

176th Session of the Council

Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - Original version

Item 19 – Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO

Member Name	Comments
<p>Brazil (Wednesday, 20 November 2024 – 16.33)</p>	<p>Brazil thanks the Secretariat for having prepared document CL 176/INF/3 and its annexes.</p> <p>Firstly, considering the timing of the conferences, we understand that the information made available to this Council Session is incomplete, and would therefore appreciate if the results and impacts of each of the three Conference of the Parties (COPs) on FAO’s activities could be presented in detail to the 177th session of the Council.</p> <p>Our comments will focus on COP16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.</p> <p>Brazil commends the government of Colombia for organizing what has already become known as the “People’s COP”, due to the unprecedented participation of people from governments, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, international organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector. This level of engagement is a testament to a commitment to protecting biodiversity and the rights of those who are its historical guardians; a commitment we are proud to share.</p> <p>The establishment of a Permanent Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j), which will enable ongoing participation by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities under the Convention framework, and the decision on the role of people of African descent in its implementation reflect a central commitment to equity and inclusion within the CBD.</p> <p>Another important achievement was the creation of a multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism from the use of Digital Sequence Information (DSI) of genetic resources and the establishment of the Cali Fund. However, this mechanism is indicative and not mandatory, which substantially limits its ability to reduce the financing gap for biodiversity and compensate those who protect and sustain this wealth.</p> <p>Moreover, negotiations on means of implementation, including financial resources, were unsuccessful. In the early hours of Saturday, November 2, COP President Susana Muhamad introduced a draft decision on resource mobilization, including the creation of a global financial instrument dedicated to biodiversity under the authority of the COP. An intense debate arose between developing countries, who supported this decision, and developed countries, who opposed it, citing possible fragmentation of the global financial landscape.</p> <p>Let us recall that currently, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Fund is hosted by the Global Environment Facility, whose structure favors wealthy countries. The United States, Canada, Italy, and Sweden, for example, each have their own seat and vote. On the other hand, Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador – among the most biodiverse countries in the world – share a single seat. There are blocs with up to 16 African countries.</p>

Emerging countries requested the creation of a new structure with equal representation among parties, which was not accepted by wealthy nations, who are the main donors to the fund. The meeting ended abruptly when our colleagues from Panama requested a quorum check, which was no longer met.

Thus, unfortunately, there was no progress related to the situation described by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in the following terms: developing countries are stripped of their resources while the scientific advancements and economic growth derived from their extraordinary wealth benefit others. Stopping this historical plundering is essential to achieving the third objective of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits.

The relevance of Cali outcomes for FAO is clear. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework requires our agriculture and food systems to contribute to biodiversity conservation, restoration, and sustainable use. The Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Framework have equally fundamental objectives of access and benefit-sharing, which unfortunately have not received due attention from developed countries. As the most biodiverse country in the world, Brazil expects these themes to permeate all discussions on agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and rural development. We are particularly concerned about the effects that discussions in Cali will have on the ongoing negotiations to improve the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). Our region has also been acting jointly within the ITPGRFA in favor of a substantial, predictable, and sustainable increase in monetary benefits derived from the use of genetic resources, including digital sequence information, thus contributing to the food security of our countries and the sustainability of our agricultural systems.

Furthermore, we consider it essential that any discussion on biodiversity-related goals and indicators be accompanied by an in-depth discussion on the means of implementation. At the last COAG session, we saw the interest with which the Secretariat and some countries advocated for the approval of the Voluntary Code of Conduct on Plastics. Brazil opposed this movement. We understand the issue will be discussed again during the 176th Council session. Our view is that, without adequate resources and sustained support, we should not accept new commitments.

We are increasingly concerned about the issue of indicators. Document CL 176/INF/3 WA3 states that FAO plays an important role in the development and implementation of the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Framework. It informs that more than 20 indicators are under FAO's custodianship or have their development process led by the organization. It also acknowledges that data produced by FAO is used in a broad range of other Framework indicators.

