

III. THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

A. PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS

18. In pursuance of paragraphs 4 (a), 5, 6, and 7 of the Resolution quoted in paragraph 1 of this report, the Interim Commission recommends for the approval of its constituent Governments the Constitution (Appendix I) of a permanent organization for food and agriculture, hereinafter referred to as the "Organization."

19. The remainder of this section of this report is devoted to an exposition, supplementing the Constitution, of the purposes and functions of the permanent Organization as the Commission has envisaged them, and of its structure and organization, its methods of working, its relationship with other organizations, national and international, and the need for its early establishment. References at the ends of paragraphs are to the corresponding articles of the Constitution.

20. Throughout this report references to the purposes, functions, duties, and powers of the Organization are to be interpreted as extending to fisheries, marine products, forestry, primary forestry products, and fibres and other non-food agricultural products. [Art. XVI.]

21. The purpose of the Organization as set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution is to promote the common welfare by furthering separate and collective action by the member nations to raise levels of nutrition and standards of living, to secure improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products, to better the condition of rural populations, and thus to contribute toward an expanding world economy.

22. The means to be employed will include the promotion of research, the dissemination of knowledge, the exchange of services, and the making of recommendations for international and national action, in which the Organization might in some cases be directly involved, with regard to the improvement of nutrition; the production, distribution, and consumption of foods and of fibres and other agricultural products; and the development and conservation of agricultural, forestry, and marine resources. [Art. I, IV.]

23. These are important and far-reaching undertakings. They should be envisaged as far as possible in their entirety, so that their interrelationships may be clearly seen. But the Organization will have to develop gradually and it will probably be a considerable time before it will be able to cover the whole field described in this report. It should be established at the earliest practicable date since there are matters falling within its scope which call urgently for action.

1. RESEARCH

24. One of the principal functions of the Organization will be to promote research in the fields relating to its work as a means of meeting the needs and helping to solve the problems of the peoples of its member nations. Competence and persistence in the search for knowledge, and fairness and courage in promoting its application, will establish a solid basis for recommendations and action. [Art. I.]

25. A vast amount of knowledge in the fields to be covered by the Organization already exists. To be more widely and effectively used, it needs to be adapted to local conditions and re-examined as conditions change. In addition, new knowledge must be sought.

26. A great diversity of research in the natural and social sciences is suggested by the range of subject-matter and the sources of information discussed in later paragraphs. While continually safeguarding and fostering the freedom of inquiry necessary to science, the Organization can do much to stimulate such research throughout the world; suggest and initiate projects, in many of which several institutions in more than one country might co-operate; co-ordinate such projects whenever possible; arrange for the use of procedures that would give comparable results; and keep research workers informed of one another's progress. The Organization should facilitate the exchange of personnel among institutions and the collection and exchange of important biological materials—breeding stocks, for example—and in some cases lend the services of members of its own technical staff to an institution or a country. Whether the Organization should supply equipment or give direct financial aid to research institutions is a matter of policy to be determined by the Conference. The question should be left for future decision whether, by arrangement with the Governments primarily concerned, the Organization should establish research stations of its own. [Art. I, XII.]

27. In sum, the Organization should lead in stimulating, promoting, and, where appropriate, conducting research focused on world needs in food, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. To carry out these and other functions it will need to assemble a great deal of information from all parts of the world. But it should not only gather data; it should find out and say what they mean.

(a) Sources of Information

28. One of the principal sources from which the Organization will gather information will be the periodic reports made by member nations in accordance with Resolutions II, III, and XV of the Hot Springs Conference. In order that these reports may serve as a basis for concerted planning and action by the member nations it is important that they give the information needed for drawing an accurate picture of the conditions in any country and throughout the world in regard to nutrition, food consumption, production, and the factors influencing them. The Organization, being charged with the responsibility of obtaining and making use of these reports, is therefore given the right to determine the lines on which they will be made and to arrange that they be furnished promptly. [Art. XI.]

29. The regular collection and systematic presentation of relevant statistics obtained from member nations and international authorities will be fundamental; and continuity in the statistical series collected will be important to ensure accurate interpretation of current and future trends. The Organization should receive regularly all published statistical material, and should also have access to unpublished material relevant to its work. The basic statistical data in many countries are very imperfect. The Organization should devise effective methods for obtaining more accurate statistical information at minimum expense, and should also make the services of its technical staff available