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# CONFERENCE

## Thirty-ninth Session

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### Interim Report on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System

#### Executive Summary

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) is the primary policy instrument of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to define the way the UN development system operates to support programme countries in their development efforts. The Conference has requested the Director-General to take action for implementation of the UNGA resolutions on QCPR. This interim report addresses: (a) funding of operational activities for development; (b) efficiency, effectiveness and FAO's participation in UN system coordination mechanisms; and (c) other areas of relevance to FAO.

During the period June 2013 to June 2015, FAO has:

- refined the use of Country Programming Frameworks to better align them with FAO's reviewed Strategic Framework, country priorities, and work in synergy with other UN agencies and country partners;
- diversified and improved its donor base as a result of renewed confidence in FAO's ability to deliver, FAO's image strengthened by its clear strategic direction and focus, the streamlining of business processes and the reinforcement of management capacity in the field;
- pursued work under its corporate Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy (RMMS) to achieve adequate, more predictable and sustainable voluntary contributions that fully support the achievement of FAO's Strategic Objectives;
- approved a new, more transparent and equitable cost recovery policy that treats extrabudgetary resources as supporting FAO's programme of work in an integrated budget;
- implemented the agreement on the cost-sharing of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system, as requested by Conference, but remains concerned about cost escalation and the continued use of ad hoc arrangements in some countries
- integrated Delivering as One (DaO) best practices in its policies and procedures, in the QCPR context with which individual UN funds, programmes and agencies have specific experience and expertise, derived from, and in line with, their mandates and strategic plans;
- collaborated with other agencies on simplification and harmonization of business practices;
- co-led the preparation of the UN system contribution to formulation of Sustainable Development Goals 2, 14, and 15, and is engaged in the development of indicators and the discussion on financial and non-financial Means of Implementation;

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- developed corporate strategies for partnering with the private sector and civil society organizations and enhance the framework for collaboration with academia and research institutions.

**Suggested action by the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference**

The Conference takes note of FAO's progress in the implementation of the QCPR Resolution.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) is the primary policy instrument of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to define the way the UN development system operates to support programme countries in their development efforts. The General Assembly resolutions on the “Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System”, issued in 2004, 2007 and 2012,<sup>1</sup> are cumulative in nature. In December 2012, the General Assembly gave policy directions to improve UN system support to developing countries as a result of its first quadrennial review of UN operational activities for development.

2. FAO Conference Resolutions 13/2005 and 2/2007 requested the Director-General to take action for the implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolutions on the “Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System”. The Conference reviewed progress reports at its regular sessions in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013.<sup>2</sup> The present report covers the main FAO milestones and achievements in QCPR implementation in the period from June 2013 to June 2015. The structure and choice of topics is guided by the General Assembly Resolutions, as indicated throughout the report, and covers: (a) funding of operational activities for development; (b) efficiency, effectiveness and FAO participation in UN System coordination mechanisms; and (c) other areas of relevance to FAO.

3. The period covered by the report saw significant change in FAO’s strategic direction and way of working. The FAO reviewed Strategic Framework, approved by the Conference in June 2013,<sup>3</sup> put in place five new Strategic Objectives, closely aligned with the most relevant and urgent development problems faced by Member Nations and the development community, to guide the work of the Organization in contributing to: i) the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; ii) making agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable; iii) reducing rural poverty; iv) enabling inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems; and v) increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.

4. At the same time, a set of far-reaching transformational changes was put in place, making the Organization more efficient and fit for purpose in order to rise to the challenges outlined by the QCPR. FAO’s network of decentralized offices has been strengthened. Results-based management principles are being systematically applied throughout the programme cycle, from planning to monitoring and reporting of results and resources. FAO has implemented a results framework that integrates global, regional and country level planning and monitoring of results, with indicators that measure progress in the Organization’s work on policy and governance processes and the uptake of global public goods in a multidisciplinary and cross-sector manner.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 59/250 (TCPR 2004) , 62/208 (TCPR 2007), 67/226 (QCPR 2012)

