PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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Update on FAO’s Gender Action Plan

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Evaluation of FAO’s Work on Gender recommended that the Gender Equality Policy be updated and that an Action Plan be developed, with short to medium term gender equality targets, to ensure adequate operationalization and monitoring of progress towards high-level policy objectives.
- The Gender Action Plan will be developed in synergy with the revision of the Strategic Framework and preparation of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25.
- In order to inform planning under the new Strategic Framework and the next MTP 2022-25, FAO conducted an assessment to identify key gender-related areas of work and results, currently prioritized in the Strategic Framework (biennium 2020-21) and their contribution to the revised objectives of the Gender Equality Policy. By highlighting work to be consolidated and areas for improvement, the assessment will support the development of the Action Plan.
- The findings demonstrate that FAO has substantial gender-related work contributing to each of the Gender Equality Policy objectives. The report notes that FAO has identified the need for upscaling successful interventions and promising practices, in order to leverage results and enhance impact, particularly at country level.
- For the next planning cycle, FAO will establish clear priorities by gender policy objective. It is foreseen that gender will play a crucial role in the new Strategic Framework, potentially remaining a cross-cutting theme and being reflected in programmatic areas of focus, linked to specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. It will be important to align contributions to Gender Policy Objectives in the new Strategic framework, fully considering lessons learned.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

- The Programme Committee is invited to review the content of the document and provide guidance as deemed appropriate.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- took note of the substantial gender-related work contributing to each of the Gender Equality Policy objectives in the current Strategic Framework (biennium 2020-21);
- acknowledged the relevance of the assessment of gender-related work as an important input in the development of the Gender Action Plan;
- looked forward to receiving the Action Plan in 2021, developed in synergy with the new Strategic Framework and MTP 2022-25; and
- welcomed that gender plays a crucial role in the new Strategic Framework, potentially remaining a cross-cutting theme and being reflected in programmatic areas of focus linked to specific SDGs and targets.
I. Background

1. The Evaluation of FAO’s Work on Gender\(^1\) recognized the relevance and validity of FAO’s Policy on Gender Equality as an overarching framework to guide the gender work of the Organization. It recommended that the Policy be updated and that an Action Plan be developed, with short to medium-term gender equality targets, to ensure adequate operationalization and monitoring of progress towards high-level policy objectives.

2. In its Management Response\(^2\), FAO agreed to the recommendation and committed to updating the Policy on Gender equality and to developing an Action Plan by 2020.

3. In 2020, FAO updated its Gender Equality Policy 2020-30 which provides the Organization with a corporate framework to orient its technical and normative work towards four gender equality objectives relevant to its mandate. A Progress Report on the main features of the draft updated Gender Strategy was presented in November 2019 to the 127\(^{th}\) Session of the Programme Committee (PC 127/4).

4. The Council in December 2019, welcomed the progress on the updated Gender Equality Strategy for the Organization, and stated that it looked forward to the FAO Gender Action Plan to be prepared in 2020 (para 10.c of the Report of the 163\(^{rd}\) Session of the Council)\(^3\).

5. The Action Plan will be developed in synergy with the revision of the Strategic Framework and preparation of the MTP 2022-25. The July 2020 document *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163\(^{rd}\) Session of the Council*\(^4\) specified that by November 2020, “FAO will compile an overview of key gender-related areas of work and results prioritized for the current biennium (Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21), to illustrate the linkages between the updated Gender Equality Policy and the Strategic Framework”.

II. Update of key activities contributing towards the preparation of the Gender Action Plan

6. In order to inform the planning under the new Strategic Framework and the next Medium Term Plan 2022-25, FAO conducted an assessment to identify key gender-related areas of work and results currently prioritized in the Strategic Framework (biennium 2020-21) and their contribution to the revised objectives of the Gender Equality Policy. By highlighting work to be consolidated and areas for improvement, the assessment will support the development of the Action Plan.

7. An internal consultation process with staff from headquarters and decentralized offices took stock of gender-related work implemented in various outputs under the five Strategic Objectives and their contribution to the revised objectives of the Gender Equality Policy. As many outputs do not explicitly refer to gender in their formulation, the underlying work plans were also reviewed to ensure all gender-related work would be captured in the analysis.

8. The outputs were mapped against the four revised objectives of the Gender Equality Policy, enabling FAO to analyse its current work by objective. For each objective, FAO identified between four to seven areas of work. Details are presented below:

**Areas of work under Objective 1: Women and men have equal voice and decision-making power in rural institutions and organizations to shape relevant legal frameworks, policies and programmes.**

a) Knowledge generation on women’s participation and decision-making in rural organizations and institutions.

b) Technical assistance for the formulation and implementation of policy and legal frameworks that promote women’s equal participation and leadership.

c) Capacity development to foster a more inclusive governance of rural institutions, including producer and civil society organizations.

