



# COUNCIL

## Hundred and Seventy-fifth Session

Rome, 10-14 June 2024

### Report of the 138th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 20-24 May 2024)

#### Executive summary

In the Report of its 138th Session, the Programme Committee:

- 1) **makes specific recommendations for decision by the Council** on: the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System: *Review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (JIU/REP/2023/5);
- 2) **brings to the attention of the Council for its endorsement**, the conclusions regarding: Preparation for the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 – Regional Priorities; the Evaluation of PPA BN4 – Reduction of Food Loss and Waste and Management Response; the Evaluation of FAO's Cash and Voucher Assistance and Management Response; the Update on the Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function; the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6); the Follow-up report on Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies; the Update on the Science, Technology and Innovation Platform; the Update on the global civil society organizations (CSOs) dialogue and other mechanisms of engagement; the Implications for the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, and its draft Action Plan 2024-27, stemming from the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and related developments; and
- 3) **informs the Council** of the Programme Committee's considerations related to: Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1 – How agrifood systems transformation through accelerated climate actions will help achieving food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow; and the Implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, including its Action Plan 2022-2025.

### Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to:

- 1) **endorse** the recommendations of the Committee on:
  - a) the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System: *Review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (JIU/REP/2023/5);
- 2) **endorse** the conclusions of the Committee on:
  - a) Preparation for the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 – Regional Priorities;
  - b) the Evaluation of PPA BN4 – Reduction of Food Loss and Waste and Management Response;
  - c) the Evaluation of FAO’s Cash and Voucher Assistance and Management Response;
  - d) the Update on the Evaluation of FAO’s evaluation function;
  - e) the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6);
  - f) the Follow-up report on Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies;
  - g) the Update on the Science, Technology and Innovation Platform;
  - h) the Update on the global civil society organizations (CSOs) dialogue and other mechanisms of engagement; and
  - i) the Implications for the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, and its draft Action Plan 2024-27, stemming from the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and related developments;
- 3) **note** the Committee’s considerations on:
  - a) Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1 – How agrifood systems transformation through accelerated climate actions will help achieving food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow; and
  - b) the Implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, including its Action Plan 2022-2025.

*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 138th Session.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, Ms Yael Rubinstein (Israel), the following representatives of Members were present:

H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak (Argentina) <sup>1</sup>	Ms Jenny Reid (New Zealand)
H.E. (Ms) Carla Barroso Carneiro (Brazil) <sup>2</sup>	H.E. (Ms) Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile (South Africa) <sup>3</sup>
Mr Maarten de Groot (Canada)	Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed Daak (Sudan)
Mr SHINDO Mitsuaki (Japan)	H.E. (Ms) Krisztina Bende (Switzerland)
Mr Abdul Rahman Abdul Wahab (Malaysia)	Ms Jacqueline Boniface Mbuya (United Republic of Tanzania)
H.E. (Mr) Marcel Beukeboom (Netherlands [Kingdom of the])	

### I. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

3. The Committee agreed to add a verbal update on the informal Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) under Item 15 - *Any Other Matters*, and made reference to documents [CL 175/14](#) and [CL 175/14 Sup.1](#), under Item 10 - Report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System: *Review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (JIU/REP/2023/5), and to multilingualism.

### II. Preparation for the Medium Term Plan 2026-29 – Regional Priorities

4. The Committee:
  - a) welcomed the priorities expressed by the three Regional Conferences, for Asia and the Pacific, Near East, and Latin America and the Caribbean, during their sessions in 2024, as reflected in their respective Regional Conference Reports, which will guide the preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2026-29, Programme of Work and Budget 2026-27 and upcoming revision of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31;
  - b) looked forward to an update on the review and evaluation on the pilot of the format of the Regional Conferences; and
  - c) looked forward to reviewing the full set of regional priorities, including those of Africa, Europe and Central Asia, and North America, as well as guidance on technical priorities stemming from the Technical Committees, at its November Session.

### III. Evaluation of PPA BN4 – Reduction of Food Loss and Waste and Management Response

5. The Committee:
  - a) welcomed the Evaluation of Programme Priority Area (PPA) BN4, its findings and recommendations and appreciated the Management Response provided;

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<sup>1</sup> Ms Alicia Silvana Barone was designated to replace H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak for part of this Session.

<sup>2</sup> Mr Arnaldo de Baena Fernandes was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Carla Barroso Carneiro for part of this Session.

<sup>3</sup> Mr Barend Jacobus Lombard was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile for part of this Session.

