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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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Renewal of the Term of the Director, Office of Evaluation (OED)

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

Mr Godfrey Magwenzi
Director of Cabinet/Deputy Director-General
Email: Godfrey.Magwenzi@fao.org
Tel: (+39) 06 57051438

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) proposes the reappointment of Ms Clemencia Cosentino as Director of the Office of Evaluation (OED) for a second and final term of four years, effective from the conclusion of her current term on 22 May 2026. This proposal is in accordance with the FAO Charter, which mandates consultation with the Programme Committee (PC) on such appointment.
- Under Ms Cosentino's leadership, OED has undergone a strategic transformation guided by the FAO Evaluation Strategy 2023-2025 ([PC 135/3 Rev.1](#)). Her tenure has been marked by significant accomplishments, including enhanced efficiency in evaluation processes and strengthened global capacity for rigorous evaluations.
- In terms of strategic contributions, OED delivered critical evaluations on key areas such as the COVID-19 response, SDG 14, food loss and waste, and cash assistance, providing actionable insights for FAO's strategic priorities. Multi-year rolling work plans were developed to align with the Organization's evolving needs, while dissemination efforts were enhanced through concise, analytical documents and a revamped website, improving accessibility and engagement. These contributions have reinforced OED's role in driving evidence-based decision-making and supporting FAO's broader goals.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to review and provide guidance on the Director-General's proposal for Ms Cosentino's reappointment, taking into account her performance, the ongoing implementation of the FAO Evaluation Strategy, and the significant progress achieved during her tenure.

I. Renewal of the Term of the Director of the Office of Evaluation (OED)

1. The Director-General submits to the Programme Committee for consultation his proposal to renew the appointment of the Director of Evaluation, Ms Clemencia Cosentino, for a further and final term of four years. Ms Cosentino's current term of four years ends on 22 May 2026.
2. This proposal is made under paragraph 43 of the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation [Basic Texts, Volume II, Chapter H, Section VIII] which provides that “[...] *The renewal of the appointment of the Director of Evaluation is subject to consultation with the Programme Committee [...]*”. Paragraph 43 of the Charter further provides that “*the Director of Evaluation serves for a fixed term of four years with a possibility of reappointment only once for a further term of four years*”.
3. The Committee may recall that, as provided in the Charter (Ibid, paragraph 42), the initial appointment of the incumbent Director of Evaluation followed a competitive procedure involving a panel consisting of representatives of the Director-General and the Programme Committee, as well as the evaluation director of another Rome-based UN agency. This panel recommended the selection of the current Director of Evaluation (see Document [PC 133/INF/4](#)). The curriculum vitae of Ms Clemencia Cosentino is included below in Section II.
4. In accordance with the Charter for the Office of Evaluation (Basic Texts, Volume II, Chapter H, Section VII, paragraph 33), the Office of Evaluation reports to the Director-General and to the Council through the Programme Committee. In line with this dual accountability, both the Director-General and the Programme Committee assess the performance of the incumbent.
5. The Director-General proposes the reappointment of the Director of Evaluation for a further term of four years based on his assessment of the performance of Ms Cosentino, which he considers fully satisfactory and her conduct consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service. In particular, the Director-General is of the view that the principles of evaluation as described in the Charter for the Office of Evaluation (Ibid, paragraphs 6 to 12) have been adhered to.
6. The Programme Committee is the direct recipient of evaluation reports for the Governing Bodies and, in accordance with the Charter for the Office of Evaluation, approves the rolling work plan for major evaluations, considers major evaluation reports, as well as management responses, receives regular progress reports on the implementation of evaluation findings and recommendations, and provides recommendations to the Council (Ibid, paragraphs 35 and 36).
7. To allow the Programme Committee to make its merit-based review of the performance of the Director of Evaluation, Section III provides a brief overview of accomplishments from May 2022 to December 2024. Section IV provides a list of deliverables to the Governing Bodies during Ms Cosentino's tenure. The Committee is invited to offer its views on the proposed reappointment of Ms Clemencia Cosentino as Director of Evaluation for a final term of four years.

