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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-third Session

Rome, 28 November - 2 December 2011

Report of the Hundred and Eighth Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 10 – 14 October 2011)

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REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Rome, 10 - 14 October 2011

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee submitted to the Council the following report of its Hundred and Eighth session.

2. In addition to the Chairperson, Her Excellency Cecilia Nordin van Gansberghe (Sweden), the following representatives of Members were present:

Mr A.R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)	H.E. LI Zhengdong (China)
Mr A. Riache (Algeria)	Mr E.O. Fayed (Egypt)
Mr G.O Infante (Argentina)	Mr A.G. Aseffa (Ethiopia)
Ms S. Afroz (Bangladesh)	Ms S. Nilsson (Germany)
Ms M van Dooren (Belgium)	Mr N. Fraser (New Zealand)
Mr M. Valicenti (Canada)	Mr G. Vega Berrio (Panama)

3. The Chairperson informed the Committee that the following representatives had been designated to replace the nominated Members:

- Algeria: Mr Mohammed Mellah to replace Mr Azeddine Riache;
- Canada: Ms Debra Price to replace Mr Marco Valicenti on October 10th and 11th;
- China: Mr Handi Guo to replace H.E. LI Zhengdong; and
- Ethiopia: Mr Fiseha Tesfu to replace Mr Abreha Aseffa

A summary of the qualifications of the above representatives is given in the addendum to this report¹.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable²

4. The Agenda and a modified version of the Timetable for the meeting were approved.

I. Programme planning and priority setting

Country Programming Guidelines³

5. The Committee expressed appreciation for the policies and principles underpinning the document. It stressed the importance of the Country Programming Framework in guiding all FAO's work at country level and encouraged FAO Representations to use this document for outreach with resource partners at country level.

6. It reiterated the lead role of decentralized offices in the country programming process, the development of their capacities in this regard, the necessity of the engagement of member countries, and the close linkages between FAO's resource mobilization strategy and the country programming process.

¹ CL 143/7 Add. 1

² PC 108/1; PC 108/INF/1

³ PC 108/2

7. The Committee provided the following specific recommendations for the finalization of the Guidelines:

- a) make more explicit reference to the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action, as well as linkages and partnerships with the Rome-based agencies;
- b) take into account possible changing government policies and priorities as part of the flexibility element;
- c) consider climate change adaptation, including biodiversity loss;
- d) clarify the links with regional priority setting and Regional Conferences;
- e) make reference to the development of capacities as an integral part of country programming; and
- f) include aspects related to monitoring and evaluation.

**Applying lessons learned from Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in the prevention and containment of major animal diseases and related human health risks –
Supplementary information⁴**

8. The Committee expressed appreciation for having more deliberations on the supplementary information provided in the document. In reviewing the Action Plan, the Committee:

- a) stressed the importance of maintaining and reinforcing FAO's capacity in this area, while also underscoring the opportunities for cooperation on the prevention and containment of major animal diseases and related human health risks;
- b) requested further explanation on how activities of the Action Plan would be prioritized according to availability of resources, also pursuing external resources;
- c) requested that additional information be provided on partnerships (in particular the Tripartite Agreement with WHO and OIE within the framework of One Health), as well as linkages to FAO's Programme of Work, aiming to maximise synergies and avoid the risk of duplication in implementing the Action Plan; and
- d) looked forward to receiving a progress report, including the requested information and addressing more fully the comments provided by Members, at its session of May 2012.

II. Evaluation

Indicative rolling work plan of strategic and programme evaluation 2012-2014⁵

9. The Committee placed highest priority on Evaluation of decentralized structures at regional level and decided that such Evaluations should follow the same methodology and have the same title as the evaluation done previously in the Near East region. These Evaluations should include a focus on how the work of the regional and subregional structures is integrated into FAO and with other UN organizations.

⁴ PC 108/3

⁵ PC 108/4

10. The Committee decided the following plan of Evaluations:

Source of Funding	Year to Start		
	2012	2013	2014
Net Appropriation	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in Latin America and the Caribbean	Evaluation of FAO's role in the dissemination of knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources
	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Africa	Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices in Asia and the Pacific	
	FAO's support to investment in agriculture	FAO's work on climate change adaptation	
		Technical Cooperation Programme	
		Capacity Development on Food Safety	
	FAO's work on genetic resources		
		FAO's work on sustainable intensification of crop production (including smallholder agriculture and biotechnology)	
Emergency and Rehabilitation Trust Fund	FAO's work in disaster risk management in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean	Joint WFP-FAO Evaluation of the food security cluster	
	Sustainable options/tools for recovery	FAO's work in natural disaster-prone countries – the Sahel and the Horn of Africa	
Mixed Funding - Country Evaluations - Middle-income countries (at least one upper-middle)	Sri Lanka	To be decided	
	To be decided	To be decided	

11. The Committee agreed that gender should be an integral part of every Evaluation.

12. The Committee requested that individual Evaluation costs be transparent. It also requested Management to identify, where possible, costs and savings for recommendations.

Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development and Management Response⁶

13. The Committee appreciated the quality of the Evaluation and the methodology used. Overall, the Evaluation showed that the accomplishments of FAO regarding the gender plan of action and development in 2002-2009 and Strategic Objective K in 2010 had been below what was planned and expected. It regretted that the Evaluation Team had been unable to visit any country in the Near East region.

14. The Committee:

- a) endorsed the implementation of the 16 recommendations of the Evaluation accepted by management and requested that they be implemented as soon as possible;
- b) stressed that political will of the membership, as well as change in attitude within the Secretariat was of utmost importance and that urgent steps needed to be taken;
- c) stressed that accountability on what the Organization is doing to promote gender issues was a key requirement and requested the Secretariat to prepare an annual report on progress toward gender results to be presented by the Deputy Directors-General and discussed at a Joint Session of the Programme and Finance Committees;
- d) welcomed the re-allocation of resources in the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 to gender and development and looked forward to seeing the cost implications of the accepted recommendations being reflected in the increased allocation for Strategic Objective K (Gender) in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget;
- e) noted that both an increase in resources and a more effective application of these are needed to meet goals;
- f) requested funding partners of FAO to consider provision of voluntary contributions for gender-related work, especially on capacity development;
- g) stressed the importance of culture change for effective incorporation of the gender dimension in FAO's work;
- h) noted the importance of appropriate baseline information in the context of results-based management for assessing progress on gender-related results;
- i) welcomed the restoration of senior gender officer posts in the Regional Offices, but stressed that gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all Officers;
- j) requested a report on the results of inclusion of gender in PEMS reporting to increase accountability for gender-related results;
- k) noted that gender focal points required to be granted adequate time and recognition in order to carry out their responsibilities effectively; and
- l) appreciated the consultations on the gender policy that had taken place between the Rome-based agencies and urged further cooperation between them on gender issues.

Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition and Management Response⁷

15. The Committee appreciated the Evaluation and its methodology and found that the recommendations were founded on a sound evidence base. It expressed its concern about the truly dissatisfying findings and saw an urgent need for action. It also regretted that no country from the Near East region was visited by the Evaluation Team. The Committee requested more detailed information on financial implications and prioritization. The Committee reiterated that nutrition was both an important cross-cutting issue requiring mainstreaming, as well as a strong hub to ensure visibility and leadership of FAO in the field of nutrition.

⁶ PC 108/5; PC 108/5 Sup.1

⁷ PC 108/6; PC 108/6 Sup.1

16. The Committee:
- a) endorsed the development of a strategy and vision for FAO in Nutrition and commended the approach taken by Management in forming an interdivisional steering committee, led by the Deputy Director-General (Knowledge) for this purpose;
 - b) urged Management to proceed quickly and requested to review the strategy and vision at its May 2012 session in order to enable FAO to take on a strategic role in nutrition. The documents provided should include an assessment of FAO's work on nutritional outcomes, food balance sheets, as well as specific timelines for the implementation phase;
 - c) accepted the recommendation to focus on stewardship and normative work based on a firm footing in operational work;
 - d) reiterated the important link between gender and nutrition;
 - e) recommended that in developing the strategy, partnership and coordination are important considerations, especially with relevant partners, including WHO, WFP, UNICEF and IFAD and that FAO ensure close links with UNSCN (United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition) and the SUN (scaling up nutrition) initiative;
 - f) confirmed that development of the strategy required strong internal leadership and external visibility and this is linked to how FAO communicates the results of the exercise; and
 - g) requested that consultation take place with member countries on the strategy.
17. The Committee noted that the institutional arrangements proposed by the Evaluation would require more careful consideration by management. The Committee looked forward to receiving management's response to these recommendations in May 2012.

Funding of evaluations – implementation of Council decisions⁸

18. The Committee:
- a) stressed the importance of the 2007 decision of the Council⁹ relating to funding of Evaluations and affirmed that resource partners should agree to inclusion of appropriate Evaluation provisions in all voluntary-funded activities;
 - b) urged that FAO staff should be made familiar with the Council decision and its incorporation in the Field Programme Circular 2011/01 and encouraged FAO to ensure that all projects and programmes have the necessary provisions for the Evaluation component;
 - c) requested FAO to find ways and means to ensure access to Evaluations by resource partners of projects/programmes implemented by FAO; and
 - d) requested a follow-up report at its October 2012 session on implementation of, and compliance with the Council decision relating to funding of Evaluations.

III. IPA implementation within the PWB

Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's work on international instruments¹⁰ and Preliminary review of Statutory Bodies with particular reference to Article XIV Bodies and their relationship with FAO¹¹

19. The Committee welcomed the documents prepared by the Secretariat and discussed these items together. The Committee noted the varied nature and complexity of the issues addressed in the Preliminary Review of Statutory Bodies, observing that the issues were either of an administrative or financial nature, or of a substantive character.