- b) appreciated FAO's ongoing commitment to reduction of food loss and waste (FLW), and the prominent and potential role it can play, in collaboration with partners, in the eradication of hunger and the successful implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, alongside related initiatives and programmes;
- c) acknowledged FAO's key role in addressing FLW globally and ensuring the technical quality of FLW initiatives, and welcomed the importance given to strengthening the technical capacity at both FAO headquarters and the Decentralized Offices supporting increased country level engagement on policies and programming;
- d) took note of FAO's leading role in developing the methodology of the SDG sub-indicator 12.3.1.a (Food Loss Index [FLI]) according to the process of the UN Statistical Commission;
- e) recommended that FAO continues strengthening data and statistical capacity at national and regional level for Members;
- f) emphasized the importance of integrating environmental considerations, biodiversity, climate impact, gender and youth more systematically in the formulation and implementation of FLW reduction actions, and mainstreaming FLW to a greater extent across all *four betters*; and
- g) invited FAO to place increased attention on enhancing the connection between the four accelerators – technology, innovation, data, and complements (governance, human capital, and institutions) – and the PPAs to seize the opportunities afforded by technical and policy innovations.

#### **IV. Evaluation of FAO's Cash and Voucher Assistance and Management Response**

- 6. The Committee:
  - a) expressed appreciation for this Evaluation which is the first comprehensive assessment of FAO's Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) portfolio since FAO began implementing CVA modalities in 2001;
  - b) welcomed the Evaluation and Management's acceptance of its findings and recommendations;
  - c) appreciated the findings of the Evaluation particularly the confirmation that cash and vouchers are recognized as highly relevant and flexible tools to achieve objectives in emergency and development settings in line with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31;
  - d) recognized that CVA modalities offer FAO an opportunity to deliver on its mandate, and noted that FAO has a niche to support governments and promote uptake of CVA modalities in national agricultural and social protection policies and programmes;
  - e) noted that FAO will develop corporate strategic guidance to increase its impact and effectiveness, and in this regard, recognized the need to generate further evidence to support strategic and operational decisions;
  - f) recognized the importance of prioritizing resources for capacity building, technical support and digitalization to enable better preparedness; and
  - g) recognized the need to strengthen partnerships and to sustain coordination, including with the Rome-based Agencies, to better share knowledge and further leverage technical capacities.

## V. Update on the Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function

7. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the update on the independent Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function;
  - b) noted that the process of completing the Evaluation is on track in line with the agreed terms of reference;
  - c) looked forward to an informal update prior to the next Session of the Programme Committee; and
  - d) looked forward to discussing the final Evaluation Report at its November Session in 2024.

## VI. Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6)

8. The Committee:
- a) congratulated FAO on being awarded the King Hassan II of Morocco Great World Water Prize during the 10th World Water Forum;
  - b) appreciated the update provided and commended the progress made in implementing the recommendations and actions in the Management Response ([PC 133/5 Sup.1](#)) to the *Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all* ([PC 133/5](#));
  - c) encouraged FAO to maximize the internal and external opportunities to prioritize collaboration on water with all resource partners to reduce "water-blindness", scale up resource mobilization, partnerships, and corporate support for integrated water resources management, recalling in particular, water resources management being the 2024-25 biennial theme and the development of the UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation; and
  - d) looked forward to further updates on the collective FAO results achieved on water, in particular at the conclusion of the biennium dedicated to the theme.

## VII. Follow-up report on Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies

9. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the *Follow-up report on Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies*, and appreciated the actions taken to implement the Evaluation ([PC 133/6](#)) recommendations, and the impact and changes achieved to date;
  - b) encouraged further action to strengthen FAO's joint collaborative activities with the other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) based on each UN entity's comparative advantages across the six thematic areas as highlighted in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2023, and concurred that RBA collaboration is being strengthened and embedded as part of the broader UN Development System repositioning;
  - c) encouraged the Organization to further strengthen and deepen its collaboration across the UN system, acknowledging the foundational importance of RBA collaboration, and inform the Programme Committee of the results;
  - d) acknowledged the critical importance of operational collaboration in disasters and conflict situations including Haiti and Sudan; and

- e) recalled the importance of Recommendation Six of the Joint evaluation which was addressed to Members and Governing Bodies that called upon Members to reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration.

### **VIII. Update on the Science, Technology and Innovation Platform**

10. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the support that the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Portal will provide to the implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and the achievement of its outcomes, thus contributing to the broader implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, and looked forward to its launch;
- b) appreciated the STI Portal's role in facilitating multisectoral and multistakeholder collaboration, providing increased and targeted access to information on innovations and technologies, and enabling the integration of evidence on science and technology in policymaking and agrifood investments;
- c) acknowledged the importance for FAO to work inclusively as an impartial platform, promoting a diversity of solutions in the implementation of the STI Portal;
- d) highlighted also the importance of an inclusive and regionally representative STI Portal that adequately features traditional knowledge from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as academic and scientific production from developing countries;
- e) encouraged FAO to establish and enhance linkages between the STI Portal across applicable FAO sources of data and statistics and relevant FAO initiatives including the Digital Villages Initiative, as well as with the Connect Portal, as appropriate, to increase synergies and avoid duplication;
- f) recommended the STI Portal maintain open communication and disseminate information and good practices with Members and other relevant stakeholders, in particular to enable the uptake of knowledge and technologies; and
- g) supported the continued improvement of the STI Portal to address users' needs regarding agrifood systems related development challenges.

