

164th Session of the Council – written correspondence procedure

Item 11: Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council

Secretariat response to written questions from the Council

1. The Secretariat expresses its appreciation for the comments received for the Document CL 164/LIM/3 *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council*. The comments and inputs are duly noted, and these will be subsumed into future iterations of the document.
2. In response to questions regarding a common specialized expertise on investigative functions related to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (CL 164/LIM 3, paragraph 5), it is noted that the Investigation Services of the Rome-based Agencies collaborate closely, including, but not limited to investigating allegations of sexual harassment and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Mutual assistance is mainly required in cases: 1) which involve a Conflict of Interest situation for the Investigation Office concerned; 2) which require investigative tools or skills not available in each of the Agencies (e.g. related to digital forensics); or 3) which exceed the available in-house capacity (e.g. investigating simultaneously several high priority cases requiring similar skills).
3. With regard to allegations of sexual harassment, FAO generally has sufficient in-house capacity to address all such complaints, and therefore does not see an advantage in pooling such capacity at this point as this would not be cost and time efficient. With regard to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), FAO has not received any such complaints in 2019. FAO notes that the Office of the Inspector-General of WFP has dealt with a significant number of such cases and has developed specialized expertise in conducting such investigations. In case of future SEA complaints, which may require a full investigation, FAO will therefore consider seeking assistance from WFP.
4. In response to questions regarding paragraph 7 of document CL 164/LIM/3, the Hand in Hand Initiative (HIHI) prioritizes beneficiary countries where large numbers of people are at risk of being left behind, where hunger and extreme poverty is increasing, as stated in document CL 164/3 Information Note 3. The list of priority countries evolves based on changing circumstances and needs, and includes Least Developed Land-Locked Countries, Least Developed Small Island Developing States, countries in food crisis or highly populated countries, but also countries seeking support to manage the impact of COVID-19 with the HIHI approach. Therefore the list of priority countries is not a closed list.
5. The initiative is funded as explained in detail in document CL 164/3 Information Note 3. The initiative has the following four core activities described in document CL 164/ 3 Information Note 3: (a) Big data lab; (b) HIHI geospatial platform; (c) HIHI country task forces; and (d) investment plans for HIHI activities. Activities (a) and (b) are fully funded by extra budgetary resources and benefit the entire membership and not only the priority countries under HIHI. Activities (c) and (d) are specific for the priority countries but are funded as explained in document CL 164/3 Information Note 3. Specifically, members of the task force

carry out these duties within their existing overall terms of reference without need for any additional funding (i.e. productivity gains); and the investment plans are funded by three sources: (i) extra budgetary resources, in line with agreements with the relevant resource partners; (ii) the World Bank partnership agreement with the Investment Centre whereby existing activities will now be directly coordinated and prioritized based on the HHI; and (iii) Technical Cooperation Programmes requested by governments.