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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COUNCIL

Hundred and Fifty-fifth Session

Rome, 5 - 9 December 2016

Report of the 120th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 7 - 11 November 2016)

Executive Summary

The Programme Committee examined a number of matters relating to programme planning and evaluation, in particular with regards to:

- a) Reviewed Strategic Framework and outline of Medium Term Plan 2018-21 (para. 3)
- b) Strategy for FAO's work on climate change (para. 4)
- c) Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Strategic Objective 5 – Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises (para. 5)
- d) Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function (para. 6)
- e) Follow-up report on the evaluation of FAO's contribution in crisis-related transition-Linking relief to development (para. 7)
- f) Follow-up report on the Joint FAO/WFP Evaluation of the Food Security Cluster Coordination (para. 8)
- g) Indicative rolling work plan of evaluations 2017-2019 (para. 9)
- h) Roadmap for the independent assessment of technical capacity of the Organization (para. 10)

The Committee brings its findings and recommendations on these matters to the attention of the Council.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is requested to endorse the findings of the Programme Committee, as well as its recommendations on matters within its mandate.

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

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REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Rome, 7-11 November 2016

Introduction

1. The Committee submitted to the Council the following report of its Hundred and Twentieth session.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, His Excellency Serge Tomasi (France), the following representatives of Members were present:

H.E. C.J. Rozencwaig (Argentina)	Mr O. Kubota (Japan)
Mr E. Robinson (Canada)	Mr F.R. Salamh Al Argan (Jordan)
Mr M. Mankoussou (Congo)	Mr M. Hooper (New Zealand)
Mr J.A. Carranza Barona (Ecuador)	H.E. I. Nordang (Norway)
Mr M.N. Camara (Guinea)	H.E. Marek Szczygiel (Poland)
H.E. A. Wadhwa (India)	Mr A. Na'ami Al-Na'ami (Yemen)

Reviewed Strategic Framework and outline of Medium Term Plan 2018-21¹

3. The Committee:
 - a) took note of the global developments, trends and challenges identified, as a basis for reviewing the Strategic Objectives, including the incorporation of statistics, and the cross-cutting themes of gender, governance, nutrition and climate change;
 - b) endorsed the continuation of the five Strategic Objectives and their reformulated Outcomes as a basis for preparing the full Medium Term Plan 2018-21 (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2018-19;
 - c) appreciated the incorporation of the SDG targets and indicators in the results framework and underlined the importance of FAO's action to help countries achieve the relevant SDGs, based on the country programming frameworks;
 - d) provided comments on the formulation of the Strategic Objective programmes, outcomes and outputs and requested the Secretariat to address more adequately agroecology, biotechnology, family farming and smallholders, including their access to local, national and international markets, migration and the cross-cutting issues of gender, governance, nutrition and climate change in the full MTP/PWB;
 - e) noted that Objective 6 provided the basis for strengthening and monitoring the technical quality of FAO's work, as well as the cross-cutting themes across the Strategic Objectives, and suggested that Objective 6 be retitled to better reflect its scope, as: *Technical quality, statistics and cross-cutting themes (gender, governance, nutrition and climate change)*; and
 - f) requested that the MTP 2018-21 include an annex that clearly compares the results framework used in 2014-17 with the proposed results framework for 2018-21.

¹ CL 155/3

Strategy for FAO's work on climate change²

4. The Committee welcomed the Strategy for FAO's work on climate change and congratulated the Secretariat for the quality of the document and for FAO's accreditation to the Green Climate Fund. The Committee:

- a) noted the Strategy took account of the evaluation recommendations, and welcomed the participatory process adopted for strategy development and its focus on country level action;
- b) highlighted the need to: (i) strengthen partnerships, particularly with the Committee on World Food Security and Rome-based Agencies; (ii) increase its focus on vulnerable groups and countries; (iii) strengthen the capacities of decentralized offices; (iv) include in the Strategy further specific themes highlighted by the Committee during its meeting; and (v) develop an action plan with clear financial and human resources requirements necessary for implementation; and
- c) requested to review an updated Strategy and a plan of action at the next Committee meeting.

Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Strategic Objective 5 – Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises³

5. The Committee welcomed this evaluation and Management Response, and the measures proposed to improve implementation of SO5, and:

- a) welcomed the work undertaken on resilience by the FAO Secretariat;
- b) noted the resources allocated to SO5 within the Programme of Work and Budget through assessed and voluntary contributions;
- c) underlined the need for the SO evaluation reports to comment on the extent of the collaboration and cooperation in the field with other UN agencies, notably those based in Rome;
- d) welcomed the fact that FAO was committed to gender mainstreaming in resilience, and that greater attention had been granted in programme design to this issue;
- e) however, the Committee noted that the report devoted insufficient attention to the issue of gender and reiterated its request that an annex be dedicated to gender in future Strategic Objective evaluations, and that FAO's gender policy standards be used as a baseline; and
- f) requested that the conclusions and recommendations from this report be taken well into account during the preparation of the next Medium Term Plan and Strategic Framework relative to resilience.