### **IX. Update on the global civil society organizations (CSOs) dialogue and other mechanisms of engagement**

11. The Committee:

- a) recognized the progress made in strengthening engagements with civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly the positive exchanges achieved during the global CSO dialogue and subsequent online consultation, in realization of the SDGs;
- b) recognized the unique role of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) as the largest multistakeholder international platform of civil society organizations acting to eradicate hunger, and encouraged FAO to strengthen its operational support to the CSIPM of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS);
- c) called upon FAO to continue its efforts to expand engagement with CSOs, including through the use of innovative modalities, and by encouraging wider participation in initiatives such as the World Food Forum, CFS and beyond, while taking into account geographical representation;
- d) recalled the recommendations of the 174th Session of the Council on the participation of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), including those classified as private sector and in this regard, welcomed FAO's initiative to update the accreditation procedure for INGOs, ensuring clarity and transparency of the process, and looked forward to updates on that process;

- e) acknowledged the work undertaken to expand its strategic engagement with other stakeholders such as Indigenous Peoples, parliamentarians, family farmers' organizations and other non-state stakeholders, and science and technology communities in an inclusive manner and with due regard to equitable regional representation; and
- f) encouraged FAO's Country and Regional Offices to strengthen their initiatives related to capacity building of CSOs including with a view to ensure balanced regional representation.

**X. Report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System: *Review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (JIU/REP/2023/5)***

12. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the 2023 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System: *Review of management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (JIU/REP/2023/5)* ([CL 175/14](#));
- b) appreciated the Management Response and Reflections ([CL 175/14/Sup.1](#)) and the actions contained therein and accepting many of the recommendations or indicating its willingness to address them within the relevant Governing Bodies;
- c) noted the formal and informal recommendations related to the mandate of the Programme Committee, particularly concerning the Office of Evaluation, and recommended Council to implement those recommendations;
- d) noted the suggestions made by the Joint Inspection Unit regarding the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and recalled the need to monitor closely the impact of extrabudgetary contributions to FAO programmes under the mandate of the Governing Bodies; and
- e) looked forward to further deliberation on this topic, including potential implementation scenarios, and requested FAO to regularly update the relevant Governing Bodies on progress made in implementing the formal and informal recommendations.

**XI. Implications for the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, and its draft Action Plan 2024-27, stemming from the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and related developments**

13. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the update on the *Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Agricultural Sectors 2024–2027*<sup>4</sup> and appreciated the inclusive, transparent, and consultative process that led to its finalization;
- b) welcomed the alignment of the 2024–2027 Action Plan with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, now known as the Biodiversity Plan, including at the Target level;
- c) encouraged Members to support the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and its 2024–2027 Action Plan, including through the provision of voluntary contributions;

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<sup>4</sup> [FAO. 2024. Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Agricultural Sectors 2024–2027. Rome.](#)

- d) requested an estimate on the funding needed and available for each outcome of the Action Plan and recommended FAO consider the need for resource allocation for the implementation of the Action Plan when developing the next PWB;
- e) encouraged FAO to leverage its convening power, according to its mandate, to bring together stakeholders committed to fostering better integration of biodiversity and sustainable agrifood systems;
- f) noted that ecosystem-based approaches and adequate valuation of environmental services are a fundamental part of mainstreaming biodiversity in agricultural sectors, leading to the improvement of resilience and reduction of vulnerabilities of agrifood systems; and
- g) requested FAO to provide regular updates to relevant Governing Bodies on progress made in the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, taking into account the guidance and feedback from Members.

## **XII. Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1 – How agrifood systems transformation through accelerated climate actions will help achieving food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow**

14. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the update on *Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1 – How agrifood systems transformation through accelerated climate actions will help achieving food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow, In brief*<sup>5</sup>;
  - b) noted FAO's collaborative efforts, across relevant initiatives, regions and countries, to ensure actions are coherent and so that lessons can be drawn for the next stage of development of the Roadmap;
  - c) acknowledged that it is a multi-year process with the final Part to be published at COP30 in 2025 and underscored the importance of FAO internal coordination among relevant divisions;
  - d) noted with appreciation the update on FAO's innovative approach of addressing SDG 2, together with climate change challenges; and
  - e) looked forward to a further update on the Roadmap at a future session of the Committee.

## **XIII. Implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, including its Action Plan 2022-2025**

15. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the update on the implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, including through the Annex ([C 2025/8 WA4](#)) provided as part of the Programme Implementation Report 2022-23; and
  - b) commended FAO's efforts to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through harnessing science and innovation for sustainable agrifood systems.

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<sup>5</sup> [FAO. 2023. \*Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1 – How agrifood systems transformation through accelerated climate actions will help achieving food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow, In brief\*. Rome.](#)



#### **XIV. Date and place of the next session**

16. The Committee was informed that the next Session was scheduled to be held in Rome from 11 to 15 November 2024.

#### **XV. Any Other Matters**

17. The Committee:

- a) took note of the verbal update on the informal Private Sector Advisory Group, delivered by Deputy Director-General Ms Beth Bechdol and Deputy Director-General Mr Maurizio Martina; and
- b) recalled the importance of multilingualism, consistent with the decision of the 166th Session of the Council ([CL 166/REP](#)).