

**General Assembly**Distr.
GENERALA/39/418/Add.1
22 October 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-ninth session
Agenda item 23CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE
LEAGUE OF ARAB STATESReport of the Secretary-GeneralAddendumMeeting on food and agriculture in the Arab region

1. In paragraph 9 of resolution 38/6, the General Assembly requested the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to consider holding a meeting on food and agriculture in the Arab region to consider action to be taken and projects to be launched jointly pursuant to the recommendations adopted at the Tunis meeting of June/July 1983 between representatives of the United Nations system and representatives of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and its specialized organizations.
2. The meeting was held at FAO headquarters in Rome on 27 and 28 September 1984. The League of Arab States (LAS) and its specialized organizations were represented by the General Secretariat of LAS, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands, the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The United Nations system was represented by the United Nations, the Economic Commission for Western Asia, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, FAO, the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.
3. The Director-General of FAO opened the meeting. He pointed out that the Arab region was at present facing an acute crisis due to the failure of the agricultural production to keep pace with the burgeoning demand stemming from growths in population, urban areas and income. He stressed that co-operation between FAO and other agencies concerned with agriculture and food, on the one hand, and Arab organizations, on the other, was an actual and continuing feature that constituted an important activity under their programmes. The objective of the meeting, he explained, was to review the various experiences in the field of food and

agriculture and to consider prospects of increased co-operation in the future. The Director-General said that he would give the recommendations of the meeting particular importance and that FAO would implement them within available technical, financial and human means.

4. In his address at the opening meeting, the Director-General of AOAD spoke of the importance of the agricultural sector within the economic structure of most of the Arab countries and the efforts undertaken by those countries in that field in the 1970s. However, he said that the contribution of agriculture to GDP had been decreasing since the beginning of the 1980s as compared with the 1970s. Consequently, the value of the food gap experienced by the Arab countries rose from approximately \$600 million in 1970 to over \$14.3 billion in 1982. He then reviewed the various causes behind this situation and the efforts undertaken by AOAD, since its establishment in 1972, in collaboration with other Arab organizations, in studying the dimensions of the food problem and food security in the Arab region. The Director-General of AOAD presented a number of ideas for strengthening co-operation with Arab and international organizations in the field of food and agriculture and for laying down a comprehensive programme for food production in the Arab region. He proposed that official co-operation between AOAD and FAO be upgraded from the level of the letter of understanding exchanged between the two organizations in 1974 to the level of a co-operation agreement.

5. The working sessions of the meeting were jointly chaired by the Director-General of AOAD and the Assistant Director-General, Regional Representative for the Near East, FAO. In the course of its sessions, the meeting reviewed the present food and agricultural situation in the Arab region. It took note of the serious constraints on agricultural development and food deficits. The meeting endorsed the need for a substantial increase in capital investment and for agricultural development strategies to increase productivity.

6. The meeting also examined the ways and means of enhancing co-operation by appropriate formal agreements and mechanisms. It agreed to strengthen collaboration by:

- (a) Undertaking joint regional studies in food security, agricultural development planning, agricultural integration and integrated rural development;
- (b) Co-sponsoring regional seminars, workshops and other technical meetings;
- (c) Technical co-operation in various fields of agriculture including remote sensing;
- (d) Promotion of joint efforts to increase the flow of investments in agricultural fields;
- (e) Co-operation between FAO and affiliated regional projects and programmes and Arab organizations and centres;
- (f) Promotion of activities for the exchange of information.

7. The full report of the meeting will be issued as an official document by FAO.

Department of Technical Co-operation for Development

64. Since 1979, the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development has been executing a project of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) of assistance to the Population Research and Training Unit in the Department of Social Affairs of the League. The Department co-operated in the organization of a Pan Arab Conference on Population and Development, held in Jordan in March 1984, and in a training course on population research methodologies held at the Arab Institute of Planning in Kuwait in April 1984 at Tunis.

United Nations Fund for Population Activities

65. In March 1982, the ongoing project, "Population Research and Study Unit in the Arab League" (RMI/78/P05), was approved for 1982 to 1984 for a total amount of \$583,600. Its achievements thus far include (a) the establishment of infrastructure; (b) the assessment of data and the establishment of a population data base; (c) the establishment of a population reference centre; and (d) initial research on international migration which is being continued in 1984. The work plan, includes (a) training courses; (b) participation in the ECWA Regional Conference on Population in the Middle East; and (c) studies on the role of family structure change in economic activities. An allocation of \$257,700 to this project in 1984 is expected.

