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**Strengthening the Regional Data Exchange System on  
Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries  
(GCP/RAS/184/JPN)**

**Report of the Fourth Focal Points Meeting  
and Technical Consultation  
Bangkok, Thailand, 5–7 October 2005**



**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Bangkok, Thailand**

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre
AFSIS	ASEAN Food Security Information System
APC	Asia and Pacific Countries
APCAS	Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics
ASE	Agricultural Statistics Expert
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DES	Dietary energy supply
EAERR	East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GPS	Global positioning system
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
NDVI	Normalized Differential Vegetative Index
PPD	Policy and Planning Division (Bhutan)
RDES	Regional Data Exchange System
SLRD	Settlement and Land Records Department (Myanmar)

# **Fourth Focal Points Meeting and Technical Consultation**

## **Strengthening Regional Data Exchange on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries (GCP/RAS/184/JPN) Bangkok, Thailand 5–7 October 2005**

### **I. Fourth Focal Points Meeting**

#### **Introduction**

1. Representatives from 16 countries participating in the project *Strengthening Regional Data Exchange on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and the Pacific Countries* attended the Fourth Focal Points Meeting held at the Novotel on Siam Square in Bangkok, Thailand, from 5 to 7 October 2005.
2. There were two senior donor government representatives; four representatives from JICA, one representative from the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve (EAERR) and two representatives from the Government of Malaysia attended as observers. Annex 2 lists all of the participants.

#### **Overview and objectives**

3. This fourth meeting of the Focal Points of the FAO regional project GCP/RAS/184/JPN followed previous annual meetings in Thailand in 2004, 2003 and 2002.
4. The Project Document specified two objectives: (a) phased implementation of the Master Plan for the Regional Data Exchange System (RDES) for food and agricultural statistics, following the concepts formulated by the previous regional project with respect to the transfer of electronic data among countries in the region and FAO; and (b) strengthening 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.
5. To achieve these objectives, the RDES was developed and installed among the participating countries. The meeting focused on a review of the implementation of the RDES, participating countries' ongoing issues and concerns about the system and their suggestions or recommendations for the RDES to accomplish project objectives more efficiently.

#### **Opening session**

6. The welcome address (Annex 3) was delivered by Mr Hiroyuki Konuma, Deputy Regional Representative, on behalf of Mr He Changhui, Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific. He said that the main objectives of the project were to implement an electronic-based regional data exchange system for the participating countries and to strengthen national capacity to analyse data on food and agricultural statistics. The project has been extended

through 2007 with generous financial contributions from the Government of Japan, for which FAO and the participating countries are grateful.

7. The United Nations, at its recently concluded 60<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, recommitted itself to intensifying international efforts and cooperation to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); slow progress in their implementation has been noted. FAO's latest estimates (2004) showed a decline in the number of hungry people in the Asia–Pacific Region by only 50 million since 1996, an average yearly reduction of six million.
8. Mr Konuma continued that FAO had always been at the forefront of promoting and providing technical assistance to member countries in establishing and developing strong agricultural statistical systems at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. It will soon publish the *World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010*. This is a most important survey to obtain not only a snapshot of the existing global structure of agriculture, but also to serve as a reliable and up-to-date basis for sampling frames.
9. He closed by stating that the discussions at this meeting would be beneficial to the member countries and the Asia–Pacific region as a whole, by advancing towards the formulation of appropriate politics on agriculture and the development of rural areas, while ensuring adequate supplies of food for the population, and the achievement of sustainable growth.

### **Opening statement from the representative of the donor government**

10. In his opening statement (Annex 4), Mr Kenji Kamikura, Senior Statistician of the Statistics Planning Division, Statistics Department, MAFF, Japan, on behalf of the donor government, expressed his appreciation of FAO's efforts towards the improvement of agricultural statistics throughout the history of the organization, especially in the Asia–Pacific region, and his sincere gratitude to all country Focal Points for attending the meeting.
11. Japan considers it vital for the improvement of global food security that all countries should produce and share reliable statistical data for the food and agriculture sector. In this context, since 1998, Japan has contributed to a trust fund in FAO for the improvement and standardization of agricultural statistics as well as statistical data exchange in Asia–Pacific countries. An Agricultural Statistics Expert (ASE) has been sent to the FAO regional office in Bangkok to promote the implementation of the project.
12. The project ended in December last year, but Japan sought project extension until 2007, despite budget stringencies. The project is so important that Japan sent Mr Hagino to serve as an Expert on 1 June 2005. The project has the following objectives: (a) widen its coverage of food and agricultural data, (b) broaden country participation in the project and (c) focus on capacity building among member countries for analysing food and agricultural statistics in order to assist policy and planning for food security, and poverty alleviation in particular. Japan intends to continue its assistance and expects the active participation of member countries.
13. The ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) project, which started in January 2003 — also with support from the Japanese Government — built an ASEAN Food Security Information Network based on the system developed by the FAO project

and stored data from the ASEAN+3 countries. On behalf of the AFSIS project donor, Mr Kamikura expressed appreciation for FAO's assistance to AFSIS.

14. Mr Kamikura concluded by saying that the project would make a fresh start for further development of the RDES and food security in the region. He expected that all the Focal Points' personnel would work actively on the management of the data exchange system, collection of necessary data and collaboration with institutions and agencies concerned for effective data utilization. Their efforts in these activities will allow the project to accomplish its targets.

## **Election of officers**

### *Agenda item 2*

15. Mr Savanh Hanephom from Lao PDR was elected as Chair, Mr Abdur Rashid Sikder from Bangladesh as Vice Chair and Mr Romeo Recide from the Philippines as Rapporteur.

## **Adoption of agenda and timetable**

### *Agenda item 3*

16. The provisional agenda and timetable were adopted without any changes. The agenda and timetable are given in Annex 1.

## **Review of work plan for GCP/RAS/184/JPN**

### *Agenda item 4*

17. The ASE presented a review of the project work plan (April 2005 to December 2007). The 16 countries involved in the project are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.
18. The project has developed the RDES (formulated by the project GCP/RAS/171/JPN) and operationalized the project's Web site. By accessing this Web site through the Internet, Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics (APCAS) countries participating in the project have been able to upload national and sub-national food and agricultural statistics into the RDES for users worldwide to view and/or download. The next step is to expand the RDES from these 16 countries to the remaining APCAS countries.
19. In the first regional project, types of data analyses for agricultural policy carried out by countries in the region were reviewed. This review concluded that regionally, national statistical data analyses were in various stages of development and countries needed continued technical assistance for developing and/or strengthening national capacity in the context of analytical technologies for food and agricultural statistics.
20. These covered the installation of computers and connection to the Internet, with the project purchasing hardware (PCs, printers and uniform power suppliers) and software for the participating countries. The unspent balance of the former project (GCP/RAS/171/JPN) covered the cost. In countries where the Focal Points did not have Internet connections, they subscribed to an Internet connection on a contractual basis, with reimbursement for the subscription. Systems were installed during the visit of the

ASE who gave necessary guidance and training to personnel in charge of system operation in the participating countries.