<sup>2</sup> C 2007/17; C 2009/14; C 2011/26; C 2013/28

<sup>3</sup> C 2013/7

<sup>4</sup> C 2013/3; PC 117/5 - FC 157/7

## A. FUNDING OF FAO'S OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

*[Paragraphs 24-56 and 74-79 of GA resolution 67/226]*

### *Diversification and improvement of the donor base*

*[Para. 35 of GA resolution 67/226]*

5. FAO's results framework, set out in the four-year Medium Term Plan (MTP) and two-year Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), guides the work of the Organization under all sources funds. It comprises a set of Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs with performance indicators and the resources required from both assessed and voluntary contributions. All contributions are subject to the same planning and oversight arrangements, encouraging reduced earmarking of voluntary contributions.
6. To attract increased partnerships and accelerate results, FAO promotes 11 Corporate Areas for Resource Mobilization (CARMs), 15 Regional Initiatives, and Country Programming Frameworks as key priority areas. For the 2012-13 biennium, FAO exceeded its resource mobilization target of USD 1.4 billion, securing USD 1.7 billion, and for 2014, USD 959 million was mobilized. An increase in confidence has been detected among donors in FAO's ability to deliver, and FAO's image has been strengthened by its clear strategic direction, the streamlining of business processes and the reinforcement of management capacity in the field.
7. While the traditional partnership base has remained fairly steady, important new resource partners are emerging, including Angola, Brazil, China, Equatorial Guinea, Mexico, Libya and Venezuela. Increased emphasis is being placed on the role of middle-income countries (MICs) both as current and future partners. During the period June 2013 to June 2015, FAO has continued strengthening partnerships with non-state actors and the international development community, particularly through the bolstering of South-South cooperation (SSC). In this regard, FAO intends to engage more MICs both as resources partners and for SSC to meet growing demands.
8. In this regard, MICs are key partners in supporting their own national development through Unilateral Trust Funds (UTFs). Through this innovative form of partnership, since 2012, UTF approvals from MICs totalled approximately USD 100 million, the top three providers being Brazil, Colombia and Mexico. Other MICs that approved UTFs with FAO during the period are: Angola, Argentina, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Libya, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tunisia and Turkey. The diversification of FAO's voluntary contribution funding base resulted in two middle-income countries now figuring in the top ten of resource partners compared to none in 2012-13.
9. FAO-facilitated South-South Cooperation (SSC) is also on the rise, and an increasing number of Southern Providers are offering technical and financial resources to meet country demands, as described in paragraphs 16-21. Financing of SSC comes from multiple sources, including triangular partnerships involving traditional resource partners to facilitate SSC exchanges.
10. In line with the QCPR principle of strengthening national capacities for better sustainability of results, FAO is also developing new contractual models of Operational Partnership (OP) to allow greater flexibility with nationally-executed programmes, including with UTFs acting as the vehicle for trilateral cooperation between international financial institutions, the recipient country and FAO.

*Defining principles for a “critical mass” of assessed contributions and improving the adequacy and predictability of resource flows*

*[Para. 39 and 46 of GA resolution 67/226]*

11. FAO's Programme of Work and Budget presents an integrated view of total resource requirements to carry out the biennial programme of work comprising the assessed contributions by Members and an estimate of voluntary funding. In principle, assessed contributions are the core of the Programme of Work and all voluntary contributions should align to the Organization's results framework and country priorities. In this context, resource partners should support FAO's cost recovery policy (see below) and contribute to simplify and harmonize reporting requirements of voluntary contributions.

12. In 2014, FAO launched its Corporate Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy (RMMS), which changed the way the Organization engages with resource partners. The RMMS aims to achieve adequate, more predictable, less earmarked and sustainable voluntary contributions that fully support the achievement of FAO's objectives. By providing a more comprehensive and transparent structure for voluntary contributions, especially unearmarked and lightly earmarked ones, the RMMS has provided a positive incentive to partners to increase their cooperation with FAO. Examples include: the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund for Food Security, through which African Nations pool funding in support of African Initiatives; the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics Trust Fund (GSTF); and the FAO Multipartner Funding Mechanism (FMM).