⁸ PC 108/7

⁹ CL 132/REP, paragraph 76

¹⁰ PC 108/8

¹¹ PC 108/10

20. Concerning administrative issues, the Committee requested that every effort be made to address administrative obstacles in order to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the statutory bodies, while preserving overall FAO's integrity and interests.
21. Concerning the substantive issues, including the reporting relationship between the statutory bodies and the governing bodies of FAO, the Committee:
- a) underlined the desirability for maintaining coherence between the activities of statutory bodies and those of the Organization; and
 - b) recommended that the Organization's rules and procedures applicable to observers be in line with those in force in the United Nations as set out in paragraph 16 of document PC 108/10.
22. The Committee invited the Secretariat to speed up the process of consultation required for the implementation of action 2.69 of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) for FAO Renewal (2009-2011) in an active and pragmatic manner. The Committee expects to receive a report on the outcome of these consultations on administrative matters at its October 2012 session, including information on the consultation process and progress with membership of Article XIV bodies and other stakeholders, consistent with paragraph 44 b) of document PC 108/10.
23. The Committee recognized the differentiated situation of the statutory bodies covered by the preliminary review and the wide variety of the international instruments included in the Evaluation. With particular reference to bodies established under Article XIV of the Constitution, it recommended that individual considerations and requirements of their membership be taken into account in the process towards providing them with increased financial and administrative authority, while remaining within the framework of FAO. In this sense, the Committee noted the interest that the IT-PGRFA¹² could exercise greater autonomy within the framework of FAO.
24. The Committee acknowledged that some of the matters considered may call for further review by the Finance Committee or the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

Access to TCP on a grant basis: eligibility criterion¹³

25. The Independent Chairperson of the Council informed the Committee of the outcome of his recent meeting with Chairs of Regional Groups to help resolve the inconsistency created by the situation of countries which belonged both to the category of countries that should receive special attention for TCP assistance and to the category of high-income countries. This followed a request from Council at its 141st session to consult and facilitate a consensus around one of the two possible options, including by integrating possible refinements such as progressive reimbursement solutions:
- Option 1: any country that falls into the "special attention" category may receive TCP assistance on a full-grant basis, even if the same country is also included on the list of high-income developing and developed countries; and
 - Option 2: any country that falls in the high-income category should be eligible for non-emergency TCP assistance on a full-cost recovery basis only.
26. The Committee acknowledged that no consensus could be reached on either of the two options proposed for resolving the inconsistency in the interpretation of the TCP eligibility criterion.
27. The Committee recommended that while keeping the status quo, some consideration be given by governing bodies to progressively work towards discouraging the use by the five countries concerned of full TCP projects and by favouring the use of only the TCP Facility (TCPF).
28. The Committee proposed that the countries concerned be informed of the Committee's recommendations.

¹² International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

¹³ PC 108/9

IV. Standing items

Report of progress on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee¹⁴

29. The Committee examined the report of progress on its multi-year programme of work for the period from December 2009 to May 2011, which had been prepared by the previous Committee. It found that the report provided useful guidance on aspects of its work requiring follow-up and underlined action needed in three main areas:

- a) programme planning and priority setting, drawing on lessons from the experience in preparing the PWB 2012-13 to inform the next programming cycle, which would start shortly, particularly to ensure standardized reporting by the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees to facilitate the deliberations of the Programme Committee on priority setting for the Medium Term Plan 2014-2017 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15;
- b) improved follow-up and impact of Evaluations, where the Committee requested the Office of Evaluation to propose a new methodology (paragraph 16). The Committee welcomed the fact that from now on the Evaluation Committee (Internal) would review the state of implementation of recommendations each year; and
- c) IPA implementation and integration into the PWB, where the Committee resolved to consider the lessons learned on aspects of the IPA within its mandate at its May 2012 session.

30. Concerning improved methods of work and efficiency of the Committee, it recalled that while informal meetings provided opportunities for more in-depth discussion, the language requirements of Members needed to be respected. The Independent Chairperson of the Council informed that he was holding informal inter-sessional meetings with the Chairs of the Council Committees to coordinate Agendas, exchange experience and consider FAO governance issues in the wider UN context.

Progress report on the follow-up to past Programme Committee recommendations¹⁵

31. The Committee examined the progress report and requested that future reports provide a more complete, coherent and concise description of actions being taken to follow-up the Committee's recommendations, both for accountability purposes, in terms of status of follow-up action, and the eventual impact of the recommendations, referring to relevant documentation and thereby ensuring coherence of delivery of FAO's work. Concerning areas to be addressed in preparing the next cycle of programme planning, it looked forward to receiving more information at its next regular session.

Date and place of the Hundred and Ninth (Special) session

32. The Committee was informed that the Hundred and Ninth (Special) session of the Programme Committee was scheduled to take place in Rome from 2 to 4 November 2011.

Any Other Business

33. There was no discussion under this item.

¹⁴ PC 108/INF/3

¹⁵ PC 108/INF/4