21. For ASEAN countries with the same Project Focal Point, computer purchase and Internet connection subscription were financed through the AFSIS project.
22. The ASE reviewed the previous Focal Points meetings, matching the recommendations and targets made at these meetings with the accomplishments to date.
23. The first meeting in Bangkok (6–7 August 2002) recommended:
  - *Establishment of webpages in countries which did not have them, and their improvement or development in countries which had already set up the webpages. **Accomplished.***
  - *The proposed "Project Work Plan" discussed in the Meeting was comprehensive and appropriate, and accordingly the Country Focal Points should pursue it actively during its implementation. **Accomplished.***
  - *Implementing close cooperation and coordination with the projects on food security information in Asia and the Pacific region. The ASE was supposed to maintain close contact with the then proposed AFSIS project and with FAO projects related to food and agricultural information. Likewise at the national level, there was expected to be strong coordination and cooperation among the concerned agencies. **Ongoing.***
  - *Implementing the RDES on a pilot basis in certain countries, to be selected based on priorities outlined in the "Guidelines" during the Meeting and taking into account certain country-specific conditions. **Accomplished.***
  - *Holding the Meeting of the Focal Points once a year, as suggested by the Evaluation Report of the predecessor Project GCP/RAS/171/JPN. The second meeting was planned for March 2003 and the agenda was to include, *inter alia*, the plan for implementation of the RDES in detail, including hardware/software installation, application of the model webpage, and related training. **Ongoing.***
  - *Identification of approaches and mechanisms to ensure sustainability of the Project after the project period. PARIS21 and the establishment of the Trust Fund for Statistics Capacity Building were cited to have possible implications for national systems of food and agricultural statistics in the Region. Countries were encouraged to explore the possibilities of using these resources. **Ongoing.***
24. At the second meeting in Bangkok (27–28 March 2003) a prototype of the RDES was presented for discussion by the participants and the future activities of the project were outlined. Recommendations were:
  - *Compilation by the Focal Points of the required statistical data into the RDES system after installation. **Accomplished.***
  - *Use of common format data tables. The proposed common basic format for the RDES data tables was considered appropriate. It was agreed that the Focal Points should use this format for loading data into the system. While a core set of common commodities would be included in the national RDES Internet pages, countries could add other commodities found to be relevant. Any deviation from basic data format would have to be explained through appropriate notes. The format of the*

statistical tables would be prepared by the project and sent to the Focal Points for implementation. **Ongoing.**

- *Hardware procurement and system installation.* The meeting agreed that the system hardware specifications were comprehensive and that the schedule of hardware procurement and software installation in countries, beginning in April 2003 and ending in June 2003, was reasonable. The Focal Points were expected to assist in hardware procurement and software installation. **Accomplished.**

25 At the third meeting in Pattaya, Thailand (12–13 October 2004), the Focal Points discussed issues relating to the RDES Web site and the various country pages, and agreed on several recommendations to further improve the system. The action points emanating from these recommendations were all ongoing:

- *Standardization of the formats of databases, data units and item names, and expansion of the scope of RDES in accordance with the presentation of the ASE (Development) on standards for data of the RDES and extension of data items and countries of the RDES.*
- *More advocacy and IT-related capacity building.*
- *Exploration of the possibility of linking and integrating with other Web sites in each country.*
- *Exercising care in posting data on the Web site (for instance, standardizing crop names to internationally-accepted definition; also using calendar vs. agricultural year).*
- *Preparation of a regional webpage in order to access information for the purpose of comparing agricultural production data at national levels.*
- *Investigating the possibility of accommodating data files as well as graphics, textual descriptions and analyses in the future, and the inclusion of supplementary information in both quantity and value indicators, e.g. contribution of agriculture to the GDP.*
- *Inclusion of monthly wholesale prices on a trial basis, in view of the very rapid changes in prices of commodities.*
- *Ensuring consistency of information reported to FAO (national level) with the data in the RDES.*

### **Comments arising from the presentation**

26 The Focal Points were informed that support from governments had been very meaningful and that regional data exchange was very important to the region, particularly as this project resulted from a request from APCAS member governments in 1996. With the rapid developments in technology, it was noted that capacity building was very important. The new Focal Points were encouraged to share their ideas, as it was important for everyone to make this regional data exchange system as comprehensive and as useful as possible.

27 The observers from Malaysia inquired about the procedure for becoming full members of the RDES. Although there are procedural steps to be taken in this regard, they were informed that they could participate in the activities of the RDES even if they were not formal members.

28. It was pointed out that there was a need to move forward, developing action points based on the recommendations from the first three Focal Points meetings.
29. Similarities and differences between the RDES and the AFSIS were cited. Both were regional projects, with AFSIS covering ASEAN countries and the RDES covering selected APCAS countries. AFSIS worked with designated institutions in countries as Focal Points. As an FAO project, the RDES had different levels of focal points. FAO first dealt with Departments of Foreign Affairs, then the specific agencies in charge of agricultural statistics and finally the person designated to represent that institution. It was noted that the sustainability of the system would rely heavily on the commitment of countries and not on individual representatives.
30. On minimum requirements/data for the Web site, it was also clarified that the second Focal Points meeting had identified ten basic crops and livestock units, as part of its recommendations.

## **Review of the RDES and the country webpages**

*(Agenda items 5 and 6)*

31. A pilot system for the RDES was designed, developed, pre-tested and installed in Lao PDR by the ASE and the Consultant with the cooperation of the Lao Focal Point. After the pilot system was modified, webpages for the system were developed and users' manuals for the national Focal Points were prepared. The project contracted the use of the web server of a private web-hosting company. The RDES was installed in this web server and the project Web site was opened for the RDES. Its URL is <http://www.faorap-apcas.org>.
32. The RDES has the following features: (a) it is an interactive web-based system; (b) a web server is not needed in each country as only Internet access is required for the system; (c) files can be stored using various formats, *inter alia*, MS Excel, MS Word, and PDF; and (d) easy data management for the Focal Points.
33. In terms of access, the site has been visited by 29 650 visitors with a total of 362 953 hits. The average number of daily visitors has been 31.7, while the average number of hits has been 389.0.
34. Security concerns were expressed and questions raised on upgrading security and preventing hacking which had already occurred. Suggested measures included: (a) the ASE should back up all the contents of the project Web site every week; (b) changing the password by Focal Points every three months; and (c) contacting the ASE immediately when a Web site anomaly occurs.
35. The member countries presented a review of their RDES implementation. Important issues emanating from the country reviews included:
  - *Usefulness of the RDES in establishing a linkage of agricultural databases among the APCAS countries.*
  - *Establishment of a systematic database on agricultural production statistics according to RDES requirements.* This would greatly assist national data users, as well as those belonging to member countries of APCAS.
  - *The availability of agricultural status and production statistics of regional countries is an important factor in determining the market opportunities for agricultural products, which has a direct impact on production.* The RDES has a vital role in

facilitating the sharing and exchange of required information on food and agricultural products among regional member countries.

- *Use of the RDES to upload and download data provided to planners and decision-makers within the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and other users in relation to production and marketing of agricultural products.*
- *The RDES provided a useful platform for the world, especially countries in Asia and the Pacific, to exchange regional data.*
- *Strengthening national capacity to analyse, use and disseminate food and agricultural statistics in support of agricultural development.* Agricultural statistics for 1993 to 2003 have been uploaded to the Web site for 14 crops.
- *In some countries, more detailed data were available from RDES Web sites.* The main users of the RDES Web sites included governments, international organizations, NGOs and those interested in trade and development.
- *Use of RDES data for investment and development planning purposes, especially in some provinces which share borders with neighbouring countries such as Viet Nam, Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia.*

## **Implementation of national seminars**

*(Agenda item 7)*

36. The objective of national seminars is to enhance planning and policy for agricultural development — including food security and poverty monitoring — and to support country-specific issues on agricultural development, poverty and food insecurity.
37. The AFSIS has conducted national seminars for its member countries. The project will join future AFSIS seminars in ASEAN countries on a cooperative basis.
38. For non-AFSIS countries, the project will conduct national seminars in eight countries — Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, India, Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The seminars will be conducted in the national language to ensure that the RDES will be well understood by the participants, comprising staff and officials from headquarters and sub-regional offices of the focal statistical agencies. Other government officials, including policy-makers, will also be invited.
39. The national seminars are expected to introduce concepts of food security and discuss policy-making with statisticians and policy-makers. They will also introduce the RDES methodology and discuss the capacity building programme for agricultural data analysis in the context of contributing to policy- and decision-making. The Focal Points will take the lead in organizing the national seminars.
40. The Focal Points from the countries in which national seminars will be held were asked to present a review of the training programmes in their respective organizations.
  - a. During the last six years, **Bhutan** conducted workshops and training events for relevant staff within the MOA at regional, district and sub-district levels on statistical subjects, and sent staff abroad for short courses on data management. Some time before the end of October, a workshop will be conducted for all the MOA staff responsible for information management. The workshop will focus on the following:
    - Standardization of data collection formats for respective departments.

