development of agriculture and rural sector, the country had identified 43 core indicators for monitoring the macro-development goals and the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs). Twenty-six of the 43 indicators were to be updated annually. The country had a two-tier indicator system: (a) the first tier comprising the 43 NSDP indicators monitored by the Ministry of Planning; and (b) the input and output indicators monitored by the line ministries.

71. The new Statistics Law, enacted in 2005, mandated that the central institution responsible for ensuring regular availability of data on NSDP indicators for M&E purposes was the National Institute of Statistics in the Ministry of Planning.

72. There was general agreement in the country on the usefulness of the proposed Sourcebook, particularly as a tool kit for selection of indicators. However, since Cambodia was just starting to build the foundation for a robust statistical system, most of the data that could be used to support the priority NSDP and ARDP indicators would continue to come from administrative records. The absence of guidelines for setting national standards was also cited as a major problem in much of the statistical work in Cambodia.

73. The Commission noted that suggestions were made in the country study for improving the proposed list of indicators to be included in the Sourcebook. While some indicators were suggested to be reclassified in appropriate sub-sectors, others were found to be neither appropriate nor feasible in Cambodia. Some additional indicators currently used in the country were proposed to be added to the list.

74. The Commission heard a combined discussion on the Agenda items 6a and 6b. The Commission was informed that the menu of indicators provided in the Sourcebook was prepared keeping in view the need to measure the outcome and the impact of projects and programmes. However, it was clarified that the countries would have liberty to add indicators of their choice for improving early warning systems or for measuring the terms of trade for agriculture. The Commission was informed that the productivity indicators were adequately covered in the Sourcebook. The Commission was advised that a scorecard was included in the Sourcebook which could be used to guide in the identification of possible areas for development and strengthening, including those in national statistical systems.

75. The Commission noted that although the follow-up actions after the publication of the Sourcebook were yet to be firmed up, FAO would shortly print 5 000 copies of the document for dissemination among countries by all the co-publishing partners. The Commission recommended that FAO organize a workshop for the countries to advocate and disseminate the Sourcebook.

76. The Commission also noted that the Sourcebook had included indicators on access, use and satisfaction with services in the menu of indicators, which could be particularly useful for measuring early results of projects. The Commission further recommended that FAO organize an Expert Consultation or Workshop to deliberate on steps that could be taken to promote the development and use of qualitative indicators, such as measures of access, use and satisfaction as a pro-active contribution for further enhancement of the usefulness of the Sourcebook.

Roundtable on Rising Food Prices and the Role of Statisticians: Experiences and Recommendations

(Item 7 of the Agenda)

77. Mr Montol Jeamchareon facilitated the roundtable discussion. Four background presentations were made to start the discussion. The first presentation was made by the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), an agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, Malaysia, which played a lead role in promoting and marketing agricultural products. FAMA was also engaged in supply chain management and collection of market related information. It also carried out analyses for matching supply and demand, which included assessments of different demand segments, e.g., for export, direct consumption in domestic market, industrial processing and contractual demand. Although the price was considered the most powerful variable, the information on demand was also judged as supplementary to price monitoring. The Commission noted that the application of state-of-the-art information and communication technologies in capturing and disseminating information played a major role in market observation.

78. The APCAS Secretary presented to the Commission FAO's response to the current phenomenon of rising food prices in Asia and the Pacific. The presentation reviewed the trends in food prices and related policy responses by the countries of the region. A brainstorming session held in Bangkok had concluded that there was no food crisis in the region, but rather just a stressful price situation. FAO's initiatives to boost production in the short term and to increase dissemination of market intelligence on current developments were described.

79. Mr Hiek Som informed the Commission of the purpose and outcome of the High Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenge of Climate Change and Bio-energy, held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 3 to 5 June 2008.

80. Mr Montol Jeamchareon, informed the Commission that several confluencing factors were contributing to soaring food prices. These included climate change, increased income of middle and upper income households, pressures brought about by the search for bio-energy and high population growth.

81. The Commission was informed that there was a need to revisit conventional approaches to both data collection methods and types of information collected. This was needed to keep information systems attuned to data needs for early warning signals of price and market fluctuations, in order to set up mitigating measures against negative impacts of rising prices. However, it was noted that the success of the system would depend upon the willingness of stakeholders to share information.

82. The Commission heard the views of participants on the role of statisticians in assisting policy makers formulate timely corrective measures when confronted with food market crises. The Commission recommended that statisticians: (a) provide not only a description of price quotations and trends, but also analysis of factors contributing to changes in prices; (b) monitor the quantities of agricultural commodities traded and the prices prevailing in national, regional and global spot and futures markets; (c) be cautious in their choice of sources of information to preclude releasing biased or unreliable information; and (d) resolve conceptual issues relating to the collection of prices, e.g., difference in wholesale prices and producers prices, and those relating to specification of items for price collection.

83. The Commission noted that when faced with new demands for data, the statisticians should give due consideration to the required human and financial resources to be able to meet the demand. The Commission likewise observed that, generally, the demand for additional resources for collecting additional data for crisis management received favourable response from the government.

Roundtable Discussion on the Role of National Statistics Offices in Agricultural Statistics and Agricultural Policy

(Item 8 of the Agenda)

84. Mr Romeo Recide facilitated the roundtable discussion. To start the discussion, Mr Generoso de Guzman presented a background paper on the national statistical systems in the region. He outlined the various frameworks for the development of the national statistical systems which included the country's constitution, statistics law, development plan and statistical development plan, as well as data frameworks developed by the UN and other international organizations. The nature of the development of the agricultural statistical service, in particular, would depend on the country's agricultural sector development plan and statistical frameworks such as the SEAFA, FBS, FIVIMS and FAOSTAT.

