

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION (FAO)

INTRODUCTION:

The Food and Agriculture Organization came into being on 16 October 1945, in Quebec City, Canada, with a view of collecting, analysing, interpreting and disseminating information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture.

FAO runs on its Latin motto, "*fiat panis*", which translates as "let there be bread".

The FAO aims to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, to improve production and distribution of agricultural products to secure improvements in the efficiency of the production to better the condition of rural population and to contribute towards an expanding world economy.

Food & Agricultural Organization (FAO) was the first specialized agency of UN established after II world which subsequently moved in to Palazzo FAO, Rome, Italy. It provides an intelligence service, including not only facts and figures relating to nutrition, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, but also appraisals and forecasts of production, distribution and consumption in these fields; promotes national and international action to improve production, marketing, processing and distribution of the products of agriculture (including fisheries and forestry), conservation of natural resources, and credit and commodity arrangement policies; and furnishes, on request, technical assistance in any of the above fields.

STRUCTURE:

The FAO mechanism works to promote public-private partnerships, improve smallholder agriculture, and develop mechanisms to monitor, reduce, and warn about hazards to the food chain. Finances coming from industrialized countries, development banks, and other sources are also monitored.

The FAO is composed of seven major departments:

- i. The Agriculture and Consumer Protection department promotes agriculture to eradicate human poverty while also protecting the environment and ensuring safe food practices and standards.
- ii. The Climate, Biodiversity, Land, and Water department promotes sustainable management practices for land, soils, energy, water, biodiversity, and genetic resources.

- iii. The Corporate Services, Human Resources, and Finance department support the entire FAO organization.
- iv. The economic and Social Development department promotes economic development through internal production and trade.
- v. The Fisheries and Aquaculture department promotes the management of aquaculture and fishing.
- vi. The forestry department promotes the management of resources through forestry.
- vii. The Technical Cooperation department supports member countries in their programs and responds to food- and agriculture-related threats and crises.

It follows a four-tier administrative structure which consists of the following:

- i. Headquarter
- ii. Regional offices
- iii. Sub-regional offices
- iv. Liaison Offices

OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF FAO:

The Food and Agriculture Organization strives to help member countries to become independent in providing sufficient food to their indigenous population, while also producing enough to become active trade partners with other countries—being able to generate revenue out of agricultural products, in other words.

Focusing on the types of food production that are suitable and prevalent for each country, the FAO works within local cultures with local staff to improve existing practices while leaving local economies intact

FAO has outlined the following priorities and targets in its fight against hunger:

- Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition – contribute to the eradication of hunger by facilitating policies and political commitments to support food security and by making sure that up-to-date information about hunger and nutrition challenges and solutions is available and accessible.
- Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable – promote evidence-based policies and practices to support highly productive agricultural sectors (crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries), while assuring that the natural resource base does not suffer in the process.

- Reduce rural poverty – help the rural poor gain access to the resources and services they need which include rural employment and social protection – to forge a path out of poverty.
- Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems – help to build safe and efficient food systems that support smallholder agriculture and reduce poverty and hunger in rural areas.
- Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises – help countries to prepare for natural and human-caused disasters by reducing their risk and enhancing the resilience of their food and agricultural systems.

FUNCTIONS:

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations is an important group. The purpose of this organization is to ensure there is enough food for all. There are several main goals of this organization. One goal is to eliminate hunger and malnutrition. Another goal is to eliminate poverty while advocating for social and economic progress. The third goal is to manage and sustain our natural resources for present and future use.

By working with various groups, this organization develops various international initiatives to help the organization meet its goals.

There are several areas of activities, some of which are:

- ✓ To provide knowledge in order to achieve sustainable agriculture in all the countries.
- ✓ To strengthen the political will to do the things needed to devise policies regarding agriculture.
- ✓ To boost public-private partnerships for improving agriculture in general, especially smaller agriculture.
- ✓ Impart knowledge in the field and keeping countries aware of problems regarding agriculture.

CRITICISM

Dissatisfaction with the organization's performance was among the reasons for the creation of two new organizations after the World Food Conference in 1974, namely the World Food Council and the International Fund for Agricultural Development; by

the early eighties there was intense rivalry among these organizations.

in 1989, the organization came under attack from Heritage Foundation, an American conservative think tank, which described the FAO as becoming "essentially irrelevant in combating hunger" due to a "bloated bureaucracy known for the mediocrity of its work and the inefficiency of its staff the FAO", which had become politicized

The 2002 Food Summit organized by FAO was considered to have been ineffectual and unproductive by the official participants.¹ Social movements, farmers, fisher folk, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, environmentalists, women's organizations, trade unions and NGOs expressed their "collective disappointment in, and rejection of the official declaration of this summit.

In May 2008, while talking about the ongoing world food crisis, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal expressed the opinion that FAO was "a waste of money" and that "we must scrap it". Wade said that FAO was itself largely to blame for the price rises, and that the organization's work was duplicated by other bodies that operated more efficiently, like the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development.

However, despite the criticisms it faced, this organisation continues to be the apex institution which is responsible for formulation of international policies pertaining to food and agriculture on a global level. It aims towards modernizing and streamlining the administrative and operational processes in its respective field.