- Standardization of reporting formats.
  - Streamlining of responsibilities of officials at various levels.
  - Drawing up agreement on the submission date of data to the PPD by respective departments within the MOA.
  - Basic analytical skills.
  - Introduction of the RDES, so that officials who have access to the Internet can visit the site.
- b. **Myanmar's** SLRD serves as the RDES Focal Point and effectively delivers human resource and infrastructure development. To improve the capacity of staff from various national agencies involved in data collection and processing, a seminar on "The System of Agricultural Statistics of Myanmar" was organized in 2002. The results generated better coordination within agencies, thus overcoming data gaps and improving the quality of data. ICT infrastructure development was undertaken through the provision of fibre optic cable networking (LAN) between the Ministry Office and six other departments, broadband wireless access, Data Processing Centers and WAN (Wide Area Network) connections. In future, a National Network System will be established to provide timely information from township-level offices nationwide.
- c. In **Indonesia**, the training was designed to improve awareness and professionalism, develop skilled personnel, provide and improve socio-economic indicators and enhance the participants' skills in designing and implementing relevant surveys. It recommended that cost structure surveys should be designed and implemented, a food and agricultural journal should be developed and published and annual meetings should be held in different venues.
- d. In **Lao PDR**, the leadership monitored trends and developments to ensure that uses were maximized. Frequently used data included information on crops for dry and wet seasons. For livestock data, monthly reports were needed on animal disease and mortality as well as annual animal inventories. More intensive training programmes were recommended to improve human resources.
- e. **Sri Lanka** has a centralized statistical system, with basic training for new entrants to the service; this consists of orientation and on-the-job training. A nine-month certificate course is held every other year for which candidates are selected through a competitive examination. In addition, seminars are held on special topics; these are attended by different levels of officers. An incentive for the officers is the privilege of enrolling in post-graduate courses, for which they are given fully paid leave. To move forward, support for a national workshop on in-depth analysis of the results of the recently conducted agriculture census data was sought by the Focal Point.
- f. **China** usually conducts two kinds of surveys: (a) sampling surveys for estimations on crops and other products, and (b) a complete survey. The MOA conducts 15 farmer surveys every year in more than 600 counties, nationwide. Complete surveys are conducted during the first quarter of each year. The results of the sample surveys from each county are sent to the MOA and stored in its Database Information Center. Price data are collected daily, with more than 200 wholesale markets participating in data gathering. To sustain these efforts, the MOA facilitated an annual nationwide meeting on Agricultural Statistics and provided training courses for farmers on statistics and information collection.

- g. Agricultural statistics in **India** came from various sources. Crop production data were gathered by state agencies and consolidated by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics under the MOA. Data on horticulture, livestock and population were collected and consolidated by different agencies. Through the RDES, the MOA plans to consolidate the efforts of all of these agencies. A multi-agency workshop on RDES would pave the way for harmonized national statistical data gathering and processing.

## **Report on the Expert Consultation on Analysis and Dissemination of Census and Survey Data**

*(Agenda item 9)*

41. The objectives of the Expert Consultation on Analysis and Dissemination of Census and Survey Data were to develop guidelines and caveats for countries and agencies which collected, analysed and disseminated agricultural sector data; reviewed various types of analysis procedures; discussed analysis procedures; recommended treatment of missing and incomplete data; and developed capacity-building and technical assistance programmes. It was attended by representatives from China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and ADPC.
42. The Consultation presentations were delivered in three parts and covered the following subjects:
- Enlarging the Scope and Analysis using Agricultural Census Data
  - Consideration of Gender Variables in the Analysis of Food and Agricultural Sector Data
  - The Crop Monitoring System of the Food Security Information System
  - Preparation of Food Balance Sheets
  - Application of Factor Analysis to Data on Food and Nutrition
  - Use of Data Warehouses for Data Dissemination
  - Organizing National Statistical Databases
  - Agricultural Census Tabulation and Analysis
  - Forecasting of Crop Production
  - Impact Assessment and Agricultural Disaster
  - Effect of Natural Disasters on Crop Production
  - Measuring the Role of Agriculture, Agri-Food and Agri-Industry in the Economy
  - Impact of Trade Flow Data on Agricultural Sector Policies
  - Seasonal Price Index in Crop Statistics
43. The Consultation made various recommendations under seven major concerns.

### **Gender**

- Time-use studies should be conducted in order to supplement the gender-disaggregated data from censuses used in the analysis of gender dynamics, relations and connections in communities. The Consultation also agreed that data

on activities (independent of the time involved) that women do would also be helpful and should be considered as a priority.

### **Crop monitoring systems**

- Existing crop monitoring systems should be improved with a view to enhancing them as effective components of the food security information system. In this respect, alternative sources like remote sensing and farmers' appraisal surveys should be explored.
- The Normalized Differential Vegetative Index (NDVI), a measure of the greenness of the ground cover and correlated with plant vigour or potential yield, is a valuable indicator of crop condition, especially in areas where rainfall is a limiting factor.

### **Food balance sheets**

- It is important for countries without food balance sheets to start their compilation on the basis of available sources of data on production, trade, wastage and other factors.
- Parameters like wastage ratio should be updated through periodic surveys in order to capture the technological developments in agricultural operations, particularly harvesting and post-harvesting operations including transport of crops to markets, factories, and the like.
- Efforts should be made to improve estimates of horticultural crops through alternative sources like household income and expenditure surveys.

### **Crop forecasting**

- No simple forecasting technique can be recommended for all countries to use; each country should make its own choice, bearing in mind its specific needs, organizational set-up and capacity, MOA resources and the national statistical agency for data/information gathering and analysis in the country.
- Crop forecasting should be institutionalized by setting up an institution within national statistical agencies with the mandate to prepare and issue national and sub-national forecasts of important crops including cereals, fruits and vegetables.
- All the institutions and agencies collecting data/information required for crop forecasting should be involved in the preparation of crop forecasting.

### **Disaster assessment**

- A standardized methodology for speedy assessment of the economic impact of disasters in the agricultural sector should be developed.
- Capacity-building activities should be undertaken at various levels in member countries to institutionalize the disaster impact assessment methodology.

### **Techniques and analysis methods**

- An agriculture census tabulation and analysis manual is an excellent guide for countries.

- Conditions/relationships of trade flow data such as knowing the characteristics or behaviour of the commodity, the region that produced the commodity and the use of the commodity could be utilized to estimate agricultural production.
- The link–relative method for forecasting future prices is a simple, but valuable tool to use. But it is important to use more than one variable/commodity in the decision-making process.

### **Agro-industry**

- Countries should exert efforts to (a) analyse the importance of their agro-industry in the national economy to help better reflect the role of the agriculture sector and (b) compile relevant indicators.
- Institutional infrastructure should be created or strengthened within statistics offices to facilitate the analysis and use of agricultural census results.

## **Highlights and Major Recommendations**

*(Agenda item 9)*

44. The country reports of the Focal Points were synthesized and presented by the Rapporteur. The highlights were summarized as follows:

### **Updates on RDES implementation**

- The RDES has been set up and maintained in the participating countries.
- The RDES has the potential to supply information for supporting food security policy formulation but its use has been limited due to various problems and constraints.

