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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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**FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries
(Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tajikistan, Sudan)**

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

1. FAO Management welcomes this synthesis of recent country evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries which provides a creditable attempt to identify areas of common concern and provide recommendations to address these.
2. Many of the issues raised in the original evaluations are already in the process of being addressed. For example, management of the FAO's emergency programme in the Sudan is now under a single senior officer and this is helping to ensure greater synergy in the programmes for the North and the South. With the arrival of the FAO Representative, collaboration between the emergency/rehabilitation and development programmes has improved. At the corporate level, the measures in response to the Strategic Evaluation of FAO's Country Programming will also help address the recommendations made by this synthesis of country evaluations.
3. Earlier this year, FAO's Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) adopted a new Operational Strategy which emphasizes development of a programmatic approach, increased collaboration with internal and external partners and knowledge sharing – all aspects identified as important in the synthesis evaluation. Implementation of this Operational Strategy, which is fully in line with the Organization's Strategic Framework 2010-19, should go a long way to addressing many of the concerns raised in the evaluation.
4. This Management Response has been prepared by TCE, in view of the focus on post-conflict and transition countries, in collaboration with the Policy and Programme Development Support Divisions (TCS), the Corporate Services, Human Resources and Finance Department (CS) and the Office of Support to Decentralisation (OSD). Management accepts the four recommendations and wishes to point out that many of the actions to be taken involve several

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organizational units, which underlines the “contiguuum” of simultaneous action on emergency/rehabilitation and development fronts.

5. Management acknowledges that there is an urgent need to review not just the operational risks but also the financial risks faced by FAO when operating in complex environments and to ensure that the Organization's policies and procedures are appropriate and address those risks. FAO financial policies and procedures were designed for a normal operating environment and the Organization will need to review the operational and financial risk factors faced when working in the very difficult context of such countries. Management notes that it must also ensure that there is adequate capacity both at headquarters and decentralized offices to manage and contain operational and financial risks (e.g. for monitoring and control functions), and in particular that adequate extrabudgetary funding is secured to do so.

6. There are clear linkages with actions in follow-up to the recommendations made in the Evaluation of FAO's Operational Capacity in Emergencies¹. For example, Recommendation 1 of this Synthesis Report reflects the priority given to better integration of emergency portfolios within the National Medium Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPFs) and the move to a more programmatic approach. The strategic involvement of technical divisions from the initial stages of an emergency response, which was covered by Management's agreement to all the recommendations concerning technical support to emergency operations in the above evaluation, is also very much in line with Management's response to Recommendation 3 of the current evaluation. In addition, the promotion of knowledge management and networking, emphasized in the earlier evaluation, is echoed under Recommendation 3 of this Synthesis Report.

7. Management acknowledges the importance and challenges of linking relief, rehabilitation and development and is taking action to diversify the technical and operational approaches in relief interventions. Important steps have been taken to improve assessment methodologies and to integrate into emergency action the elements of FAO's normative work such as development of seed systems, farmers field schools, integrated plant management and soil fertility management, conservation agriculture, support to animal health services etc. in order to help ensure their sustainability. These efforts are often hampered by the inability of financing transition actions within existing donors' funding frameworks.

8. Additional financial resources are likely to be required for the recommended support to governments in formulating strategies, policies and legislation, as well as for a strengthened technical response. To obtain this, Management will take action to reinforce advocacy at country level by training and production of advocacy material suitable for post-conflict and transition contexts. In order to enable FAO Representatives to play their full role in enhancing country effectiveness in a consistent fashion, sustained support to FAO country offices will be required, something which - the evaluation notes - the emergency programme, because of the nature of its funding, has not been able to provide.

9. Management has noted the reference made by the evaluators to the disruptions of FAO's field work due to the length of FAO Representative vacancies or the absence of an FAO Representative in some countries. These gaps in representative country coverage were caused partly by the structural budgetary deficit of the FAO Country Offices Network, which was referred to by the Independent External Evaluation of FAO and examined by the CoC-IEE in preparing the Immediate Plan of Action. In response, the Director-General decided on measures to address this structural budgetary deficit in the short-term, and also proposed to eliminate the Lapse Factor for budgeted posts in the FAO Country Offices, as endorsed by the CoC-IEE. The interim measures include appointing Emergency Coordinators as Officers-in-Charge of FAO Representations where feasible and with the prior consent of the concerned donors and, on a case-by-case basis, placing current FAO Representatives against vacant posts in the Regional and Subregional Offices. With these measures in place, it is expected that the Organization will have greater flexibility to appoint Officers-in-Charge of the FAO Programme in countries with large

¹ PC 103/7 – FC 132/10

emergency programmes but no agreed Host Country Agreement for the establishment of a country office. It will also help in reducing the average length of FAO Representative vacancies.