85. Agricultural statistics could be generated from agricultural censuses and surveys, market information systems, extension workers' periodic reports, crop monitoring systems and administrative records. The statistical systems for collection and dissemination of agricultural statistics could either be centralized or decentralized. The paper *inter alia* enumerated basic advantages and disadvantages of centralized and decentralized systems.

86. A centralized system could have comparative advantages in terms of economies of scale, credibility, objectivity and independence, use of uniform standards and harmonized concepts, provision of one-stop-shop for data users and establishment of national data archives to facilitate easy access and production of special-purpose statistics on demand. On the other hand, in a decentralized system the statisticians worked more closely with data users and acquired intimate knowledge of data domains and hence tended to be more responsive to the needs of the users. The administrative records became accessible for statistical users and hence their potentials more fully utilized.

87. The Commission invited the participants to outline their national statistical systems and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses keeping in view the framework of merit and demerits highlighted in the paper. The delegates also apprised the Commission of the efforts being made to improve the effectiveness of their agricultural statistical systems.

88. The Commission noted the conclusions of the roundtable. First, there was no unique model or system of agricultural statistics which would be suitable to all countries. An appropriate model for each country would need to be decided keeping in view its geo-political, administrative and legal structure. Available financial and human resources would critically influence the choice of suitable statistical system for the country. Second, in order to win the confidence of respondents, particularly in surveys involving sensitive data, it would be desirable that the survey was carried out under the auspices of a neutral agency, e.g., the National Statistics Office of the country. Third, the credibility of the statistics would improve if these were produced by a neutral agency.

89. The Commission recommended the countries to prepare a Medium-term Statistical Development Plan, which could include a system of designated agencies for different types of statistics and a calendar of release of statistics. The Plan would also specify the frequency, level of disaggregation and method to be employed for compilation of statistics.

90. The Commission recommended that the countries, which have a decentralized system for collection of agriculture statistics, introduce a strong coordinating mechanism among different agencies playing a role in the system or using its products. Such coordination could be achieved through the establishment of permanent bodies, such as a board or a commission, for laying down standards, creating a shared pool of statisticians in the civil service and designation of focal points for harmonization and cross-validation of statistics compiled by different agencies. Such mechanisms could bring in the benefits of a centralized system even to a highly decentralized system.

WORLD PROGRAMME FOR THE CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE 2010

(WCA 2010): PLANS AND ISSUES

(Item 9 of the Agenda)

91. Document APCAS/08/11 "The World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA 2010): Opportunities, Plans and Issues" was presented to the Commission by Mr Mukesh Srivastava. The Commission was informed that since the FAO assumed primary responsibility for the World Census of Agriculture (WCA) Programme in 1950, the number of countries participating in the programme had steadily increased, particularly during the last five decades. In the last round, which referred to the period from 1996 to 2005, among the Asia and Pacific countries, 29 had undertaken agricultural censuses and 25 provided their reports to FAO.

92. The Commission noted that the WCA 2010 was advocating an integrated statistical system approach while also providing enough flexibility to countries to create a census and survey plan best suited to their requirements and ensuring that a minimum set of essential data for international comparison would be available.

93. The important new features of this programme were highlighted to the Commission as bases for obtaining feedback from countries about their plans. The new features of the WCA 2010 included: (a) a modular approach which included a core census on a limited range of data items covering all agricultural holdings, followed by detailed inquiries in the form of supplementary modules or follow-up sample surveys based on sampling frames obtained from the core census; (b) possibility to monitor the MDGs specifically those relating to eradication of poverty and hunger, achievement of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, and environment sustainability; (c) guidance on collection of community-level data as part of the agricultural census. The Commission was informed that Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Republic of Korea were examples of countries in the Region which had accumulated experience in community-level data collection; and (d) option of integrating national agricultural and population censuses for greater synergy in field work, cost-effectiveness, increased scope of data analysis and complete coverage of agriculture.

94. The Commission noted that while many countries had established a routine for carrying out an agricultural census, some issues, if not adequately addressed at planning stage, would often render the census data incomplete and incomparable at international level. These issues related to the use of cut-offs based on scale of operation in definition of agricultural holdings for the census and ensuring complete coverage of agricultural areas operated by holders living in distant locations.

95. The Commission was informed of the plans of member countries for participation in WCA 2010 and the manner in which they were benefiting from the new FAO guidelines on WCA 2010. The Commission was pleased to note that out of the 24 APCAS member countries, 17 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, People's Republic of China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam), had already prepared concrete plans for participating in the WCA 2010 Programme. Cambodia, Malaysia and Afghanistan informed their intentions to participate in the current round of WCA. The Commission also learnt that many countries were already planning to integrate their agricultural census with their population census.

OTHER RELATED AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS TOPICS

(Item 10 of the Agenda)

Forestry in Sarawak

(Item 10a of the Agenda)

96. Document APCAS/08/12 "Forestry in Sarawak" was introduced to the Commission by Ms Salina Hamdi of the Forest Department of Sarawak. It was informed that the Ministry of Planning and Resource Management was responsible for the formulation of policies on forestry. The Forest Department in Sarawak was responsible for the identification and protection of the forest reserves, protected forest, communal forest, national park, natural reserves and wildlife sanctuary. It had the authority to regulate production and export of logs from the state, and to impose and collect royalties, fees and other payments. Furthermore, the Department was authorized to issue licences and permits under the Forest Ordinance (1958), National

Parks and Nature Reserve Ordinance (1998) and Wildlife Protection Ordinance (1998). The Department was also tasked to promote the economic utilization of forest produce, protect and preserve endangered wildlife resources of the State and conduct research on the conservation, management and utilization of forest resources.