### ***Problems and Constraints***

- Low priority and low profile of the RDES in some countries.
- Technical problems were encountered by some countries in data items and data format, non-uniform home pages.
- Lack of metadata.
- Inadequate resources (at the country level) for maintenance of the RDES.
- Weak coordination, monitoring and feedback mechanisms.
- Lack of capacity building at the country level in relation to RDES implementation.

### **Requests and Recommendations**

The Focal Points approved the requests and recommendations listed hereunder.

#### **a. Increase data coverage/entrance features by:**

- Expanding the range of agricultural statistics available to meet the needs of data users.
- Uploading results of special studies and censuses.
- Providing the RDES with a facility where users have the option to query the online database for cross-country comparisons.

- Providing additional features on the Web site to enable users to choose suitable formats – HTML, PDF or spreadsheet.
- Country pages should have a short article or digest or a tabular presentation showing recent developments in the country's agricultural economy.
- Making the functions of the RDES more user-friendly, retaining present features, such as Tabulation, Graph and Mapping options.

**b. Capacity building**

- Strengthen the capacity of offices at all levels in the areas of data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination.
- Organize training for the webmasters of country home pages on the RDES methodology to ensure compliance with agreed uniform procedures and standards.

**c. Formats and standards**

- Standardize data units, data items and data formats.
- Identify core indicators for all countries.
- Prepare an RDES Manual of Operations.

**d. Institutions/Organizations**

- At the country level, lobby for more support for the RDES as a regular function.
- At the regional level, design and implement coordination, monitoring and feedback mechanisms to keep country Focal Points updated on progress on various aspects of RDES work.

**e. Hardware/Security concerns**

- Improve hardware, networking and Internet facilities.
- Strengthen Internet security to prevent hacking.

45. The Focal Points reviewed the list of commodities (Annex 5) for which data had to be uploaded by member countries. For crops, data on production in thousand tonnes, area harvested/planted in thousand hectares and yield in kilograms per hectare would be uploaded. For livestock and poultry, number of head and volume of production would be reported. A consensus was reached to allow countries to upload farm-gate and other market prices if available.

## **Closing Session**

*(Agenda item 10)*

46. The ASE expressed his gratitude to the Focal Points for their cooperation and contributions which had made the meeting successful. He urged them to continue their efforts in making the project responsive to the needs of their respective countries.
47. He thanked the representatives and observers from the donor government and the Japanese Embassy for attending the meeting; the officers from the FAO Regional Office for their continuing support to the project; and the Meeting Secretariat for playing a significant role in the smooth organization and implementation of the meeting.

He looked forward to the next meeting of the Focal Points, and the national seminars which will be implemented in the coming months.

48. The meeting was adjourned, after a vote of thanks from the Focal Points, at 16.30.

## II. Technical Consultation

*Friday, 7 October 2005*

### Overview and Objectives

*(Agenda item 1)*

1. The Technical Consultation was held after the completion of the Fourth Focal Points Meeting. The overview and objectives of the Technical Consultation were presented by Dr Frederick Baker, Senior Statistician, FAO RAP.

### Estimation of Percent of Undernourished

*(Agenda item 2)*

2. The presentation on estimating the number of undernourished was made by Mr David Dawe, Senior Food Systems Economist of FAO RAP, who emphasized that this presentation borrowed heavily from presentations made at the FAO workshop on the Measurement of Food Deprivation, held in Rome in October 2004. He defined the concept of undernourished by referring to those whose dietary energy consumption is insufficient for body weight maintenance and child growth; work performance.
3. The FAO methodology for estimating the percentage and number of undernourished relies on data on (a) per capita dietary energy consumption, (b) distribution of food consumption and (c) per capita minimum energy requirement. He added that using lognormal distribution, two parameters were considered — average per capita food consumption and the inequality in distribution. The methodology for estimating per capita dietary energy supply (DES) was also discussed.
4. Several problems and limitations were identified:
  - Statistics are not always reliable or available for all commodities. The best statistics are primarily confined to the important food crops. Non-commercial and subsistence production is difficult to measure, but it may be a large part of total production in some countries.
  - Basic data on the feed, seed and industrial/manufacturing use of crop and livestock products often do not exist. Statistics on feed use are a particular problem.
  - Accurate measurements of waste during storage and transportation and inside the household are often not available. Other waste information — on quantities intentionally discarded for the purpose of price control or disease control — may be classified.
  - Import and export data may be accurate in the majority of countries, but in others, significant amounts of trade across borders may remain unrecorded.
  - Often different time-reference periods are used to report production for different commodities.
5. A number of issues related to the presentation were raised. These included:
  - The low FAO numbers on the malnourished. This is how the undernourished will be calculated for the MDGs, as calculating dietary requirements differently would make it more difficult to achieve standardization across countries. FAO is concerned with the distribution of calories as a measure of the undernourished, and not the distribution of income or poverty measures. In the MDGs, other

indicators are available and could be used for calculating poverty incidence.

- The relationship between the calculation of percent undernourished and the poverty indicators and poverty incidence; and the need to look at not only the average GDP, but also at its distribution.
- How to make best use of the calculations. The idea is to set a uniform standard for all countries so that it will be easier to make cross-country comparisons. Establish a universal line to consider different population structures which have quite different calorie needs.
- Minimum energy requirements on the poverty line, which differ by country.
- More detailed information on the calculations was requested from FAO. Information on poverty measures can be obtained from other organizations like the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank.
- In the case of Thailand, FAO data are often perceived to be wrong, not because of the methodology, but because of the data used in the calculations. It was pointed out that this issue was already being addressed at FAO.
- A particular problem for Thailand is that its economic growth has been most rapid, but the estimate for the inequality of food distribution dates back to 1990. There is a need to calculate new inequality parameters and enter them into the calculations.
- Posting of production data for a year for which they were not submitted (as in the case of Bhutan). In this case the participants were advised to submit their production data regularly, to ensure that each year had the correct postings. FAO should probe countries on how they arrived at the estimates to encourage countries to consistently submit data.
- It was recognized that the difficulties in obtaining data in a timely manner would cause delays in data consolidation and analysis. As the lack of data could affect the decision-making process for agriculture, the representative from India revealed that he also estimated figures for regions which failed to submit data on time. In some ways, he had also been using the FAO strategy for data consolidation.
- FAO data on food production for different commodities, except for those on the main commodities (rice and wheat) were estimates made in Rome based on data received from the countries. If countries believe that the data are not accurate, they should contact FAO Rome for correction.
- There is also a need for FAO to inform the countries of the data before they are made official, as there have been occasions when data have not been consistent with national data. Thailand requested the support of other member countries in requesting FAO to adopt this approach