13. Civil aviation

International Civil Aviation Organization

66. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) continues to co-operate closely with the Arab Civil Aviation Council (ACAC). The President of the Council of ICAO attended the twenty-fifth Assembly of ACAC at Algiers. ACAC was represented by observers at the ICAO Middle East Regional Air Navigation Meeting and in the twenty-fifth session (extraordinary) of the ICAO Assembly. ICAO will provide assistance in the formulation of civil aviation plans and programmes and in the strengthening of civil aviation infrastructure, facilities and services, and promote exchange of technical information and documentation.

14. Maritime transport

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

67. In the area of shipping, UNCTAD is implementing three training projects in Arab States through the TRAINMAR programme. Two projects are for the development of national maritime management in Tunisia and Morocco; the third is for the establishment of two regional training centres. A TRAINMAR course development workshop was organized at Geneva in May 1984 with 14 participants from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Two studies on dry bulk shipping have also been undertaken for Morocco and Tunisia.

United Nations Development Programme

68. Participating Arab States have agreed to contribute \$1.5 million cost-sharing to the project, "Arab Maritime Transport Academy" (RAB/80/008), mainly for the purpose of providing equipment. The UNDP contribution will total \$932,000 for experts and fellowships for the period 1984-1987.

69. The objective of project TRAINMAR (RAB/82/025) is to create two training centres in the field of maritime transport, one in North Africa and another in the Near East region. Activities of the centre for North Africa have started. The location of the other centre remains to be decided.

International Labour Organisation

70. ILO has provided assistance to the Arab Maritime Transport Academy in training for and promotion of safety in port operations.

International Maritime Organization

71. On 17 February 1984, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States signed an agreement of co-operation. The agreement provides for consultations with regard to matters of common interest in the field of maritime transport in the States members of the League and the development and use of shipping in international trade.

72. The services of IMO's interregional adviser in maritime safety administration can be provided to LAS or to its individual member countries on request. Further, IMO, in co-operation with the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, can provide advice and assistance to member countries of LAS on request, in the formulation of national maritime legislation. The services of IMO's interregional consultants in maritime training (deck and maritime engineering) can be made available on request. The services of IMO's interregional consultants can also be utilized, in conjunction with the resources available at the World Maritime University, for the training of high-level personnel in shipping. IMO's interregional consultant in maritime pollution can also be made available. Furthermore, assistance can be provided, in accordance with procedures which may be agreed between IMO, the League and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and in consultation as necessary with particular members of LAS for the training and placement of Palestinians.

15. Postal services

Universal Postal Union

73. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has developed machinery for close co-operation with the Arab Postal Union (APU) in accordance with resolution C6 of the UPU Executive Council on participation of the restricted unions in the UPU technical assistance programme. Several bilateral meetings have been held to evaluate a bilateral agreement specifying the fields of co-operation.

C. Replies pertaining to food and agriculture

World Food Programme

74. As of 31 March 1984, 51 development projects were in operation in 13 Arab countries, at a total cost of \$667.5 million. These countries are Algeria, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen. The level of World Food Programme (WFP) assistance to the Arab region from the inception of WFP up to 31 March 1984 amounted to a total of \$1,862,312,870, representing 25.7 per cent of the total aid supplied by WFP to all regions of the world.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

75. Co-operative activities between FAO and the League of Arab States and its subsidiary bodies are based on a formal agreement with LAS and letters of understanding with the subsidiary bodies. By the agreement with LAS, the two organizations agreed to concert their efforts to (a) carry out studies in the field of food and agriculture and disseminate the results of such studies; (b) improve nutritional methods; (c) conserve natural resources; (d) improve the marketing and distribution of agricultural commodities; and (e) promote the development of agricultural credit facilities. Letters of understanding have been exchanged between FAO and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID), the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU).

76. Co-operative arrangements with LAS and its subsidiary bodies cover a wide field. They include conducting regional studies, technical co-operation, agricultural investment, training and exchange of information.

