



BS/AI/WG/R(96)1

**REPORT OF THE MEETING
OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-INDUSTRY**

Taganrog, Russia, 6-7 May 1996

1. The Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Agriculture and Agro-industry was held in Taganrog, Russian Federation, on 6-7 May 1996.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Vladimir FILATOV, Deputy Head of the Department of Plant Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Russian Federation.
3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC.
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
4. The representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Israel, BSEC Business Council, and the International Black Sea Club attended the Meeting as Observers.
5. The Meeting was also attended as guests by the representatives of the Administrations of the Rostov Region, Rostov-on-Don, and Stavropol Region.

The list of participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex I.

6. Mr. Vladimir YEMELJANOV, First Deputy Head of the Rostov Region Administration, and Mr. Sergei I. SHILO, Head of the Taganrog City Administration welcomed the participants of the Meeting. Their statements are attached as Annex II.

7. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted with amendments. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex III.

INTRODUCTION AND CULTIVATION OF HIGH YIELD SEEDS IN THE BSEC REGION. ECONOMIES OF SCALE IN DIFFERENT TYPES AND ZONES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

- scientific cooperation in the field of exchanging seeds and genetic materials

8. Under this item, the delegations had a thorough exchange of updated information regarding the specific activities and projects on the national level aimed at introducing and cultivating the wheat, corn, rice and other high yield seeds in the BSEC region.

Some delegations shared experience of their countries regarding the functioning economies of scale for different types and zones of agricultural production.

9. The WG stressed the importance of developing the cooperation in the said sectors and invited the relevant national authorities in the Participating States to forward their concrete proposals on this score to the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS).

It was also recommended that working relations be established and maintained among scientific research centers and institutions of the Participating States in the field of exchanging high yield seeds and genetic materials.

10. Having considered the subject of the participation of representatives of the BSEC States in the training courses in agriculture, organized by Israel and Egypt, the WG expressed its high appreciation and gratitude to both countries for the substantive assistance which they have provided. The WG welcomed the new offer of Egypt for additional eleven scholarships in various fields of agriculture for the next year 1996-1997.

The Group called upon the appropriate authorities of the Participating States to undertake necessary measures for ensuring participation of their representatives in the said courses.

11. The participants noted with interest the projects presented by the Egyptian Delegate in the fields of food technology, aquaculture, genetic engineering, horti-culture, and developed tests for seed quality evaluation. They invited the States to consider these projects within the framework of promoting regional cooperation in agriculture and agro-business in the BSEC region.

12. The WG considered the concrete proposals of Armenia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine regarding exchange of relevant information and studying the possibility of selecting optimal and very productive high yield seeds, particularly corn and wheat for the BSEC region.

13. In this context, several Delegations emphasized the need of developing cooperation in the fields of cultivating grapes and wine production, utilizing modern and effective technologies.

COOPERATION AMONG SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES OPERATING IN AGRO-BUSINESS AND FOOD PACKING INDUSTRY. IDENTIFICATION OF MOST SUITABLE MANUFACTURING ESTABLISHMENTS IN SPECIFIC FIELDS OF AGRO-INDUSTRY

14. Having considered this subject, the WG agreed to further study the advisability of an integrated approach to a greater involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises to export-oriented agricultural production, food processing and packing industries, etc., in the Participating States. In this respect, it was agreed that the BSEC States will transmit to the PERMIS, through the appropriate authorities, their proposals and ideas, to be incorporated in a background paper which will be considered at the next WG Meeting.

15. The WG welcomed the proposal of the BSEC Business Council and recommended that the latter cooperate with the Balkan Center for SMEs established in Bucharest, with the purpose of enhancing cooperation among small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the agro-business and food-producing industry, and for identifying the most suitable manufacturing establishments in specific fields of agro-industry in the BSEC Participating States through the network of their national counterparts.

16. The participants expressed the view that the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, when it starts operating, could consider the possibility of granting soft loans for stimulating the establishment of new small and medium-sized enterprises in agro-business and food-packing industry.

DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY TECHNOLOGIES FOR RAISING CEREALS AND VEGETABLES WITH THE HELP OF BIOLOGICALLY ACTIVE AGENTS FOR PROTECTING PLANTS. DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES INCLUDING BIO-TECHNOLOGY IN THE SPHERE OF AGRICULTURE

17. The WG recommended that the Participating States undertake pertinent measures for preserving biological diversity in the context of the Black Sea eco-system, while implementing various projects aimed to growing the agricultural production.

18. With this goal in mind, the WG advised that the Participating States extend the utilization of environment friendly technologies for raising cereals and vegetables with the help of biologically active agents for protecting plants.

19. The WG requested the PERMIS to present the said recommendation for consideration by the next meeting of the WG on Environmental Protection, with the view to coordinating the steps undertaken by both BSEC Subsidiary Bodies in this direction.

20. Some delegations emphasized the need for applying bio-technology and other new technologies in various sectors of agriculture with the view to contribute to the substantive growth of the production.