*Emerging opportunities for country-level pooled funding*

*[Paragraph 44 of GA resolution 67/226]*

13. The CPFs address national priorities in line with FAO's results framework, addressing country level demand and supporting harmonization of work at country level as reflected in the UNDAF and other joint UN frameworks. Hence, the CPFs are critical for supporting alignment with country priorities and harmonized work with other UN agencies and country partners. As such, they are key in ensuring that resource mobilization activities are complementary to wider UN efforts. The UNDAF, CPF and “Delivering as One” (DaO) initiatives are discussed further in the following sections. In 2014, FAO has received about USD 119 million from UN interagency pooled funds.

*Ensuring full cost recovery*

*[Paragraph 47-56 of GA resolution 67/226]*

14. During 2013 to 2015, FAO developed a Comprehensive Financial Framework (CFF) for cost recovery as the basis for preparing a more transparent and equitable cost recovery policy that would treat extrabudgetary resources as supporting FAO's programme of work in an integrated budget. The CFF for cost recovery takes account of recent developments within the UN system and adopts those existing practices accepted by Member States, donors and governing bodies within the UN system that support FAO's efforts in implementing its unique mandate.

15. In March 2015, the FAO Finance Committee and the FAO Council endorsed a new FAO Cost Recovery Policy effective 1 January 2016. The policy is based on full proportional cost recovery with attributable support costs, and new cost recovery categories of Direct Operational Costs (DOC), Direct Support Costs (DSC) and Indirect Support Costs (ISC). The policy was approved with an ISC rate of 7 percent, subject to review every two years.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> FC 157/10, CL 151/3 paragraphs 22-23; CL 151/REP paragraph 11e

*South-South Cooperation (SSC)*

*[Paragraphs 74-79 of GA resolution 67/226]*

16. FAO is recognized as a leading facilitator of South-South Cooperation (SSC) for food security and agricultural development. With over two decades of experience, FAO has helped to connect SSC country demand and supply, as well as ensure the quality of the exchange. Increasingly, countries are requesting support, recognizing the Organization's role as a neutral broker and seeing SSC as a cost-effective and highly relevant means for agricultural development, based on principles of mutual benefit and solidarity.

17. FAO's corporate SSC Strategy sets out a broad vision to mainstream SSC as a key mechanism to deliver development results at regional and country level, contributing to all FAO's Strategic Objectives.

18. A growing number of Southern providers are offering technical and financial resources to meet country demand. However, leveraging more financial resources is critical and the engagement of Middle Income Countries (MICs) and triangular partners is key. To date, FAO's main providers have been Brazil and China, whose main focus is on Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

19. Since 2012, FAO has facilitated over 55 SSC partnership projects, of which 42 have been funded by MICs totalling USD 83 million. In 2014, financial contributors to SSC included Angola, Brazil, China, Mexico, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Venezuela. Over and above these figures are new commitments, such as the major boost of USD 50 million from China, as well as substantial commitments from Brazil, Morocco and Venezuela. Innovatively, Angola and Nigeria are funding from their own national budgets the supply of Southern expertise from Brazil and China, respectively. In addition, new funding sources, such as the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund SSC Facility with contributions guided by the principle "Africans for Africa", are beginning to provide more flexible resources in support of intraregional SSC.

20. Moving forward, FAO intends to engage more countries as SSC providers and upscale programmes with existing partners to meet growing demands in the realm of food security and agriculture. In particular, FAO is in dialogue with MICs to encourage greater partnership, to jointly shape ways to rise to the challenge.

21. Working together with the wider UN System, FAO is a member of the recently established UNGD Task Team on South-South and Triangular Cooperation. A joint cooperation framework for SSC is being reviewed and FAO is playing a leading role alongside other Rome-based Agencies in the Food Security Agenda.

