PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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Evaluation of FAO’s support to Zero Hunger (SDG2)

MANAGEMENT OBSERVATIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- FAO welcomes the Report on Phase One of the SDG2 evaluation, and appreciates the thorough and comprehensive analysis on FAO’s present and past engagement, with comprehensive information on ongoing work, as well as challenges and opportunities for the Organization’s strategic engagement. It is very timely and helpful to provide insights to the review of the FAO Strategic Framework.

- FAO welcomes the preliminary findings of the Phase One evaluation and presents some suggestions for elaborating the Phase Two.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Phase One Evaluation report, and to the observations by Management.

Draft Advice

- The Committee:
  a) welcomed the Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 2 - “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” - Report on Phase One;
  b) supported the preliminary findings;
  c) took note of Management Observations; and
  d) looked forward to reviewing the Phase Two Evaluation report at its November 2020 session.
Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 2 - “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” - Report on Phase One

Preliminary Management Observations

1. FAO welcomes the Report on Phase One of the SDG2 evaluation and appreciates the thorough and comprehensive analysis on FAO’s present and past engagement, with comprehensive information on ongoing work, as well as challenges and opportunities for the Organization’s strategic engagement. It is very timely and helpful to provide insights to the review of the FAO Strategic Framework.

2. The evaluation well elaborates on the comprehensiveness of SDG2, partially addressing its interconnections with different targets across SDGs - particularly the ones related to poverty eradication, and natural resources sustainable management and use - and on the comparative advantage for FAO to boldly engage at all levels.

3. While the narrative and findings well present the comprehensiveness of SDG2, and build a solid case for an integrated approach guiding FAO’s engagement at all levels, Management feels that the analysis of the findings and the recommendations lack an in-depth reflection of the critical role of natural resources and ecosystems sustainable management and use, in particular, land, soil and water, and implications of climate change’s impact on production and productivity. These interconnections are currently reflected in FAO’s results framework, and are recognized by Members as the value added of FAO’s support to countries.

4. Recommendations related to increasing governments’ ability to attract investment through enabling environments and policy integration, in particular through public-private partnerships, promoting South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and to the need to address institutional and resource efficiency in line ministries, are welcome. Moreover, it would be useful to specifically mention the need to strengthen the capacities for governance and policy support, which will be necessary to better understand the country policy environment (at national and at subnational levels, using a territorial approach); analyse data and information related to trade-offs between competing policy objectives; and using food systems analysis, examine the impact of possible policy options on other SDGs – such as eradicating poverty, protecting biodiversity and land, soil and water resources, and promoting resilience to climate change.

5. The Evaluation acknowledges the importance of governance and integration of policies and interventions, by generating evidence and better understanding of the situation, its political economy, trends, and the impact of past policies to guide policy support and suggest concrete options for country level implementation. It would also be important for Phase Two of the report to better specify the country needs and the capacities and support expected of FAO at all levels, including recommendations on how to bring the support and results at scale.

6. Management welcomes the findings and recommendations calling for improved silos breaking and more integrated approaches and is confident that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative will address such concerns, noting potential incentives that can be put in place to ensure across-FAO collaboration. Capitalizing on this Phase One report and taking into account the general comments for improvement illustrated above, Management recommends that Phase Two of the SDG2 evaluation address the following.

7. The suggested theory of change, currently exclusively focusing on the interconnection among targets within SDG2, and providing the rationale for the subsequent recommendations may better reflect integrated approaches for achieving zero hunger and sustainable food systems on three key aspects:

   a) The interconnection between SDG2 targets and other socio-economic targets across SDGs, key to ensuring the fulfilment of the ‘leaving no one behind’ principle, and in particular on aspects related to the support and empowerment of small-scale food producers. Interlinkages should in particular cover their access to productive resources
and services, as well as the provision of social protection and other safety nets in support to smallholders and rural actors.

b) The critical role of natural resources management and sustainable use, currently only related to agriculture genetic resources, and missing the critical interconnection with ecosystem services, the impact of climate on production, productivity and availability and use of natural resources and ecosystem services.

c) The impact of disasters and climate change that may be massive for global food security and nutrition, including on the integrated work by the Organization in addressing food security and resilience to crisis and disasters through nature-based solutions, and reflecting the most recent focus and corporate approach.

8. The evaluation should strengthen the focus and provide recommendations on concrete country needs, and consider inclusion of specific considerations and recommendations on targeted groups of countries, including inter alia in-conflict countries, SIDS, LDC/LLDCs,¹ to guide the Organization in providing more strategic and tailored support.

9. A more focused analysis on critical capacities and tools needed by FAO decentralized offices to lead support for achieving SDG2 would be essential. Recommendations from the upcoming Evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) would also be important in this regard.

10. The evaluation may also better reflect the critical role of partnerships, particularly capitalizing on the ongoing dialogues conducted at global, regional, and country levels, with non-state actors, including the private sector, civil society organizations, producers and consumers organizations, and research institutions and academia.

11. The evaluation may wish to consider more specific analysis and recommendations related to prioritizing territorial approaches, particularly for promoting food systems transformation as a framework linking different aspects of FAO’s work in a more holistic setting.

12. The evaluation team could consider adding a recommendation regarding FAO’s role and work at global level (for instance, as related to selected technical and governing bodies), and on ways for FAO policy discussions and deliberations related to SDGs to be better disseminated and used in regional and global discussions on SDG2.

¹ Small Island Developing States (SIDS); least developed countries (LDCs); landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)