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PRESS RELEASE

Russian Federation Joins the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

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On April 11, the Ambassador of Russia in Italy handed to FAO Director General Jacques Diouf a notification that the Russian Federation has officially joined this organization as of April 3, 2006.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was founded on October 16, 1945 to tackle world food problems. Forty-six states were its founders, including the USSR, which held back from joining the organization for a number of political and economic reasons, among them the confidentiality of agricultural statistics. The question of Russia's joining the FAO, in which it had the status of observer until now, was raised more than once over the last ten years, but the appropriate decision eluded adoption, due to, among other things, the instability of the financial and economic situation in the country.

Under the FAO Constitution, the principal goals of the Organization are raising levels of nutrition and standards of living; securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all agricultural, forestry and fisheries products; assisting the development of rural areas and bettering the condition of rural populations, and eliminating, eventually, the problems of hunger and undernourishment.

Joining the FAO meets the interests of Russia's growing economy. Russia now acquires new channels of international cooperation: the possibility to use FAO experts' consultations; the training of agriculture, forestry and fisheries specialists; use of the FAO's databank; receipt of the entire FAO documentation, in the Russian language also; extended participation in fisheries, agriculture and water resources projects; the use of FAO information and recommendations on the storage and processing of, and trade in products; full-fledged participation in FAO technical assistance projects; participation in the elaboration of international documents on food product safety, and others.

Membership of the FAO has a great significance for Russia also from the vantage point of current negotiations on our entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), since member countries' intergovernmental agreements on agriculture and food have to go through a preliminary examination by joint groups of WTO/FAO.

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