77. Significant studies undertaken on a co-operative basis include a major food security study prepared by AOAD with the assistance of FAO, and studies on agricultural development planning in which FAO is co-operating with CAEU, AOAD and AFESD. FAO assisted AFESD in the preparation of a study on integrated rural development in the least developed Arab countries. FAO co-operated with AOAD in a study on marketing of livestock and meat between East Africa and the Middle East.

78. FAO has regularly participated in ministerial and other high-level meetings organized by LAS. Mutual participation in seminars, workshops and other technical meetings has strengthened collaboration between the two organizations.

79. In the field of technical co-operation, FAO assisted AFESD in preparing a 10-year basic programme for the Sudan, which marks the first step towards a food security policy. FAO is assisting the Arab League Documentation Centre at Tunis in establishing an Arab Food Information Network. Furthermore, FAO has been assisting ACSAD in the assessment of soil degradation and mapping and in the preparation of a seven-year programme in the field of land reclamation and water management. A range land monitoring programme is being developed by FAO in collaboration with ACSAD. FAO participated in the various steps towards formulation of the project

"Transnational Green Belt" of North Africa, sponsored by UNEP and ALECSO. FAO assisted AFESD to study the possibilities for establishing a viable pesticides industry and a pesticides research and development centre in the Arab region. A documentation and information centre in AOAD in Khartoum has been established with FAO technical assistance.

80. In respect of investment in agriculture, the Investment Centre in FAO has been the unit for contact and co-ordination with AFESD and AAAID. There has been co-financing by AFESD of projects prepared by the Investment Centre for other institutions, but closer co-operation has taken place recently with a number of projects being prepared by the Investment Centre at the request of AFESD.

81. The Latakia Forest Ranger's School has trained hundreds of foresters at the technical level. FAO and AOAD have collaborated in holding a number of training courses in the field of animal production and health. FAO, ACSAD and the French International Training Centre for Water Resources Management collaborated in organizing a training course on water resource planning. Collaboration with ACSAD has paved the way for organizing a training course on plant genetic resources and another on irrigation management.

82. In the field of information, close contacts have been established with the Arab League Documentation and Information Centre since its establishment. AOAD and ACSAD have been making use of the services of FAO's library and systems: AGRIS (International Information System for Agricultural Science and Technology) and CARIS (Current Agricultural Research Information System). About 3,000 microfiches of FAO documents were furnished to AOAD. FAO has been providing the statistics computer print-out regularly to AFESD.

83. Ad hoc co-operative activities have also been undertaken with other subsidiary bodies of LAS, such as the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology and the Arab Industrial Development Organization.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

84. IFAD has been closely co-operating with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) and AFESD supervises and administers one third of IFAD's projects in the Near East and North Africa. IFAD provides technical assistance support to two main Arab League organizations involved in agriculture and rural development, namely, the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development.

D. Replies pertaining to social development, labour matters, human resources and cultural affairs

Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

85. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs will co-operate with LAS in the field of social development and social defense, in the activities

related to complementary rural development projects, and in joint action in favour of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

United Nations Children's Fund

86. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continues to co-operate with LAS in the fields of social development, particularly with regard to the welfare of children and mothers. Active negotiations are currently under way to translate the Charter of the Arab Child, adopted by the Conference on the Arab Child in 1980, into a programme of action. UNICEF is also planning a workshop for representatives of the Arab information media to develop a strategy for benefiting children, with emphasis on ensuring their survival, growth and development.

87. Discussions with LAS are currently being considered for joint sponsorship of programmes of humanitarian assistance to Palestinian children and mothers, a field of assistance in which UNICEF is already actively engaged.

United Nations Development Programme

88. UNDP informed ILO that it will contribute \$1.2 million to the project on labour administration, in addition to cost-sharing to be provided by ILO. The project document is expected to be completed by ILO and the Arab Labour Organization.

International Labour Organisation

89. ILO and the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) are closely co-operating in the launching of two regional projects on employment promotion and labour administration. Further, co-operation with the recently inaugurated ALO Arab Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is under way. Exchange of information in the labour field is ongoing, and collaboration in the production of training materials in Arabic is envisaged. Co-operation with the Arab investment funds to explore human resources implications, especially vocational training and management of investment decisions in economic and social sectors, is being developed. ILO will also welcome intensified joint action in aid of disadvantaged groups and promotion of equality of opportunity for women in employment.

