THIRD CHAPTER

THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
"There have been functional international agencies with more circumscribed objectives and tasks, but FAO is the first which sets out with so bold an aim as that of helping nations to achieve freedom from want. Never before have the nations got together for such a purpose."

- Lester B. Pearson of Canada

Chairman - First Session of the Conference.
CHAPTER III

THE F.A.O.

The foremost hope of most people in the modern world is that a permanent peace can be won, and negotiations are being carried on unceasingly to achieve this. But even when the most comprehensive agreements are finally reached, peace will still be built on quickeand while the majority of the human race are unhealthy, illiterate, hungry and im-poverished.

To reinforce national development programmes a whole family of international agencies is attacking the various facets of poverty by investigating causes, developing answers, and mobilizing resources. Among these agencies the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations is concerned with the use of world farmlands, fisheries and forests to meet man's most basic needs for food, shelter and clothing.

History of FAO: FAO in Boom :-

Many people realized around the mid 1930's-- as Walters put it in his history of League --" that the whole complicated network of high tariffs, quotas, prohibitions, exchange restrictions and so on, which had gradually been created in an effort to solve depression problems was strangling trade and making the situation worse."
There was a growing conviction that "untold possibilities" of material advance were being neglected and that opportunities which might never recur were being allowed to pass.

There was a great gap between existing and possible conditions of human life. New discoveries and new methods made it easy to manage adequate facilities that men needed for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families. Though perhaps only a few experts realized the fact that the standard of living of workers and poor sections of society was falling rather rising. Against this background a world monetary and economic conference was held in London in 1932-33.

Later, when the clouds of coming war were darkening, the League of Nations was losing its political importance, some persons came forward to find some measures of international co-operation by enlarging action in such spheres: as food, agriculture, housing etc.. The foundation for this effort had been laid in earlier studies by the League Secretariat. The books 'Nutrition and Public Health' and 'Physiological Bases of Nutrition' were published.

With these studies as a springboard, a small group that included, Mr. Bruce, Mr. F.L. McDougall (Australia) and John Boyed Orr of Scotland argued "Mankind needs food. Farmers want to produce as much food as possible, as efficiently as possible. If these two drives can be efficiently linked, the world can start on the road to an economy of abundance instead of the economy of scarcity that seems to
obsess men's minds.

In the League Assembly Mr. Bruce made a speech proposing a "marriage of health and agriculture" - vigorous revival of trade between the industrialized and the agricultural countries which would make it possible for immense numbers of people to get more of the foods they needed for health. In a formal resolution, the League recognized that "the relation of nutrition to the health of the people has become a social and economic problem of widely accepted significance and .... that this subject has an important bearing on the world agricultural problems. Subsequently, the Assembly published a final document - "The Relation of Nutrition to Health, Agriculture and Economic Policy" in 1937.

Thus by the end of 1939, a world food movement had started and plans had been made for regional meetings the Far East and Africa. The League's institutions drawn the outline of a common front against poverty, ignorance and disease.

During the world war II every country applied science and technology in order to augment their output of food and fibre. (*)

An Idea Emerging: -

The pre-occupations with food created a favourable atmosphere for keeping alive the beginning of the inter-

(*) Please refer 'The Story of FAO' by Clive Hombidge.
-national approach to food problems, which had been made in the latter days of the League of Nations.

A group with the help of Mr. McDougall worked out a memorandum known as "the McDougall Memorandum" which outlined proposals for establishing an international organization concerned with food and agriculture as soon as the war ended. These ideas were set out in an article written by McDougall late in 1942 for "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences." He wrote:

"The exigencies of war and of the relief period will in the next few years render almost all men everywhere in world highly food conscious.... Psychological reasons may therefore lead us to anticipate that in the United Nations plans for world reconstruction, action to secure better nutrition and improvements in food production and distribution will be accorded high priority."

"If the United Nations decided to make freedom from want of food the first .... will require national action in every country and international action to assist countries lacking technical knowledge and financial means to secure improvements in food production."