Evaluation Recommendations	Management Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management - Action to be taken			
		Action	Responsible Unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>Recommendation 1: The NMTPF should reflect overall coherence and some continuity between emergency, rehabilitation and development activities, by better targeting populations and areas where it would be necessary to carry on with emergency and rehabilitation interventions and by increasing synergies between the various activities and elaborating some advocacy for transition.</p> <p>Other elements to be considered include FAO comparative advantage in terms of policy and legislative support as well as of analysis and dissemination of information on food security.</p> <p>FAO NMTPF should be realistic vis-à-vis the Organization's operational capacity and take into account the government strategies and plans.</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>In order to better reflect overall coherence and continuity between emergency, rehabilitation and development activities, the NMTPF should include, where appropriate, risk identification, mitigation and strategic interventions to reduce future vulnerabilities, in accordance with SO-I.</p> <p>Furthermore, in post-disaster and disaster-prone countries, the NMTPF should be further enhanced by developing a comprehensive rehabilitation programme and/or plan of action (POA) in order to address immediate risks, hazards and needs of the affected population and ensure a contiguum along the emergency-rehabilitation-development path.</p> <p>The NMTPF is intended to identify priority demand for FAO assistance in line with national priorities, the Organization's comparative advantage, strategic objectives and operational and technical assistance capacity. Hence the need for realism is already accepted in the country programming process. However, the NMTPF should not be restricted solely to FAO's capacity. Some of the issues and demands identified may be addressed by building partnerships with other institutions.</p>	<p>Include in the joint corporate review with TCE, TCS/TCD and OSP regarding the policies governing the integration of emergency activities into the NMTPF and country work plan, as agreed by Management in response to the Strategic Evaluation of FAO's country programming (doc. PC 104-4) Recommendation 13.</p>	<p>FO X1 coordination involving OSD, OSP, TC, ROs and technical departments</p>	<p>2010-2011</p>	<p>N</p>

Evaluation Recommendations	Management Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and COMMENT on the Recommendation	Management - Action to be taken			
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<p>Recommendation 2: In order to increase FAO's strategic role in advocacy, policy support, institutional strengthening and capacity development and its capacity to manage the project portfolio while respecting the volume and diversity of activities, a stronger presence should be guaranteed at the appropriate levels (national, state or provincial).</p> <p>Furthermore, FAO Representative posts should not be kept vacant for long periods of time and full-time residential FAO presence should be ensured in-country, especially in countries with a large extra-budgetary portfolio.</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Stronger presence at country level would have resource implications.</p> <p>Efforts to ensure timely filling of FAO Rep positions are ongoing, but delays are often caused by late clearance of FAO Representative nominees by Governments concerned in countries of accreditation.</p>	<p>Engagement with countries of accreditation to speed up the clearance process of FAO Representative nominees will be further intensified.</p> <p>Regular consultation with TCE on countries where stronger presence required because of large extra-budgetary portfolio will be further strengthened.</p>	<p>OSD</p> <p>TCE/OSD</p>	<p>Ongoing and continuing.</p>	<p>Y</p>
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<p>Recommendation 3: In order to improve FAO's operational and technical capacity and effectiveness, FAO staff must coordinate and collaborate more effectively at all levels, first at country level between the emergency staff and representations and between country staff and Headquarters.</p> <p>Support from headquarters and decentralized offices must be received on time by those who requested it.</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>TCE's Operational Strategy emphasizes the importance of increased collaboration at country level between the emergency staff and representations and between country staff and Headquarters.</p> <p>A starting point for closer collaboration at country level will be the participation of emergency staff in country programming exercises in these post-conflict and transition countries. Particular efforts should be made to maintain information exchange with a view to ensuring the LRRD contiguum.</p> <p>Proactive involvement of the technical divisions from need assessments and formulation of emergency/ rehabilitation projects, programmes and plans of action through all phases of implementation to monitoring and evaluation should be emphasized.</p> <p>The organization is preparing an Information and Knowledge Management Strategy to deal inter alia with these issues. Moreover, the draft New Vision on Decentralization highlights the importance of the further development of internal knowledge networks that should play an important role in the internal knowledge exchange.</p>	<p>Expedite the implementation of TCE's Operational Strategy that already emphasizes the importance of increased collaboration at country level between the emergency staff and representations and between country staff and Headquarters.</p> <p>Strengthen the mandate of the Strategy Team of Strategic Objective I to include strengthening of cooperation and networking between units including the more systematic involvement of the technical staff in the regional and sub-regional offices to ensure the LRRD contiguum.</p> <p>Continue to work on the Corporate Information and Knowledge Management Strategy (OEK).</p>	<p>ROs, TCE, TCS, OSD</p> <p>DDO</p> <p>OEK, ROs, concerned technical units and SOI OR-3 group</p>	<p>Work in progress, some results by 2010/11 biennium.</p>	<p>N for first part of recommendation.</p> <p>Y likely for some technical units for second part.</p> <p>N</p>

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<p>Recommendation 4: The Organization should make use of its comparative advantage in order to guide and support governments in formulating strategies, policies and legislation; particularly in post-conflict and transition contexts the opportunities to contribute to shaping national policies in areas such as land tenure, forestry, natural resource management, animal health etc. should not be lost. Considering the unpredictability of donor support, FAO needs to take a pro-active role in promoting assistance in these fields.</p>	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Rehabilitation programmes and plans of actions that ensure contiguum through linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) could be emphasized as one of the tools to address some of the structural problems in the agricultural sector, while providing post-shock rehabilitation assistance/partnership, within the resources of FAO's regular programme.</p> <p>A review of FAO's Country Programming Policy and guidelines is foreseen as follow-up to the Strategic Evaluation of FAO's Country Programming. This will address: (i) FAO's assistance to Governments in priority setting; (ii) development of NMTPF/CPF including LRRD contiguum; (iii) country workplans including unit results in the field of disaster risk management.</p>	<p>Reinforce advocacy at country level. Work on production of advocacy material suitable for post-conflict and transition contexts.</p>	<p>FAORs, TCSP, LEG, TCE with SOI, OR-3 group</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Y</p>
		<p>Follow-up to this recommendation to be included in the review of the corporate Country Programming policy.</p>	<p>FO X1 coordination involving OSD, OSP, TC, RO's and technical departments</p>	<p>3rd Quarter 2011</p>	<p>Y</p>