Implementation and Perspectives of CountrySTAT in the Asia and Pacific Region (Item 10b of the Agenda)

97. Document APCAS/08/13 “Implementation and Perspectives of CountrySTAT in the Asia and Pacific Region” was introduced to the Commission by Mr Robert Mayo. The Commission was informed that CountrySTAT was designed as an integrated national food and agricultural statistical information system ensuring harmonization of national data and metadata collections for analysis and policy-making. The web based system was using common international standards and frameworks, i.e., FAOSTAT, Genetic Algorithm Utility Library (GAUL) and Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX). In the APCAS region, CountrySTAT was integrated with the RDES, had been successfully implemented in the Philippines and was being implemented in Bhutan.

98. The Commission noted that an important objective of the CountrySTAT model was the establishment of a nationally owned and maintained information system capable of providing quality statistics on food and agriculture in a structured format. CountrySTAT provided the vehicle for promoting evidence-based technical, political and financial decision-making. The Commission was advised that CountrySTAT should promote strong partnership with national statistical offices and other statistical authorities to enhance capacity building.

99. The Commission was apprised that since 2005, CountrySTAT was being developed by the FAO Statistics Division in technical collaboration with Statistics Sweden which provided the PC-Axis Software Family, the information dissemination technology implementing the CountrySTAT. The datasets of CountrySTAT maintained statistics and indicators by time periods and geographic areas to monitor conditions and performance of the food and agriculture sector. The FAO Statistics Division decided to develop a simplified food balance sheet methodology to be integrated into CountrySTAT in order to provide a data analysis tool to an erstwhile pure provision of raw statistical information.

100. The Commission noted that CountrySTAT provided capacity building to partners at each step of implementation. The Commission was informed that in the APCAS region, Bhutan was currently in the initial phase of implementation, where the application was enriched to respond to the national needs, and main players were introduced to the application. The exercise in the Philippines had entered an advanced phase involving dissemination and sub-national advocacy strategy. The Commission further noted that a regionalized version of CountrySTAT had been adopted for demonstration under the RDES. The Commission was, however, cautioned that the statistical information workflows from the countries to the CountrySTAT for RDES and the subsequent back-end harmonization of datasets would require more work in methodological development for which cooperation of the countries would be necessary.

101. The Commission was pleased that under RDES a user manual for CountrySTAT had been developed and published for use by both administrators and end-users. The Commission expressed concern that no decision had yet been made on which institution would be mandated to own the RDES System and maintain gathered statistics and indicators.

Towards a Simplified Food Balance Sheet

(Item 10c of the Agenda)

102. Document APCAS/08/14 “Towards a Simplified Food Balance Sheet” was presented to the Commission by Mr Robert Mayo. The Commission was informed that since the 1940s the FAO was preparing the Food Balance Sheets (FBS) on regular intervals. The FBS aimed to present a comprehensive picture of the pattern of a country’s food supply and utilization during a specified reference period.

103. The Commission noted that the FBS was serving as a useful tool for monitoring the national food supply, providing valuable data sets for both intra- and inter-country comparisons of food consumption. The FBS, when compiled regularly, could also reveal the extent to which the food supply of the country would be adequate in relation to nutritional requirements. The Commission was also apprised that by bringing together the larger part of the food and agricultural data, FBS would also be useful in the detailed appraisal of the food situation in a country. The Commission noted that only a few member countries were currently compiling the FBS in the region.

104. The Commission was cautioned that FBS had some limitations such as the quantities of food available for human consumption, as FBS estimates could be higher than the amount of food actually consumed. Moreover, the FBS would not give any indication of the differences that might exist in the diet consumed by different population groups nor on seasonal variations in the total food supply. The Commission was advised that in order to get a complete picture, food consumption surveys showing the distribution of the national food supply at various times of the year among different groups of the population should be conducted. The Commission was likewise advised that the recommendations of FAO back in 1946, expressing that: (a) member governments prepare FBS to a uniform pattern; (b) FAO provide direct assistance to governments which find it difficult to prepare FBS; (c) to promote comparability in the presentation of food consumption data in terms of calories and nutrients, FAO should continue its work on food composition tables and make the same available to governments for use in the preparation of FBS; and (d) FBS be published as soon as possible, still held.

105. The Commission was advised that the accuracy of FBS, which were in essence derived statistics, would depend on the reliability of the underlying basic statistics of population, supply and utilization of food and of their nutritive value. These varied among countries, both in terms of coverage and accuracy. In addition, the Commission was informed that in most cases, the assumptions for waste used in FBS were based on expert opinion obtained in the countries. It was important that this country-specific information be provided to FAO.

106. Commodity Balance Sheets (CBS) were also introduced to the Commission. It was informed that these were the elementary framework for analysis of the food situation of a country or groups of countries. The Commission was informed that FAO was maintaining a Commodity Balance database (XCBS) with balance sheet structured data for major commodities in the following groups: cereals, dairy, meat, oil bearing crops, sugar, tropical beverages, bananas and citrus.

107. The Commission welcomed the efforts of FAO to simplify the compilation of the FBS. It was pleased to know that moves were been taken to reduce the list of commodities for most developing countries in order to diminish the burden of data compilation and calculations associated with FBS. The Commission was informed that a simplified FBS with 20-30 items in place of the currently more than 900 commodities would, for many countries, account for 90-95 percent of calories available for consumption.

108. As there were only few member countries that had sufficient experience in compiling the FBS, the Commission sought clarification on the procedures for compiling the FBS, particularly with respect to the estimation of the nutrient equivalents of specific agricultural food commodities. FAO committed to address these concerns with possible technical assistance to countries needing such help.

