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منظمة  
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# COUNCIL

## Hundred and Sixty-eighth Session

29 November - 3 December 2021

### Report of the 132nd Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 8-12 November 2021)

#### Executive Summary

The Programme Committee examined a number of matters relating to programme planning and evaluation, in particular with regard to:

- a) Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23;
- b) The Hand-in-Hand Initiative;
- c) FAO Strategy on Private Sector Engagement – Updates and Implementation Status;
- d) Rural Youth Action Plan;
- e) Gender Action Plan;
- f) Proposal for improved governance of FAO statistical activities;
- g) Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change;
- h) The outline and roadmap of the “FAO Science & Innovation Strategy”;
- i) Evaluation of FAO's role and work on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus and Management's Response;
- j) Real time Evaluation of FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme - Phase 1 and Management's Observations; and
- k) Indicative rolling work plan of evaluations 2022-2025.

The Committee brings its findings and recommendations on these matters to the attention of the Council.

#### Suggested action by the Council

The Council is requested to endorse the findings of the Programme Committee, as well as its recommendations on matters within its mandate.

*Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:*

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## Introduction

1. The Programme Committee (PC) submitted to the Council the following Report of its Hundred and Thirty-second Session.

2. In addition to the Chairperson, H.E. (Ms) Yael Rubinstein (Israel), the following representatives of Members were present:

H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak (Argentina)	Mr Zaid Al-Ani (Iraq)
H.E. (Mr) Fernando José Marroni de Abreu (Brazil)	Ms Traoré Halimatou Kone (Mali)
Mr Maarten de Groot (Canada)	Mr Donald G. Syme (New Zealand)
Mr NI Hongxing (China)	H.E. (Mr) Morten von Hanno Aasland (Norway)
Ms Delphine Babin-Pelliard (France)	Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed Daak (Sudan)
Mr Bommakanti Rajender (India)	Mr Kayoya Masuhwa (Zambia)

3. The Session was convened in a hybrid modality, with designated representatives of some Members attending in person at FAO headquarters (Argentina, Canada, France, India, Mali, New Zealand, Norway and Zambia) and others participating virtually (Brazil, China, Iraq and Sudan) on an exceptional basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy and worldwide.

4. Having regard to this exceptional modality, the Committee confirmed that participation by designated representatives through virtual modality constituted attendance at the Session, which was convened at the seat of the Organization in accordance with Rule II(5) of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee. The Chairperson informed Members that, should technical connection fail, the meeting would be suspended if the quorum was not reached.

### I. Item 1 – Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

5. The Committee, took note that Items 3, 5 and 13 will be addressed through a written correspondence procedure, requested to receive information on One Country One Priority Product to be included under Item 17 - Any Other Matters, and adopted the Agenda and Timetable for the Session, as amended.

### II. Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23

6. The Committee:

- a) welcomed and took note of the reviewed number of Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and allocation of budget between the *four betters* to ensure a better balance among the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental);
- b) welcomed that the updated results framework (*Table 1* and *Annex 1*) better articulates the linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the *four betters* through the addition of specific SDG targets and indicators;
- c) appreciated FAO's new Strategies on Climate Change and on Science and Innovation being developed in full alignment with the Agenda 2030 and fully implemented within the overall Strategic Framework 2022-31;
- d) reiterated the importance of strengthened partnership arrangements to achieve the PPAs;
- e) welcomed the inclusion of references to transparent markets and stressed the role of trade to ensure food security and address malnutrition in all its forms;
- f) acknowledged that the process of transformation of agri-food systems towards achieving sustainable agri-food systems should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate, and in accordance with and dependent on national contexts and capacities;
- g) supported the proposed approach to results planning, monitoring and reporting, welcoming the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative baseline data and output indicators under the PPAs, and their contribution to SDGs;