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\(^1\) PC 126/4  
\(^2\) PC 126/4 Sup.1  
\(^3\) CL 163/REP  
\(^4\) CL 164/LIM/3
d) Technical support and capacity development to strengthen women’s leadership and participation in rural institutions and organizations.

Areas of work under Objective 2: Women and men have equal rights, access to and control over natural and productive resources, to contribute to and benefit from sustainable agriculture and rural development.

a) Generation and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on women’s access to and control over natural and productive resources, including in the context of conflicts and disasters.

b) Knowledge generation on the gender gaps in access to and control over natural and productive resources, and on good practices to address them.

c) Technical advice for the formulation and implementation of policy and legal frameworks that promote inclusive governance of, and equitable access to and control over, land and other natural resources.

d) Technical advice for the formulation and implementation of gender-responsive policies, strategies and investments that promote biodiversity, conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

e) Capacity development of rural institutions and rural organizations to promote gender-equitable access to climate-resilient practices and technologies.

Areas of work under Objective 3: Women and men have equal rights and access to services, markets and decent work, as well as equal control over the resulting income and benefits.

a) Generation and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on rural employment and access to agricultural support services, including rural finance, social protection, business development and rural advisory services.

b) Knowledge generation on the gender gaps in access to services, technologies, markets and employment opportunities, and on effective strategies to address them.

c) Knowledge generation and technical advice on gender and agricultural investments.

d) Technical advice to the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies that facilitate rural women’s access to decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in agricultural markets and value chains.

e) Capacity development of institutions and rural organizations to enhance the provision of gender-responsive services (advisory, business development and financial).

f) Capacity development at national and regional level to design and implement gender-responsive social protection policies and programmes.

g) Technical support to promote uptake and dissemination of integrated approaches for rural women’s economic empowerment.

Areas of work under Objective 4: Women’s work burden is reduced by enhancing their access to technologies, practices and infrastructure and by promoting an equitable distribution of responsibilities, including at household level.

a) Generation and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on the gender division of labour and time use in agriculture.

b) Knowledge generation on women’s work burden, its implications and solutions.

c) Technical support and capacity development of national counterparts to facilitate the identification and dissemination of women-friendly and labour-saving agricultural technologies and practices.

d) Technical support for the uptake of gender transformative approaches for the promotion of an equitable distribution of tasks and responsibilities, including at the household level.

9. The assessment shows that FAO already has substantial gender-related work contributing to each of the Gender Equality Policy objectives. The Organization has developed a large number of knowledge products, guidelines, assessment tools and capacity development materials on gender. Whilst strong results
have been achieved so far across all objectives, the gender-related work is not evenly distributed across the four objectives. There is substantial work under Objectives 2 and 3, which are traditionally FAO’s mandate areas. However, there will be need to build the body of work under Objectives 1 and 4, while continuing to consolidate results achieved under the other two Objectives.

10. The assessment also highlights the need for consolidating and upscaling successful interventions and promising practices, in order to leverage results and enhance impact, particularly at country level. In the new biennium, FAO will focus on the dissemination of these knowledge products, guidelines, assessment tools and capacity development materials, for example by ensuring their availability in multiple languages and supporting their application in policy and programmatic work at country level. FAO will also prioritize the development of knowledge products, such as the Country Gender Assessments, which have the potential to contribute to expanding the evidence base on gender in agriculture, informing policy-making and programming at country and regional level, and serving as a baseline for monitoring progress and the impact of FAO interventions.

11. Further, FAO will progressively put an emphasis on the application of gender transformative approaches targeted at tackling the root causes of gender inequalities, such as discriminatory socio-cultural norms and gender stereotypes; engaging more with men as allies; addressing unequal intra-household dynamics that undermine women’s autonomy and decision-making power. This will require stronger collaboration with partners in-country to test and implement tools and approaches.

12. In the new biennium, FAO will establish clear priorities by gender policy objective. Specific outputs and activities will contribute to the objectives and be monitored through gender-related indicators and targets.

13. It is foreseen that gender will play a crucial role in the new Strategic Framework, potentially remaining a cross-cutting theme and being reflected in programmatic areas of focus linked to specific SDGs and targets. It will be crucial to align contributions to the Gender Policy Objectives in the new Strategic Framework, fully considering lessons learned.

14. The Gender Action Plan will be finalized by mid-2021, in synergy with the finalization of the MTP 2022-25.