Gender Statistics for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Asia-Pacific Region: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects

(Item 10d of the Agenda)

109. Document APCAS/08/15 "Gender Statistics for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Asia-Pacific Region: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects" was presented to the Commission by Mr John Curry. It was informed that most gender statistical work focused on issues such as population, health, education, formal and informal employment, gender-based violence, political participation and time-use. However, the gender dimension of agricultural statistics was often neglected by both agricultural statisticians and gender statistics specialists.

110. The Commission was informed that for nearly twenty years, FAO responded to this data gap in both agricultural and gender statistics through collaboration of two of its divisions (Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) and the Statistics Division (ESS)) with national statistical systems in member countries. The collaboration aimed to build capacity at national level by providing training and technical support in gender and statistics for ministries of agriculture and central statistics offices. Much of the work varied in scope and intensity across global regions and occurred within the framework of both the WCA Programme and the changing context of dominant analytical approaches to gender in development studies.

111. The Commission noted that the current Gender and Development (GAD) perspective was a progression in thinking from a focus on Women in Development (WID), where women's practical/basic needs or economic empowerment were specially targeted. GAD now was taking into account the division of work and benefits between women and men.

112. FAO's statistical work within the GAD perspective had included: (a) production of technical guidelines and training materials for gender and statistics to support data production and use; (b) sensitization and training of both producers and users (actual or potential) in gender issues, concepts and tools for the production, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data; (c) technical support to agricultural censuses/surveys in gender principally within the framework of technical support to the WCA; (d) recoding and re-tabulation of existing data to produce sex-disaggregated data sets, especially for use in policy decision-support provided by FAO; and (e) preparation of sex-disaggregated data sets, for inclusion in larger databases such as FAOSTAT.

113. The Commission was reminded that in the 1994 Session of APCAS, two papers focused on advocacy and guidelines for improving the visibility of women in agricultural statistics. One discussed the alternative data sources for women's work in agriculture and the other showed that statistics on women could be derived from agricultural censuses and surveys. It was also mentioned that in 1999, a study on gender database for agriculture and resource management policies was made covering three Pacific Island Countries (Fiji, Vanuatu and Western Samoa).

114. A sensitisation workshop on gender-disaggregated data and indicators (GDD) was conducted in India in 2004 in collaboration with the Centre for Studies on Gender Concerns in Agriculture, and the Kerala Agricultural University. It aimed to promote greater understanding of the importance of gender disaggregated data analysis in gender-sensitive agricultural development planning.

115. The Commission noted that FAO's technical support to gender and agricultural statistics primarily consisted of country-specific studies of gender-disaggregated census data. Among member countries, China, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam were cited.

116. The Commission was apprised that FAO's advocacy to promote gender factors in agricultural statistics within the GAD framework was mainly reflected in the two WCA programme cycles (2000 and 2010). Gender had been included in the list of themes for supplementary survey in the WCA 2010 census recommendations. Moreover, gender items in the minimal core data items are the sex and age of the holder to allow for tabulation and cross-tabulation of relevant gender issues with other features of the recommended core census data set. New concepts in the 2010 round, such as sub-holders, could help reveal the contribution of both women and men to agriculture thereby, adding value to the policy relevance of agricultural statistics.

117. The Commission noted that some member countries had conducted country-specific studies on WID and GAD and that they were willing to share these with FAO. In addition, member countries also shared that in many national surveys, such as labour force or wage surveys, the survey instruments would have at least the sex of the respondents or members of households that would allow gender analysis. However, very few countries were doing such analysis on regular basis. The Commission also noted that a common feature of time-use studies was a special focus on time management especially among women. These studies could also provide an avenue for more in-depth gender analysis.

118. The Commission welcomed plans for the inclusion of the gender dimension in CountrySTAT. Moreover, indicator systems in a few countries had incorporated a module on gender in agriculture. Statistical service staff in member countries would, however, need assistance to increase their capacity to undertake gender analysis.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(Item 11 of the Agenda)

Venues of the Twenty-Third, Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth Sessions of APCAS

119. Cambodia expressed its readiness to host the Twenty-Third Session with Siem Reap as the most probable venue. Indonesia supported Cambodia's proposal, at the same time expressing its willingness to host the Twenty-Third Session with either Bali or Djogjakarta as alternative venues in the event that Cambodia's offer would not materialize. Viet Nam, on the other hand, expressed its willingness to host the Twenty-Fourth Session in 2012 while Lao PDR offered Vientiane or Luang Prabang in Lao PDR as possible venue of the Twenty-Fifth Session in 2014. The Secretary committed that he would pursue the matter with relevant authorities from these countries.

Other Matters

120. The Commission noted that APCAS Sessions were being organized every two years. It suggested that FAO planned activities that would allow more interactions of member countries, such as the organization of statistical training, to foster statistical capacity building of national officers.

121. The Secretary of APCAS requested Focal Points of the recently concluded Japan-supported project on RDES to update their contact information with FAO in order to maintain the network that was established in the project. This network would facilitate the continuation of project activities even as the project formally concluded in December 2007.

122. The Host Government, Malaysia, arranged a field visit for the delegates to some of the interesting sites in Sarawak, such as the Semenggoh Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, the Agricultural Research Station in Rampangi and the Sarawak Cultural Village.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING OF THE SESSION

(Items 12 and 13 of the Agenda)

123. The Commission concluded the Twenty-Second Session on 13 June 2008 after considering and adopting the report prepared by the Drafting Committee.

ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

AGENDA

- I. Opening Ceremony**
- II. Election of Officers** (Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Drafting Committee)
- III. Adoption of Agenda**
- IV. FAO Activities in Food and Agriculture Statistics in Asia and the Pacific since the last Session of the Commission**
 1. Overview of FAO's Activities in Asia and the Pacific Region since the 21st Session of APCAS
 2. Final Draft Report on the FAO/Japan Project GCP/RAS/184/JPN – Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries
 3. Expert Consultation on Farmers' Income Statistics
 4. Highlights of the Fourth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS – IV)
 5. Other Information Items
- V. State of Food and Agricultural Statistics in Countries of the Region**
 1. Compendium of the Metadata for National Agricultural Statistics in Selected APCAS Countries: Experience and Preliminary Findings
 2. Recent Developments in Agricultural Statistics in the Countries of the Region (update by member countries on selected topics, including statistics on farmers' income).
- VI. Agricultural Statistics and Indicators for Measuring Progress in Rural and Agricultural Development: A Joint FAO-World Bank Study**
 1. Tracking Results in Agriculture and Rural Development in less-than-ideal Conditions: A Sourcebook of Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation
 2. Validation at Country Level during the FAO-WB Study on Indicators for Tracking Results of Agricultural and Rural Development: Cambodia Case
- VII. Roundtable on Rising Food Prices and the Role of Statisticians: Experiences and Recommendations**
 1. Market Price Watch and FAMA's Role in Malaysian Agricultural Marketing
 2. FAO's Response to Rising Food Prices

3. Highlights of the High level Conference on World Food Security
4. Roundtable Discussion

VIII. Roundtable Discussions on the Role of National Statistics Offices in Agricultural Statistics and Agricultural Policy

National Statistical Systems in the Region: Who should be in charge of Agricultural Statistics?

IX. World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010 (WCA 2010) with Modular Approach

World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010: Opportunities, Plans and Issues

X. Other Related Agricultural Statistics Topics

1. Forestry in Sarawak
2. Implementation and Perspectives of CountrySTAT in the Asia and Pacific Region
3. Towards a Simplified Food Balance Sheet
4. Gender Statistics for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Asia-Pacific Region: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects

XI. Any other business

Topics, date and venue for the next APCAS Session

XII. Adoption of the Report

XIII. Closing of the Session

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LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Doc. No.	Agenda Item	Title of Document
APCAS/08/1	3	Provisional Agenda
APCAS/08/2	3	Provisional Timetable
APCAS/08/3	4a	Overview of FAO's Activities in Asia and the Pacific Region since the 21 st Session of APCAS
APCAS/08/4	4b	Final Draft Report on the FAO/Japan Project GCP/RAS/184/JPN – Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries
APCAS/08/5	4c	Expert Consultation on Farmers' Income Statistics
APCAS/08/6	4d	Highlights of the Fourth International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS – IV)
APCAS/08/7	5a	Compendium of the Metadata for National Agricultural Statistics in Selected APCAS Countries: Experience and Preliminary Findings
APCAS/08/8	5b	Recent Developments in Agricultural Statistics in the Countries of the Region (update by member countries)
APCAS/08/9	6a	Tracking Results in Agriculture and Rural Development in less-than-ideal Conditions: A Sourcebook of Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation
APCAS/08/10	6b	Validation at Country Level during the FAO-WB Study on Indicators for Tracking Results of Agricultural and Rural Development: Cambodia Case
APCAS/08/11	9	World programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010: Opportunities, Plans and Issues
APCAS/08/12	10a	Forestry in Sarawak
APCAS/08/13	10b	Implementation and Perspectives of CountrySTAT in the Asia and Pacific Region
APCAS/08/14	10c	Towards a Simplified Food Balance Sheet
APCAS/08/15	10d	Gender Statistics for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Asia-Pacific Region: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects

Information Documents

APCAS/08/INF1	Information Note
APCAS/08/INF2	List of Documents
APCAS/08/INF3	List of Participants

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By

**Y.A.B Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud
Chief Minister of Sarawak**

Delivered to

**The Twenty-Second Session of the
Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics**

Kuching, Malaysia

9 – 13 June 2008

Y. Bhg Puan Hajah Wan Ramlah Wan Abd. Raof, Chief Statistician of Malaysia
Dr Jairo Castano, Secretary of the APCAS Commission
Y.B. Datuk Amar Wilson Baya Dandot, State Secretary, Sarawak,
FAO Representatives,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning and Selamat Datang,

I wish to convey the apology of the Yab Chief Minister Sarawak as he is unable to be present this morning due to other commitment. It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you to Malaysia, especially to Kuching, Sarawak, land of the hornbill.

Firstly, I would like to thank the organisers for giving me this opportunity to officiate the opening of the 22nd session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics or APCAS, which is held from 9 – 13 June 2008. on behalf of the Malaysian government, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Food and Agriculture Organization or FAO for choosing Malaysia as the venue for this round of session.

I would like to welcome all participants from the 25 participating countries to this session, jointly organized by the FAO, Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities Malaysia and the Department of Statistics, Malaysia. I hope your trip here is productive, enlightening and enjoyable. Please take some time off to enjoy this beautiful country of ours, including our delicious food and warm hospitality.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

This session which will be held over 5 days, beginning this afternoon will address various pertinent aspects in relation to agricultural statistics.

APCAS, which is a statutory body of FAO, meets every two years to assess the current status of food and agricultural statistical development in member countries. it also reviews the FAO activities in Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the period 2006 to 2020, the Malaysian economy is targeted to grow at 6.3 percent. This target is premised on the world economy registering an average GDP growth of 3.5 percent during the entire plan period, greater focus will be given to develop the agriculture sector, particularly in areas of food supply and food security. This is in line with the third national agriculture policy, which spans from 1998–2010.

