Chair's Aide Mémoire - Third Meeting of CoC-IEE Working Group I
Monday 11 February 2008
Vic Heard, Chair

Attendance of Senior Management Observers in WG I Meetings

1) It was agreed that in addition to management speakers on particular topics, senior management (ADGs and above) were welcome to be present at meetings as non-speaking observers as long as there was not a space constraint in the room.

Identification of priority themes for the FAO Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan

2) Discussion centred upon a presentation on the concept of priority themes by management and a list of possible priority themes drafted by the Chair following the discussion at the second meeting of WG I (see Annex I). With respect to the possible list of priority themes, points made by members and the Chair's clarifications included:

  a) The list was in no way presented in order of priority;
  b) Listing of sub-component in brackets at this stage of the iteration of themes was not always helpful;
  c) Food security, food safety and nutrition needed to be more fully reflected and the themes needed to demonstrate more of a people focus, especially with respect to natural resources. The livelihoods concept could come through more clearly; and
  d) The potential to reduce the number of themes, with some favouring six as suggested by the IEE.

3) During the discussion it was clarified that a priority theme contributes to one or more of the Global Goals; Focusing attention on a very major priority for a large group of Member Countries where FAO has a comparative advantage; Is used to mobilise partners and the membership around achievement of the immediate goals (outcomes – results) towards which the theme is directed in the medium term (e.g. four to six years). Themes are thus not all encompassing of FAO's work or a repeat of the Global Goals, but focus in such a way as to achieve real impacts at all levels in selected major priority problem areas, bringing together both FAO's normative strengths and technical support to Member Countries and integrating all sources of funds.

4) Members further concluded that in addition, priority themes should:

  a) build-on FAO's comparative advantages;
  b) normally include time bound targets and specify results achievable by 2015; and
  c) be programmable.

5) Members requested that the:

  a) CoC-IEE secretariat and management prepare a flow chart of the present programme model and that as proposed by the IEE, with comments upon the advantages of the IEE proposals and any disadvantages;
  b) management prepare for discussion at a subsequent session in March a further development of themes, taking into account the criteria and views expressed. These

suggestions should clearly show the relationship between the proposed priority themes, the technical programmes and the Global Goals.

Global governance priorities for FAO

6) The need for FAO to play a strong role in Global Governance was agreed and the management suggested possible approach (see Annex II) was in general endorsed by Members. Management was requested to proceed with the further development of proposals. Points made by members included the following:

   a) greater emphasis on global policy coherence to ensure adequate food and nutrition for all. Policy coherence and not just regulatory instruments were important in all areas of global governance;
   b) the need for a study of the current regulatory frameworks for food and agriculture. As requested in WG II, an early overall map of the responsibilities, overlaps and interactions with the bodies working in FAO's area of mandate was also needed from management and the CoC-IEE secretariat; and
   c) the need to rapidly arrive at an initial policy agenda, pending the outcome of the study.

7) The majority of members supported the FAO governing bodies' role in reviewing global governance discussions and instruments being developed elsewhere. Such discussion would be with a view to ensuring that the implications for the hungry and for sustainable agricultural and food development were adequately reflected, as well as the contributions they could bring. They argued that national representation on such issues was not necessarily completely joined up and FAO involvement could benefit national governments in alerting them to wider implications. This did not need to be seen as conflictual but beneficial and served to develop partnership, which should be a strong feature of FAO's approach to global governance. Some others argued that their governments had well considered national positions and it was not FAO's place to make points about discussions in other global fora. In their view this could also lead to duplication of work.

Discussion of strategies

8) **Assistance in Development of Policy and Strategy:** Members in general supported the overall conclusions and recommendations of the IEE with respect to support to countries in the development of their policies and strategies. They concurred that this was a high priority of countries and noted that FAO was facing a steadily growing demand. The management presentation of the issues (Annex III) was also appreciated and points made by members in the discussion for development of a strategy included:

   a) FAO has a comparative advantage in multidisciplinary policy support;
   b) FAO's neutrality in this area, does not constitute a comparative advantage per se, but is very important to developing countries;
   c) FAORs and the decentralised resources available to them are central to FAO's capacity to support policy development but both FAORs and decentralised offices need to be better equipped for this, assuring the requisite competencies, including through training;
   d) policy work must better integrate normative strengths and capacities with direct support to countries;

e) the national medium-term priority frameworks are an essential building block in identifying country's individual policy support needs and in building up an overall picture of demand;

f) TCP can play a valuable role in providing policy support;

g) there is a need to better sequence short, medium and long term policy work; and

h) technology policy can be an important area of policy support.

