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# PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

## Hundred and Twenty-first Session

Rome, 27 - 31 March 2017

Evaluation of FAO's contribution to reduction in rural poverty (SO 3)

Management Response

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1. Management welcomes the Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Objective 3 – Reduce Rural Poverty. It provides a useful diagnosis of the current situation of the Programme and its implementation at regional and country level, and provides a blueprint for moving forward in improving FAO's focus and interventions on poverty reduction and mainstreaming poverty reduction across FAO's work programme. Management agrees fully with five of the six (6) main recommendations brought by the evaluation team. Management believes that the SDGs, in particular SDG1, provide the ideal platform for strengthening and embedding the Organization's work on poverty reduction at global, regional and country level. Moreover, management believes that FAO is best positioned to promote the complementarities between SDG1 (poverty eradication) and SDG 2 (hunger eradication), which are fundamentally interrelated.
2. As highlighted by the evaluators, while one of FAO's three Global Goals is poverty eradication, there is nonetheless significant scope to more explicitly recognize the poverty reduction potential in FAO's programme of work, which has traditionally focused on food security and hunger as well as the more technical aspects related to sustainable production and natural resource management. In this sense, Strategic Objective 3 can be seen as a somewhat "new" area of work for the Organization, with all of the attendant challenges and opportunities this presents, including raising awareness, capacities and buy-in both inside and outside of FAO. This is particularly important in terms of mobilizing voluntary contributions to achieve the goals of Strategic Objective 3, in a context where resource partners are less familiar with FAO's role and contributions in this area of work. In this regard, the Report recognizes the need for a broad, cross-sectoral approach consistent with the Strategic Objective 3 revised Theory of Change as presented in the MTP 2018-21<sup>1</sup> and the interest of countries to broaden the scope of programmes and projects explicitly targeting and benefitting the poor beyond "traditional" areas of FAO in order to achieve the SDGs.
3. Given the profile of FAO technical capacities both at HQ and in the decentralized offices, it is clear that the balance of the current portfolio of the Organization's work under SP3 addresses access to resources, technologies and markets and empowerment issues in the context of sustainable agricultural (crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry) production ("Outcome 1"). This does not however diminish the importance of a broader approach to poverty reduction and FAO's essential contributions in the areas of rural employment ("Outcome 2") and social protection ("Outcome 3") in the context of ongoing rural transformations. Indeed, the merit of FAO's approach to rural poverty reduction embodied in Strategic Objective 3 is the need to link FAO's programme of work in sustainable agriculture and inclusive value chains to decent rural employment and social protection in broad-based rural poverty reduction and rural development strategies in order to maximize FAO's contribution to achieving SDG1. In the case of Outcomes 2 and 3, FAO is acutely aware that the only way to achieve sustainable impact is to leverage the Organization's value-added through intensive collaboration with other development actors to contribute to country-driven policy processes and programmes. As rightly stressed by the evaluation report, in order to effectively tackle poverty reduction, FAO engagement at country level needs to go beyond the agricultural development agenda.
4. Management believes that the Evaluation provides evidence and justification for FAO to ensure more strongly focus its poverty reduction agenda and make sure it is leveraged and mainstreamed into the Organization's programme of work. In this vein, FAO is aware that this agenda can be a vigorous vehicle for consolidating and expanding strategic partnerships. FAO should deepen and broaden its ongoing high level engagement with UN agencies such as UNICEF, ILO, IFAD and IOM around rural poverty reduction to include WFP and UNDP, as well as continue to expand strategic partnerships with civil society and producer organizations, the private sector and academic and research institutions.
5. In order to achieve country level results at scale, a significant push will be needed as well to further deepen and leverage FAO's collaboration with the World Bank, IFAD and other international financial institutions, taking advantage of and building on the expertise available in FAO's Investment

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<sup>1</sup> C 2017/3 paragraphs 200-222

Centre (TCI) and integrating TCI further into the work of SP3 and the other strategic programmes. There are also significant opportunities to better recognize the essential linkages between poverty reduction, natural resources and climate change, taking advantage of mechanisms such as the GEF and the Green Climate Fund. Moreover, FAO is promoting a more tailored and targeted resource mobilization effort at all levels, with a unifying narrative built around the SDGs.