The Government of Malaysia has taken various measures in this aspect, to revitalise the agriculture sector as the third engine of growth. Hence, the third national agricultural policy and the Ninth Malaysia Plan are geared towards increasing productivity and competitiveness, ensuring food security and creating new sources of growth for the economy. The essence of these policies are to increase agricultural production, further expansion in agro-based processing activities, strengthening marketing and global networking to increase export, improving delivery services system which would ultimately elevate the income levels of farmers.

Efforts are also being undertaken to develop Malaysia as a major producer of *halal* products and services. Malaysia will leverage upon its international recognition as a modern and progressive Islamic country to gain access to the export markets for its *halal* products and services. Eventually, this will boost the agricultural sector and at the same time, encourage greater involvement of the smes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A strong statistical data system is fundamental for the formulation of macro-economic policies. It provides indicators for the performance of the economy, forming a basis for the adoption of current decisions and at the same time underline the projections for future developments. In addition, the statistical indicators form the basis for comparative analyses on the economies of other countries and are therefore essentially relevant for positioning the economy, worldwide.

In line with this, the Malaysian Government with the cooperation from the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities and the Department of Statistics, Malaysia is in the process of developing a comprehensive database for agricultural statistics. This is for the benefit of policy makers and other users.

With the current global issues on the increase of food prices and other challenges in food supply, the compilation of a comprehensive and up to date agriculture statistical data has become a priority. A complete and harmonised statistical system has to be made available to policy makers primarily as inputs for planning, monitoring and evaluation of development activities. At the same time, the pervasive use of computing technology and the increased reliance on information systems has created a heightened awareness and concern on storage of information. Hence, the rapid development in information technology has become an important mechanism in addressing these issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is hoped that during this session, participants will actively deliberate to bring about improvements and innovations in the management of agricultural statistical system which will assist in addressing issues, In light of the present challenges faced by the line ministries as well as national statistics offices.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the organizers and all participants for making this seminar a reality. I hope you will have a successful and fruitful deliberation during the seminar. I also hope the discussions and interactions will strengthen friendships among seminar participants and organizers. I wish you a pleasant stay in Sarawak and hope you will bring home fond memories of your stay in our country.

On that note, it is my great pleasure to declare the Twenty-Second Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics officially open.

Thank you.

OPENING ADDRESS

By

He Changchui
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Delivered to

The Twenty-Second Session of the
Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics
Kuching, Malaysia
9 – 13 June 2008

Y.B. Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam, Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak,
Madame Puan Wan Ramlah Wan Abd. Raof, Honourable Chief Statistician of Malaysia,
Distinguished Delegates and Dignitaries,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to extend, on behalf of the Director-General of FAO and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the Twenty-Second Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS). I am pleased that, after 34 years, APCAS returns once again to the host country of the fifth session which was held in Kuala Lumpur in 1974.

I am especially grateful to the Government of Malaysia for its generosity in hosting this session in the beautiful state of Sarawak and for providing excellent facilities and an environment conducive to fruitful and productive discussions. I am personally grateful to you, Your Honourable, for devoting your valuable time to inaugurate this 22nd Session of APCAS.

The enchanting state of Sarawak located in the Borneo Island is Malaysia's largest state. It is endowed with one of the world's richest and most diverse ecosystems. We will have the opportunity to admire some of the natural and cultural beauty of this paradisiacal state throughout the week.

I am delighted to note that some 52 delegates from 15 member countries are attending the meeting, together with 5 observers from Malaysia and Afghanistan. I am thankful for your continued keen interest in the work of the Commission and in the activities of FAO. Your active involvement is significant as the demand for reliable food and agricultural statistics are more essential than ever for proper planning and decision making; sharing of experiences between member countries becomes important for building synergies and for enhancing knowledge networking.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

APCAS is a statutory body of FAO established in 1963. The first Session of the Commission was held in Tokyo, Japan in 1966 and 21 meetings have been held since then in 12 different countries. APCAS serves as a body for senior statistical officials from member countries to meet and review recent developments in their agricultural statistical systems and exchange ideas with experts from FAO and other bodies on the state of food and agricultural statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

This Commission serves to effectively synthesize the opinions and recommendations of member countries within the region. These opinions and recommendations are brought up to the attention of all member countries in the FAO regional and general conferences. Therefore, APCAS provides a unique opportunity to put forward proposals that may contribute to the further development of agricultural statistics in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are well aware that FAO's main mandate is to combat hunger and monitor progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially MDG one, Target two, aimed at halving hunger by 2015. Despite the rapid transformation of economies that has taken place, the Asia-Pacific region still accounts for more than 60 percent of the world's undernourished¹ population due to its large population and relatively low per capita incomes when compared with the Latin American and the Near East and North Africa regions. Latest FAO statistics show that 527 million people suffer from chronic hunger in the region, of which 300 million are in South Asia, 163 million in East Asia and 64 million in Southeast Asia.

There has been a significant change in the nature and location of hunger and poverty. While poverty is declining at a rapid rate at the national level there is a tendency for poverty to become concentrated in certain areas and among certain social groups. There is therefore a new pattern of localized persistence of poverty, even in countries such as China and India which have generally performed extremely well in terms of overall economic growth as well as reduction in the number of poor. Generally, the poor are living in marginalized areas with poor resource endowments and extremely weak infrastructure and services, and almost with no linkages to the mainstream economy. The recent soaring food prices may exacerbate the issue by pushing a large number of people back to poverty.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In harmony with the biodiversity that surrounds us in Sarawak, I have noted several relevant and interesting issues, from technical to policy matters, that will be tabled during this APCAS Session.

