

## 165<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council

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

#### Item 13 - Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies collaboration

Member Name	Comments
<p>United States of America - Member (Tuesday 24/11/20 15:24)</p>	<p>The United States thanks FAO for the comprehensive and useful information included in this document and thanks the three Rome-based Agencies (RBA) for the important work they have achieved. We agree RBA collaboration has increased and improved, and the thorough documentation of collaboration marks a positive change in the quality of reporting on this issue. The joint RBA action plan during the current pandemic, including the impact assessments with partners that fed into the socio-economic response plans and the joint estimates that were included in the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report (SOFI) are important examples of the synergies that can be developed across the RBAs for increased effectiveness and efficiency.</p>
<p>Australia – Member (Wednesday 25/11/20 10:15)</p>	<p>Australia notes this progress report and welcomes the efforts made to improve collaboration between the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) in order to maximise the impact of their comparative advantages, capabilities and expertise. The importance of such collaboration has been reinforced during the current pandemic, and Australia appreciates the efforts of the RBAs to coordinate at the global, corporate, regional, and country levels across their country programming and planning, policy and analytical support, advocacy and information, and business continuity activities in response to Covid-19.</p> <p>Australia is supportive of the RBAs’ joined up involvement in the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, and encourages these organisations to foster strong interlinkages across the Action Tracks for which they are responsible. Finally, we reiterate the importance of the RBAs continuing to strengthen their collaboration with attention to the broader context of the UN reform.</p>
<p>Indonesia – Member (Thursday 26/11/2020 14:08)</p>	<p>Indonesia welcomes the Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration. We appreciate the work of the Secretariat to provide a comprehensive document.</p> <p>In particular, Indonesia commends the collaboration of RBAs on the area of Covid-19 response, to continue supporting countries in need of assistance during the pandemic.</p> <p>We encourage FAO to continue its strong collaboration with other agencies, in particular with its Rome’s sister agencies, including on some key priorities moving forward: (i) alignment of RBAs collaboration within the UN Reform; (ii) preparation of UN Food Systems Summit; (iii) collaboration in the context of Covid-19; (iv) implementation of joint funding approaches to limit competition; and (v) leveraging knowledge and operationalizing collaboration.</p> <p>On the last note, we welcome the progress has been made so far at the initial stage of the RBA Joint Country Strategic Plan in Indonesia. We support four major themes which emerge from the alignment between our National Strategic Development and strategic priority setting of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), with food system at the heart of the proposed work. We expect concrete implementation of the RBAs collaboration in developing a reference model sustainable food system in Indonesia.</p>

<p>Japan – Member (Thursday 26/11/2020 14:55)</p>	<p>With regards to the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) Action plan on Sahel, Japan is not in a position to support the waiver of direct and indirect costs for supporting the joint programmes because it implies additional financial obligations in FAO's regular budget when voluntary contributions are accepted. Financial Regulation 6.7 stipulates that "the acceptance of any such contributions and moneys which directly or indirectly involves additional financial obligations for Member Nations and Associate Members shall require the consent of the Conference." Japan requests to discuss whether direct/indirect costs should be reduced again at the Finance Committee and to make a decision at the Conference among the Member States.</p>
<p>European Union – Member (Thursday 26/11/2020 15:55)</p>	<p>We wish to commend this year's report, which presents well-structured information about the four pillars defined in the RBA Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 2018, including global-, country- and regional-level collaboration, and collaboration on thematic areas and on the joint provision of corporate services. As regards global-level collaboration, we highly appreciate the joint preparation and launch of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2020 Report together with RBA partners, and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). We call upon FAO to continue this path and further strengthen its collaboration with the other RBAs.</p> <p>We fully share the concern expressed by the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee regarding the delay in the preparation of the assessment concerning the feasibility of integrating administrative functions, and greater collaboration in some oversight functions. The Council at its 163rd Session in December 2019 requested this assessment to be submitted to our current session of the Council. We urge FAO to finalise, together with its RBA partners, the feasibility assessment as soon as possible.</p> <p>Regarding the Joint Action Plan for the Sahel, we believe it is an excellent initiative that strengthens synergies between the RBAs' operations and maximise their impact on the ground. We would welcome an update on the development of a more elaborated version of the Joint Action Plan detailing each agency's actions and its interlinkages, along with a theory of change, a timeline and indicators to measure improved outcomes and results, taking into account regional system approaches alongside the country level.</p> <p>In this regard, we underline the critical importance for the RBA Joint Action Plan to be fully aligned with the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) strategy and the Humanitarian Response Plans; to be supportive of existing national institutions and policy frameworks and to ensure close coordination and full cohesion with the Resident Coordinator systems, existing policy frameworks and relevant programmes in order to avoid duplications and leverage comparative advantages. Furthermore, the RBA Joint Action Plan needs to guarantee that humanitarian action is neutral and impartial. We also call on FAO to provide more information on its contribution, both technical and financial, to the Emergency and Rural Development in the Sahel: Response to the 3C Challenges (COVID-19, Conflicts and Climate Change).</p> <p>We welcome the assessment of 'enablers' and 'critical constraints' on collaboration among the three RBAs, including in the areas of joint funding and competition, and we encourage FAO to duly address them. We agree with the perception that 'trust and relationships among RBA colleagues' is the most significant condition for a constructive, collaborative</p>

