

166th Session of the Council

Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 165th Session of the Council (30 November-4 December 2020)

Secretariat responses to written inputs by the Council

In response to Brazil, the title of the document (an issue brief), still in early preparation phase, currently reads “*Agroforestry as a possible solution for sustainable food systems*”. It is correct that the initially proposed title for this Forestry Division Issue brief contained the term “nature-based solution”. However, further to a comment by Argentina prior to the 130th Session of the Programme Committee, this was already revised to “agroforestry as a possible solution for sustainable food systems” in the relevant document (PC 130/7 Rev.1)¹.

FAO undertook an initial review of tools that assist decision making at landscape level to reduce deforestation in 2020. In 2021, FAO is co-developing with at least two UN-REDD pilot countries a landscape tool navigator to enable REDD+ practitioners finding the right technical tool to enhance synergies and manage trade-offs between agriculture and forestry. The beta version of the navigator solution is planned to be launched at the end of 2021.

The Secretariat takes note of the comments and suggestions and is pleased to acknowledge Members’ recognition that collaboration between FAO, WFP and IFAD has improved at the global, regional, and country levels within the context of the broader UN Development System (UNDS) repositioning.

In relation to the preparations of the Food Systems Summit 2021, the Secretariat reassures Members that the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) are working together and with other UN Agencies across all the five Action Tracks and are coordinating on key crosscutting issues for the development of game changing solutions. The RBAs also continue working on the ground to support the national Food Systems Summit Dialogues, contributing to prepare the UN System for the implementation of the Summit outcomes.

The Secretariat acknowledges that the results of the Joint Evaluation on RBA collaboration may be helpful in consideration of the implementation of the Food System Summit’s outcomes. The independent joint evaluation will primarily assess the extent of RBA contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly at the country level, and will be completed by year-end.

The Secretariat would like to report that the process of developing a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) relating to the implementation of FAO’s Private Sector Strategy is underway, and the relevant Terms of Reference are being defined with support of the Investment Center. This is a complex undertaking; while the costs of the Strategy’s implementation can be directly quantified, many of the Strategy’s desired outcomes are challenging to express in financial terms, such as for example innovation, data and knowledge sharing, or SDG-alignment and SDG advocacy with private sector businesses. Therefore, certain benefits might need to be expressed in qualitative terms.

The results of the CBA will be presented to the Council in the Spring Session of 2022 as part of the Annual Progress Report. This will allow the CBA to cover a full year of implementation since the endorsement of the Strategy. The Secretariat will inform on the progress of the CBA at the November 2021 Programme Committee Session.

Regarding the query on human resources related to the implementation of the Strategy, the Secretariat would like to inform the members that the team relies primarily on the support of the three Regular Programme Professional staff that were transferred from PSU to PSR with the approved reallocation of

¹ See page 19: <http://www.fao.org/3/ne857en/ne857en.pdf>

responsibilities. Punctual assistance from the rest of the Business Development and Private Sector Unit team has been used to support these. Many activities have benefited from ad-hoc cooperation with colleagues from OCC, CSI, LEG, PSU and PSS. The PSR Business Development and Private Sector Unit will be strengthened by a P-4 level professional seconded from the Swedish government in August of this year. Additional support will be provided by the Private Sector Inter-Departmental Working Group (PS-IDWG) advising on, inter alia, capacity development and training, as well as key guiding documents and tools on private sector engagement. The first meeting of PS-IDWG is planned for the end of May.

With regard to the data request related to the COVID-19 response programme, it could be summarized as follows: FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme - target USD 1.32 billion; total pledged and confirmed contributions as of 19 April 2021: USD 247 million; Voluntary contributions: USD 218 million; Confirmed contributions: USD 106 million; Pledged contributions: USD 112 million; TCP contributions: USD 28 million, FAO core resources for elaboration of COVID-19 data and statistics: USD 1.85 million.

Regarding the query about the feasibility study on the integration of administrative services amongst the RBAs, the study is being reformulated by the three Agencies and will be discussed with Members in an informal session before the end of June.

In relation to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), the Secretariat reassures Members that, building on the substantial simplifications introduced in 2019, work is progressing to further streamline procedures during 2021. Improved approval performance against 2020-21 biennium despite COVID-19 is already showing the results of these efforts. Progress will be reported at the forthcoming Sessions of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees and the Council.