One of those matters concerns the Regional Data Exchange System (RDES). FAO has recently completed this Japan-assisted project, whose progress since 2002 was reviewed during previous APCAS Sessions. The achievements of this project

¹ FAO, *The state of food insecurity in the world 2006*.

have been catalytic in nature, and contribute significantly to capacity building. FAO greatly appreciates the support received from Japan in strengthening agricultural statistics systems in the region, and further increasing the analytical capacities in the countries. The final report of this project will be discussed during this Session.

One activity linked to the RDES is the Compendium of Country Reports on Metadata for National Agricultural Statistics. Sixteen countries in Asia and the Pacific were involved in the preparation of these country reports. These reports were discussed in a sub-regional workshop in Manila in October 2006. The Compendium contains a description of data systems and its main characteristics as well as critical views of these systems that point out the strengths and weaknesses of the systems. The highlights of the Compendium will be presented at this Session to facilitate discussions and formulation of recommendations on ways to move forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the UN Conference on Financing for Development, in Monterrey, Mexico, 2002, developing and developed countries made commitments to a shared responsibility to achieve development results including those embodied in the Millennium Development Goals. This required countries to have the capacity to monitor indicators that reliably reflected results at all phases of the development process, from strategic planning to implementation to completion. Since many countries lack the capacity to produce and report the necessary data to inform the international development debate or to monitor their national trends, practical guidelines on appropriate monitoring indicators were needed.

To this end, the World Bank and FAO have recently prepared a sourcebook, which provides guidance on how to build the capacity needed for effective monitoring and evaluation in developing countries; and on the approaches for determining which indicators to select for tracking results in less-than-ideal conditions. This week, you will have the opportunity to learn some of the insights of this sourcebook and glimpse the results of the test of its methodology in Cambodia.

The responsibility for agricultural statistics in the countries has always been an issue in national agricultural policies. In some cases the responsibility lies with the National Statistical Office (NSO), in others it lies with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). And yet, in other instances, the responsibility is shared by both the NSO and the MoA. Some argue that NSO should be in charge while others believe that MoA should be responsible. How well this works, however, depends largely on the legal framework operating in the country and the level of collaboration between the parties. A clear-cut description of responsibilities in the production of agricultural statistics and partnership between the main stakeholders is also important. This provocative topic will be considered in roundtable discussions this week.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International food prices have increased rapidly over the last three years. In December last year, FAO launched an initiative to respond to the crisis that threatens to push millions of people back into hunger and poverty. Governments from several

countries, in turn, have adopted different policy measures to address rising food prices. But what is the role that statisticians play or can play to support policy decision makers? A second roundtable will address this issue and try to derive some recommendations for implementation by countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may recall, in 2005 FAO launched the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010 (WCA 2010), FAO's ninth Census round. The new programme was intended for countries planning to conduct their national censuses during the decade 2006–2015. The Census updated guidelines have a modular approach, with one core module and few supplementary modules according to the needs of the country. This new and flexible approach allows countries to collect data on a variety of subjects in an integrated and cost-effective manner. China, among other countries, has undertaken the Census of agriculture while preparations in other countries are underway. I am glad to note that a report on the progress made by the Asia-Pacific region will be presented at the Session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to facilitate wider analysis and utilization of available data and its effective use in the process of policy formulation, it is important to create – at the national and subnational levels – statistical databases with common data structures and compatible software so that communication and exchange is possible, not only between the producers of agricultural statistics but also between users and producers of statistics.

CountrySTAT, the country-level version of FAOSTAT, has been piloted in some Asia-Pacific countries since 2005. This versatile database system offers a two-way bridge between national and international statistics on food and agriculture and facilitates integration of efforts of several data producers within a country. I see from the Timetable that the implementation and perspectives of CountrySTAT in the region will be presented and discussed during the meeting. I invite you all to be aware of the capabilities of this system and take full advantage of its availability in the statistical systems of your respective countries.

Several other topics such as gender statistics and food balance sheets will also be tabled in this APCAS session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

APCAS has provided strong support for the development of agricultural statistics in the region throughout its 45 years of existence. The Commission works not only to monitor the progress in development of agricultural statistics and takes cognizance of the needs of countries, but it also sets directions for further developments of statistical systems by working as a platform for sharing country initiatives. FAO looks to its member countries in deciding new programme initiatives and for setting priorities in the course of FAO reform. I request that you observe how previous undertakings have been implemented and recommend directions for our future actions. FAO looks to you for this guidance. In turn, I wish to assure you that

we at the FAO Regional Office in Bangkok are always ready to extend technical assistance to our member countries to the best of our expert capability, despite any resource limitations.

Finally, let me again convey my sincere gratitude to the Government of Malaysia for hosting this session of the Commission. I acknowledge the hard work of the secretariat staff from the Department of Statistics of Malaysia, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry and the State Government Secretary of Sarawak in the preparation and organization of this meeting. I would also like to thank my colleagues from FAO headquarters and the regional office for their technical contributions and managerial efforts for making this meeting valuable and productive.

I wish you all success in your deliberations and a pleasant stay in the “land of the Hornbill”.

Thank you.

WELCOMING ADDRESS

By

Y. BHG PUAN HAJAH WAN RAMLAH WAN ABD. RAOF
CHIEF STATISTICIAN OF MALAYSIA

Delivered to

The Twenty-Second Session of the
Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics

Kuching, Malaysia

9 – 13 June 2008

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Honorable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam – Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak, representing the Chief Minister Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud
Dr Jairo Castano, Secretary of the APCAS Commission
Y.B. Datuk Amar Wilson Baya Dandot, State Secretary, Sarawak,
FAO Representatives,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh and Good Morning.