II. Curriculum vitae of Ms Clemencia Cosentino

A. Overview

1. Clemencia Cosentino is the Director of the Office of Evaluation at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Prior to joining FAO, she was the Chief Evaluation Officer of the United States National Science Foundation, Senior Fellow and Director of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Research at Mathematica, and the Director of the Program for Evaluation and Equity Research of the Urban Institute, a think tank in Washington, D.C., United States of America. Her 30 years of professional experience have been focused on generating (and building capacity to generate) robust evidence to support decisions (programmatic and policy) and strategic planning. Her studies have included, and taken her to work with local partners in, countries in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. She has been invited by international organizations, foundations, professional societies and universities to give lectures and offer workshops related to evaluation—including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the U.S.

National Academy of Sciences, and Harvard University. She is the author of a wide range of publications and the recipient of several honors—from her university years (Phi Beta Kappa, summa cum laude) to the 2021 inaugural “Excellence in Program Evaluation” award from the United States White House.

2. Languages: Spanish and English

3. Education: She holds a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master of Science in Sociology from Princeton University, and a Bachelor of Arts in History, International Studies and Economics from Washington University in St. Louis, United States of America.

B. Career Details

4. 2019 – 2022. National Science Foundation (NSF), Virginia, USA, Chief Evaluation Officer. Responsible for providing leadership, technical guidance and strategic management of evaluation and other evidence-building efforts. Work included serving in executive working groups, such as the Agency Equity Team, and responding to legislation, such as the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act; representing the Agency externally, such as in the G7 Working Group on Research Assessment and the White House Office of Management and Budget Council of Evaluation Officers; transitioning the Agency-wide evaluation unit in support of Agency strategic goals, which included developing an evaluation policy, annual evaluation plans, learning agenda, and an assessment of data maturity and capacity to build evidence.

5. 2010 – 2019. Mathematica, Washington D.C., USA, Director, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Research and Senior Fellow. Responsible for providing intellectual leadership, technical/methodological guidance, and strategic management of evaluations across divisions.

6. 1994 – 2000, 2002 – 2010. Urban Institute, Washington D.C., USA, Program for Evaluation and Equity Research (PEER), Education Policy Center. Began evaluation career as a Research Assistant, and later continued as Research Associate, Senior Research Associate, and ultimately Director. Initially responsible for programming and conducting research tasks and later for designing, and leading teams of researchers conducting evaluations and other research.

III. Key accomplishments

7. During Ms Cosentino’s tenure (23 May 2022–present), the Office of Evaluation (OED) underwent a major transformation driven by the FAO Evaluation Strategy 2023-2025 ([CL 172/REP](#)). Developed to drive this transformation, this Strategy introduced a comprehensive vision for strengthening FAO’s evaluation function. It is anchored in the following five key pillars, followed by a few examples of accomplishments.

1. **Plan and monitor.** Strategically allocate resources and continuously assess priorities to align evaluations with FAO’s evolving needs. Key Achievements:
 - a) reduced the backlog of evaluations from 400 to 282 (August 2023–August 2024) and the backlog of audit recommendations from 17 to 3 (with ongoing progress on remaining ones to close them in 2025);
 - b) developed an online project management system and an OED e-Library to support planning, promote collaborations, ensure electronic access to documents and data, and enhance transparency;
 - c) revised the Trust Fund Guide to clarify guidance and promote transparency and consistency; and
 - d) commissioned external quality reviews of evaluations to obtain independent feedback.
2. **Strengthen Capacity.** Expand global evaluation capacity and ensure consistent quality through decentralization and enhanced quality assurance. Key Achievements:

- a) hired skilled personnel to fill critical positions, address skills gaps, and improve the share of staff among OED personnel (41 percent as of December 2024);
 - b) enhanced regional presence and created a Knowledge Management team;
 - c) improved quality assurance processes and developed new and updated guidance for OED;
 - d) delivered trainings in survey methods, theories of change, research methods, and statistical programming (the last two open to FAO divisions and Rome-based Agencies); and
 - e) actively engaged in external conferences and other events to support the evaluation community, disseminate learning, and share insights.
3. **Research and Innovate.** Leverage cutting-edge research and technology to design impactful, data-driven evaluations. Key Achievements:
- a) developed, pilot-tested, and launched technology tools, including dashboards and a timekeeping system;
 - b) completed a study on recommendations to guide a dialogue with Management and the PC regarding potential changes in current practices with respect to recommendations;
 - c) conducted a benchmarking study of evaluation models, with pilot testing to inform future adjustments to OED practices; and
 - d) streamlined internal processes by developing a comprehensive system to track evaluation progress and improve efficiency.
4. **Evaluate for Use.** Design evaluations to measure tangible results and generate actionable insights for decision-making. Key Achievements:
- a) enhanced the quality of recommendations by focusing on fewer and potentially high-impact, transformative suggestions to focus actions;
 - b) advanced the development of a Learning Agenda to prioritize critical questions for OED's evidence-building efforts;
 - c) revised the Programme Evaluation Report (PER) to be focused on content; and
 - d) initiated the creation of an OED annual report to disseminate information and enhance transparency.
5. **Disseminate for Broader Impact.** Maximize the reach, transparency, and usability of evaluation findings through internal and external dissemination. Key Achievements:
- a) integrated dissemination plans into evaluation workflows;
 - b) revamped the OED website to improve accessibility and engagement;
 - c) developed guidance for report writing and presentations; and
 - d) expanded the types of documents in favour of shorter and more analytical documents.