McDougall pointed out that at least 60% of the world's workers are engaged in farming and the welfare of farmers is "the outstanding social problem of the world."

He then went on to propose a "United Nations Organisation for food and agriculture" as the first step in the creation of a world-wide agency for the preservation of peace and the attainment of full employment and rising standards of living. This organization would have three broad functions: to collect, compile and interpret statistics relating to agriculture and food consumption; to organize a world service around the sciences affecting agriculture; and to provide technical guidance and help for the less developed countries by recruiting groups of agricultural experts who would be available to be sent to any part of the world to assist in improving agriculture methods, securing better land tenure systems, bringing about more effective marketing or promoting agricultural education."

At the meantime, President Roosevelt talked Mr. McDougall and the latter suggested that since food would be the first pre-occupations of the whole of mankind after the war, this would be a good starting place for the work of new international agency—United Nations. Consequently, Mr. Roosevelt called a conference on food and agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, U.S.A., in May 1943.

INTERIM COMMISSION : FOUNDATION OF FAO

"This UN Conference on food and Agriculture set up another signpost along the highway of international planning for agriculture". It adopted as its goal "Freedom from want in relation to food and agriculture". Freedom from want means a secure and adequate and a suitable supply of food for every man.".

1. Final Act and section Reports, UN Conference on food and Agriculture, page 1, Department of State Washington, D.C.
It was further declared that, "we must equally concern our efforts to maintain freedom from fear and freedom from want. The one can not be achieved without the other. These are worthy aims.

Though the Hot Springs Conference came in the midst of the war, it was concerned with peace. It dealt with the most basic of the biological, social and economic problems of mankind—the provision of food for life and health. This was a practical start for international co-operation. The delegates of 44 countries who attended, had a sense of participation in a world event of unusual significance, they hoped to contribute something vital to future friendly relations among governments. The discussions focussed on three main subjects: actual food consumption levels compared with food requirements, increased production to meet consumer needs and better distribution. The final Act of Conference with its 33 recommendations and three discursive reports—on production, consumption, and distribution—is a basic and states-manlike document.

What the delegates had agreed upon, in essence, were these points:

0 Food production must greatly be expanded.
0 The necessary technical knowledge is available.
0 To produce more food is useless unless markets are created to absorb it by a widespread increase in consumer purchasing power.
0 Each nation is responsible for seeing that its own people have the food they need, but no nation can fully achieve this objective without the co-
-operation of others.

0 A permanent international organization with a wide range of technical functions and duties, concerned with food and agriculture must be established as quickly as possible.

Shortly after Hot Springs Conference an Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture was organized to work out plans for the permanent organization, with all the countries represented there as members. Mr. L.B. Pearson of Canada was elected chairman.

The Commission organized its work in three committees: one headed by Sir Girja Bajpai (India) to draft the constitution (which is specially creditable to India), another headed by Eurico Penteado (Brazil) to prepare a declaration which eventually took the form of a preamble to the constitution; the third headed by Darwish Haidari (Iraq) to help work out the technical functions and duties of FAO.

After great discussions and study this Interim Commission prepared a draft constitution for FAO and submitted it to governments represented on the Commission.

Because of war conditions, it took long time to get 20 notifications of acceptance of the constitution required to establish FAO. But by April 1945 the necessary number of acceptances has been received. (Article 20 provides for entry into force upon acceptance by 20 nations specified in Annexure I.)
**Constitutional Birth of FAO**

FAO officially came into being with the signing of its constitution on October 16, 1945, at the first session of its conference at Quebec (Canada) when it took over and greatly enlarged the functions of the League's Mixed Committee on the problem Nutrition and the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome. (*) (liquidated in January 1948. By agreement of the member governments, which were also members of the former International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, the functions and assets of the latter were transferred to the new body.¹

On December 14, 1946, FAO was formally brought into relationship with the UN as a specialized agency, with the approval of an agreement between the two organization by the

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(*) The International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, established in 1905, largely as the results of the untiring efforts of an American - David Lubin, was designed to perform somewhat the same services as that of the projected permanent organization. For a detailed analysis of the organization, structure and activities of the Institute, see: Asher Hobson. The International Institute of Agriculture, University of California Press).