Brazil requests that Council Members receive detailed information on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework indicators that are under FAO's custodianship, as well as on the respective methodologies for data collection and consolidation and response rates. We also request to be regularly informed on the development of new implementation indicators for the Framework. Additionally, we would like to understand how FAO is working to develop indicator measurement methodologies adapted to different biomes and agricultural practices, and especially what is being done to encompass the practices adopted by smallholders, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities. We are aware of the centrality of data in evaluating progress toward the implementation of goals and commitments undertaken. However, we are equally aware that the indicators measured by FAO are calculated based on methodologies developed with consideration for the agronomic, meteorological, and productive realities of temperate

	<p>zones. We are also familiar with the capacity gaps that contribute to the low response rate to FAO questionnaires from developing countries, including megadiverse countries in tropical areas.</p> <p>Furthermore, we consider it essential that any discussion on biodiversity-related goals and indicators be accompanied by an in-depth discussion on the means of implementation. Without adequate resources and sustained support, we should not accept new commitments.</p> <p>In light of all this, Brazil expects the Agenda of the next Council Session to include an Item dedicated to the impacts of the outcomes of COP 16 of the CBD on FAO's activities, with particular attention to aspects related to means of implementation and the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Framework.</p>
<p>European Union (Wednesday, 20 November 2024 – 16.47)</p>	<p>I am honoured to write on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.</p> <p>The EU and its Member States thank FAO for the information provided.</p> <p>We recognize the importance of the Summit of the Future and its outcomes for addressing global challenges and advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the context of the FAO mandate, we particularly welcome the commitments included in the Pact for the Future regarding the elimination of food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition.</p> <p>We also welcome the objectives and principles of the Global Digital Compact, recognizing the role of digital technologies in supporting the SDGs implementation, as well as the need to use technology and other innovative approaches to solve some of the world's most pressing problems while ensuring that all groups, particularly women and youth, have equitable access to their benefits. We emphasise that while technology and innovation hold great promise, systemic barriers must be dismantled to achieve genuine empowerment. The ethical concerns around AI - such as gender bias, job displacement, and the potential to widen the digital divide - are valid and must be addressed also at the UN level to ensure inclusive digital transformation for the benefit of all, and with respect for universal human rights. To this end, we call for targeted actions, including collaborative research and capacity-building efforts, ensuring that ethical frameworks align with national and regional priorities.</p> <p>We note FAO's role in the establishment of the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty and in assisting the Alliance member governments in implementing, improving or up-scaling relevant policy instruments. We stress the importance of aligning FAO's support with regional initiatives tailored to local needs, particularly those enhancing food security and sustainability.</p> <p>We agree that transforming agrifood systems is essential to achieve global goals related to biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation neutrality. We thank FAO for playing a significant role in advocating for this transformation, particularly through its consistent approach in engaging with the Rio Conventions and supporting ambitious agreements at key international summits, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP), and we highlight the importance of FAO's work in improving the understanding of the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic issues. Additionally, FAO's engagement in organising dedicated events during thematic days at COP events that focus on agrifood systems ensures that these issues receive the attention they deserve at the highest levels. We encourage FAO to integrate diverse perspectives, reflecting the varying climatic, environmental, and socio-economic conditions of</p>