6. Given the resource constraints of the Regular Program Budget, Recommendation 4 is particularly relevant, and the SP3 team is already closely engaged in the development of a marketing and branding strategy for SP3. This will assist the team in raising awareness both amongst resource partners and throughout FAO itself around the critical role that SP3 plays in achieving the goals of the Organization. Steps now underway include the development of standard messaging and training modules to provide resource mobilization advocacy tools to decentralised actors, and increasing the capacity of the Team to support resource mobilization through the services of a specialized marketing campaign manager, based in TCS and providing 100 percent support to SP3.

7. To effectively improve the focus and increase the critical mass and impact of FAO's poverty reduction work at country level will require a concerted effort of the Organization. The approach will combine improved strategic focus, partnering and resource mobilization at national, regional and global level, and will be flanked by communications and capacity development. Given the decentralised nature of resource mobilization decision making for most partners, it is essential that FAORs and other key actors be equipped and motivated to act as champions for SP3 in their interaction with donors. The overall effort will be led by the SP3 Management Team under the guidance of the Deputy Director-General, Programmes, and supported by regional and subregional management, the other SP Teams, Communications, Human Resources, and the Office for Support to Decentralization. It will also require the support of the Deputy Director-General, Natural Resources, in order to tap into the wealth of technical expertise and ensure tailored approaches to poverty reduction through the array of FAO Technical Networks.

8. Finally, FAO management looks forward to better targeting and sharpening its work on poverty reduction and pitching interventions at a more strategic level in country, with enhanced recognition of the important catalytic role that FAO can play in assisting governments to work towards their SDG commitments, in full understanding of the critical inter-linkages between the SDGs, and the essential need for interaction between the various government ministries including but not limited to the ministries of agriculture.

**Management response to the Evaluation of FAO's Strategic Objective 3: Reducing Rural Poverty matrix**

Evaluation recommendation (a)	Management response (b) Accepted, partially accepted or rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Timeframe (e)	Further funding required (Y or N) (f)
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> FAO should identify a limited number of countries where conditions are right to achieve significant results through multi-sectoral approach to poverty reduction to demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach	Partially accepted  Over the past year, all five strategic programmes have together led an intense process of, on the one hand, prioritization of the programme of work in a limited number of countries in order to focus on achieving significant results, and on the other, deepening of multi sectoral cross strategic programme initiatives. FAO agrees, however, on the need to focus further multi-sectoral approaches to poverty reduction in a reduced number of countries, a process which is already under way. This focus includes countries where conditions are favourable to the achievement of results at scale, but should not, however, impede attention to countries suffering high incidence of poverty where FAO can make a difference, but needs to invest over a longer time horizon. FAO will build on key opportunities,	1.1) Identify a limited number of countries where conditions are favourable to achieve results through a multi-sectoral approach and provide targeted support from the different SP teams, giving priority to Regional Initiative focus countries and other countries where FAO has already built a critical mass of work.	SP3MT with other SPMTs and RSPLs	End 2017	N
		1.2) Explore new multi sectoral, cross strategic programme initiatives at country level, and deepen existing initiatives, such as for example Nutrition Sensitive Social Protection and Zero Hunger (SP1-SP3), shock responsive social protection (SP3-SP5), migration (SP3-SP5), inclusive value chain/food systems (SP3-SP4) and decent employment and improved livelihoods in agriculture (SP3-SP2).	SP3MT with other SPMTs and RSPLs	2018-19	N