## **Agricultural Census Data Tabulation and Analysis**

*(Agenda item 3)*

6. The Focal Point from the Philippines, Mr Romeo Recide, delivered a presentation on agricultural census data and analysis. He reviewed the role of agriculture in the economy, the role of statistical information in the formulation of agricultural policies and programmes and discussed agricultural censuses, citing the differences between agricultural census results and sample survey results. He cited the need for more understanding and support of agricultural censuses.
7. On account of their sizes, complete enumeration censuses of agriculture used different and less accurate data collection methods than those employed in sample enumeration and intercensal sample surveys. These differences often resulted in significant discrepancies for the same variables and items between the complete censuses and the regular sample surveys, especially in, but not limited to, countries where different agencies were responsible for these undertakings.
8. He acknowledged that there was lack of financial support for the regular conduct of agricultural censuses; perhaps this is because the uses for current statistics are unappreciated and the role of the results of agricultural censuses in the agricultural information system is not clear.
9. He discussed the advantages for using each type, and the methodologies as well as tools used in presenting results for the various types of surveys.
10. Issues arising from the presentation were:
  - Having fewer details means being at least one level below a national coverage. It was pointed out that data coverage was not synonymous with data items which defined the scope for research. There should more detail in terms of scope and less in terms of coverage.
  - The ideal number of pages for a census would be from one to four pages; greater length would make the research difficult. It was noted that in the next World Food Census, there has been a move to consider the census operation as a series of census operations, more like dividing the census into smaller components.
  - There should be a standard definition for a “household” and when it became an agricultural holding. A household has been defined as a group of people sharing the same arrangement for food. However, this definition varies by country.
  - The reality is that there is difficulty sometimes in reconciling survey and census results, as survey results sometimes do not match census results. The question was posed: Given two results, which would become the official result?
  - The Focal Point from Nepal pointed out that the speaker was putting more weight on surveys rather than censuses, when in fact the latter are conducted on a larger scale and hence are expected to give better results and information. Mr Recide explained that the bias was simply due to limited resources in his country, which has a census\_budgetary requirement that is much larger than the allocation; hence there is a need to be “creative”.
  - The representative from Nepal explained national practices and pointed out that the census process is regarded as an integrated process in which the population census is followed six months later by the agricultural census.

## Using Statistics for Policy Work

*(Agenda item 4)*

11. The presentation on the analysis of data in national statistics was made by Ms Nanae Yabuki of FAO RAP's Policy Assistance Branch. The objective of this presentation was to share the policy-maker's perspective on the kind of data needed for policy work.
12. The discussion covered the purpose of the data used; data needed for policy work (on agricultural development/poverty reduction); methodologies; suggestions and conclusions. Policy-makers use the data for identification and monitoring of economic and social situations, policy analysis and policy formulation.
13. Policy analysis systematically evaluates alternative means of achieving economic and social goals and considers existing or prospective policies to improve welfare; it includes a series of activities such as identification of the problem and criteria, identification and evaluation of alternative actions and recommendation of the best policy option.
14. Policy formulation covers the provision of incentives/disincentives for a particular activity to guide the economy in the planned direction, coordination with other policies and time consistency. It also understands a "gap" between the policy goals and the current situation, identifies priority areas and policy tools, decides the sequence of policy implementation and considers the need for "accompanied policies" or a safety net.
15. On the data needed for policy work on agricultural development and poverty reduction, the Policy Assistance Branch focuses on net real income (as a proxy for the final earnings or profit) and the rural poor, whose well-being is directly related to poverty reduction and food security. The focus on net real income is on macro, sectoral and household levels. The rural poor population is defined as net buyers of food who spend a large proportion of their income on food, with their wages as their major income source, and who are engaged in agriculture and related activities.
16. Methodologies used are econometric analysis, statistical analysis, cost-benefit/financial analysis and other tools including cross-country and sectoral comparisons.
17. Policy-makers need time series data, cross-country/sectoral data with consistent definitions and data conforming with international standards. Also needed are survey data or census data without sample bias.
18. There is a need to bridge the gap between statistics and policy work. To this end, Ms Yabuki raised issues on designing statistics/surveys according to the needs of the users; policy-makers' participation in the design/revision of the statistics/survey design; discussion of data definitions between the policy-makers and the statistics sector; and the design of statistics/surveys in line with national economic plans. She concluded that statisticians and policy-makers mutually benefit through better coordination.
19. The participants reactions to the presentation are listed hereunder:
  - Most countries depend solely on the national budget for their statistical activities. Exceptions are Iran which has no budget for statistical undertakings; Lao PDR

which obtains its funds from the national government and donors; Viet Nam which receives funding from the government and other sources; and Thailand which receives funds from both the national government and JICA. Donors also provide consultants.

- It was pointed out that statisticians should ask how the data requested by policy-makers will be used and the degree of accuracy that is required, as well as the level of data that is needed.
- Producers of information should have guidance from policy-makers including the manner in which the data will be used.
- On correlations and regressions, data sets (that could be used by the policy-makers) should be provided to enable the generation of the kind of information needed to carry out policies.
- The issue of confidentiality of data was raised as well as the integrity of statisticians. In some cases, the policy-makers may decide not to use results and instead implement policies without supporting data.
- Lack of time was noted in some cases to revise the sample design prior to a survey. It was acknowledged that there is a need to revise the design every year as improvements are identified.

### **Agricultural Statistics' Data Analysis for Decision-Making in Thailand**

*(Agenda item 4, con'td)*

20. The representative from Thailand presented his paper on agricultural statistics' data analysis for decision-making in Thailand. While legally the Office of Agricultural Economics is responsible for agricultural statistics, in reality the system is decentralized, with each agency having its own statistical unit.
21. The current statistical activities included annual production surveys (for crops, livestock and fisheries); yield surveys covering eight commodities; socio-economic surveys (every two years); production cost surveys (annually and covering 18 commodities); regular price reports; and area surveys using remote sensing, GIS and GPS.
22. Thailand also has an agricultural commodity registration system and makes forecasts at least twice a year for 60 commodities. Information is disseminated through the Web site (<http://www.oae.go.th>), a reporting system, via a service centre and publications.
23. Agricultural data are used as guidelines for decision-making, in development planning and for policy formulation, as well as for forecasting, monitoring and evaluation, and publication. The data required for policy formulation are domestic consumption, production areas, export markets, prices and production costs.
24. Data analysis includes the comparison of prices and costs for the determination of necessary measurements, distribution of production to consumers, determination of the amounts of imports and exports and the amounts for processing. Examples cited were the comparison of prices and costs of pineapple for processing, maize for animal feed, Jasmine rice, longan and durian, all of which are important national export commodities.

## **Agricultural Production Survey and Data Analysis for Decision-Making in Japan**

*(Agenda item 4, continued)*

25. In relation to statistical surveys on agriculture, forestry and fisheries and changes in organizations, the following points were discussed: (a) the establishment, upgrading and expansion of statistics organizations under the direct jurisdiction of MAAF; and (b) the development of statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries since the high economic growth period. A historical review of the establishment of MAAF at the end of the Second World War, and its statistical activities which were intended to help in overcoming the food shortage and establishing a food supply and demand plan, was presented.
26. The upgrading and expansion of agricultural statistical surveys covered the completion of the postwar democratization policy (including agricultural land reform), improvement in food supply and demand, start of farm household economic surveys and production costs, and the implementation of the 1950 World Census of Agriculture and Forestry.
27. In the context of development of statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries since the start of the high economic growth period, needs for statistical surveys on agriculture diversified, there was significant progress in online statistical information processing and new policies were developed — MAAF responded through enhanced efficiency of statistical information work.
28. Since the establishment of the basic law on food, agriculture and rural areas in 1999, there is a need to develop the management of statistical information to respond to the new framework of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The review of statistical information on agricultural, forestry and fisheries has been ongoing since 2001, and one result is the separation of information-related organizations.
29. The key points in the basic plan include the basic policy on measures related to food, agriculture and rural areas, great concern over food safety and wholesome diets, more diversified demands, delays in structural reforms in agriculture (for instance, the decrease in the number of farmers as a result of ageing and delays in scale expansion), expectations of multi-functionality and rural areas and advances in globalization.
30. A new plan will be based on the following components: (a) building a policy system that is effective, efficient and easy to understand; (b) incorporating consumers' concerns into policies; (c) encouraging farmers and local inhabitants to assert independence and creative ideas; (d) developing measures that focus on environmental conservation; and (e) development of aggressive agricultural policies based on new movements in agriculture and rural areas.
31. The targets for food self-sufficiency and data analysis covering the trends of food self-sufficiency on a calorie basis, the characteristics of Japan's food self-sufficiency activities, production targets and graphical cases of data analysis for the basic plan were also discussed.