	regions, and we commend FAO's efforts in maintaining a strong focus on addressing specific challenges and fostering collaborative solutions that enhance cooperation across different regions.
Australia (Wednesday, 20 November 2024 – 22.16)	<p>Australia notes FAO's critical role in the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty at the G20. We recognise the need for urgent and enhanced action to mobilise additional resources to implement effective policies to tackle poverty, hunger and malnutrition worldwide, which is why Australia endorsed the proposal to establish the Alliance at the G20 session. We note the placement of a Support Mechanism Director at FAO's Rome office in the Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP), and we encourage FAO to keep Members updated on relevant developments.</p> <p>Australia notes FAO's engagement in the 29th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP 29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP16 to the Convention on Biological Diversity and COP16 to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. Australia strongly supports FAO's efforts to position agriculture as part of the solution to addressing climate change, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and to combat desertification, and we welcome FAO's active engagement in relevant processes. We look forward to further updates following the conclusion of these COP sessions.</p>
United Kingdom (Wednesday, 20 November 2024 – 22.31)	<p>The UK welcomes FAO's engagement and leadership in various fora of importance for the mandate of FAO, including as detailed in the documents CL 176/INF/3, CL 176/INF/3 WA1, CL 176/INF/3 WA2 and CL 176/INF/3 WA3.</p> <p><u>The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty</u></p> <p>The UK strongly supports the newly launched Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty and Brazil's leadership through its G20 Presidency in accelerating action on this important agenda. The UK has joined the Alliance as a founding member and will sit on the Board of Champions to help steer its work. We welcome FAO's commitment to hosting the Alliance's Support Mechanism, for its role as part of the Task Force for the Alliance's establishment, and its Statement of Commitment, particularly around the knowledge pillar of the Alliance. We look forward to hearing more as the Support Mechanism is established, and urge FAO and partners to expedite this, including recruitment of the Support Mechanism's Director and staff.</p> <p><u>G7</u></p> <p>The UK notes that FAO's engagement in multiple tracks of this year's Italian G7 Presidency – notably the agriculture and development tracks – was not mentioned in the support documentation. Regardless, the UK welcomes Italy and FAO's work to bring food and agriculture issues to the heart of their G7 Presidency this past year, including through the Apulia Food Systems Initiative. We draw particular attention to the attention on disaster risk financing, which has a vital role in humanitarian and crisis funding for food shocks and in anticipatory action. With the increasing frequency and severity of climate-driven shocks, this thinking is timely and important. For this, the UK would like to extend particular thanks to the FAO Chief Economist and his team but request an update on next steps for the Financing for Shock-Driven Food Crises Facility, including to ensure that it links closely to other established sovereign and non-sovereign insurance instruments, and that political momentum continues for its design.</p> <p><u>G20</u></p>

Aside from the work on the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, the UK also welcomes FAO's engagement on the G20 Agriculture track. We note that the supporting documentation for this item had intended to comment on this, but no detail was included. The UK strongly supported the G20 Agriculture Ministers, and once again welcomes the leadership of Brazil, including in their efforts to connect up between tracks and to other global processes, not least on climate and nature. In that regard, the UK welcomed the text of the Ministerial Meeting Declaration, including its underscoring of the importance of enhancing sustainability in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry, to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, deforestation and forest degradation, and for the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and actions towards its 1.5 degrees goal, as well as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. We were also pleased that the Declaration recognise the importance of the COP28 Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilience Food Systems and Climate Action and we look forward to progress on the Sharm El Sheikh Joint Work.

The UK also notes that agriculture features prominently in the G20 Leaders' Declaration, which notes that agriculture and food systems are at the forefront of addressing key challenges, such as fighting poverty, ending hunger, improving nutrition, while confronting climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and desertification. These issues lie at the heart of FAO's mission.

International Conference on Financing for Development

The UK would like to request an update from FAO on their engagement ahead of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Spain next year. It is imperative that agrifood systems financing is part of the conversation.

Nutrition for Growth Summit

The UK welcomes FAO's involvement in preparations for the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in France next year. We would welcome an update from FAO on achievement of its targets set at 2021's N4G Summit, and on what their commitments for the 2025 N4G Summit will be.

Triple COPs

2024 has presented an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that we continue to highlight the interlinkages between food systems, climate, nature, water, soil and land. Aligning food and agriculture systems transformation with climate and nature actions is crucial, to deliver food and nutrition security, livelihoods, poverty reduction and economic development for all, on a liveable planet and leaving nobody behind.

For these reasons, the UK welcomes FAO's engagement across all three COPs and its work to support the mainstreaming of food and agriculture into NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs and Land Degradation Neutrality Targets. This work is vital to shift global public and private investment into agrifood systems transformation at scale, which joint analysis by FAO and the ClimateShot Investor Coalition (CLIC) (funded by the UK) has shown must increase by nearly 40 times to align with a low-emissions and climate-resilient development trajectory.

We look forward to FAO continuing to play a global leadership role on addressing the interlinkages between food systems, climate and nature, including in the lead up to UNFCCC COP30 in Brazil next year.