90. Following a mission of ILO from October 1982 to January 1983, a regional symposium was organized by ILO in January 1983, at Geneva, for the promotion of employment in the Arab region, in which representatives of 21 Arab countries, the Palestine Liberation Organization, a number of United Nations organizations and ALO participated.

91. Discussions are in progress with UNDP for the funding of a regional technical co-operation project between ILO and ALO on labour administration.

92. A senior official of the Arab League recently visited the ILO headquarters to study the possibility of expanding technical co-operation. Two specific areas are readily identifiable: (a) a study of employment opportunities; and (b) a seminar for senior Arab officials and researchers on experience in the use of models for promoting projects geared to development.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

93. On 3 December 1983, a tripartite agreement was signed in Kuwait between UNESCO, ALECSO and AFESD, for carrying out a feasibility study on cultural and educational industries in the Arab region. Close co-operation has continued with AFESD, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands and other concerned organizations associated with the League of Arab States.

World Health Organization

94. As recommended at the Tunis meeting, research in endemic diseases is particularly relevant to the tuberculosis research programme of the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, the proposals relating to the special programmes for the promotion of primary health care, training in planning and programming of health services, and broader exchange of information are important to WHO's programme for the strengthening of health services. Also, since 1976, WHO has had an extensive programme for Arabic publications on health. In the establishment and development of this programme, WHO has collaborated closely with the Council of Arab Ministers of Health. WHO is engaged in joint planning and consultations with the newly established Arab Centre for Health Documentation and Publications. WHO has approached all Arab and European States to initiate or strengthen technical co-operation through the Mediterranean Zoonosis Control Programme.

95. As regards improvement in the supply of drinking water, WHO has been in contact with various Arab financing agencies, notably AFESD and BADEA.

96. A meeting was held between WHO and the Committee established by the Council of Health Ministers of the members of LAS at Geneva on 9 May 1984, and the following areas of future co-operation between the Council and WHO were selected:

- (a) Essential drugs and vaccines;
- (b) Information and health education;
- (c) Health legislation;
- (d) Support of the regional Arabic programme.

International Atomic Energy Agency

97. The International Atomic Energy Agency has 16 projects, costing at about \$1.5 million, related to health care programmes to be carried out within the framework of the WHO overall policy of "Health for All by the Year 2000" in eight Arab countries, i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia.

World Intellectual Property Organization

98. Following a meeting between the Director-General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States on 9 August 1983, at Tunis, WIPO sent to the League a draft memorandum on co-operation between the two organizations.

99. Following the meetings, held at Tunis on 10 August and at Geneva on 31 August 1983, respectively, between the Director-General of WIPO and the Director-General of ALECSO, a working agreement regulating co-operation between the two organizations was signed by the two directors-general on 31 August 1983. The WIPO co-ordination committee approved the agreement during its September 1983 session.

100. WIPO attended the first meeting of the Arab Committee for the Protection of Copyright at Tunis in November 1983. Further, WIPO invited ALECSO to several of its meetings on copyright and neighbouring rights as well as an international conference organized by WIPO at its headquarters on the situation of inventors in May 1984.

101. The Director-General of WIPO met the Secretary-General of the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) at Tunis on 10 August 1983. A joint WIPO/ASBU seminar on copyright and neighbouring rights for Arab countries was held at the WIPO headquarters in May 1984.

E. Replies pertaining to refugees, disaster prevention and emergency relief, and human rights

1. Refugees

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

102. At the invitation of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, the High Commissioner visited the headquarters of the League at Tunis from 4 to 8 April 1984, and held fruitful discussions with the Secretary-General on matters of common interest, in particular, the ways and means to strengthen co-operation between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and LAS.

103. UNHCR, in co-operation with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, organized a seminar for Arab experts on asylum and refugee law in the Arab countries from 16 to 19 January 1984 at San Remo. The League was represented at this seminar. The seminar adopted a number of conclusions including one supporting the strengthening of co-operation between the League and the Office of the High Commissioner.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

104. The maintenance of services performed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is dependent on voluntary contributions from the international community. UNRWA has for many years faced severe financial problems. Member States of the League of Arab States, bilaterally and through intergovernmental organizations, are among the traditional donors to

UNRWA, and this agency has periodically received much support from LAS in its fund-raising efforts.

