

## 177th Session of the Council

### Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - English version

#### Item 7 – Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative

Member Name	Comments
Mexico (Tuesday, 25 March 2025 – 11.35)	<p>Mexico recognizes the strategic value of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative as a catalyst for investments aligned with national objectives relating to poverty reduction, sustainable rural transformation and agrifood modernization. Mexico’s inclusion among the 75 participating countries is a key opportunity to promote priority projects, especially in areas with lags and productive potential, leveraging tools such as the Geospatial Platform.</p> <p>The Investment Forum is one of this Initiative’s key elements and the pillar of its partnership-building work. It provides a platform to present investment opportunities to investors, multilateral development banks, the private sector and donors, focusing on agricultural investment potential, especially in food value chains.</p> <p>For countries, the long-term financing of public sector investments is fundamental to the success of the HIH. Multilateral development banks’ blended finance structures and risk mitigation mechanisms can support the private sector in the poorest countries and help strengthen the role of these private investors in participating countries. Mexico joined this Initiative in October 2024 and is expected to participate in the fifth Hand-in-Hand Initiative Investment Forum to mobilize funding sources.</p> <p>We also consider it important to promote the use of the HIH Initiative to foster Mesoamerican regional investments, particularly in priority projects, climate adaptation and regenerative agriculture.</p>
Australia (Thursday, 27 March 2025 – 18.51)	<p>Australia appreciates this update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative.</p> <p>We note the overview of the FAO geospatial agro-informatics platform (initially designed to support the HIH initiative) including its growing use as a tool in delivering FAO’s work, together with the rich and diverse data captured. Noting the continued enhancements to the platform, we suggest there would be value in organising an information session for Members on the content and capabilities of the geospatial platform.</p> <p>Further noting the significant growth in the user community, it would be useful to have further granularity on users in terms of the sectors represented (government, academia, civil society, private sector), from what regions/countries and what the most common usage of geospatial data is. We request this information being provided in the next update on the Hand in Hand Initiative.</p> <p>We also note two subregional training activities on the HIH Geospatial Platform are being planned, including one for the Pacific Islands. Australia looks forward to receiving more information on that activity ahead of time.</p> <p>We are pleased to note that HIH the dashboard now incorporates real-time monitoring and reporting. As highlighted previously, in addition to showing the potential of investments (as featured on the dashboard), it would be valuable to</p>

	<p>include reporting on how much investment has actually been forthcoming for each country (and, over time, the impacts of the investment towards achieving the SDGs) as key performance criteria for the HIH. We would welcome an updated version of the Dashboard to reflect these elements.</p>
<p>European Union (Thursday, 27 March 2025 – 19.23)</p>	<p>I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.</p> <p>We thank FAO for preparing the comprehensive update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative for the Council, including the detailed breakdown by country and region.</p> <p>We note members’ interest in the HIH Initiative as indicated by the 75 participating countries and the five Regional Initiatives and appreciate the regional consultation held by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) to review Members’ interest in HIH. We would welcome additional information on the partners involved in the countries mentioned, as well as on the steps planned for including more countries in HIH.</p> <p>In October 2024, the third HIH Investment Forum announced USD 15 billion in investment opportunities across 115 cases. We would like to reiterate our desire to have some clarification on how this figure of USD 15 billion has been arrived at and how its delivery will be monitored and evaluated.</p> <p>The update indicates that the HIH Initiative has facilitated USD 9.6 billion in agriculture and food systems investments since 2022. We would appreciate receiving details of the amounts, countries, and thematic areas where these investment opportunities have applied, especially considering that the update for this same value in December 2024 was USD 3.8 billion.</p> <p>We acknowledge the information provided about the 2025 HIH Investment Forum, the FAO geospatial agro-informatics platform and internal consultations to explore options for evaluating HIH at country level and encourage FAO to continue exploring new ways to help provide details, on a regular basis, on the monitoring and evaluation criteria for HIH and participating countries, partner organisations, and investment totals.</p> <p>We thank FAO for preparing the concept note on planning a new methodology for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the HIH Initiative, which are crucial for assessing the program’s effectiveness and identifying possible improvements.</p> <p>The concept note document proposes a monitoring and evaluation framework, detailing the planned methodology and other technical features. It also suggests conducting an initial pilot phase, selecting the countries of South Sudan, Peru, and Nepal. In this regard, we would be pleased to be informed of the reasoning underlying this selection, as well as the expected timeframe for launching the pilot phase and the estimated time it will take to obtain results.</p> <p>Lastly, we call on FAO to continue working, in the context of its strategic framework, on the shared goal of expanding our collective engagement with agriculture and food systems investment communities – development banks, foundations, impact funds, private sector, donors, and other development partners – to accelerate investment in sustainable agriculture and food systems transformation for the SDGs.</p>
<p>United States of America</p>	<p>The United States notes the update on the Hand in Hand (HIH) Initiative.</p> <p>The United States has made clear the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advance a program of soft global governance that is inconsistent with U.S. sovereignty and adverse to the rights and interests of Americans.</p>

<p>(Thursday, 3 April 2025 – 10.29)</p>	<p>FAO should not focus on advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through its programs. Instead of advancing the SDGs, the FAO should focus on key objectives such as ending hunger.</p> <p>The United States cannot accept an unnecessary and distracting focus on climate in HIIH's work. In lieu of general references to climate change as a policy matter or root cause of threats, the United States encourages HIIH to focus on specific environmental threats (such as threats to clean air and clean water, wildfires, floods, drought, sea-level rise) and sensible environmental protections (increasing access to affordable, reliable and secure energy; enhancing resilience; and disaster planning).</p> <p>The United States strongly encourages the FAO to seek funding, particularly for technical and resource support, from a range of sources, including the private sector.</p>
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