- h) noted that there are many approaches to sustainable agriculture production, there is no one-size-fits all approach and prescriptive language, which has no consensus among Members on its direct interlinkages with sustainable agriculture production, should be avoided given the different perspectives expressed on geographical indications (GIs)<sup>1</sup> and climate-smart agriculture, among other concepts, and this should be reflected in the results framework;
- i) recommended the Council to request FAO to replace references to "green" under BP1, to "sustainable", to bring coherence with the new title given to the PPA;
- j) recommended the Council to request that under BP2 the concept of "blue food systems" be replaced by the term "aquatic food systems";
- k) supported the results framework for the PPAs under the *four betters* as shown in *Annex 1*, which articulates FAO's technical focus and offer and allows the Organization to position itself strategically within the agri-food systems dialogue, and looked forward to reviewing progress in implementation of the updated results framework during 2022-23 in the corporate reporting at mid-term and end-of-biennium; and
- l) welcomed the information provided in *Annex 4* on considerations on the implementation of accepted recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's strategic results framework.<sup>2</sup>

### III. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative

#### 7. The Committee:

- a) welcomed that the number of countries participating in the Initiative has increased to 45, and took note of the different ways that participating countries are using the Initiative to enhance the science- and evidence-based decision-making, to make investment planning a more transparent and inclusive process through broad stakeholder consultation, and to scale up, strengthen and accelerate existing programmes or develop ambitious new ones;
- b) highlighted the country-owned and country-led nature of the programmes supported by the Initiative, and welcomed steps taken to deepen national ownership in every dimension of the Initiative, including through national or joint management of all activities undertaken in support of the nationally-led programmes;
- c) took note of the extraordinary challenges faced by the HIH Initiative-supported countries given the COVID-19 pandemic during the past 18 months and appreciated the flexibility and agility of the HIH Initiative-supported programmes to sustain work-in-progress under extreme crisis conditions;
- d) recognized that all FAO Members may participate in the HIH Initiative as they choose, not only as direct or indirect beneficiaries, but also as development and resource partners through multiple channels, including direct assistance, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, in-kind technical support, support to public-private exchanges, and support to mechanisms such as the Flexible Multi-donor Mechanism (FMM) which affords the flexibility to respond quickly to emerging needs and to develop new tools and training jointly with some of the Least Developed Countries;
- e) took note that the HIH Initiative's commitment to science- and evidence-based, transparent and inclusive decision-making is consistent with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement;
- f) took note of the initial progress made toward the realization of a programme monitoring dashboard for enabling Members and all partners to track progress against objectives, share information, communicate and coordinate actions in response to events and opportunities, and, ultimately, measure and track impact against prioritized SDG indicators, and looked forward to receiving further information on its functions and use;
- g) welcomed the designation of the HIH Initiative as one of the twenty PPAs under the Strategic Framework 2022-31, placing the Initiative under the same oversight and

<sup>1</sup> Article 22, Section 3, part 2, of the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

<sup>2</sup> PC 127/2 Sup.1

- reporting requirements as other PPAs, to offer Members more effective and efficient support to enable more dynamic, scaled-up programming at country level in collaboration with other relevant partners in the country; and
- h) encouraged FAO to continue working to develop the HIH Initiative as a transparent and accountable initiative that supports transformation of agri-food systems and rural development.<sup>3</sup>

#### IV. FAO Strategy on Private Sector Engagement – Updates and Implementation Status

8. The Committee:
- a) noted with appreciation the implementation progress of the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement since its endorsement by the 165th Session of the Council, and the updates presented at the 130th Session of the Programme Committee, including the launch of the CONNECT portal, the Private Sector Interdepartmental Working Group as well as an anticipated capacity development and training programme for FAO's personnel on private sector engagement;
  - b) commended and encouraged the continuous efforts in pursuing a portfolio of active, strategic and transformative partnerships, with focus at country level, which should be balanced in terms of geographical coverage, thematic area of engagement and types of entities;
  - c) welcomed the updated Due Diligence mechanisms and procedures under the new Framework for Risk Assessment and Management for Engagements (FRAME) with non-state actors, developed in line with the principles put forward in the Strategy and the UN Global Compact and emphasized the importance of a science- and evidence-based approach;
  - d) recalled the importance of strengthening the Strategy's contributions to SDG 17 that recognizes international trade as a driver for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, in particular in developing countries, recalling that the balance between SDGs must be maintained;
  - e) recalled the importance of implementation of the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement in compliance with FAO's Policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights, currently under development, in line with internationally agreed standards and protocols;
  - f) recommended to the Council the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the informal Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), recalling that greater precision on the structure and its composition is necessary;
  - g) noted with appreciation the regular reports, informal and formal briefings and consultations with Members and the relevant Governing Bodies on the progress made in the engagement with the private sector, and encouraged to continue this transparent and inclusive process, to keep Members regularly informed of changes and developments, in particular, through the Governing Bodies;
  - h) requested priority be given to those thematic sectors that suffer lack of funding that is contributing to an imbalance in programmatic work; and
  - i) looked forward to receiving the first annual report of the progress and achievements of the Strategy implementation at the next session.