¹ Refer U.S. State Department Publication No. 3655, February 1950.
United Nations General Assembly under article 57 of the Charter of the Un.¹

To quote from 'So Bold an Aim': The great decision had been taken and for once first things had been put first. Food - the essential of life; Agriculture - the occupation of two-thirds of the population of the world; all the consumers and the majority of producers vitally concerned about what might be achieved in this field."²

Thus the preparation began at Hot Springs and continued for over two years at Washington came to an end, and the work of FAO began.

**FAO: Its Evolution**

FAO was the first of the permanent UN specialized agencies launched. When the organization was established, its activities were at first restricted to making technical studies, collecting statistics and disseminating them via publications and correspondence, calling and attending conferenced, establishing technical commissions, and despatch of occasional field study missions.

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¹ For constitution of FAO and Agreement between FAO and UN, Refer: - International Governmental Organizations: constitutional documents By Amos J. Peaslee. Page 489 to 512.  
² So Bold an Aim Page 53.
Very early it became obvious that FAO could not content itself with giving information and advice. Then in 1950 came the beginning of change. Powerful world currents and events disclosed critical urgent needs for development help in the underdeveloped continents, and led by the United Nations which itself embarks upon a large programme of bilateral aid, the UN and its family of organizations stepped up its response to the need. In the years since, "response to need" has evolved into a worldwide program of development to help narrow the large and growing gap between incomes in poor nations and those in the rich. In these circumstances and given the overwhelming actual and potential importance of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the less-developed countries, FAO has began to grow from a small technical agency to a major UN Development Agency disposing of funds in excess of 50 million dollars a year and leading a worldwide campaign and the active fight against hunger. The underlying programme named as United Nations family's Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and institute in 1951.

In 1959 the active arm of FAO's programme gained a new dimension with the institution of the Un Special Fund, to finance major projects beyond the scope of the EPTA.

The establishment of World Food Programme and Freedom from Hunger Campaign gave a new dimension to the activities of FAO.

At present FAO/UN is the most indispensable agency
of UN family. Its multi-pronged efforts are now assisting the world in bringing the much needed freedom from want and hunger and thereby paving a way for perfect peace and prosperity in the world.

PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF FAO:

FAO originated in the hope expressed in the Atlantic Charter of seeing established a peace which will afford assurance that all men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from want.

The preamble to the constitution of FAO states that the aim of the nations accepting the Constitution is to promote the common welfare by furthering separate and collective action for the purposes of:

"raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples under their respective jurisdictions;"

"Securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products;"

"betering the conditions of rural populations;"

"and thus contributing towards an expanding world economy."

In so far as its detailed functions are concerned, FAO is first charged, in Article I of its Constitution, with the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture. FAO further promotes and recommends national and international action
Which it considers necessary to attain: the increase of production in agriculture, fisheries and forestry; the improvement of education and administration in those fields; the improvement of processing, marketing and distribution of the products of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, the conservation of natural resources, the adoption of policies for the provision of adequate agricultural credit and of international policies with respect to agricultural commodity arrangements.

Finally, on request, FAO furnishes technical assistance to Members to help them bring new land under cultivation, improve the yields of land already cultivated, reduce the costs of production, improve the efficiency of international distribution, raise levels of consumption, and better the living conditions in rural areas.

In the words of Woytinsky and Woytinsky (In "World Commerce and Governments" Page 810) "The educational activities of FAO include not only dissemination of agricultural knowledge but also practical training of technical personnel in under-developed areas, co-ordination of governmental efforts directed toward raising agricultural output by improved methods of farming, and operation of special programs wherever and whenever the need arise".

Norris E. Dodd defined FAO's major responsibilities in two categories:

1. maintaining an intelligence service for member governments and its own staff to be utilized in the action programmes it operate;
2. framing and developing action programmes to supplement those initiated by governments and in which FAO on the request of such governments is in a position to participate."