## **Summary of the Technical Consultation and Closing**

*(Agenda item 5)*

32. The Senior Statistician noted that the trends in agriculture should be analysed, as the roles of agriculture and GDP were changing, but the way data were collected remained static.
33. He complimented the speakers on their charts and graphs which gave an informative visual overview of the situations in different countries for effective communication to policy-makers.
34. There is a need for the statisticians to coordinate regularly with policy-makers to discuss the use of data and the time lines for the generation of such data because policy-makers require information at specified time intervals. The importance of clarity and exactitude to minimize mismatches and information gaps was emphasized.
35. In closing the Technical Consultation, the Senior Statistician cited the importance of the contributions of the Focal Points to food security and poverty reduction.
36. Being his last official meeting with the Focal Points, he indicated his appreciation of their cooperation with FAO during the period of his assignment, and his hopes for improved developments in the areas of concern in statistical analysis for food security.
37. The Consultation was adjourned at 16.30.

## AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

### Fourth Focal Points Meeting and Technical Consultation on Analysis of Data in National Statistics (GCP/RAS/184/JPN) Bangkok, Thailand, 5–7 October 2005

#### 1. Fourth Meeting of Focal Points

##### Wednesday, 5 October 2005

08.30 - 09.00 Registration

09.00 - 09.40 Agenda Item 1 - Opening Session

- Welcome address, *Dr He Changchui, Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific*

*Delivered by Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Deputy Regional Representative of FAO for Asia and the Pacific*

- *Photo Session*
- Overview and objectives of the meeting, *Mr Takeshi Hagino, Agricultural Statistics Expert, GCP/RAS/184/JPN*
- Address by the Representative of the donor country, *Mr Kenji Kamikura, Senior Statistician, Statistics Planning Division, Statistics Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan*
- Introduction of the participants

Agenda Item 2 - Election of Officers

Agenda Item 3 - Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

09.40 - 10.10 Coffee Break

10.10 - 11.30 Agenda Item 4 - Review of Work Plan and Outputs, *Mr Takeshi Hagino*

11.30 - 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 14.30 Agenda Item 5 - Review of the RDES and Project Web Sites in the Participating Countries, *Mr Takeshi Hagino and all Focal Points*

14.30 – 15.00 Coffee Break

15.00 – 16.00 Agenda Item 5 - Continued

##### Thursday, 6 October 2005

09.00 – 10.30 Agenda Item 6 - Continued Development of the RDES, *Mr Takeshi Hagino*

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 – 12.00 Agenda Item 7 - Implementation of National Seminars, *Mr Takeshi Hagino*

*and all Focal Points*

- 12.00 – 13.00 Lunch
- 13.00 – 14.00 Agenda Item 8 - Report of the Expert Consultation on Analysis and Dissemination of Census and Survey Data, *Mr Frederick Baker, Senior Statistician, FAO RAP*
- 14.00 – 14.30 Coffee Break
- 14.30 – 15.50 Agenda Item 9 - Adoption of Highlights and Major Recommendations
- 15.50 – 16.00 Agenda Item 10 - Closing Session

## **2. Technical Consultation**

**Friday, 7 October 2005**, Technical Consultation

- 9.00 – 9.10 Agenda Item 1 - Overview and Objectives of the Technical Consultation, *Mr Frederick Baker, Senior Statistician, FAO RAP*
- 9.10 – 10.30 Agenda Item 2 - Estimation of Percent of Undernourished, *Mr David C Dawe, Senior Food Systems Economist, FAO RAP*
- 10.30 – 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.00 – 12.30 Agenda Item 3 - Agricultural Census Data Tabulation and Analysis, *Mr Romeo Recide, Director, Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, Department of Agriculture, the Philippines*
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch
- 13.30 – 14.20 Agenda Item 4 - Data Analysis and Indicators for Policy-making, *Ms Nanae Yabuki, Policy/Programme Officer, FAO RAP*
- 14.20 – 14.45 Coffee Break
- 14.45 – 16.00 Agenda Item 4 - Continued  
Agricultural Statistics Data Analysis for Decision-making in Thailand, *Mr Montol Jeamchareon, Director, Centre for Agricultural Information, Office of Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand*  
  
Agricultural Production Survey and Data Analysis for Decision-making in Japan, *Mr Kenji Kamikura, Senior Statistician, Planning Division, Statistics Department, MAFF, Japan*
- 16.00 – 16.30 Agenda Item 5 - Summary of Technical Consultation and Closing

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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on Analysis of Data in National Statistics  
(GCP/RAS/184/JPN)  
Bangkok, Thailand, 5–7 October 2005**

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## Welcome Address

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### He Changchui

*Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative  
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It is my great pleasure to extend to you a warm welcome to this fourth meeting of the Focal Points for the project *Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and the Pacific Countries (RDES)*. The main objectives of the project are to implement an electronics-based regional data exchange system for the participating countries and to strengthen national capacity to analyse data on food and agricultural statistics.

This project — carried out by FAO — was recently extended through 2007 with generous financial contributions from the Government of Japan. On behalf of FAO and the participating countries, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for Japan's continued support to food and agricultural development in the region, specifically in the sector of agricultural statistics.

The United Nations, at its recently concluded 60<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, has recommitted to intensifying international effort and cooperation to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and has noted the slow progress made in the implementation of the MDGs. According to FAO's latest estimates (2004), the number of hungry people in the Asia–Pacific region has declined by 50 million only since 1996, an average yearly reduction of six million.

In order to achieve the internationally agreed goals, in particular, the overarching MDG1, which explicitly recognizes the inter-relationship between hunger and poverty and the imperative of reducing both, all stakeholders — the governments, international organizations, donors and NGOs — must redouble their efforts and re-assess their roles and actions.

Food and agricultural statistics' agencies should play an important role in this effort by providing decision-makers with reliable and timely information related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries as well as commerce and trade. This information will enable formulation of appropriate policies and actions for the agricultural sector.

FAO has always been at the forefront of promoting and providing technical assistance to member countries in establishing and developing strong agricultural statistical systems at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels. FAO has continued efforts in support of censuses of agriculture. It will soon publish the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010. This is a most important survey not only for a snapshot of the existing global structure of agriculture, but also as a reliable and up-to-date basis for sampling frames.

Food and agricultural statistics in countries in the Asia and Pacific region have undergone dramatic changes during the last 20 years. Although national reporting systems continue to be a major source of data in many countries, sample surveys have gradually been introduced into statistical systems.

With rapid social and economic development in the region and the rapid advancement of

new technological tools, such as powerful ICT technologies, this project has developed the Regional Data Exchange System (RDES) using Internet technology. Since the project launched the RDES in 2002, the RDES has been supplying valuable updates to the databases for the region, giving users an opportunity to review at national and sub-national levels, information about the area, production and yield of major agricultural commodities as well as data about livestock in participating countries.

By using the RDES, statistical agencies have been able to better respond to requests from policy-makers, planners of agricultural development and data users from the private sector for more detailed, timely and reliable information.

In addition, the project has achieved remarkable results at the country level, such as Internet-based access to RDES national and sub-national data for all 16 participating countries. I note in this respect that these national pages are regularly updated by the country Focal Points themselves. The project is also endeavouring to include RDES data from non-participating countries such as other APCAS members, as well as from developed countries.

At this stage, it is considered important for the RDES to further provide capacity-building support to participating countries regarding the analysis of agricultural data on the RDES. I understand that this fourth meeting of Focal Points for the project will serve as a forum to introduce new project activities, to review the RDES, to discuss its development and to agree on future outputs.