#### V. Rural Youth Action Plan

9. The Committee:
- a) appreciated the inclusion of the revisions suggested during its 130th Session; and
  - b) welcomed FAO's embedding of Rural Youth Action Plan in its Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and its alignment with the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

<sup>3</sup> Recalling that transformation should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate, and in accordance with and dependent on, national contexts and capacities.

## VI. Gender Action Plan

10. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the Gender Action Plan as an important instrument for adequate operationalization and monitoring of progress towards the objectives of the Policy on Gender Equality;
  - b) commended the development of the Gender Action Plan in synergy with the Strategic Framework 2022-31, the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the measurement of short and medium term gender equality achievements through relevant SDGs indicators;
  - c) highlighted the visibility given to the objectives of the Policy on Gender Equality 2020-30 within the Strategic Framework 2022-31;
  - d) emphasized the importance of strengthening FAO's work on gender equality and women's empowerment and recommended that cooperation and coordination should be reinforced with the UN system at country level, in line with the UNDS repositioning;
  - e) stressed the importance of facilitating open discussions that lead to a better understanding of women's needs, gender gaps, and challenges in the attainment of their rights;
  - f) recognized that gender plays a crucial role in FAO's Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and its Strategic Framework, through the identification of a stand-alone PPA and as a cross-cutting theme, contributing to specific SDGs and targets, and looked forward to receiving its progress report through the Programme Implementation Reports (PIRs); and
  - g) reiterated the need to use multilaterally agreed language.

## VII. Proposal for improved governance of FAO statistical activities

11. The Committee:
- a) took note of the Proposal for improved governance of FAO statistical activities, which aims at better managing the data for the elaboration of statistics in support of the work of the Organization, and encouraged FAO to further develop the document;
  - b) recalled the importance of the Proposal for improved governance of FAO statistical activities to be aligned with FAO's Policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights, currently under development, in line with internationally agreed standards and protocols;
  - c) appreciated the comprehensive approach of the Proposal to address the key recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO Statistical Work, in particular the plan for strengthening the statistical capacity of Decentralized Offices and the efforts to optimize resource allocation and intensify resource mobilization;
  - d) reiterated the importance and critical role of the Organization's statistical work and the data for its elaboration, including following the recommendations of the UN Data Strategy and other relevant UN standards, and appreciated the measures proposed by Management to further enhance the quality of its outputs, including the modernization of the information technology (IT) infrastructure in compliance with tendering procedures;
  - e) recommended continued informal briefings and consultations with Members through the Governing Bodies on the data for elaboration of statistics and statistical work of the Organization, and recognized Management's commitment to improve means to update Members on statistical information and the document under development;
  - f) looked forward to receiving updates on the detailed assessment of resources allocated to FAO's statistical work;
  - g) invited Members to have the opportunity to provide written inputs in a timely manner on the Proposal for improved governance of FAO statistical activities; and
  - h) appreciated CCLM<sup>4</sup> Chairperson's briefings on the outcome of the matter on FAO Policy on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights at the 113th Session of CCLM, and took note of the recommendations in this regard.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters

<sup>5</sup> CL168/10

## VIII. Update on the development of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change

12. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the update on the development and roadmap of the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change and the timely update on the COP26, and commended the Organization's involvement and leadership in the COP26;
- b) stressed the need to align the new Strategy with FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31, its PPAs, and other related FAO Strategies and initiatives as well;
- c) underlined the importance of considering the diverse contexts, specificities, priorities and capacities across regions, countries and the local level in developing the new Strategy;
- d) highlighted that focus should be on FAO's comparative advantages, to avoid duplication with other international organizations in terms of the relevance of agri-food systems while addressing and responding to climate challenges in line with FAO's mandate;
- e) requested to use multilaterally agreed language;
- f) highlighted the importance of identifying further financing mechanisms to tackle climate change in the context of agri-food systems to support developing countries;
- g) highlighted the interest and engagement by FAO Members in this matter, and recommended further written inputs from FAO Members to contribute to elaboration of the outline of the Strategy, e.g. by 15 November 2021, for the consideration of the 168th Session of the Council; and
- h) appreciated the inclusive and transparent consultative process in its elaboration, and looked forward to continued engagement in this process and to reviewing the new Strategy at its 133rd Session.

## IX. The outline and roadmap of the "FAO Science and Innovation Strategy"

13. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the initiative to develop FAO's first ever Science and Innovation Strategy with the overall aim of strengthening FAO's capacities to deliver the SDGs and the Strategic Framework 2022-31 through science and innovation;
- b) noted with appreciation the proposed outline of the Strategy, and the broad scope of the Strategy as responding to the complexity of agri-food systems, covering all relevant scientific disciplines and types of innovations, including those stemming from indigenous and local knowledge;
- c) recalled the importance of the dissemination of science- and evidence-based practices and innovations to small-scale producers, in particular in developing countries, upon the request of Members and making data-driven information available to Members for policy-based decision making, while ensuring protection of data and intellectual property rights;
- d) acknowledged the role of inter- and trans-disciplinary research to address systemic challenges in a holistic manner;
- e) concurred with the inclusion of small-scale producers and family farmers in the Strategy;
- f) highlighted that science and innovation should be adaptable to national and regional development contexts;
- g) encouraged FAO to continue to undertake an inclusive and transparent consultative process with Members and relevant stakeholders for its elaboration;
- h) stressed the importance to use multilaterally agreed language and concepts, especially those agreed by FAO Governing Bodies; and
- i) recommended the endorsement of the outline and roadmap of the Strategy by the 168th Session of the Council and looked forward to reviewing the Strategy at its 133rd Session.

## **X. Evaluation of FAO's role and work on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus and Management's Response**

14. The Committee appreciated the timely and comprehensive evaluation and Management's acceptance of the evaluation's recommendations, including the proposed actions and commitments in the Management Response, in particular, the Committee:

- a) welcomed the Evaluation, which constituted an important input to the Organization's efforts in the development of an effective and innovative Strategic Framework 2022-31, centred on the SDGs and 'leaving no one behind' through the *four betters*;
- b) acknowledged that the Evaluation was conducted during an exceptionally challenging period, when the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in limited in-person interaction with FAO personnel, especially those in Decentralized Offices;
- c) noted that a humanitarian-development nexus contributing to peace approach is not a new area of work or a particular type of programme, instead, it is a mindset, a systemic way of thinking, and a new way of working, with main features which are about joined-up, multi-partner, flexible, rights-based frameworks and people-centred approaches to achieve inclusive and peace sustaining results and inclusive and adaptive programming that is anchored in context analysis and evidence;
- d) noted that adopting a humanitarian-development nexus and its contribution to peace approach within the scope of FAO's mandate would require a major corporate effort, and recognized that it is necessary to create an enabling organizational environment to promote such adoption;
- e) welcomed FAO's engagement to promote and incentivize rights-based frameworks and people-centred approaches to achieve inclusive and peace sustaining results across its humanitarian and development programmatic work, whilst ensuring that the technical entry points of its interventions are sufficiently informed by conflict-sensitive analysis and "do no harm" approach, and sustaining peace-related objectives, as appropriate;
- f) appreciated FAO's commitment to take urgent steps to improve and increase the frequency and quality of regular context/conflict and risk analyses in project and programme development; and
- g) underlined the importance of strengthened partnerships at global, regional and country levels, within FAO's mandate, to engage across the nexus with humanitarian, development and peace actors, including with the private sector and academia, among others, in line with the reinvigorated business model at the core of the Strategic Framework.

