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**STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
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**CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN
STATISTICIANS**

**Joint UNECE/Eurostat/FAO/OECD
Organization of the Third World
Conference on Agricultural Statistics
(Cancun, Mexico 2-4 November 2004)**

**STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (Eurostat)**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL
ORGANISATION (FAO)**

**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(OECD)**

**REPORT
THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE STATISTICS
(ICAS III)**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Third World Conference on Agriculture Statistics (ICAS III), organized jointly by Eurostat, FAO, OECD, UNECE and ISI on the invitation of the Government of Mexico, was held in Cancun, Mexico from 2-4 November 2004. The Conference was entitled Measuring Sustainable Agriculture Indicators (MEXSAI). It was attended by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America and Zambia. The European Communities was represented by Eurostat. Representatives of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Bank also attended.

2. The Conference was chaired by Mr. Juan Manuel Galarza, general director of Agrifood and Fisheries Information and Statistics Service (SAGARPA). The Conference was opened by Mr. Galarza and representatives from the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Farming, Rural development and Fishery and representatives of provisional Government of Quintana Roo.

ORGANISATION OF THE CONFERENCE

3. The following substantive topics were discussed at the Conference on the basis of invited and supporting papers that countries and organisations had contributed:

- (a) From agriculture to rural development indicators:
 - 1) Data requirements for rural development indicators;
 - 2) It makes a difference: household versus farm as a unit of measurement;
 - 3) Labour force in rural areas – concept and methodology;
 - 4) Income and employment of the rural household.

- (b) International standards and methodology for agriculture and rural statistics:
 - 1) Strategies for developing a national system of agriculture and rural statistics;
 - 2) New development in census methodologies;
 - 3) The innovative use of survey and censuses – practical solutions to today's challenges;
 - 4) The innovative use of survey and censuses – applications in frame development and sampling;
 - 5) Methodology and new techniques for statistical systems.

- (c) Rural poverty and hunger (MDG1):
 - 1) Measuring rural poverty and hunger (MDG1).

- (d) Environmental sustainability, food safety, animal health and social welfare:
 - 1) Measuring social welfare and environmental sustainability;
 - 2) Measuring agriculture.

4. Documentation for the Conference is available at following web addresses:

<http://www.siap.sagarpa.gob.mx/mexsai> or <http://www.nass.usda.gov/mexsai>

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION AND THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS REACHED AT THE CONFERENCE

5. Some of the main conclusions of the Conference are given below. Other conclusions that the participants reached at the Conference on the above topics will be presented in a report (in English only), which will be posted on the above-mentioned web page.

6. The Conference gave evidence of a significant shift in the interest from traditional agriculture surveys to rural development statistics for the monitoring of the well-being of

agriculture households vis-à-vis rural non-agriculture households and urban households. It was also concluded that the farm household is the focal point for how policies affect farm production activities. The supply of labour reflects the nature of the households supplying it. This calls for a redesign in agriculture surveys, which should recognize the household as the statistical unit of interest, without giving up measurements of the farm unit. This is something which has recently also been strongly stressed in a report by the European Communities Court of Auditors.

7. The nature of self-employment, the form which most labour takes in agriculture, makes quantification in terms of input to the production process problematic.

8. Furthermore, it was stressed that there is a need to integrate and link various surveys such as household budget and expenditure surveys, labour force surveys, farm structure surveys etc, as well as to link them with population censuses. To this end, household master samples were suggested. The initiative of the World Bank to create a Household Budget Surveys Network was strongly supported.

9. The importance of agriculture censuses was again stressed. However, it was recognized that they might be too expensive (in Brazil, for instance, the statistical law calls for an agriculture census every five year but for cost reason has been prolonged to every 10 year). Fewer and fewer countries are actually conducting censuses. More and more countries are doing sampling on basis of area frames. The Conference suggested that agriculture surveys should be connected with population census, on the one hand, and harmonized administrative data with sample survey data, on the other. To this end, the Conference recommended more extensive use of new technology to bridge survey, administrative and remotely sensed data (GIS; GPS,..)

10. The Conference called for development of internationally recognized definitions of rural development statistics, taking into account the four legs: (a) Land and water; (b) Populations density, based on administrative areas, for definition of rural versus urban and various intensities thereof; (c) Households, farm and non-farm; and (d) Enterprises, farm and non-farm. To this end, countries gave full support to the new international Handbook on Rural Household, Livelihood and Well-Being, which is being undertaken by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Agriculture Statistics (IWG.AGRI).

RECOMMENDED FUTURE WORK

11. On the invitation of the Government of China it was agreed that the Fourth World Conference on Agriculture Statistics should be held in China in 2007.