The meeting offers a timely opportunity to further fine-tune your requirements and expectations from the project. Let me re-iterate that while FAO is taking the lead in the implementation of this project with support from the Government of Japan, the ultimate beneficiaries of the project are the people in the participating countries, including the hungry and malnourished whose livelihoods will improve from enhanced planning and more effective policies.

I therefore call upon you to join with FAO to make every effort to improve agricultural statistics in your countries and the region and to provide reliable indicators to decision-makers for the development of policies and in monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness. Your discussions this week will be beneficial for your countries and the whole Asia and the Pacific region. It will accelerate the formulation of appropriate agricultural policies and the development of rural areas, while ensuring adequate supplies of food for populations, and the achievement of sustainable growth.

In conclusion, I wish you a successful outcome for the meeting and an enjoyable stay in the city of Bangkok.

## Opening Statement

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Kenji Kamikura  
*Senior Statistician, Statistics Planning Division*  
*Statistics Department, MAFF, Japan*

It is my great pleasure as a representative of the donor country to thank you for attending this fourth meeting of the Focal Points for the project *Strengthening Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics*.

To begin with, I deeply appreciate that throughout its history, FAO has continued the improvement of agricultural statistics, especially in the Asia and Pacific region.

Japan considers it vitally important that all countries produce and share reliable statistical data for the food and agriculture sector for the improvement of global food security. In this context, we have contributed to a trust fund in FAO since 1998 for the improvement and standardization of agricultural statistics as well as statistical data exchange in Asia and Pacific Countries (APCs). Also, an Agricultural Statistics Expert has been posted to the FAO Regional Office in Bangkok to promote the implementation of the project.

The Japanese Government posted Mr Eura as the first project Expert. This second stage of the project has been operational since December 2001; objectives were the improvement of agricultural statistics in member countries and the development of a Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in APCs. The project has already succeeded in creating webpages for a regional data exchange network. The network enables us to share food and agricultural statistics at national and regional levels among countries in the Asia and Pacific region and FAO. I would like to congratulate FAO on this achievement and express our thanks to each of you for your contributions.

Although the project ended in December last year, Japan sought for continuation of the project for member countries despite stringent budget circumstances. Thus, the project has been extended until 2007. The work is so important for the region that Japan posted Mr Hagino as the second Expert on 1 June 2005. New objectives are: (1) to widen its coverage of food and agricultural data, (2) to broaden country participation in the project and (3) focus on strengthening the capacity of member countries to analyse food and agricultural statistics in order to assist policy-making and planning for agricultural development, particularly for food security and poverty alleviation. Japan intends to continue its assistance and expects the active participation of the member countries.

At this juncture, I would like to mention another project, which started in January 2003 through Japanese support — the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS). This project has created an ASEAN Food Security Information Network on the basis of the system developed by the FAO project and stored data from the ASEAN+3 countries. On behalf of the AFSIS project donor, I would like to express our appreciation of FAO's assistance to AFSIS.

These two projects share the common target of assisting member countries in collecting and exchanging reliable data on food and agriculture. I believe that close collaboration between them will make great contributions to food security in the region.

Especially, I would like to stress the importance of the World Census of Agriculture 2010 which is essential for statistical development in the region and furthers understanding of agricultural trends in each country. I understand that FAO is currently developing the Census

programme so I call upon you to collaborate with FAO by making every effort to carry out the Census in your country.

At this Focal Points meeting, I understand that member countries will report their project activities and the FAO Expert will propose developments for the RDES and implementation of national seminars. The Focal Points meeting will be followed by a Technical Consultation that addresses Data Analysis for Policy Making and Decision Making. At the meeting, you will learn about the present status of data analysis and future prospects in member countries.

As I mentioned earlier, the project will provide further impetus for further development of the RDES on food and agricultural statistics and food security in the region. Success depends for the most part upon member countries' participation. I expect all of the Focal Points attending this meeting to work actively on the management of the data exchange system, collection of necessary data and collaboration with institutions and agencies concerned with effective data utilization. I believe your efforts will enable the project to achieve its goals.

## List of Items and Description Codes

Description codes	Data		Description codes	Data	
A01	Total land area		G01	Jute	
A02	Agricultural land		G02	Seed cotton	
A03	Total population		G03	Raw silk	
A04	Agricultural population		G04 - G99	Other fibre crops	
A05 - A99	Other demographic data		H01	Natural rubber	
B01	Rice paddy		H02	Sugar cane	
B02	Wheat		H03	Coffee	
B03	Maize		H04	Tea	
B04	Millet (Bajra)		H05	Cocoa bean	
B05	Cereals		H06	Chilies and peppers	
B06	Barley		H07	Tobacco	
B07	Buckwheat		H08 - H99	Other crops	
B08	Sorghum (Jowar)		I01	Cattle	
B09	Small millet		I02	Buffalo	
B10 - B99	Other cereal crops		I03	Pigs	
C01	Cassava		I04	Sheep	
C02	Sweet potatoes		I05	Goats	
C03	Potatoes		I06	Chickens	
C04	Taro		I07	Ducks	
C05 - C99	Other roots and tubers		I08	Milk (total)	
D01	Pulses		I09	Cow milk	
D02	Gram		I10	Buffalo milk	
D03	Mungbean		I11	Chicken eggs	
D04	Tur		I12	Poultry	
D05 - D99	Other pulses		I13	Horses	
E01	Groundnuts		I14	Yaks	
E02	Soybean		I15 - I99	Other livestock	Bees, camels
E03	Coconut		J01	Wholesale prices	
E04	Palm oil		J02	Retail prices	
E05	Oil crops (oil seeds)	copra	J03 - J99	Other prices	
E06	Castor seed		K01 - K99	Fisheries	
E07	Linseed		L01 - L99	Forestry	
E10	Rapeseed & mustard		M01 - M99	Census data	
E11	Safflower		N01 - N99	Other data	
E12	Sesame				
E13	Sunflower				
E14 - E99	Other edible oil crops				
F01	Fruits (total)				
F02	Bananas				
F03	Citrus				
F04	Mangoes				
F05	Vegetables (total)				
F06	Tomatoes				
F07	Onions				
F08	Watermelons				
F09 - F99	Other horticultural crops	Apples, oranges, dates			

## Review of the Workplan for GCP/RAS/184/JPN

Fourth Meeting of Focal Points for the GCP/RAS/184/JPN  
Bangkok, Thailand, 5–6 October 2005

**HAGINO**

**Takeshi**

**Agricultural Statistics Expert**

### OUTLINE OF THE WORKPLAN

**Project Title and Symbol:** Strengthening the Regional Data Exchange System on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Asia and Pacific Countries — Phase II  
GCP/RAS/184/JPN

**Donor:** Government of Japan

**Countries:** Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam

**Duration:** April 2005 – December 2007

### 1. BACKGROUND

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economies of the countries of Asia and the Pacific region. Economic growth in these countries is substantially influenced by the growth of agriculture. It is central to strategies for planning socio-economic development; a high rate of agricultural growth is essential achieving food security at macro and micro levels and reducing poverty levels.

Food and agricultural statistics play an important role in agricultural development by providing decision-makers with a reliable and timely description of the agricultural sector. This information enables them to develop appropriate policies on agriculture and on the development of rural areas, while ensuring adequate supplies of food to the population, and achieving sustainable growth of the national economy.

Food and agricultural statistics in Asia and Pacific countries have undergone dramatic changes during the last 20 years. Although reporting systems continue to be a major source of data in many countries, sample surveys have become more prominent in statistical systems. National statistical publications are now being issued on a regular basis and many countries are introducing modern information technology systems for data processing, analysis and dissemination. More timely and more reliable food and

agriculture statistics are expected to benefit national agricultural development, food security and poverty alleviation, as well as policy development, evaluation and monitoring.