## **XI. Real time Evaluation of FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme - Phase 1 and Management's Observations**

15. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the first phase of the real-time evaluation and the progress achieved;
- b) underlined the complexity of the evaluation and supported the objective of identifying good practices and lessons learned emerging from programme implementation, specific to the humanitarian and development response and the provision of knowledge products and data services in support of recovery efforts;
- c) welcomed Management's observations and supported the actions being taken to mainstream the good practices and consider the lessons learned identified in the report;
- d) appreciated FAO's role and contributions through the provision of knowledge products, technical services as well as humanitarian response to vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic;
- e) further appreciated FAO's promptness in defining the strategic objectives, in applying lessons from previous crises responses and epidemics, and in putting in place processes to address emerging issues;

- f) stressed the importance of leveraging in-house expertise, networks and partnerships to enhance the outreach of FAO's efforts; and recognized the importance of adopting measures to foster collaboration across the Organization;
- g) underscored the importance of cooperation between the RBAs, and with WHO and OIE, among others, in view of intensifying their work in the context of their respective mandates and competences;
- h) concurred with the report's findings that highlight strengths of the Organization in terms of producing global public goods, data and analytical work, advance programme design, clear strategic planning and humanitarian response with a strong link to medium- and long-term impact on the ground; and
- i) looked forward to receiving the results of the second phase of the evaluation at its 133rd Session.

## **XII. Indicative Rolling Work Plan of evaluations 2022-2025**

16. The Committee:

- a) appreciated the alignment of the work plan with the outcomes of the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference, and the incorporation of proposals made by the Committee in its previous sessions;
- b) appreciated and recognized the work developed by Mr Masahiro Igarashi as FAO Director of the Office of Evaluation, which has provided outstanding inputs for the improvement of FAO's mandate globally;
- c) noted with satisfaction that the decentralization process of evaluations has started and commended the support provided by the Office of Evaluation to Decentralized Offices;
- d) underscored the importance of national evaluation capacity development and the engagement of governments and national institutions in conducting Country Programme Evaluations with a view to supporting their efforts to achieve the SDGs;
- e) endorsed the indicative work plan of evaluations for 2022-2025, as contained in document PC 132/8; and
- f) requested the following evaluations to be presented at the informal presentations organized by the Office of Evaluation:
  - i. Evaluation of forced displacement; and
  - ii. Synthesis of impact assessments of seeds interventions in protracted crises.

## **XIII. Update on the Work Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (Item for information)**

17. The Committee:

- a) took note of the progress on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) activities implemented under the Tripartite MoU;
- b) encouraged FAO to continue to provide opportunities for Member consultations and input in its work on AMR and the Tripartite; and
- c) encouraged strengthened resource mobilization to support implementation of the FAO Action Plan on AMR 2021-2025.

## **XIV. Progress Report on the implementation of Programme Committee recommendations (Item for information)**

18. The Committee took note of the Progress Report on the implementation of Programme Committee recommendations.

## **XV. Tentative agenda for the 133rd Session of the Programme Committee (Item for information)**

19. Having regard to Rule III of the rules of Procedure of the Programme Committee, the Committee recommended the inclusion of items on:



- a) Update on review of process for development of Standardized procedures for FAO policies, voluntary guidelines, strategies and action plans;
- b) Update on data policies;
- c) Update on International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture; and
- d) Update on FAO's work on the One Health approach.

#### **XVI. Date and Place of the next session**

20. The Committee took note of the proposed dates for its 133rd Session, to be held from 16 to 20 May 2022, and acknowledged that the arrangements for the session would be established in accordance with the evolving COVID-19 restrictions.

#### **XVII. Any Other Matters**

21. The Committee noted the information provided on the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative and looked forward to receiving more information at a future session.