FAO deals mainly with almost all the problems of countries that have not reached a high degree of economic development and strengthen their hands to achieve the alround prosperity of their people.

Constitution

FAO is one of the autonomous specialized agencies of the United Nations family. It has close working relationship with the United Nations as well as with its sister specialized agencies, through the UN Economic and Social Council.¹

Organization : Governing and other bodies:

The governing bodies of FAO are Conference and Council. The staff is headed by a Director-General.

The Conference composed of one representative from each Member nation, is the policy-making organ of FAO, in which each nation has one vote. It meets once every two years. The conference reviews FAO's work, determines its policy and approves the budget; it reviews the food and agriculture situation and the programmes and plans of Member Governments, and recommends

¹ Refer International Governmental Organizations : Constitutional Documents " Page 489 to 512: By Amos J. Peaslee.
STRUCTURE OF THE FAO

THE FAO CONFERENCE

THE FAO COUNCIL

- Director General
- Deputy Director General
- Special Assistants

Department of Administration & Finance

- General Services
- Health & Medical Services
- Finance
- Personnel & Management

Department of Program and Budgetary Services

- Program Formulation and Budget Program Liaison
- Technical Assistance Co-ordination
- FAO/IBRD Co-Operative Program

Department of Public Relations and Legal Affairs

- Conference & Operations
- Liaison & Protocol
- Legal Counsel
- Legislation Research
- Library, Publications
- Public Information
- FAO/Industry Co-Operative Program (FPPC)

Department of Technical Services

- Animal Production & Health
- Forestry
- Forest Products
- Land & Water Development
- Nutrition
- Plant Production & Protection
- Atomic Energy in Agriculture
  (Joint with IAEA)
- FAO/FFNC Fertilizer Program

Department of Economic & Social Affairs

- Commodities
- Economic Analysis
- Rural Institutions and Services Statistics

REGIONAL OFFICES

- AFRICA
  - APRICA
  - ACCRA
  - NAIROBI
- EUROPE
  - GENEVA
- ASIA-FAR EAST
  - BANGKOK
  - NEW DELHI
- NORTH AMERICA
  - WASHINGTON, D.C.
- LATIN AMERICA
  - SANTIAGO
  - MEXICO CITY
  - RIO DE JANEIRO
- NAR EAST
  - CAIRO

WORLD FOOD PROGRAM

- FAO Director General
- UN Secretary General

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND APPRAISAL

EXPERIMENTAL DIRECTOR

PROGRAM OPERATIONS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND GENERAL AFFAIRS
National and international action. It elects Director-General. Decisions of the conference are taken by a simple majority vote, except in instances such as the admission of new Members, when a two-thirds majority of all Members of the organization is required.

The Council of FAO, comprising 31 member Nations elected by Conference for three-year terms under an independent chairman (also elected by conference); acts as interim governing body, meeting one to three times annually. The council keeps the world food and agricultural situation under constant review and makes recommendations to Member Governments, international commodity authorities and other international agencies.

Committees:

The working of FAO is helped by different committees. The most important standing committees of the council are the Finance Committee, the Programme Committee and, of particular interest, the committee on Commodity problems, which consists of 24 Member Nations elected by the Conference. National FAO Committees established in many countries serve as contacts between FAO and governmental and non-governmental agencies.

SECRETARIAT

It consists of 2,700 number of personnel, of whom some 2,300 are stationed at Rome headquarters, and the others in regional and sub-regional offices. In addition, there are about 1,300 experts working on field projects, the Director-General.
of FAO, elected by the conference, has full power and authority to direct the work of the organization, guided by the general recommendations of the conference and the council. The present Director-General Mr. Addeke H. Boerma (Netherlands) was elected in November 1967 and he joined the services on January 1, 1968. The preceding Director-General Mr. Binay Ranjan Sen (Sen : India) remained in the office for two terms i.e. 11 years which is a special credit to India. The former Director-General were : John Boyd Orr (U.K.), Norris E. Dodd (U.S.A.), P.V. Cardon (U.S.A.).

