

SPEECH BY THE DONOR REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE EMBASSY OF ITALY  
IN NAIROBI ON THE OFFICIAL OPENING  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL  
ORGANISATION AFRICOVER – EAST AFRICA PROJECT  
SECOND NATIONAL COORDINATORS' MEETING  
FEBRUARY 15 – 20 1999

The Guests of Honour  
FAO Representative in Kenya  
Distinguished participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government and the people of Italy, and on my own behalf, I extend Italy's gratitude for the invitation to this grand occasion on the opening of the FAO AFRICOVER Project Second National Co-ordinators' Meeting.

The characteristics of this project fully represent what I consider a very interesting example of a Development project implemented by FAO through Italian Funds. The Italian Government has always giving high priority to the activities to be carried in East Africa and has often supported UN Agencies in Regional Activities in the area.

In the last years, several Donors have been giving a particular emphasis to the support to Planning activities both at national and regional level. Italy has focused her support in giving technical assistance to the involved countries in developing appropriate technologies in collecting, processing and managing data necessary for those planning activities. These actions have been done both through bilateral projects (supporting the Planning

Department and Ministries) and through multilateral Regional projects (such as Africover and Nile Basin project).

The expectations from a Project like Africover are very high. Reliable results can help the countries participating in the project in making several steps ahead in a very short span of time, having a solid basis of information on which reliable planning can be built up.

Up to now, mainly due to previous technologies, it often occurred that the geographic data were not enough detailed to be used as a reliable source of information for the planning processes. With the methodology and the tools developed in Africover, a very detailed classification system has been developed, taking into consideration all the possible features visible on the land, classifying them, and consequently giving so much more information concerning the resources available in each country and in the region.

The accessibility to those geographic data gives the possibility to develop new sectorial and specific tools for the management of different resources in agriculture, food security and livestock, wild life management, health, industrial and urban development.

I am very pleased to see that the discussions that will be addressed in the meeting will touch both very technical and operational issues as well as perspectives for the future and possible application of those data. This means that the efforts on going are showing high interest for the countries, serious sustainability of the investment made and a clear intention for future development.

I am convinced that the participants are going to have exhaustive discussions on the issues at hand and that at the end of the meeting, concrete decisions for the full implementation of the activities of the project will be agreed upon, as well as policy guidelines for the future activities will be drafted.

These topics are very important and central to the full implementation of the objectives of AFRICOVER. Since the participants in this meeting represent the highest expertise in the key sectors and departments concerned in the region, the outcomes of your deliberations will represent the best possible solutions to the remaining open issues from your previous meeting, in order to have a successful completion of our project in the shortest delay possible and achieving the expected results.

I want to confirm the financial commitment of the Government of Italy for the accomplishment of the project, and that the Italian Government looks with high interest for future developments of this project. Particular attention is given to the future application of the Africover database in the participating countries and in the region, as a major tool for the Planning exercises in the area.

The Guests of Honour, FAO Representative in Kenya, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I conclude allow me to say that Italy intends to continue to be committed, as per her long tradition, to collaborate further with the countries of the African region.

I thank you and wish you fruitful deliberations