21. In the light of the BSEC Conference of representatives of the academic communities scheduled for the end of 1996, the WG called upon the scientific research centers in the Participating States to contribute, through their specific activities and programs to the promotion of bio-technology and other secure technologies, to the development of agricultural production in the BSEC region.

PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS WITHIN THE BSEC REGION

22. The delegations exchanged views and relevant information on this matter and recommended that the proposal of setting up a BSEC center for mountainous agriculture be further studied by interested Participating States which were invited to send to the PERMIS their concrete ideas and proposals regarding the tasks and modalities of the functioning of the future center.

PROJECTS IN AQUACULTURE

- setting up in the aquatoria of the BSEC Seas of small-sized (family) farms specialized in fisheries and aquaculture

- acclimatization of “veslonos” (a variety of sturgeon) in the Black Sea basin

23. Particular attention was attached by the WG to some specific projects in the field of aquaculture, such as: the establishment of small-sized(family) farms specialized in fisheries, acclimatization of veslonos in the Black Sea basin.

24. With regard to the development and realization of the said projects, the PERMIS was invited to contact some international organizations and institutions such as: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), European Union and its Commission, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with the view to attracting possible assistance of organizational and material nature.

25. The WG took note with interest of the information provided through the PERMIS by the Hellenic Republic on the current activities of the Institute of Fisheries Research in Kavala, as well as of the proposal to organize a series of intensive courses on fisheries and aquaculture for representatives of the BSEC Participating States within the framework of the Summer School. The appropriate national authorities were invited to transmit to the Secretariat, at their earliest convenience, names and other relevant information regarding their candidates for the said courses.

26. The WG recommended that the Eighth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs endorse a resolution calling upon the Participating States to cooperate more closely in implementing certain concrete projects in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture, taking into account the potential of the Black Sea and other seas of the BSEC region, as well as its inner basins which could be better utilized for economic purposes.

27. The WG welcomed the proposal of the BSEC Business Council towards the identification of public and private companies that would be interested in developing projects in aquaculture in the Black Sea basin and to report this information to the BSEC PERMIS with the purpose of circulating such information to the interested Participating States.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BSEC VETERINARY CENTER

28. The WG stressed the growing importance of strengthening veterinary control on bilateral and multilateral level in the BSEC region in accordance with the existing international regulations.

29. The WG emphasized the significance of the implementation of the resolution adopted by the Fifth MMFA regarding the establishment of a BSEC Veterinary Center, through a possible expansion of the activities of the future Balkan Veterinary Committee to the Black Sea region.

With this aim in view, the Group agreed to recommend to convene a meeting of veterinary experts to consider the subject in its entirety including the elaboration of the agreed rules for exporting concrete shipments of live-stock and forage products controlled by the state veterinary service and of necessary documents for shipping via the BSEC countries.

30. The WG took note with interest of the proposal made by the Bulgarian Delegation regarding the setting up of a Consultative Veterinary Commission, dealing with the most dangerous animal diseases within the BSEC region.

It was recommended that the next meeting of the WG on Agriculture and Agro-industry consider in detail, with the concrete assistance of the PERMIS, the said subject and propose appropriate measures and future actions.

31. The WG received with interest the relevant documentation provided by the Republic of Turkey on the veterinary regulations and called upon the other Participating States to transmit to the PERMIS similar documentation on the said subject, as it was recommended by the previous WG meeting in order to circulate it.

32. The WG also invited the PERMIS to contact the appropriate international organizations and institutions with a view to identifying their possible support for the said BSEC project.

SPECIFIC INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN THE FIELDS OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-INDUSTRY

- project on developing sturgeon type fish breeding and its processing

- project on building a factory for sorgo stalk and seed processing

33. The WG took note with interest and exchanged opinions on various specific projects introduced by the delegation of the Russian Federation: project on developing sturgeon type fish breeding and its processing; project on building a factory for sorgo stalk and seed processing (proposals of Rostov Administration); super-intensive technologies of fruit and grape production in the south of Russia (proposal of Stavropol Administration).

The participants stressed the importance of developing and implementing these projects and invited the relevant national authorities of the interested Participating States to encourage the utilization of new technologies in the fields of agro-business and agro-industry in the BSEC region.

34. The WG requested the PERMIS to present the said projects to the BSEC Business Council for further joint actions and report to the next WG meeting on the results achieved in this direction.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

35. The WG agreed that the Chairman of the WG Meeting will continue to have an active role, in collaboration with the PERMIS, in ensuring the follow-up and implementation of the adopted recommendations until the next meeting of the Working Group.

It also agreed that a medium-term plan of action for the WG could be elaborated and invited the Participating States to transmit their proposals to the PERMIS.

36. The PERMIS informed the participants about the World Food Summit which will take place in Rome on 13-17 November 1996 and invited the BSEC Participating States to consider their active participation at this important forum.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

37. The participants expressed their sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation and to the Administrations of the Rostov Region and of Taganrog for the excellent arrangements, as well as the warm hospitality extended to them during their stay in Taganrog.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

38. The WG agreed that the date and venue of its next meeting would be transmitted to the Participating States through the PERMIS.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

39. The WG adopted the present report for submission to the Eighth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