FINANCING THE FAO: ITS BUDGET

Major portion of peace and security funds of UN family is raised through compulsory assessment while economic and social operations subsist solely on the generosity of governments and private citizens' groups throughout the world. This system of voluntary contributions offered a practical basis on which most of the economic and social programmes could get started.

Some degree of fiscal co-ordination exists between the UN and the specialized agencies. As indicated in Chapter 4 Article 17 of the Charter, provided the basis for agreements between the FAO and the parent body, which give the Assembly the right of perfunctory supervision of the budgets of FAO.
FAO's financial resources must be viewed in relation to needs, and needs are virtually unlimited - certainly not definable in precise amounts. To quote Mr. John G. Stoessinger and others\(^1\) "The funds required for agriculture in the developing countries can only be defined in the light of answers to two questions:

How far and how fast?

In the first year FAO's annual budget was about 2 million dollars, during the years following, it steadily increased and amounted to 49.97 million dollars for the biennium 1966-67. The budget derives from contributions by Member Nations in amounts proportional to their net national product, Associate Member Governments pay four tenths less. This budget can hardly meet the ever-rising demand even though, as FAO declared in a report to the Economic and Social Council, the responsibility for the development of agriculture rests on the Member Governments themselves. "While FAO can hardly hope to meet the agricultural needs of the developing part of the world, it has not faced grave financial problems within the scope of its activities."\(^2\)

FAO is the largest single beneficiary of EPTA, and also engaged in a number of Special Fund programmes. The world Food Programme, under joint administration by the FAO

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and UN, hopes to accumulate 100 million dollars worth of surplus food in voluntary contributions for use in promoting development in low income countries.

The FAO, like WHO, has experimented with a stamp scheme. In 1962 the organization invited Member Governments to issue "Freedom from Hunger" Stamps on March 21, 1963. Again Governments were asked to donate stamps to FAO or to make proceeds of sales available for the FFHC. Moreover, it was hoped that additional revenue would be obtained from large philatelic sales. Total income is estimated to be about 1 million dollars.

The FAO has experimented with Special Voluntary Programmes and novel methods of increasing its income in order to keep pace with rising needs and expectations.

Co-ordination with other UN and other organizations.

The United Nations as such, together its system of specialized Agencies and other inter-governmental and non-governmental institutions related to it, provides the institutional framework for international co-operation and a continuity of programmes far more extensive than ever before in the history of nations.

FAO is one of the Specialized Agencies within the UN family of organizations. Each specialized Agency is an autonomous organization with its own constitution, its own policy-making and executive body, and its own secre
tariat and administration. The UN Charter recognizes the desirability of decentralizing international economic and social action, but also prescribes that each Specialized Agency be "brought into relationship" with the rest of the UN family.

The Economic and Social Council is the organ which co-ordinates the work of UN and the Specialized Agencies, on the basis of an individual agreement made with each Agency. These agreements follow a standard pattern. They provide for reciprocal representation at meetings and the inclusion of items on the agenda when requested, exchange of information and documents, co-ordination as regards budgetary and financial arrangements, common technical and administrative services whenever possible, and uniformity of personnel regulations.

Inter-Agency agreements define the fields of specialization of the respective agencies. Where FAO's interests and activities border or connect with those of other organizations or other Specialized Agencies, arrangements are provided for liaison and co-ordination. Numerous publications, conferences, training programmes and field projects are jointly sponsored by FAO and organizations such as the UN, WHO, Unesco, IAEA, UNICEF etc.

Close association is also maintained with many other international organizations which number 114 according to Register of International Organizations that have relationship with FAO upto 1.4.1963.
The relationship and the number of organizations can be classified as follows:

1. Permanent relations with 4 Inter-governmental Organizations.
2. Working relations with 41 Inter-governmental Organizations.
3. Relations with 17 Non-governmental organizations in consultative status.
4. Relations with 21 non-governmental organizations in specialized consultative status.
5. Relations with 26 non-governmental organizations in liaison status.

For example, some organizations are such as European Economic Community, the organization of American States, International Commodity Councils etc., etc.