105. The host Governments of the Palestine refugees in UNRWA's area of operations - Egypt (which "administered" the Gaza Strip from 1948 to 1967), Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic - are among the 10 members of the UNRWA Advisory Commission.

106. UNRWA maintains regular contacts with LAS and its offices in Vienna and Washington. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA has held fruitful discussions on several occasions with the Secretary-General of LAS.

107. Information material is sent regularly to the secretariat of LAS as well as to its member States in Arabic, English and French. UNRWA also provides the radio and television stations of the member States of the League with programmes on the Palestine refugees and UNRWA's activities. Photographic coverage and comprehensive photo exhibits have been displayed and distributed throughout the Arab world, drawing attention to the plight of the Palestine people. The Department of Information of UNRWA makes regular visits to the Gulf States and to the secretariat of LAS to exchange information.

2. Disaster prevention and emergency relief

Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator

108. Follow-up action on the specific recommendations has been initiated for disaster prevention and emergency relief. Liaison officers from the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) and from the League of Arab States have been designated and are in regular contact; briefings and visits have been undertaken. Moreover, representatives of LAS and of Arab countries participated in UNDRO's Mobile Disaster Unit meeting, held at Geneva during May 1984. Contacts were also established with Arab representatives, at the ministerial and other levels, involved in disaster relief and preparedness. Further, agreement has been reached to hold a joint UNDRO/LAS seminar on disaster preparedness by the end of 1984 at Tunis.

3. Human rights

Centre for Human Rights

109. The Centre for Human Rights, on 21 December 1983, addressed a letter to the LAS secretariat reiterating its readiness to engage in consultations on human rights matters and expressing particular interest in the progress of the regional instrument on human rights under preparation within the League. The Centre also dispatched to the secretariat a set of the most recent United Nations documents on human rights. Further, an invitation to LAS to send observers to meetings of United Nations human rights organs was renewed. Moreover, LAS was invited to participate in an informal consultative meeting of representatives of human rights secretariats and to contribute to a forthcoming United Nations seminar on the question of religious freedom and tolerance.

110. The League was represented by an observer at the fortieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, who participated in the deliberations on relevant items. The League has also been invited, and has offered its views on, various topics on which United Nations human rights organs have requested that regional intergovernmental organizations be consulted.

F. Replies pertaining to information and communication

Department of Public Information

111. The United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) at Tunis has been strengthened and a full-time director has been appointed. Further, consultations are continuing with the LAS officials for holding a symposium for representatives of Arab mass media on the role of information in development.

International Telecommunication Union

112. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) will, within the framework of the MEDARABTEL project, continue to organize joint technical seminars with the Arab Telecommunications Union (ATU), as was done in 1983. In this context, the general policy of strengthening the South-South co-operation is being followed.

113. ITU has provided lecturers to several technical meetings and symposia sponsored by the Arab States Broadcasting Union. Further, as in other regions, UNDP/ITU projects give priority to human resources development. Also, when hiring experts for service in the Arab States, under equal conditions of experience and qualifications, preference is given to experts from the Arab region.

114. An Arabic language section has been created for extending the use of Arabic, in publications and service documents of ITU and from 1 January 1984, Arabic has become one of the six official languages of the Union.

IV. PROPOSED MEETING ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN THE ARAB REGION

115. In paragraph 9 of resolution 38/6, the General Assembly requested the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to consider holding a meeting on food and agriculture in the Arab region to consider action to be taken and projects to be launched jointly pursuant to the recommendations adopted at the Tunis meeting of June/July 1983. It is understood that consultations have taken place on this matter between FAO, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in the light of which a meeting will be held on 27 and 28 September 1984 at FAO headquarters at Rome. The subject of the meeting will be "Co-operation in food and agriculture in the Arab region".

V. PROPOSED MEETING ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

116. In paragraph 10 of resolution 38/6, the General Assembly recommended that another sectoral meeting on social development should be organized, in January/February 1985, under the sponsorship of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, in a country member of that organization, to give careful consideration to projects prepared for joint implementation, in conformity with the priorities set forth in paragraph 61 and 62 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/38/299 and Corr.1), including joint sectoral meetings. It is understood that the League secretariat has initiated preparatory action for the meeting.