**B. IMPROVED FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FAO PARTICIPATION IN UN SYSTEM COORDINATION MECHANISMS**

*United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and FAO country programming frameworks (CPF)*

*[Paragraphs 113-121 of GA resolution 67/226]*

22. It is the policy of the Organization to align CPFs with the country planning cycle and UNDAF.<sup>6</sup> FAO Representatives are encouraged to discuss and agree with the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) and the UN Country Team (UNCT) regarding FAO's contribution to UNDAF.

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<sup>6</sup>PC 108/2

23. As a specialized agency, it could be that some technical areas of work and related results identified in the CPF do not clearly relate to the UNDAF. This has been especially true of FAO activities related to implementation at country level of normative and standard-setting work in support of global public goods. FAO reserves the possibility to implement these activities outside UNDAF and, together with other Specialized Agencies, has ensured that this principle is recognized in the 2014 UNDG Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for “DaO” (discussed in the following sections). In this context, it is important to note pages 11 and 12 of the SOPs respectively, which mention that: “UN agencies might undertake in a country activities that are not covered by the entire UNDAF programme cycle” and that “Some specialized agencies may not be mandated by their governance structures to replace their country programmes and work plans in given sectors and thematic areas.”

24. The FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) is funded from the Organization’s Net Appropriation. In March 2015, FAO Council welcomed the proposal to source an additional USD 6.1 million in 2016-17 through extrabudgetary resources to be used exclusively to strengthen the TCP programme in support to Small Island Developing States, particularly to adapt to effects of climate change. The TCP addresses needs from FAO Members for technical assistance in all areas of action that pertain to FAO’s mandate. In December 2013, the FAO Council (at its 148th Session) endorsed the enhancement measures and related implementation plan presented by the Organization to better align the TCP to the Strategic Framework, facilitating a more strategic use of TCP resources and ensuring that TCP interventions be aligned to national priorities through the CPFs. On that occasion, Council expressed “its support to the proposed alignment of the enhanced TCP to the reviewed Strategic Framework and the bottom up alignment to national priorities through Country Programming Frameworks (CPF’s)”.

*Involvement in UN System coordination and the Resident Coordinator System (RCS)*

*[Paragraphs 122-131 of GA resolution 67/226]*

25. FAO is a proactive member of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). The UNDG as one of the pillars of the UN Chiefs Executive Board (CEB) designs system-wide guidance to harmonize UN operational activities for development.

26. In pursuing its commitment to the QCPR call for creation of a “participatory, collegial and mutually accountable” RCS owned by all components of the UN development system, FAO has:

- participated at global level in relevant UNDG working groups and task forces related to country-level activities for development, as well as in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which addresses the role of the RC as Humanitarian Coordinator;
- taken part in regional UNDG teams and other related consultative mechanisms;
- ensured that FAO country Representatives and staff fully participate in UN Country Teams (UNCTs), including leading thematic groups related to FAO-mandated areas.

27. FAO has taken further steps towards the full implementation of the “Management and Accountability System of the UN Development and the RC System” (MAS), introducing a requirement for FAO Representatives to reflect the work done in the context of UNCT in the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) agreements.

*Financial Support for the Resident Coordinator System (RCS)*

*[Paragraphs 124 and 128 of GA resolution 67/226]*

28. Mandated by ECOSOC resolution 2011/7, the UNDG commissioned an independent review of the funding modalities of the RCS. The total funding requirements for the RCS at global, regional and country level was estimated at USD 132 million in 2011. In 2012, the QCPR urged: “the United Nations development system to provide further financial, technical and organizational support for the resident coordinator system”. In the spring of 2013, a small UNDG Task Team developed a cost-sharing formula, proposing cost-sharing of USD 44 million by the UNDG member entities.