9) **Knowledge Management:** Members agreed with the importance attached to this by the IEE and generally shared its analysis and recommendations and the need to develop a strategy. It was questioned if the management proposals for strategy development (see Annex IV) fully responded to the concerns expressed by the IEE. Particular points raised during the discussion included:

a) better recognition of the concerns expressed by the IEE for total knowledge policy and facilitation so that agricultural and food knowledge outside and inside of FAO was available to those who needed it, when they needed it and in a form which they could use it. In this context members also referred to the importance of local languages; the role of the media and the importance of partnerships and networking national and international institutions, including the non-governmental sectors; and that LDCs in particular needed knowledge to be genuine public good, i.e. at no cost;

b) greater attention to how knowledge was to reach end users, especially producers;

c) the importance of embedding and mainstreaming knowledge management within FAO at both headquarters and decentralised levels and the role of the decentralised offices in all aspects of knowledge management.

10) Translation quality, timeliness and price were raised as a particular issues, especially for Arabic and the Organization was urged to redouble its efforts to make progress in these areas, in particular through outsourcing.

11) **Capacity Building:** Members agreed with the importance attached to this by the IEE and generally shared its analysis and recommendations and the need to develop a strategy. As with knowledge management, it was questioned if the management proposals for strategy development (see Annex V) fully responded to the concerns expressed by the IEE. Particular points raised during the discussion included:

a) FAO developing a better understanding of the capacity building needs of countries, as a prerequisite for developing the strategy;

b) the importance of capacity building being a fully mainstreamed embedded function across headquarters and decentralised offices;

c) partnership with others in capacity building;

d) the funding of capacity building was a priority and multi-donor pool funding should be explored for this. Also Members agreed that TCP had limitations for capacity building but considered that it could still play a useful role, especially in small countries and in middle income countries which could themselves build on the catalytic initial inputs.

12) **Basic Data and Statistics:** There was general agreement that this is a fundamental area of the Organization's work and that a new strategy is needed with focus on the needs of users. It was agreed that the strategy should allow for flexible and responsive development of statistics and data in response to emerging needs. FAO's neutrality as a provider of data was

appreciated. The orientation presented by management was welcomed (see Annex VI). Particular points raised during the discussion included:

a) strategy should concentrate on the needs of users;
b) FAO needed to be an advocate in developing countries for the importance of statistics and data for sound policy making and planning;
c) there should be no neglect of providing global basic statistics in order to provide more analytical products. Basic statistics should be the first priority for Regular Programme resources; and
d) partnering and coordination were important also in statistics and basic data, including for geo-referenced information.

Annex I: Priority Themes: Management Presentation of Considerations in Developing Priority Themes

1) Strategic function of themes:

a) Place in logical hierarchy for addressing Members' goals
    i) Objectives - results – programmes
    ii) Formulate clear, demonstrable results from FAO's action
b) Continuum of means of action - Advocacy, normative, technical cooperation
c) Integrate extra-budgetary resources - Not driven by donors but by Members
d) Build on partnerships

2) Setting scope and priorities
a) Relation to cross-cutting functions and ongoing priority work
b) Dynamic – adapt to changing circumstances and needs
c) Identify in close dialogue between Membership and Secretariat

