

Chair's Aide Mémoire – Seventh Meeting of CoC-IEE WG I
(Discussion of IEE Findings and Recommendations on FAO Programmes – Continued)
Tuesday 18 March 2008, 09.30 – 17.30
Vic Heard, Chair

- 1) **Introduction:** Members welcomed the Management presentations at this session, which focused directly on the relevant IEE recommendations and the Management response.
- 2) **Economic, Social, Food and Nutrition Policy:** Members welcomed Management's overall agreement with the IEE recommendations. It was agreed that FAO's work in policy and capacity building is of highest priority for Members. The Working Group appreciated management emphasis on joining up normative work and members' needs and the better identification of those needs. Members emphasised the importance of:
 - a) Ensuring that FAO's policy work is neutral and integrated across departments and disciplines, taking account of all aspects (technical, social, economic, environmental);
 - b) Providing support to Members in creating an enabling environment for the private sector and business for income generation and better livelihoods;
 - c) Integrating nutrition into the multiple dimensions of FAO's work on food security;
 - d) FAO's work on commodity analysis for policy (the value of FAO undertaking short as well as medium-term commodity analysis work was recognised);
 - e) Strong partnerships.
- 3) **Nutrition:** There was strong support for integrating nutrition into food policy work. However views varied on the emphasis to be given to other nutrition work:
 - a) Management's view that maintenance of food composition data at global level should be continued was generally agreed;
 - b) Some countries argued that FAO must stick to its clear areas of comparative strength and this did not extend to nutrition education. Others stressed the importance of FAO manuals and approaches but emphasised the value of strong partnerships, particularly with UNICEF.
- 4) **Crop Production Technology and IPM** The enduring importance of crop production, which still represents the major part of agricultural activity, was agreed by all as crucial in overcoming hunger, food insecurity and poverty. However, views differed on FAO's strength's in addressing increased crop production, with many emphasising the importance of policies and institutions, while many others stressed that technology transfer was also important. All Members agreed on the centrality of FAO's role as a knowledge manager and in addressing the implications of technology for policy. Many Members considered that that FAO crop work needed to extend beyond the areas highlighted by the IEE (plant nutrition and horticulture), particularly as a knowledge manager and disseminator. Some Members agreed with the IEE

proposals that FAO should concentrate on fewer areas noting the strong role now played by others in crop production technology per se. Also:

- a) The International Rice Commission: Various views were expressed on the desirability of winding up the commission or its transfer to the CGIAR. While many members supported this, another group questioned whether the CGIAR could play the same role as host institution. Management explained that the Commission is highly under-resourced and that this issue would need to be addressed if it was to be made effective and responsive to Members' needs in future;
 - b) Integrated Pest Management (IPM): Members stressed the importance and highly positive impact of FAO's IPM programme. There was agreement that policy and regulation work in IPM and plant protection remain a crucial area for FAO involvement;
 - c) Merger of the Crops and Grassland and Seeds and Plant Genetic Services: Management supported this recommendation, and was intending to go further to provide a matrix management model for the Plant Production and Protection Division without individual services. This would enable a more integrated approach to be taken to the entirety of crop production and protection; and
 - d) FAO and the CGIAR – There was agreement that the organizations have separate but complimentary mandates. FAO is devoted to research-based development and the CGIAR system to development-based research in agriculture. Management noted that there is already considerable collaboration, reflected in the frequent references to the CGIAR in the IEE report.
- 5) **Production Technologies, Technology Transfer and Piloting**: There was a divergence of view on this issue. One group of members considered that while improvements in production technology were important, FAO did not have a strong comparative advantage in the actual transfer of those technologies itself. Another group of members considered that transfer of production technology was of vital importance to development and FAO had an important direct role to play, including in facilitating South-South knowledge transfer. Members agreed with the IEE that piloting should be highly selective, aimed at addressing genuine gaps in knowledge and have reasonable assurance of follow-up and replication if successful. Also:
- a) TeleFood: While several members questioned FAO's comparative advantage in TeleFood type projects, the majority agreed with management's proposals for the integration of TeleFood projects into other projects which could provide the necessary technical support. It was emphasised that TeleFood should be totally devolved to the FAORs working with national TeleFood committees and NGOs, and with no requirement for involvement from FAO Headquarters at any stage of the process. Management confirmed it was essentially an advocacy tool. Many members observed that it should be cost neutral for FAO and management

confirmed that this was largely the case; and

- b) Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) – Members in general welcomed the discontinuation of SPFS pilot programmes and the upscaling of the SPFS to national and regional programmes addressing food insecurity and rural poverty in an integrated approach. Important in this approach are policy development and the development of national institutions both within government and the private and NGO sectors.
- 6) **Joint work with IAEA:** Members did not develop a common position on the desirability of continuing with a joint division devoted to the application of nuclear technologies in agriculture. Some Members felt the current arrangement should continue with objectives and activities which were better focused on FAO priorities. Other Members supported the IEE recommendation to discontinue this arrangement with the development of focused collaborative projects between the IAEA and the relevant FAO programmes. Members were informed of the strong IAEA support to the programme and the relatively small input by FAO. Management was requested to prepare options for further consideration by the Working Group.