

42nd Session of the Conference
Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - English version

Item 17 - Programme Evaluation Report 2021.

Member Name	Comments
<p>New Zealand (Fri 21/05/2021 8:17 AM)</p>	<p>New Zealand thanks the Evaluation team for all the useful evaluations summarised in this Report. New Zealand notes that as well as the successes, the Evaluation team has highlighted a number of shortcomings in FAO’s work, which provides the opportunity to make adjustments to enable FAO to better carry out its mandate in the future. Commendably, FAO Management has responded favourably to a majority of these, and we are pleased that many responses to recommendations are reflected in the new Strategic Framework 2022-31 and Medium Term Plan 2022-25 to be considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Statistical governance</p> <p>New Zealand agrees with the Report’s conclusion that there is a critical need to form a solid basis for well-coordinated, coherent statistical work. New Zealand considers this is a priority, as data and evidence have a fundamental role in informing policies and responses to our key global challenges.</p> <p>We strongly support adequate funding of governance being a focus and an area to accelerate efforts (addressed in Outcome 6.4 of the budget). New Zealand also supports the recommendation for a key performance indicator (KPI) around ensuring strong governance across FAO’s internal statistical work.</p> <p>The Evaluation Report noted FAO is reliant on extrabudgetary resources to carry out its core statistical work. New Zealand strongly supports the increase in the budget allocated to statistics (addressed in Outcome 6.2 of the budget). In doing so, it is vital that resources are directed specifically to lift FAO’s capacity to support core statistical activities. Further, New Zealand supports that the budget be earmarked to address the identified need to accelerate actions to improve the quality of its data and IT infrastructure support and adoption of an appropriate quality management system. It is critical that FAO, as a centre of excellence in food and agriculture, fully adheres with all internationally accepted statistical standards and norms.</p> <p>Finally, to ensure a solid coherence across statistical work, methodologies and standards should be fit for purpose and therefore the use of regional knowledge should be incorporated.</p> <p>Climate change</p> <p>New Zealand supports the findings on the need for FAO to better contribute to climate actions by improving FAO governance, including internal coordination, mainstreaming climate change, monitoring and reporting, outreach and partnerships, and the development of a new Climate Change Strategy. New Zealand believes good governance in FAO is key to ensuring much needed multilateral change is made. While the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture roadmap has been a successful first step, it needs to conclude with ambitious action across the global agriculture sector. This will be fundamental to driving more action and ambition in agriculture. New Zealand is committed to continued global</p>

	<p>collaboration on climate change in agriculture through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).</p> <p>Programmes in the Asia and Pacific/Small Island Developing States (SIDS)</p> <p>New Zealand supports the recommendations for FAO to continue its programmes in the Asia and Pacific to improve resilience of agriculture and fisheries food systems, and also recommendations on the need for tailored support to Small Island Developing States.</p>
<p>Brazil (Mon 24/05/2021 4:36 PM)</p>	<p>Brazil takes note of the Programme Evaluation Report 2021, as presented in document C 2021/8.</p> <p>In particular, Brazil welcomes the excellent results reported therein on FAO’s ability to mobilize funds from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). According to the report, page 5, “Almost 80 percent of the projects evaluated in 2019–2020 contributed directly to environmental and climate change-related targets, with more than 60 percent primarily targeting SDG 15 (life on land)”. These results clearly portray the excellent structure and work already in place at FAO to support countries in fulfilling their environmental goals.</p> <p>Concerning one of the conclusions of the report, according to which FAO could “better use markets to valorize sustainable agricultural practices and products” (page 4), the meaning of “better use markets” is unclear. In this regard, Brazil would like to underscore, and call on FAO to keep promoting the importance of global food supply chains and open, rules-based, non-discriminatory and predictable international trade, taking into account the mandate of FAO and pertinent international agreements, including those under the World Trade Organization.</p>
<p>Spain (Mon 24/05/2021 4:46 PM)</p>	<p>Spain fully supports the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, but wishes to emphasize the following in relation to this Agenda Item:</p> <p>The 2021 Programme Evaluation Report has a crucial role to play in enabling FAO to improve its performance and achieve greater impact in conjunction with other partners. In this regard, we commend the role of the independent FAO Office of Evaluation as an essential body for appraising the Organization’s work at the country, regional and global levels.</p> <p>In the aforementioned Report, we particularly welcome the conclusions highlighting both areas of success and those that need improvement; and we are grateful for the preparation of the Strategic Framework 2022-31, aligned with the Evaluation of the Strategic Results Framework.</p> <p>We commend FAO’s adoption of a holistic approach to food systems, as well as its highly collaborative approach to the United Nations Development System (UNDS) reform process, in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and their interrelationship with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. In particular, on the evaluation of FAO’s support for SDG 2 and SDG 13, we note the specific suggestions made in the Report for achieving the 2030 Agenda and commitments on climate change.</p> <p>We applaud FAO’s commitment to intensify its action on governance in relation to climate change; and we look forward to rapid implementation of the outcomes of the 166th Session of the Council on the evaluation of FAO’s support to climate action (SDG 13), and implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017). More</p>