29. The UNDG cost-sharing formula was subsequently submitted for review by the Finance and Budget Network of the CEB High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM). Based on the inputs provided by FAO and other agencies, the amount for the cost-sharing by the UNDG Members was streamlined and reduced from USD 44 million to USD 33 million.
30. On 4 April 2013, the UNDG Principals agreed on a final modality for system-wide cost-sharing of the RCS by all UNDG Members starting in 2014 (with retroactive payment for late-comers). The cost-sharing modality was based on a global funding scenario of USD 121 million, with USD 33 million to be cost-shared by UNDG members and the remaining “back-bone” (some USD 88 million) still being funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). FAO’s share was approximately USD 2 million per year.
31. The FAO Conference in June 2013<sup>7</sup> requested: “FAO to implement the agreement on the cost-sharing of the RC system”. FAO’s share for 2014 and 2015 was included in the Adjustments to the PWB 2014-15<sup>8</sup> at USD 4 million and in the proposed PWB 2016-17<sup>9</sup> at USD 4.3 million. FAO is concerned about the escalating costs of the arrangement.
32. FAO joined the cost-sharing agreement with a view to put an end to ad hoc local arrangements for funding for the RC offices. These ad hoc arrangements have however continued in some countries and this is a matter of concern for the Organization, as it represents a duplication of costs and defeats the purpose of the global agreement.
33. The UNDG is engaged in discussions with agencies for the cost-sharing model in 2016-17. FAO is advocating for an interagency review of the experience of 2014-15 in order to avoid double charging and further escalation of the UNRC cost-share.

*“Delivering as One” (DaO)*

*[Paragraph 132-143 of GA resolution 67/226]*

34. Mandated by the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR), the Independent Evaluation of the “Delivering as One” pilot initiative was finalized in 2012. FAO has played an active part in the evaluation proceedings. As a result of the evaluation, the 2012 QCPR resolution granted intergovernmental recognition to the DaO approach, though it remains a voluntary option.
35. In the post-pilot phase, the UNDG concentrated its efforts on formulating and disseminating a set of DaO SOPs for UNCTs. FAO has actively contributed to the formulation of the SOPs. In addition to the work mentioned in the section on UNDAF and CPF above, FAO co-led the preparation of the 2014 UNDG Guidelines on UN Joint Programmes (as Co-Chair of the UNDG Joint Funding Task Team) and co-led the development of the system-wide DaO monitoring framework (as Co-Chair of the related Task Team). FAO is also actively following the work related to the Business Operations Strategy Pilot (BOS) and other DaO workstreams.
36. The Organization progressively integrates DaO best practices in its policies and procedures. For example, the UN Joint Programmes have been integrated in the FAO Project Cycle Guide. The establishment of the “Project cycle and operations support unit” within the transformed South-South Cooperation and Resource Mobilization Division (TCS) (DG Bulletin 2015/05 refers) will further strengthen this process.
37. The SOPs respond to the mandate of the QCPR which “recognizes that the individual UN funds, programmes and agencies have specific experience and expertise, derived from, and in line with, their mandates and strategic plans”. In this regard, FAO believes that improvement of coordination and coherence at the country level should be always undertaken in a manner that

<sup>7</sup> FAO Conference item C 2013/28

<sup>8</sup> CL 148/3 paragraphs 103 and 104

<sup>9</sup> C 2015/3 Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17 paragraph 72d)



recognizes the respective strategic frameworks, mandates and roles and enhances the effective utilization of resources and the unique expertise of all UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

*Simplification and harmonization of business practices*

*[Paragraphs 15 and 152-163 of GA resolution 67/226]*

*Business Operations harmonization*

38. The 2012 QCPR resolution encourages agencies to seek efficiencies in country business operations by increasing collaboration and FAO will continue to pursue more effective and cost-efficient support services at country level. During 2014-15 FAO has been actively participating in the pilot of the UNDG joint Business Operations Strategy (BOS) in a number of countries. An assessment of the pilot in terms of cost savings and efficiency gains is expected to be conducted in 2015 in order to inform future joint harmonization efforts and direction in the business operations area.

39. In line with FAO commitment to the UN harmonization agenda at the country level in UN Joint Programmes as required, and in order to reduce transaction costs for partners through harmonization of requirements with other participating UN agencies, FAO applies the 2014 UNDG Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Framework adopted by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA with due consideration for the specificity of FAO's business model and business processes as recommended by the Framework.