However, despite the significant progress made in collecting food and agriculture data, many countries in Asia and the Pacific are still facing difficulties in obtaining reliable and timely data and in carrying out efficient data analysis and dissemination of the results. Methodologies for collection and processing of data can be improved in a number of countries, and new and modern techniques for data collection, analysis and dissemination can be applied and corresponding capacity-building programmes can be planned and implemented.

Formulated by the project GCP/RAS/171/JPN, the RDES was developed and the project Web site became operational. By accessing this Web site through the Internet, APCAS countries participating in the project have been able to upload national and sub-national food and agriculture statistics into the RDES for users worldwide to view and/or download. The next step is to expand the RDES to the remaining APCAS countries.

In the first regional project, the types of data analyses for agricultural policy implemented by the countries in the region were reviewed. This review concluded that national statistical data analyses are in various stages of development in the region and that the countries need continued technical assistance for developing or strengthening national capacity in analytical technologies for food and agricultural statistics.

## **2. IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES, OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1. Immediate Objective One**

**To implement the RDES for food and agriculture statistics in all APCAS countries.**

#### ***Output 1.1 Installation of the RDES in the remaining APCAS countries***

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Activity 1.1.1</b> | Construction of the country pages for all participating APCAS countries into the project Web site for the RDES |
| <b>Activity 1.1.2</b> | Capacity building in the use of the system for all participating APCAS countries                               |

#### ***Output 1.2 Region-wide standards for data in the RDES and its modification to facilitate sustainability after completion of the project***

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Activity 1.2.1</b> | Formulation of strategies toward evolution of regional-wide statistical standards/classification systems for compilation of priority components of the RDES |
| <b>Activity 1.2.2</b> | Preparation of recommendations for region-wide statistical standards/classification for data in the RDES  |
| <b>Activity 1.2.3</b> | Modification of the RDES for APCAS-wide expansion/sustainability  |

## 2.2. Immediate Objective Two

To strengthen national capacity to analyse food and agricultural statistics in support of national agricultural development policy and planning, including associated food security and poverty alleviation concerns.

### **Output 2.1** *Meetings of national Focal Points convened to address specific subjects of the project*

- Activity 2.1.1** Organization of the First Meeting of National Focal Points (back to back with Activity 2.2.1) to recommend systematized standards/classification
- Activity 2.1.2** Organization of the Second Meeting of National Focal Points
- Activity 2.1.3** Organization of the Third Meeting of National Focal Points (back to back with Activity 2.2.3) to provide input for evaluation

### **Output 2.2** *National seminars, regional workshop and capacity-building training focused on use of statistical data for analysing issues on sustained agricultural development, food insecurity and poverty*

- Activity 2.2.1** Organization of regional workshop on data analysis using the RDES in support of country-specific issues on agricultural development, poverty and food insecurity
- Activity 2.2.2** Organization of 8 national seminars on data analysis using the RDES in support of country-specific issues on agricultural development, poverty and food insecurity
- Activity 2.2.3** Organization of regional capacity-building training on data analysis techniques and capacity-building tools for the analyses

### **Output 2.3** *Recommendations for food and agriculture statistics analysis techniques in support of effective decision making, planning, targeted policies and programme formulation such as GDP analysis, food balance sheets, mapping, country/sub-country profiles, etc.*

- Activity 2.3.1** Review of national level data analyses in the participating countries and identification of essential data analysis techniques to be adapted for the respective countries
- Activity 2.3.2** Development of data analysis techniques

### **Output 2.4** *Capacity-building tools for strengthening analysis skills at national levels, such as training videos, manuals, demonstration webpages, etc.*

- Activity 2.4.1** Investigation of effective capacity-building tools for the participating countries
- Activity 2.4.2** Development of capacity-building tools

### 3. INPUTS

#### 3.1. Inputs of APCAS Member Countries

Countries will nominate national Focal Points who will be the liaisons for project activities and who will participate in regional meetings as may be required. These focal points will be nominated in consultation with the FAO RAP Senior Statistician in his/her capacity as Secretary of APCAS. Candidates should come from the department in charge of agricultural statistics and have responsibilities for the management and implementation of programmes in this field. The focal points will maintain the data from their respective countries.

Members of APCAS from developed countries are welcome to participate in project activities, especially for regional-level undertakings.

#### 3.2. Contributions of the Donor Government (Japan)

The donor is expected to fund project activities. The funds will be used for the following budgetary items. The balance of the budget from the previous phase of the project will be used to support travel costs for participants' invitations and training costs for organization of the Second Focal Points meeting sponsored by the project.

##### (a) Staff Costs

###### i) Professional

An **Agricultural Statistics Expert**/Project Manager will be assigned to provide advice on project implementation, including the preparation of the Project Implementation Workplan, periodic budget revisions, recruitment of consultants, training, monitoring and evaluation of project progress (Years 4: 7 months, Year 5: 12 months, Year 6: 5 months).

###### ii) General Service

**Administrative Support Staff** (Secretary) to support the Agricultural Statistics Expert (Years 4 & 5: 12 months, Year 6: 4 months).

##### (b) Consultants

###### **International Consultant on capacity-building training for data analysis**

To develop capacity-building tools for data analysis and to assist in the preparation and conduct of regional capacity-building training on data analysis (Year 5: 1 month, Year 6: 1 month).

##### (c) Contracts

i) Contracts with private firms for Internet web-hosting service to maintain the webpage of the project (3 years).

ii) Contracts with national institutions for organization of national seminars on data analysis (Year 4: 1 country, Year 5: 7 countries).

##### (d) Travel

- i) Duty travel for the Agricultural Statistics Expert to member countries of the project in support of project activities.
- ii) Backstopping mission by FAO RAP to the participating countries of the project and from FAO headquarters to Bangkok.
- iii) Participants at regional meetings, which are meetings of focal points and regional workshop/training (Year 4: 4 days, Year 6: 8 days).

Note: Under this project, the second focal points meeting of two days will be also organized in Year 5. The balance of the budget of the previous phase of the project will be used to support travel cost for participants' invitations in the second focal points meeting sponsored by the project.

- iv) Evaluation mission by FAO headquarters and the donor country to Bangkok (Year 6: 3 weeks).

**(e) Training**

Direct costs for organization of regional meetings (Year 4, Year 6).

**(f) Expendable Procurement**

Expendable equipment and supplies required in support of project activities such as computer supplies, stationery, etc. for the project office.

**(g) Technical Support Services**

- i) Technical Backstopping

FAO will provide technical backstopping and oversight of the project, averaging one month of professional staff services each year.

- ii) Terminal Report

After the completion of the project, FAO will submit a Terminal Report to the Donor Government.

Evaluation

- iii) Evaluation will be undertaken during the focal points meeting in Year 6. The evaluation team will consist of an official of FAO headquarters and a representative of the donor country. (3 weeks, an official of FAO headquarters and a representative of the donor country).

**(i) General operating expenses**

General operating expenses including cost sharing of the project office and cost of telecommunication maintenance, production of field documents and miscellaneous activities for smooth project implementation.

**3.3. FAO Contributions**

Project Headquarters will be located at the premises of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), Bangkok. FAO RAP will make available office space for the project expert and will recruit and service the staff assigned to implement the project. It

will also make available conference facilities and a vehicle for local transport in Bangkok, Thailand for regional meetings, seminars and workshops, organized under the project.

#### **4. Project Evaluation**

FAO and the Donor Government will jointly examine the progress of the project. The project will be subject to an evaluation in accordance with the policies and procedures established by FAO.

At the time of the focal points meeting in the last year of the project, an official terminal evaluation will be planned, by a small team consisting of an official from FAO headquarters and a representative of the donor country, hired using project funds. The Terms of Reference and exact timing will be decided in consultation between FAO and the Donor Government.