	<p>specifically, Spain approves the holding of the inclusive consultations scheduled ahead of the 168th Session of the Council, as a starting point for developing the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change, naturally aligned with the SDGs. We urge FAO to adopt participatory approaches to supporting the most vulnerable groups, especially rural women and youth, making sure the principle of inclusiveness is upheld.</p>
<p>Bangladesh on behalf of the Asia Group (Mon 24/05/2021 5:14 PM)</p>	<p>The Asia Group would like to acknowledge the commendable work of the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) to prepare the Programme Evaluation Report 2021 based on the ninety-five thematic, country, project, programme and emergency evaluations completed during the period 2019-20. We note the evaluation work provides evidence to develop the Strategic Framework 2022-2031, FAO’s work on Nutrition, gender and also FAO’s contribution to Strategic Development Goal (SDG) 2, among others.</p> <p>Having said this, the Asia Group would like to highlight the following points:</p> <p>With regard to the geographical distribution of the evaluation programme, it is pertinent to mention that only 2 out of 15 country programme evaluations took place from the Asia and Pacific Region during 2019-20 which is quite low. Only 10 projects were evaluated from the Region out of 58. Even the coverage is not so high when we see the geographical distribution of planned or ongoing country programme evaluations for 2021-22. We encourage FAO to maintain more balanced approach in identifying the evaluation programme.</p> <p>The Asia Group supports boosting the national evaluation capacity and encourages strengthening the evaluation culture at the regional and country level in order to contribute to FAO’s programming cycle and results-based management system as this had also been mentioned in the 2016 Evaluation Report. We look forward to the implementation of the proposal submitted by OED for phasing the decentralization process in the 2021-22 Biennium.</p> <p>The Asia Group would like to welcome more partnership with the stakeholders while conducting the evaluation. Consultations with the government, relevant Ministries and other partners are key in order to get their views and reflect this in the Evaluation Report. This will facilitate the generation of necessary buy-in of the knowledge product by the stakeholders. Moreover, this lesson-learning process will also help FAO to develop the future priorities and programmes of the beneficiaries.</p> <p>Lastly, we would like to commend OED for the way it has conducted the evaluation function despite the challenging environment due to the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic and would like to get more information on how the COVID-19 derived situation affects the evaluation work to identify the true picture of the support FAO has provided to rural communities through its projects.</p> <p>With this, the Asia Group took note of the Programme Evaluation Report 2021.</p>
<p>Canada (Mon 24/05/2021 11:04 PM)</p>	<p>Canada welcomes this informative Report on the work of the Office of Evaluation.</p> <p>We support the assessment on paragraph 20 that FAO’s work to support the most vulnerable groups “required improvements”. We also note the assessment in paragraph 29 that FAO’s assistance to Indigenous Peoples “remains inadequate” and we urge a renewed focus in this area.</p> <p>Canada appreciates the progress made on gender equality recognized in paragraph 21 and 25 while also reiterating that</p>