*Harmonization in management of human resources*

40. In 2014, FAO, IFAD and WFP signed a Framework Agreement for the collaboration on recruitment, selection and appointment of General Service staff at Rome headquarters. A Central Roster for the recruitment of temporary/short-term staff in the General Service category is being created and vacancies for positions are mutually open to candidates from each of the three Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs). Existing provisions, operational processes and system issues are being reviewed with a view to harmonizing to the extent possible in order to ensure successful implementation of the agreement.

*Harmonization in procurement processes*

41. FAO is a member of the UN High-level Committee on Management Procurement Network (HLCM PN) and has been actively involved in redrafting the UNDG guidelines for common procurement, developing related training and publicizing their use as well as implementing a vendor sanctions policy. The guidelines are also being incorporated into the FAO rules on procurement.

42. FAO is a main actor in the Common Procurement Team of the RBAs which jointly procures for headquarters when possible, shares best practices and promotes optimization of procurement activities, generating savings and other benefits. Benefits from procurement cooperation are also being generated outside of headquarters, where all FAO offices are encouraged to collaborate with other UN agencies in their countries and can now use the results of tenders from other agencies.

*Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Interoperability Study*

43. FAO participates in the Steering Committee which leads the study of the feasibility of establishing interoperability among the existing enterprise resources planning systems of the UN organizations, chairing an Advisory Group which will review the progress of the study and provide input to both the consultants and the Steering Committee as well as ensure alignment between the requirements of agencies and the proposed solutions. A study on the feasibility of achieving synergies and convergence across the ERP systems of the RBAs for enhanced efficiency and savings will seek to leverage the results of this UN system-wide study.

### *International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)*

44. Following the deployment of IPSAS compliant systems and processes to all offices worldwide during 2012-13, FAO has prepared the first IPSAS-compliant financial statements for the year 2014 closure.

### *Facilities Management*

45. FAO is an active member of the UN Issue Management Group (IMG) on Environmental Sustainability Management and has made significant progress in reducing emissions, increasing efficiency and integrating sustainability into its daily activities. The operational areas involved – both in headquarters and country offices – are facilities management (e.g. energy efficiency, waste management, sustainable events), travel and procurement. Since 2009, the projects implemented resulted in annual emissions reductions of over 6 300 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent and more than USD 600 000 in cumulative annual savings with an average payback period of less than five years.

## **C. OTHER AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QCPR OF RELEVANCE TO FAO**

### *Poverty Eradication and accelerated achievements of the MDGs and the process leading to the Post-2015 Development Agenda*

*[Preamble and operative paragraphs 69-73 and 136 of GA resolution 67/226]*

46. The Post-2015 Development Agenda includes several Goals pertinent to FAO's mandate and objectives as prioritized in the revised Strategic Framework. In particular: Goal 1 to "End poverty in all its forms everywhere," including reference to access to land and other productive resources; and a comprehensive Goal 2 with five respective targets, to "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture". Other Goals relevant to FAO are: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" (Goal 6); "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns" (Goal 12); "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" (Goal 13); "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" (Goal 14); and "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss" (Goal 15).

47. FAO co-led the preparation of the UN system contribution to Goals 2, 14, and 15. The RBAs worked together on Goal 2. The vision included in FAO's Strategic Framework is well reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

48. FAO's continued engagement is ensured also in the final phase of the Post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations, with focus on: i) the development of indicators, to be endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission at its annual session in March 2016; and ii) the discussion on financial and non-financial Means of Implementation (MoIs) of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The new development agenda will be adopted at the Post-2015 Summit in September 2015. The UN System is also advancing preparations to support the implementation of the new development agenda through its "Fit for Purpose" process involving the CEB. Of particular interest, under the new working mechanisms of the UNDG, is a Working Group on Sustainable Development (SDWG). In addition, the Dialogues of ECOSOC on the longer-term positioning of the UN system are advancing. FAO is well represented at and involved in these fora.

49. Global and regional initiatives may also help in catalyzing support, sharing good practices, and advance an integrated implementation of the Post-2015 development agenda. Powerful institutional partnerships such as the High Level Task Force on Global Food Security (HLTF) and its comprehensive support of the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC), mobilizing UN in partnerships with

stakeholders to promote holistic and comprehensive approach to Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture are good examples of this effort.