IV. Work presented to Governing Bodies for discussion

1. Evaluations (autumn 2022 – autumn 2024)

- a) **Real-time evaluation of FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme** (PC 134/5, 2022) [Link](#).

The Committee welcomed this evaluation and Management Response...[and] c) encouraged FAO to strengthen its activities to prevent the emergence of future zoonotic diseases notably by promoting the One Health approach.

- b) **Evaluation of FAO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation** (PC 134/6, 2022) [Link](#).

The Committee appreciated the Evaluation and Management's acceptance of its findings and recommendations as the first step towards better work...[and] e) invited FAO to continue strengthening enabling environments for South-South and Triangular

Cooperation, project design, resource mobilization, as well as the strategic guidance and communication to better incorporate cross-cutting themes within and outside the Organization.

c) Evaluation of FAO's support to life below water (SDG 14) (PC 137/3, 2023) [Link](#).

The Committee welcomed the Evaluation report, its findings and recommendations and appreciated Management's Response...[and] e) appreciated and stressed that despite FAO's considerable efforts and progress there is room for improving persistent data gaps and discrepancies that undermine data quality and recommended the need for a long-term programme on these, which are fundamental to improve country reporting on SDG 14.

d) Evaluation of Programme Priority Area (Better Nutrition 4) Reduction of Food Loss and Waste (PC 138/3, 2024) [Link](#).

The Committee welcomed this evaluation and Management Response...[and] f) emphasized the importance of integrating environmental considerations, biodiversity, climate impact, gender and youth more systematically in the formulation and implementation of Food Loss and Waste reduction actions and mainstreaming it to a greater extent across all four betters.

e) Evaluation of FAO's Cash and Voucher Assistance (PC 138/4, 2024) [Link](#).

The Committee expressed appreciation for this Evaluation which is the first comprehensive assessment of FAO's Cash and Voucher Assistance portfolio since FAO began implementing Cash and Voucher Assistance modalities in 2001. The Committee welcomed the Evaluation and Management's acceptance of its findings and recommendations.

f) Evaluation of One Health (Better Production 3) (PC 139/4; 2024) [Link](#).

The Committee appreciated the timely, useful and comprehensive evaluation of One Health and Management's acceptance of the Evaluation's recommendations, including the proposed actions and commitments in the Management Response, and looked forward to its implementation in full.

2. Work plans (autumn 2022 – autumn 2024)

a) **Programme Committee 134th Session (7-11 November 2022): [Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations 2022-2025 - Update](#)**

b) **Programme Committee 137th Session (6-10 November 2023): [Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations 2024-2027 - Update](#)**

c) **Programme Committee 139th Session (11-15 November 2024): [Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations 2025-2028 - Update](#)**

3. Other reporting

a) **Programme Committee 135th Session (13-17 March 2023): FAO Evaluation Strategy (PC 135/3 Rev.1): [Link](#)**

b) **Conference 43rd Session (1-7 July 2023): Programme Evaluation Report 2023 (C 2023/4) [Link](#).**

The Conference: a) welcomed the Programme Evaluation Report 2023, including the main findings emerging from the project, programme, country and thematic evaluations of development and emergency and resilience evaluations completed during the period 2021-22; b) commended the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) for the volume of work completed during the biennium despite the challenges faced, including the COVID-19 pandemic; e) welcomed the evaluation strategy for the next two years with its focus on increasing OED effectiveness and efficiency, building capacity to conduct rigorous

evaluations, and generating robust evidence that is useful to FAO and its stakeholders; and f) highlighted the importance of the independence of OED and need for appropriate resources to carry out its work.