	<p>it is crucial for FAO to move beyond the mainstreaming of gender equality in its programmes to adopting gender-transformative approaches for impactful gender equality and women’s empowerment results, recognizing the important role of tackling underlying social norms, attitudes, behaviours and social systems perpetuating gender inequalities. Canada further echoes the recommendation in paragraph 15 that “FAO could do more on governance in relation to climate change, internal coordination, mainstreaming climate change, monitoring and reporting, outreach and partnerships”.</p> <p>In this sense, we encourage FAO to appropriately integrate the needs and perspectives of women, youth and Indigenous Peoples, and to mainstream climate change and the promotion of biodiversity in the Strategic Framework for 2022-31, the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23.</p> <p>We look forward to the consultations on the Gender Action Plan to be submitted at the Programme Committee in November 2021 to ensure that gender is effectively mainstreamed in all of FAO’s work, with targets, outputs and indicators.</p>
<p>The United States of America (Tue 25/05/2021 12:18 AM)</p>	<p>The United States of America appreciates the inclusive innovation agenda in the new Strategic Framework (2022-2031), which clearly builds on the Organization’s performance in the past biennium. We welcome the specific mention of new technologies that are used throughout the world in agriculture and help to improve the lives of farmers, ranchers, foresters, and fishers and contribute to solutions to global challenges.</p> <p>The United States commends FAO for mobilizing significant funds for climate action during the last biennium through the Green Climate Fund and being accredited to the Adaptation Fund. These efforts, and FAO’s acknowledgement it can do more on governance, internal coordination, mainstreaming climate change, monitoring and reporting, outreach, and partnerships, provide the underpinning for the emphasis we now see throughout the Strategic Framework, where climate change is highlighted as a driver, top challenge, and financing and innovation opportunity. As President Biden stated at the Leaders’ Summit on Climate in April, the United States is committed to climate action by mobilizing a whole-of-government approach, and we are raising our ambition to strengthen capacity to help people at home and around the world cope with the current impacts of climate change, reduce future risks, and improve resilience. We appreciate FAO making climate change work within its mandate a priority.</p> <p>The United States also notes the importance of FAO’s normative work and support of standard-setting work of Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), brought forward in the new Strategic Framework.</p> <p>We appreciate the Evaluation’s role in spurring FAO’s development and adoption of a new Private Sector Strategy in December 2020; a more agile FAO engaged in diverse and creative partnerships and leveraging the private sector can deepen food security gains and climate change progress.</p>

<p>Japan (Tue 25/05/2021 9:02 AM)</p>	<p>Japan welcomes the Programme Evaluation Report 2021 and commends the efforts made by the Office of Evaluation to adapt the evaluation work to the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of acceleration of global efforts to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, Japan also recognizes that almost 80 percent of evaluated projects contributed directly to environmental and climate change-related targets. Japan expects FAO to continue to implement projects and evaluations in a transparent manner.</p>
<p>European Union (Thu 27/05/2021 4:51 PM)</p>	<p>The European Union and its 27 Member States commend FAO's independent Office of Evaluation, which is an essential body to assess FAO's work at the national, regional and global levels. As the Programme Evaluation Report 2021 demonstrates, it is crucial to learn from evidence, so that the FAO can improve its performance and achieve greater impact together with other partners.</p> <p>We welcome the Report, which summarises the main findings from the evaluations conducted in 2019 and 2020. We particularly welcome the inclusion of findings which highlight both areas of success and those in need of improvement, and express appreciation for the preparation of the Strategic Framework 2022-31, in line with the Evaluation of the Strategic Results Framework.</p> <p>We note that the Report finds that FAO has been broadening the scope and diversity of its products, albeit slowly, and adopting more holistic methodologies, such as the food systems approach. We also observe with satisfaction the findings on the highly collaborative approach to the United Nations development system (UNDS) reform process, in the context of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and its interlinkage to the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs).</p> <p>About the evaluations of FAO's support to SDG 2 and SDG 13, it is worthwhile recognizing the specific suggestions included in the Report for improving FAO's positioning and contribution to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and climate change-related commitments.</p> <p>We welcome the commitment from Management in reply to the observation that FAO could do more on governance in relation to climate change, internal coordination, mainstreaming climate change, monitoring and reporting, outreach and partnerships. We look forward to a swift implementation of the outcome of the 166th Council Session on the evaluation of FAO's support to climate action (SDG 13) and the implementation of FAO's Strategy on Climate Change (2017). In particular, we support the inclusive consultations scheduled ahead of the 168th Session of the Council, which will be the starting point for developing the new FAO Strategy on Climate Change, which should be aligned with the SDGs.</p> <p>As recommended by the Evaluation, we encourage FAO to replicate on a larger scale participatory approaches such as those applied in Dimitra Clubs to support the most vulnerable groups, notably rural women and youth.</p> <p>Lastly, we also take this opportunity to recall the recommendation of the Programme Committee at its 129th Session (paragraph 20. (a) of the final Report) to the Office of Evaluation to include in the next update of the Work Plan, proposals for an evaluation of FAO's implementation of Conference Resolution 7/2019, <i>Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including Agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO</i>.</p>

	<p>We would like to conclude by reiterating our full support for the work of the FAO Office of Evaluation and stressing the importance of continuing to identify lessons to be learned from the FAO's work, both positive and negative, so as to deliver better results.</p>
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