50. In 2013, as part of the Organization-wide Strategy on Partnerships, the Organization developed specific strategies for partnering with private sector and civil society. Such partnerships are critical elements in achieving FAO's Strategic Objectives and ensuring that hunger, food security and nutrition remain high priorities on the global post-2015 development agenda<sup>10</sup>.

#### *Regional dimension*

*[Paragraphs 144-151 of GA resolution 67/226]*

51. The regional dimension has always been fundamental to FAO's work. The Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2012-13<sup>11</sup> records details of the progress made during that biennium in implementing the initial six pilot regional initiatives. Updated regional priorities were considered at each of the five FAO Regional Conferences in 2014 within the framework of the Organization's five Strategic Objectives, with fifteen regional initiatives endorsed by these bodies to address the priorities. The Regional Initiatives serve as a mechanism to ensure effective delivery and impact, with a coherent framework for FAO's actions at country level in each of the regions, through common themes across country priorities set out in the CPFs.<sup>12</sup> The Mid-term synthesis review – 2014<sup>13</sup> further illustrates accomplishments under the Regional Initiatives for the year 2014.

#### *National capacity development*

*[Paragraphs 57-68 of GA resolution 67/226]*

52. FAO's core functions - its means of achieving results - include advice and support to capacity development at country and regional level to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments and programmes as well as the dissemination and uptake of knowledge, technologies and good practices within FAO's mandate.

53. FAO takes an active role in the development of national capacities and promotes inclusive, nationally-led approaches for capacity needs assessments, capacity development projects and programmes and follow-up activities. FAO has been active in developing learning materials, in particular e-learning on data collection and analysis, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation in the areas of agriculture and food security.

54. FAO plays a leadership role in agriculture information management systems and standards, and has developed methodologies and tools, as well as common standards and protocols for agricultural information exchange. FAO supports Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development Initiative (CIARD), the global movement for open agricultural knowledge for development, which seeks to connect agriculture information management workers worldwide, and to develop their capacities. FAO manages the e-agriculture global initiative to enhance sustainable agricultural development and food security by the use of information, communication, and associated technologies. FAO manages the Access to Global Online Research on Agriculture (AGORA) programme, with a number of publishing partners to provide developing countries access to scientific information on food, agriculture and related social sciences. AGORA is part of Research4Life, which also includes other UN agencies (UNDP, WHO).

55. Depending on the nature of the required FAO assistance and in order to strengthen national capacities for better sustainability of results, where possible, FAO implements its projects/programmes

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.fao.org/partnerships/strategies/en/>.

<sup>11</sup> C 2015/8

<sup>12</sup> PC 117/5 - FC 157/7 and C2015/3

<sup>13</sup> PC 117/5 – FC 157/7

in partnership with national government entities, academia, research and scientific institutions, NGOs, or non-United Nations multilateral and intergovernmental entities. In this delivery model FAO relies on national capacities for implementation contributing to capacity building of partners, assuming at the same time a facilitating and enabling role for national partners to access technical knowledge and expertise supporting them in the areas where they themselves request direct support and assistance.

#### *Results-based management*

*[Paragraphs 164-172 of GA resolution 67/226]*

56. Over the past several biennia, FAO has been progressively establishing a results-based culture within the Organization. The elements of FAO's results framework were approved by the FAO Conference at its 38<sup>th</sup> Session in June 2013.<sup>14</sup> The basis is its Strategic Framework which sets out FAO's Vision, Global Goals, five Strategic Objectives, a sixth objective on technical quality, knowledge and services, Core Functions as mean of delivery and Functional Objectives for an enabling environment. The Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget set out outcomes, outputs and measurable indicators of achievement with targets, and required resources, with progress reported in the PIR. Links to country programming, UNDAF and resource mobilization are described earlier in this paper.

