

165th Session of the Council – written correspondence procedure

Item 15: Council Multi-year Programme of Work 2021-24

Responses by the Independent Chairperson of the Council to inputs by Members

1. The Council Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPoW) is a document submitted annually to the Council as a results-based planning and monitoring instrument to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's Programme of Work. The MYPoW is adapted and improved on an ongoing basis and as a result of comments and requests from Members, as necessary. The document may be revised and updated following consultations by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with Members, including through the established mechanism of informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups. Following such consultations, a revised document will be submitted as Council MYPoW 2022-25 to the Council at its 168th Session in 2021.
2. The ICC appreciates the support communicated by Members regarding the focus and priority setting of the Council's Programme of Work to be aligned with the SDGs. In particular, the Secretariat takes note of the request by Indonesia to include a reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under 'Outputs' in Section II.A of the Council MYPoW 2021-24, which may be developed in the context of the ICC informal meetings as described in the paragraph above. The ICC also notes Indonesia's support of empowering of the Drafting Committee of the Council, and to conduct a study in view of introducing potential improvements to Council's working methods, including through bilateral consultations between the ICC and the Regional Groups.
3. In response to the questions from Spain and the European Union with regard to the former paragraph listing 'substantive issues which shall be regularly addressed at Council Sessions' it is noted that the Council addresses a wide array of substantive issues at its Sessions which both comprises and exceeds the list included in previous versions of the Council MYPoW, including document CL 163/14, Council MYPoW 2020-23.
4. It is noteworthy that the list of substantive issues which shall be regularly addressed at Council Sessions, outlined in previous versions of the MYPoW, has not benefitted from review or update over the last ten years, since the first Council MYPoW 2010-13 was submitted to the 140th Session of the Council in 2010. Document CL 165/15 *Multi-year Programme of Work of the Council 2021-24* for consideration by the Council provides an updated and more accurate reflection of the work programme of the Council over the next period of four years, without limiting the Council to a defined set of substantive issues to be addressed at its Sessions. The Council MYPoW 2021-24 has been revised to reflect throughout the document the mandate of the Council, as the executive arm of the Conference, and as outlined in Rule XXIV of the General Rules of the Organization.
5. As such, Members may consider the need to reflect the current priorities of Members and the Organization with regard to the substantive issues to be regularly addressed at Sessions of the Council, to be included in the next version of the Council MYPoW to be submitted to the Council at its 168th Session in 2021. Members may therefore hold consultations on this issue at the informal meetings of the ICC with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups.
6. The ICC acknowledges the comments by the European Union and Argentina regarding the need to set a clear commitment to multilingualism in the Organization, and in particular, with regard to the delivery of Governing Body documentation in all languages of the Organization by the established deadlines. As noted at the ICC informal meeting with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons on 27 November 2020, Management is undertaking a strategic analysis of multilingualism in the Organization including the complex and varied elements involved in the provision of multilingualism at FAO. This broad array of factors will be analysed to develop specific proposals for the enhancement of

multilingualism in the Organization, including how to secure better delivery of multilingualism in the governance process, for consideration by Members.

7. Should the 165th Session of the Council approve the related recommendation of the 129th Session of the Programme Committee, a comprehensive report on multilingualism will be submitted to the Council in April 2021, following review by the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and the 184th Session of the Finance Committee¹. The report will outline proposals to bolster the Organization's capacity and increase its efficiency in adhering to the principle of multilingualism while continuing to ensure the continuity and integrity of the governance process. The Director-General has pledged to enhance and reinvigorate multilingualism in the Organization and further proposals will also be developed in this regard in the Strategic Framework 2022-31 as well as the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23, to be considered and approved by the Conference at its 42nd Session in July 2021.

¹ CL 165/10, paragraph 28 (g).