Independent Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function⁴

6. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the high-quality report, and noted the progress in improving the evaluation function in FAO in the past biennium;
- b) agreed in particular with the recommendation for enhancing learning and accountability;
- c) agreed on the need for greater consideration of the gender dimension in evaluations;

² PC 120/2

³ PC 120/4; PC 120/4 Sup.1

⁴ PC 120/5; PC 120/5 Sup.1

- d) requested an action plan and timeline to implement the agreed recommendations to be submitted to the next session of the Committee in 2017, as well as a follow-up report on the implementation of recommendations after two years;
- e) agreed with the Management Observations to continue with the existing Charter before future consideration could be given to an Evaluation Policy, and looked forward to review of this issue by the Committee in 2019;
- f) agreed to continue with a centralized evaluation function at FAO, noting that in the future, consideration could be given to decentralized evaluations, and observing the risk posed to the impartiality of externally-funded decentralized evaluations; and
- g) stressed the value of the dual reporting line of the Director of Evaluation to the Members and to the Director-General with a view to servicing both the learning and accountability functions; while supporting greater flexibility in the use of OED human and financial resources within the context of the Office's reporting line.

Follow-up report on the evaluation of FAO's contribution in crisis-related transition – Linking relief to development ⁵

7. The Committee took note of this follow-up report, and:
- a) expressed appreciation for the important progress made by the Secretariat in the implementation of the recommendations;
 - b) encouraged FAO to continue advocating its comparative advantage and expertise in crisis and transition contexts;
 - c) noted the importance of strengthening resilience in country programming frameworks (CPFs) and encouraged the Secretariat to pursue action taken in this regard;
 - d) welcomed the progress made by the Secretariat in the inclusion of gender aspects in resilience programming; and
 - e) encouraged FAO to continue strengthening the partnership with the Rome-based agencies in linking relief to development.

Follow-up report on the Joint FAO/WFP Evaluation of the Food Security Cluster Coordination⁶

8. The Committee, took note of this follow-up report, and:
- a) welcomed the quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided;
 - b) acknowledged the good progress in the implementation of the evaluation recommendations;
 - c) appreciated the important coordination role of the cluster in food security interventions in crisis situations and the joint leadership role of FAO and WFP in this regard; and
 - d) encouraged further strengthening of the partnership for results between FAO and WFP, in particular at the field level, building on good practices such as the collaboration under the Global and Country Food Security Clusters.

⁵ PC 120/6

⁶ PC 120/7

Indicative rolling work plan of evaluations 2017-2019⁷

9. The Committee:
- a) endorsed the proposed work plan of evaluations 2017-2019 with comments, while noting the importance that the evaluation of FAO's work on gender be a comprehensive report, including implementation of the gender strategy; and
 - b) recommended evaluation of FAO's major thematic strategies on a cyclical basis, and looked forward to a proposal in this regard at its next session.

Roadmap for the independent assessment of technical capacity of the Organization⁸

10. The Committee:
- a) took note of the content of document JM 2016.2/3 "Roadmap for the independent assessment of technical capacity of the Organization" and its Addendum "Terms of reference and curricula vitae of independent consultants";
 - b) welcomed the fact that the draft report of the external consultants would be presented at an informal briefing to Permanent Representatives in late January/early February 2017; and
 - c) noted that the final report of the independent assessment of the technical capacity of the Organization will be presented to the 156th session of the Council in April 2017 and the 40th session of the FAO Conference in July 2017.

Any other business

11. The Committee:
- a) recalled the welcoming by the 154th Session of the Council of the Director-General's decision to hold an informal seminar dedicated to gender in 2016, and looked forward to the seminar, along with a document elaborating FAO's work and achievements on gender;
 - b) expressed its deep concerns on the tardy publication of some documents in some languages at this session; and stressed the need for receiving documents in all languages at the earliest possible juncture, and no later than two weeks before the meetings of the Committee, as established by current standards; and
 - c) requested the Secretariat to present at its next session considerations for possible future disaggregation of agenda items relating to evaluation matters into separate, additional meetings of the Committee.

Date and place of the Hundred and Twenty-first Session

12. The Committee was informed that its 121st session would take place in Rome from 27 – 31 March 2017.

⁷ PC 120/8

⁸ JM 2016.2/3; JM 2016.2/3 Add.1