Evaluation recommendation (a)	Management response (b) <b>Accepted</b> , partially accepted or <b>rejected</b>	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Timeframe (e)	Further funding required (Y or N) (f)
	including those highlighted by the Evaluation Team.				
<b>Recommendation 2:</b> FAO should ensure that poverty analysis is conducted in programme countries, and based on such an analysis, pro-poor approaches with theories of change are built into the design of country programmes and projects.	<b>Accepted</b> The incorporation of the SDGs in the FAO MTP provides an opportunity to more clearly frame and further align SP contributions to country plans and strategies. It also provides an important vehicle to make more explicit the impact on poverty reduction of the other Strategic Programmes and FAO's broader technical programme of work. As correctly underlined by the report, this requires explicit poverty analysis in the formulation of country CPFs, programmes and projects, and a clear theory of change of how FAO's programme of work will lead to rural poverty reduction, including in specific areas of social protection, access and youth employment and their related SDG targets. FAO will work at regional and country	2.1) ES Department, in collaboration with the CB Department and the SP3MT, the other SPMTs and RSPLs, will adapt an appropriate analytical methodology to identify the main drivers of poverty and impediments to achieving SDGs 1 and 2, which focuses in particular on identifying the inter-linkages between hunger, rural poverty, sustainable food and agriculture, non-farm income generation, resilience to threats and crisis, migration and climate change. A particular focus will be made on the climate change and poverty nexus, including prevention, adaptation and mitigation elements. This would include specific linkages around social protection, migration, climate resilience and youth employment. The methodology development should generate tools for policy analysis and support to assist countries in addressing the main causes of rural poverty and hunger and improve targeting.	ADG-ES, ADG-CB and SP3MT with other SPMTs and RSPLs	Mid-2018	N
		2.2) Provide guidance for countries to include poverty analysis in the CPF process, and in programme and project formulation based on the ES and CB analytical approach.	SP3MT, TCS, TCI and OSP with ESD and CBD	Mid-2018	N

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	level to support member countries in identifying and clarifying needs for support and the relevant linkages to FAO Strategic Programmes, in the context of SDG engagement. This will provide the platform for building awareness and ownership across countries, regions and SPs on linkages to poverty reduction and the importance of poverty analysis in the formulation of CPFs and national projects and programmes.	<p>2.3) All strategic programmes will systematically consider the dimensions of poverty, income inequality, empowerment, gender equality, decent work, social protection and poverty targeting in CPF, programme and project formulation when applicable.</p> <p>2.4) FAO will review the feasibility of requiring poverty assessments as part of FAO's environmental and social managerial guidelines for programmes and projects.</p>	<p>SPLs, RSPLs and DDN supported by ESD, CBD and SP3-MT</p> <p>DDP with SP3MT and other SPMTs</p>	<p>2018-2019</p> <p>End 2017</p>	<p>N</p> <p>N</p>
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> FAO should develop a capacity development programme for country offices around SP3 themes that is based on a targeted skill-needs analysis, and clearly identify ways and monitor how the targeted officials, such as FAORs and programme managers, apply such capacity in programme design and resource mobilization.	<b>Accepted</b> FAO will leverage its Technical Networks and FAOR programme and Community Network and related mechanisms to build capacity around key gaps in decentralized knowledge and skills on the SP3 areas of work. FAO will enhance its capacity development programme to strengthen technical skills, particularly in poverty and gender-equality targeting, climate change and poverty nexus, and other areas of	<p>3.1) Conduct a staff skills needs assessment (in HQ and DOs) around poverty reduction issues, including the main components of the FAO theory of change (access/employment/social protection/multi-sectoral poverty reduction strategies).</p> <p>3.2) Based on the skills needs assessment and building on existing initiatives, develop a capacity building programme, leveraging to the highest extent possible existing knowledge sharing platforms such as the FAO Technical Networks and FAOR Programme and Community Network, to ensure wide diffusion, demonstrate linkages and build ownership across FAO technical areas.</p>	<p>SP3MT with OHR and OSD</p> <p>SP3MT and OHR with OSD, other SPMTs, DDN and ES</p>	<p>End 2017</p> <p>Mid 2018</p> <p>End 2017</p>	<p>N</p> <p>Y</p> <p>N</p>