Chair's Suggestions of Possible Themes – based on Previous Discussion in the WG

1. Supporting Pro-poor and Anti hunger decision making
2. Creating employment and incomes for the poor and malnourished through value added in agriculture and agro-industrial development
3. Increasing Food Production in Low Income Food Deficit Countries
4. International trade development and benefits for developing countries
5. Ensuring livelihoods through early agricultural recovery from emergencies (building back better for food and income)
6. Managing Transboundary and Epidemic Plant Pests and Animal Diseases
7. Climate Change (Reducing it and Living With it) – role of agriculture and implications for the hungry
8. Managing water for rural users
9. Ensuring fish for food and livelihoods tomorrow (management of aquatic resources and the role of aquaculture)
10. Ensuring the natural resource base for sustainable use today and tomorrow

Annex II: Considerations in Global Governance Priorities - Management Presentation

1) Possible strategic areas
    a) Agriculture, resource sustainability and environment - fisheries, forestry, animal and plant genetic resources, pesticides, animal health, sustainable land management, biosafety, climate change, etc.;
    b) Agriculture and trade, including food safety - Codex, IPPC, trade negotiations, food security issues, food safety and nutrition, intellectual property rights;
    c) Agriculture and social aspects of food security

2) Possible approach
    a) Review of international regulatory frameworks for food and agriculture
        i)   present coverage of FAO policy and regulatory frameworks
        ii) interaction with other relevant frameworks and activities
        iii) demands being placed on developing countries in particular
    b) Elaboration of strategic areas
    c) Prioritize
        i)   by strategic area/subject
        ii) timeframe
        iii) resources

Annex III Assistance in the Development of Policy and Strategy – Management Presentation

Context
- Changing role of Government
- Increasing demand for policy assistance
- Emerging issues – bio security, change in the food chain, rising food prices, climate change, Biofuels.
- Delivery of comprehensive policy advice for addressing complex issues

Challenges for FAO
- Many divisions and units deal with policy in HQs with poor integration or co-ordination
- Policy work is by large split between policy assistance mainly in decentralised offices and analytical work mainly in HQs
- Risk of field level experience not given full cognizance in HQs and assistance in the field not fully reflecting knowledge in HQs
- Ensure coherence in policy work –inter departmental effort to define mechanism for coordination and integration.
- Better integration of policy normative work and policy direct support.
- Strengthen link between policy work and investment programming
- Partnership building – academic and research institutions, regional organizations, IFIs, private sector,
- Inter-agency cooperation - New aid modalities and UN reform both at country and global levels.
- **Result oriented policy support**

Annex IV – Knowledge Management –Presentation by Management

Issues :
• Staff and technical expertise (Internal)
• Member States and Partnerships (External)
• Organizational structure and culture
• Technology and Infrastructure

Knowledge Management strategy will focus on how to:
• empower people to collaborate, learn and innovate;
• foster partnerships/networks for knowledge exchange;
• create/support a knowledge sharing culture;
• embed KM into FAO's activities and processes;
• develop and provide appropriate KM and sharing tools.

Annex V – Capacity Building –Presentation by Management

Capacity Building strategy will focus on:
• operational aspects of CB
• competency development
• resource mobilization

Strategy development process:
• consultation
• partnership
• networking
• sustainability

Annex VI: Basic Data and Statistics

FAO's main statistical dissemination tool is FAOSTAT:
• Recent development work highlighted a number of conceptual and methodological issues and a decision was taken to move towards a statistical model to generate the data for FAOSTAT
• This was not entirely successful and FAO is currently reverting to the old FAOSTAT methodology and datasets as a short-term solution.

Issues of data coverage, quality and timeliness persist:
• Many developing countries do not have the range of statistics required. Even basic data on subjects such as production are often not available
• The quality of statistics provided is often suspect and not based on sound statistical methods
• Data is often provided after long delays limiting its use for policy making.

Governance of Statistics in FAO
• Lack of coordination of statistical activities - duplication and conflicting datasets.
• The interface with users needs to be improved so that the statistics compiled better meet the needs of our users both within FAO and outside.

The way forward
- Building Country Level Capacity: CountrySTAT is seen as a major player in helping towards this goal
- The coordination of statistical activities should be strengthened
- Greater recognition of users' needs to be fully taken into account when developing the statistical information system
  - Partnerships should be further strengthened and FAO should continue to play a major role in the international statistics arena