	<p>RBA environment. In this regard, we would encourage FAO to explore ways and means of promoting mutually advantageous and cost-neutral staff exchange programmes.</p> <p>We highly appreciate FAO's engagement in the preparatory process of the UN Food Systems Summit to be held in 2021. This is an excellent opportunity for the RBAs to demonstrate that they can work together towards common goals. We are happy to note that the RBAs continued to provide financial and staffing support to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Secretariat and we urge FAO to continue doing so. We also encourage FAO to pay due attention to the CFS guidelines and policy recommendations and to incorporate them in FAO's policies and strategies.</p> <p>We wish to express our full support for continued collaboration between WFP, FAO and IFAD in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their work and minimise overlaps, including by paying due attention to the Joint RBA Calendar when planning governing body meetings and consultations.</p>
<p>Spain – Member (Thursday 26/11/2020 16:48)</p>	<p>We wish to show our full support for the intervention of the EU and its Member States.</p> <p>Under this agenda item, we would like to stress the interest that they display for all the Rome-Based Agencies (RBA), the guidelines and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the need for them to be considered.</p> <p>We encourage FAO to continue the joint work done on submitting the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2020 report, while urging it to finalize the feasibility assessment on current and future corporate services collaboration as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Dominican Republic – Member (Thursday 26/11/2020 17:18)</p>	<p>The Dominican Republic [a] notes with satisfaction the increasing level of collaboration between the three agencies in the field and at their headquarters, where we wish to see the most important institutional collaboration, which takes place within the framework of the Committee on World Food Security, continue to expand and strengthen, [b] looks forward with interest to the results of the independent joint evaluation on collaboration among the RBA , which will provide valuable information to guide the future direction of their collaboration, and [c] urges the RBAs to continue to strengthen links in their response to the pandemic, including through joint planning and programming activities, conducting joint assessments to assess trends and effects of COVID-19 on food and nutritional security, and taking advantage of joint financing and knowledge-sharing at country and regional levels of recovery and resilience-building activities (such as the recovery and resilience strategy for East African micro, small and medium enterprises in the agri-food sector).</p>
<p>Canada – Member (Thursday 26/11/20 17:30)</p>	<p>Canada encourages the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) to continue to strengthen their collaboration and better align their tools and processes, including in the context of the UN Reform, with a view to achieving greater impact on the ground towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through better quality investments.</p> <p>We welcome the new more strategic and analytical Progress Report on the ongoing collaboration at global, headquarters and country levels, on thematic areas, and on corporate services, identifying constraints, lessons learned, and enablers of collaboration such as trust-building, a common collaboration vision, joint funding, and strengthening respective capacities within core mandates and comparative strengths.</p>

	<p>We appreciate the suggested path forward, noting the strong RBA collaboration in the COVID-19 response qualified as “a dream partnership” with the potential of offering good practices as the United Nations must also build back better. We encourage the RBAs to strengthen collaboration in the preparations of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. We support the priority set for leveraging knowledge and operationalizing collaboration in order to better understand what works well and can be expanded. This is why we also build this component in the five-year Canada-RBA Joint Resilience Initiative. We look forward to the evaluation on RBA collaboration to be finalized by December 2021. We urge further progress on feasibility of integration of administrative functions and common specialized expertise, including the finalization of a feasibility study requested by Council as soon as possible. Canada supports efforts made to strengthen accountability and oversight functions, such as the strong current collaboration among the RBA investigations community and training in sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse (SH/SEA), and sharing of knowledge and best practices.</p>
<p>United Kingdom – Member (Thursday 26/11/2020 23:18)</p>	<p>The United Kingdom thanks FAO, IFAD, and WFP for this update report on strengthening Rome-based Agencies (RBA) collaboration. As COVID-19 has highlighted, the need for more effective collaboration, in the context of the UN Development System reform, is more important than ever. We welcome the coordinated RBA response to the impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition at the global, corporate, regional and country-level, with a focus that includes country programming and policy support.</p> <p>We support the translation of planning work in the Sahel region into concrete action at country level through the <i>Joint Sahel Programme to Respond to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change</i> and the FAO Investment Centre’s facilitation of the project design. We encourage FAO’s full engagement in the programme and would like to see the joint IFAD-FAO-WFP results framework and monitoring and evaluation plan for the programme. We understand that the agencies intend to develop a joint resource mobilisation plan and would like to receive information on this – which would be in line with the finding that joint fundraising strategies would help to address the most important issue cited in hindering RBA collaboration. We also request regular reporting, at least every year, on progress with implementing this joint regional programme – including on challenges and lessons learnt.</p> <p>Continuing the focus on maximising impact at country level, we welcome the update on the RBA pilot joint country programmes and plans in Colombia, Indonesia, and the Niger. We look forward to reviewing and would like to ask for confirmation of the links to the documents for membership. We note the mapping and planning work done and would like to receive more information on monitoring and measuring of results. Further information to build on the pilots would also be helpful.</p> <p>We appreciate the examples from the feasibility assessment on current and future corporate services collaboration that is due to be concluded at the end of this year. We would like to ask about next steps and the development of a joint plan in response to findings in order to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <p>We note the path forward outlined in the five priority areas, including the Food Systems Summit, and encourage strengthened strategic collaboration that focuses on measurable results to maximise the agencies’ contribution, in partnership, towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.</p>