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	recognized gaps in the decentralized offices such as decent rural employment and social protection. This will be flanked by an intensified communications effort to raise awareness around key messages and build commitment.	3.3) Develop and implement a communication plan for FAO's role on rural poverty reduction and hunger with particular focus on country level work/examples, illustrating successful cases and use the SDG global coordination mechanism for dissemination along with the policy portal, internal communication channels and outreach mechanisms targeting FAORs and decentralized offices.	SP3MT and OCC with OSD, DDN and ESD		
<b>Recommendation 4:</b> FAO should develop a customized resource mobilization strategy that includes global, regional and country level dimensions and considers the identification of new funding streams within donor institutions more relevant to SP3.	<b>Accepted</b> FAO is currently engaged in developing a resource mobilization plan based on a clearer articulation of the value proposition ("branding") that the Organization brings to rural poverty reduction; this will include actions at global, regional and country level. In connection with this, FAO will undertake a mapping of resource partners pursuing the poverty reduction agenda, to ensure potential matches are identified to the fullest extent possible, including in new funding streams of donor institutions and, taking advantage of mechanisms such as the GEF and the Green	4.1) Develop a resource mobilization action plan for SP3, with a particular focus on underfunded programme areas, such as youth employment and social protection. The plan should consider support to decentralized offices in approaching potential donors for resource mobilization efforts and duly take into account new funding streams of donors.	TCS and SP3MT with RSPLs	Mid 2017	N
		4.2) Provide guidance for GCF/GEF project formulation to explicitly consider rural poverty reduction, including targeting, policies and activities, and multi sectoral approaches.	CBD and TCI with SP3MT, other SPMTs and RSPLs	End 2017	N

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	Climate Fund which can better incorporate the poverty and climate change nexus.				
<b>Recommendation 5:</b> FAO should deepen its collaboration with strategic partners to achieve scale and concrete results around relevant SDGs.	<b>Accepted</b> FAO engages in numerous partnerships with UN agencies at global, regional and country level under SP3-related areas. FAO will continue to pursue high-level engagement with UN Agencies and other strategic partners in order to best leverage complementary approaches to the poverty reduction agenda, particularly at country level. FAO will also strengthen its engagement with international financial institutions in close collaboration with TCI in order to more effectively leverage the Organization's contribution to SDG1, as well as with non-state actors including civil society, producer organizations and the private sector.	5.1) Leverage existing CPF formulation and related resource mobilization efforts, broaden strategic engagement beyond agriculture to ministries (such as Social Development, Rural Development, Labour, Gender, Planning) and partners (such as ILO, UNICEF, UN-Women, DFID, UNDP, IFAD, WFP) involved in rural poverty reduction;	Cos with RSPLs, OPC, SP3MT and other SPMTs	2018-19	N
		5.2) Continuously engage in a high level dialogue with UNTT for SDGs and Rome-based Agencies towards building synergies in the development agenda and considering the value added of each organization to develop joint programmes/projects for supporting countries in achieving the SDGs.	ODG and SP3MT with DDN and ES	2018-19	N
		5.3) Engage strategically with Development Banks in developing investment strategies with greater impact on poverty reduction, considering the access of the poorest to natural resources, markets, technologies, employment generation, social protection and sectoral policies.	TCI and TCS with SP3MT	End 2018	N

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		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection (c)	Responsible unit (d)	Timeframe (e)	Further funding required (Y or N) (f)
<b>Recommendation 6:</b> FAO should identify SP3-related approaches that have the greatest potential for impact on gender equality, and ensure that these are duly considered during the design and implementation of SP3 interventions.	<b>Accepted</b> FAO will intensify its engagement to promote gender equality and rural women's empowerment in poverty reduction interventions, building on work across all SP3 outcomes and on proven approaches with transformational potential for narrowing the development gap between men and women, boys and girls. This will require buy-in and collaboration across strategic programmes and all levels of the Organization.	6.1) Further strengthen the analytical capacity to mainstream gender in poverty analysis and in assessing the impact of poverty reduction programmes.	ESD and CBD with SPMTs and RSPLs	Mid-2018	N
		6.2) Identify successful gender equality and rural women's empowerment approaches in FAO programme of work and promote them at regional and country level for scale up, including within the context of SSC;	ESP with SPMTs and RSPLs	End 2017	N
		6.3) Develop a component on gender equality and rural women's empowerment interventions in the capacity development programme (see Action 3.2).	ESP with SP3MT and OHR	Mid-2018	N