#### *Evaluation function in FAO*

*[Paragraphs 173-182 of GA resolution 67/226]*

57. During the period 2013-14, the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) carried out eight thematic and strategic evaluations, one of which conducted jointly with WFP's evaluation unit. The independent review of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) was also carried out upon the request of the FAO Council. Four country programmes were evaluated; three of them were in middle income countries, for which a synthesis report was prepared. In addition, OED supported the evaluation of 49 projects at the global, regional and country levels.

58. Since 2014 OED has been intensifying efforts to assist programme countries in the strengthening of their national evaluation capacities through increased involvement of national evaluation functions and expertise in country and project evaluations.

59. OED maintains collaboration with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and other evaluation networks, including by active participation in a number of Working Groups of UNEG (S01, S02 and S04), and has lately strengthened its contribution to Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluators (VOPEs) at regional and country levels.

#### *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*

*[Paragraphs 80-92 of GA resolution 67/226]*

60. FAO contributes to and reports against the UN System wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP). In the FAO's 2014 final report on the UN SWAP, the Organization met or exceeded 13 performance standards out of 15, compared with the total number of 12 standards that the Organization met or exceeded in 2013. There was an improvement in the number of standards that exceeded requirements from three (in 2013) to six (in 2014), and in the quality of FAO's report.

61. The cross-cutting theme on gender enables the Organization to mainstream gender issues in all of FAO's Strategic Objectives at global and country level. FAO gender specialists identified key areas

<sup>14</sup> C2013/7, C2013/3, C2013/REP paragraphs 96-110

of work which required particular attention to gender during the 2014-15 strategic planning process. This resulted in: 14 Outcome level indicators and 22 Output level indicators with qualifiers that are either gender specific or present specific dimensions that allow monitoring and tracking results in gender sensitive areas; the inclusion of gender perspectives and approaches applied to specific activities integrated in work plans and projects; and the introduction of gender markers, to support the assessment of gender sensitivity of activities/projects or programmes.

62. At the end of 2014, at least 90 Decentralized Offices reported on gender-related activities implemented, demonstrating the successful integration of gender issues in country programming and results.

63. Capacities of member countries to formulate and implement gender-responsive policies were strengthened through sector-specific learning initiatives. Major results achieved in 2014 include the development of a comprehensive e-learning course on gender in food and nutrition security related to Strategic Objective SO1 and the consolidation of the Gender and Land Rights Database (SO3).

64. FAO improved the availability of gender-sensitive statistics in various technical areas. The Organization continues its participation in interagency coordination mechanisms on gender equality and the empowerment of women (with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality [IANWGE], UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, interagency task force on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW], and the RBAs). FAO partnered with IFAD, WFP and UN Women to support the development of a General Recommendation on Rural Women by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

#### *Transition from relief to development*

*[Paragraphs 93-112 of GA resolution 67/226]*

65. FAO's resilience work, one of the five Strategic Objectives of its Strategic Framework, is anchored in many years of experience gained in planning and implementing relief, recovery and risk sensitive development.<sup>15</sup> FAO calls for a paradigm shift from reactive crisis response, where disaster and crisis are seen as the exceptions, to a more visionary proactive approach anticipating and preventing the increase of frequency and magnitude of shocks affecting vulnerable agriculture based livelihoods at risk. FAO has continued to support governance of risks and crises, early warning, vulnerability reduction and preparedness in countries of the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, areas that face recurrent bouts of severe droughts and remain highly vulnerable to food insecurity. Mindful of the importance of contributing to transition and peacebuilding, FAO together with the other RBAs, facilitated the formulation of a policy framework to improve food security and nutrition and build resilience in protracted crises for adoption at the 2015 session of the Committee on World Food Security. At country level, FAO supported three corporate Level 3 emergencies in 2014 (Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, Central African Republic and South Sudan). FAO continues to engage in policy and operational support on transition issues through its membership in the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition and co-chairing the IASC Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience.

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<sup>15</sup> Risk sensitive development is risk informed development which includes disaster risk reduction measures, avoiding the creation of new risks and building back better to face the challenges ahead. It takes into account the lessons learned from disasters and crises.