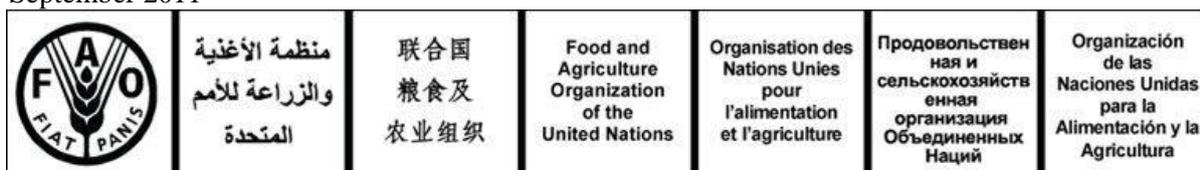


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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

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

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1. This cover page provides the background and key issues for the attention and guidance of the Committee on the attached report *Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development* and the Management Response.

Background

2. The Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development was requested by the FAO Programme Committee (PC) in October 2008 to take place in 2010. In April 2010, the Committee requested that the Evaluation should be carried out in parallel and coordinated with a Gender Audit managed by the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) with the support of UNIFEM (now UN Women). The Evaluation confirmed to a large extent, and broadly supports the findings of the Gender Audit, although recommendations differ to some extent.

Key issues in the Evaluation report

3. Overall, the Evaluation showed that FAO's achievements in implementing the Gender and Development Plans of Action in the period 2002-2009 and Strategic Objective K in 2010 were short of expectations. The gender dimension was insufficiently considered in about 40 percent of FAO's projects even though gender equality was relevant to achieve the stated project objectives. Many of the

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Organization's Global Public Goods also did not address gender issues, despite the relevance of gender to the topics treated.

4. Corporate mechanisms for mainstreaming gender, ranging from the Project and Programme Review Committee to the Gender Focal Points, have broadly failed to achieve the desired results. A paramount factor identified by the Evaluation is the lack of attention to and accountability for gender mainstreaming at senior levels of the Organization.

5. In the light of these findings, the Evaluation identified core principles that FAO should integrate and internalize to improve the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of most of its work at the broader level, as "people" are the true stakeholders of the Organization and "equality among them" will be the path to food security for all.

6. The Evaluation has formulated 17 recommendations, some of which contain multiple actions. They are set out in order of priority and address the following aspects: a renewed commitment to gender equality at the most senior level and related accountability mechanism; the need for a gender policy in FAO; staff gender balance; corporate culture; structure and competences for gender mainstreaming; role and mandate of ESW; capacity development; FAO's work in HIV/AIDS; improvement of project effectiveness; partnerships and alliances; and operational issues.

Management Response

7. Management welcomes the Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development, particularly the recognition that gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all Strategy Teams, units, divisions and departments in FAO headquarters and decentralized offices.

8. Management fully accepts sixteen of the seventeen recommendations and proposes, as part of the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13, to restore gender-related resources in all regional offices and allocate additional funding to ESW to support gender mainstreaming activities with FAO membership, partners and staff, as well as regional gender officers.

9. Management agrees that FAO's goals on gender mainstreaming can only be achieved by creating a culture that promotes gender equality. A special focus will be given to developing the capacities of FAO staff at all levels on gender issues. Furthermore the culture change initiatives, supported by the IPA, will place greater emphasis on promoting gender equality

10. Management does not accept Recommendation 13 on renewed commitment to work on HIV and AIDS. The Organization has been strategic in its response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, recognizing early its implications for the agricultural sector and putting this on the development agenda. However, FAO is aware that at this stage of the epidemic's evolution, prevention and mitigation work may be more effectively managed by better resourced sister agencies in the UN system such as WHO, UNAIDS and UNFPA.

Guidance sought

11. The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report, and to the response to the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions by Management.