Firstly, I would like to specially welcome YAB Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud, Chief Minister of Sarawak to the opening ceremony of the Twenty-Second Session of the Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics this morning. We are pleased that you have courteously accepted our invitation to deliver the opening address and to officiate the opening of this session.

On behalf of the Government of Malaysia, please allow me to extend a warm welcome to all the guests, may I say “Selamat Datang”. It is indeed a great honour to the Department and to Malaysia to host this meeting since the last session held in 1974 and may I take this opportunity to thank FAO for the support and commitment rendered to make this event a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics or APCAS is a biennial event and it has provided strong support for the development of agricultural statistics in the Asia and Pacific region throughout its 43 years of existence. The Commission is also responsible to set directions for further developments of statistical systems by working as platform for sharing country initiatives. Thus assisting FAO in deciding new programme initiatives and for setting priorities in the course of FAO reform.

FAO being the coordinator rotates the host country to organize this event among member countries. We are fortunate that Malaysia has been given the opportunity to host the 22nd Session where it provides an avenue to review the development in agricultural statistics since the last session held in Phuket, Thailand in 2006. Besides, this meeting facilitates the exchange of ideas with the presence of experts from FAO and other organizations regarding the State of Food and Agricultural Statistics in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malaysia is taking new shift in priority toward agriculture. In Ninth Malaysia Plan, the agriculture sector is about to achieve the first mission to increase the value added in the country's economy. The 'new agriculture' programme will revitalise the Malaysian agriculture as the third engine of growth. The programme is not just about producing more but it is expected to enhance value-addition to agriculture products, targeted to grow at 7.6 percent by 2010. Ultimately it will generate new source of growth and improving the national socio-economics divide by eradicating poverty.

Today, the agricultural statistics are very crucial for the planning and policy formulation in Malaysia especially with the alarming global threats, shortage of food and price volatility. A lot of effort has been made and resources allocated by the ministry and the statistics department to conduct surveys and censuses. In 2005, the agriculture census was carried out by the department of statistics covering all agricultural households in Malaysia.

To materialise the need to establish the right approach to garner data and information on agricultural statistics and to meet the various requests from stakeholders and users, a new division in the Department of Statistics, the Agriculture and Agro-Based Statistics Division was established in the year 2007. The initial activity by the division was to conduct the agriculture and logging economics census and through which the statistics presented are related to gross output generated, cost of input, salary and wages, and fixed assets owned in the sectors. The division also conducts monthly rubber statistics to provide general statistics on production, stocks, import, export, domestic consumption of rubber and number of workers, salary and wages in rubber estates. For future development, the division plans to establish a survey on agro based industries and supply and utilization account.

As the economies are globalizing so are the statistics which reflection of such development. Nowadays economic flaw occurs immediately without showing any substantial indicator especially foods. It is very eminent for the government to monitor the production and productivity of the agricultural products to avoid shortfall. Initiative has been taken by the statistic department together with the ministry of agriculture and agro-based industry and the ministry of plantation industries and commodities to develop a database for agricultural statistics which can be shared by other government agencies. The database comprises data at household and establishment level. In future, the department will take a lead as a focal point for international agriculture data sharing and exchange.

In line with this, greater involvement of FAO promoting advanced agricultural statistics system integrated into a national statistics system is essential especially in terms of technical support and capacity building.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Malaysia I would like to take this opportunity to specially thank FAO for their assistance given during the agriculture census. The department will support the commission and the member countries to prepare proper world programmes and approach for the census of agriculture 2010. It is a big challenge to the commission as one of the new objectives of the census is "Monitoring Millennium Development Goals". The modernisation of FAOSTATS really assists the policy maker and planners to view the data at international level and set benchmarks at the click of the mouse.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all for the support and commitment given in making this meeting a success. May our efforts be blessed and may this session be a productive one.

Finally once again, I would like to wish a pleasant and memorable stay in Kuching, Sarawak.

Salam and thank you.

**ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

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Australia	Malaysia
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India	Sri Lanka
Indonesia	Thailand
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**DATES AND PLACES OF SESSIONS OF THE
ASIA AND PACIFIC COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

First	–	Tokyo, Japan, 26 September – 3 October 1966
Second	–	New Delhi, India, 9 – 14 December 1968
Third	–	Bangkok, Thailand, 26 – 31 October 1970
Fourth	–	Seoul, Korea, 6 – 12 October 1972
Fifth	–	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 16 – 20 July 1974
Sixth	–	Manila, Philippines, 25 – 31 March 1976
Seventh	–	Bangkok, Thailand, 17 – 23 August 1978
Eighth	–	Kathmandu, Nepal, 26 – 31 October 1980
Ninth	–	Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2 – 7 December 1982
Tenth	–	Jakarta, Indonesia, 26 July – 1 August 1984
Eleventh	–	Seoul, Korea, 29 May – 3 June 1986
Twelfth	–	Colombo, Sri Lanka, 10 – 16 August 1988
Thirteenth	–	Bangkok, Thailand, 29 October – 2 November 1990
Fourteenth	–	Beijing, China, 8 – 13 June 1992
Fifteenth	–	Manila, Philippines, 24 – 28 October 1994
Sixteenth	–	Tokyo, Japan, 28 October – 1 November 1996
Seventeenth	–	Hobart, Australia, 2 – 6 November 1998
Eighteenth	–	Bali, Indonesia, 6 – 10 November 2000
Nineteenth	–	Seoul, Korea, 21 – 25 October 2002
Twentieth	–	New Delhi, India, 20 – 24 September 2004
Twenty-first	–	Phuket, Thailand, 11 – 15 September 2006
Twenty-second	–	Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, 9 – 13 June 2008

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