

## 174th Session of the Council

### Item 13: Update on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities

FAO expresses its appreciation for the strategic guidance and specific comments from Members on Item 13, *Update on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities*. FAO takes note of all suggestions and is pleased to acknowledge Members' recognition of the importance of enhancing collaboration with all United Nations (UN) system entities, including the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As highlighted in the report, FAO remains steadfast in contributing to, and building upon, the benefits of the UN development system (UNDS) repositioning. The Organization aims to further enhance its participation and leadership within UN Country Teams, leverage Resident Coordinator (RC) support to integrate agrifood systems perspective into relevant frameworks, expand participation in joint programmes, and increase access to UN inter-agency pooled funds, with an overall objective to increase the impact and value addition of UN collaboration on the ground, to assist countries in their SDG attainment.

Further updates on the implementation of the UN reform may be made available next year through the UNDS Checklist for UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Entities' Governing Bodies, which was developed by the Chairperson of the UNSDG. At present, the outcomes of internal assessment showcased that, with few minor exceptions, some of which are still in the process of being addressed, FAO is in consistent alignment with the UNDS repositioning and is implementing its recommendations in accordance with the suggested timeline.

The recent global tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the RBAs, circulated to Members through the Members Gateway in August 2023, and the deepening and institutionalization of collaborations with other UN entities mark significant steps towards unified efforts in tackling global challenges. FAO is committed to providing more detailed and regular updates on these partnerships, including concrete examples of joint RBA work and results emanating from the MoU.

The referenced two-year UN partnership roadmap, developed in collaboration with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), serves as an internal guide for developing FAO's vision and building and enhancing the tools and capabilities of FAO's technical, regional and country offices to fully engage with the larger UN system, thereby reinforcing the collective approach to UN partnerships with a focus on country-based results. The outcomes of the roadmap implementation would be duly reflected in FAO's future reporting to its Governing Bodies on UN collaboration as well as on Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) implementation.

FAO welcomes Members' desire for further clarification on the nature and implementation of these collaborations at all levels. As such, the Organization recognizes the need for providing concrete examples and detailed descriptions of how these partnerships manifest and contribute to various sectors, including fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, as well as water in an integrated way, for example through blue transformation, ecosystem restoration and other thematic areas, highlighting their contribution to the SDGs. FAO will also be launching soon a new external website on the Organization's collaboration with UN system partners, which will put greater spotlight on these important partnerships.

FAO is strategically collaborating with a range of UN and other environmental fora related to climate change and biodiversity. By leveraging these collaborations, and actively providing technical inputs to intergovernmental discussions, FAO aims to support the implementation the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in the areas of FAO's mandate and technical expertise, including food waste, pesticides, genetic resources, agricultural reform subsidies, restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems,

and agriculture plastics. A recent example of this is FAO's ongoing discussion with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) aimed at strategizing existing collaboration.

FAO appreciates the emphasis on not only the quantity but also the quality of these collaborations. To this end, FAO is developing metrics of success and impact measurement methodologies with the support of UNSSC, as part of the two-year UN partnership roadmap. These will assist in evaluating the effectiveness of our UN partnerships and their contributions towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. FAO also agrees to include specific case studies in future updates and progress reports, highlighting both the successes and challenges faced in these collaborative endeavors.

FAO has developed long-standing and trustful relationships with international financial institutions (IFIs), including through FAO Investment Center, and is currently engaged in ongoing UN system-wide discussions on enhancing collaboration with IFIs at country level. Specific examples of FAO's engagement – together with other UN agencies – in various country-level collaborations with IFIs can be included in next year's report. Regarding the regional dimension, the Regional Conferences may be considered a more relevant fora for updating the Membership on the wide range of regional--level partnerships and collaborations.

Additionally, the report's emphasis on the importance of continued and strengthened RBA support to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is noted. FAO acknowledges the significance of ensuring that the CFS remains a key component in the RBAs' activities post UN Food Systems Summit.

Finally, with regard to the provision and circulation of MoUs with Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), the matter was referred to the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) under Rule XXXIV, paragraph 7(m), of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) and will be addressed during the 174th Session of the FAO Council, in December 2023. Steps can be taken to disseminate all MoUs concluded with other Intergovernmental Organizations through a dedicated password-protected portal, should the Members decide so, provided that FAO obtains the express consent of the other parties prior to dissemination or publication.